

STABILIZING THE DOWNTOWN:  
CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A REGIONAL SHOPPING  
MALL ON THE DOWNTOWN OF GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

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The Faculty of Graduate Studies  
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of City Planning

by  
Sheila Vanderhoef  
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SHEILA DELORES VANDERHOEF

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DEDICATION

To Harry, who issued the necessary imperative.

## ABSTRACT

This document is concerned with the importance of retailing in the CBD's of smaller cities and the impact of major retail shopping alternatives on the viability of the CBD. The inquiry is comprised of a literature review and a case study.

The literature review section focuses on the development of the CBD and the problems of a particular type of CBD. The case study examines the City of Grand Forks, North Dakota and the impact of a regional shopping mall on the CBD of the city.

This document concludes with an assessment of the actions which Grand Forks took, to try to cope with the impact of the regional mall.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the downtowns of cities and their problems and prospects. The specific focus will be on downtowns of medium-size cities for whom commercial activity is of primary economic importance. The downtown is also important to the city at another level. It serves as the central focal point of the urban area and as such, is most frequently traversed and readily recognized by residents and non-residents alike. In this respect, the historical or symbolic nature of the downtown is recognized. These two concepts of the importance of downtown, form the underlying assumptions of this thesis.

Within the context of the above assumptions it is generalized that if the downtown district of a city is an important part of the city then there is a critical relationship between a vital downtown and vital urban area. Additionally, the changing relationship of the downtown to the city

city and problems arising from this change will be explored in the framework of the role of downtown from the past to the present and the relationship of city size to the development of this role.

The interest in strengthening and stabilizing the downtown of North American cities is rooted, not only in the symbolic historical basis of downtown, but is also a part of a general trend towards compact or centralized living. In the U.S., which is the primary focus of this thesis, the rising costs of energy has forced all levels of governments to reconsider the economic viability of further spatial expansion versus, reconcentration in the existing core. The timeliness of this inquiry then, is in certainty that energy costs will not decrease significantly in the short term and therefore abandonment of the spatially compact central cities, which has been taken place, must be reconsidered. It is the basic theory here that the abandonment of the older core has taken place because of a conflict between the old lifestyle which created the compact downtown and the present living pattern of a highly mobile population.

This investigation will utilize a literature review to establish the roots of the downtown and a case study to

highlight the predicament of the present downtown.

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is the intent of this thesis to investigate, in detail, the specific circumstances of a problem-plagued downtown. Certain recommendations will be put forth to resolve these problems, and the recommendations will consider the linkage of city to region. It is suggested that those technological advances which have strengthened the city and region relationship have contributed to the diminished importance of the downtown, and with these considerations in mind, this thesis will examine some strategies aimed at revitalizing or stabilizing a declining downtown.

It is recognized that the city is a central focal point and operates in a regional context. Strategies, aimed at revitalizing or stabilizing a declining downtown, must deal with regional developments which have an influence upon the district. Some of the more profound effects on the downtown are generated by population and commercial shifts at the regional level, and while such regional concerns are the general interest of this thesis, the one specific development that will be focused upon is the regional shopping center.

A regional shopping center, as the title implies, is largely, although not exclusively, a retail/commercial facility and as such has its greatest impact upon those cities whose predominant function is as a regional retail/commercial center. The cities in this group are generally the smaller cities located in historically rural/agricultural regions where agriculturally related industries and occupations still prevail. It is suggested that these cities are adversely affected by the introduction of regional shopping and such effects appear most apparently in the downtown district.

In response to the increasing impact upon the traditional downtown of regional shopping centers, and the general impact of continuing dispersion of economic and social activity, on the whole city; a decision concerning the continued viability of a small city and the role of the larger city must be made. It is the contention of this thesis that the decision must, of necessity, be in favour of strengthening and stabilizing the city by strengthening and stabilizing one key element of the city, the downtown.

This inquiry will be limited to dealing specifically with the smaller city - its problems and prospects. In

particular, it will focus, through the case study, on a smaller United States city, which was experiencing decline in the downtown, and found the process accelerated by the introduction of a regional shopping center on the periphery.

In summary then, the central question of this investigation is; Can municipal governments develop and implement strategies to revitalize, stabilize, and strengthen the downtown? The literature review and case study will provide the information basis and suggest the answer to this question.

#### Method of Approach

In the course of the study, two distinct methods of approach are used. The first method will be a review of existing literature in the areas of the historical development of downtowns; the emergence of general problems leading to decline, and a review development of the several categories of solutions exercised in an attempt to solve the problems.

For further clarity, the historical section of the literature review can be divided into two parts. One deals with the rise of downtowns and the second part deals with the relationship of the role of the downtown and the size and function of the city. The second part of the literature

review, concerned with general problems, can be divided into large city and smaller city problems as general types. Solutions will also be reviewed in terms of their occurrence with respect to city size.

The second method to be employed here will be a case study. The case study will focus on the specific circumstances of the City of Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The two parts, in concert, will serve as a basis for developing guidelines to ascertain the most appropriate strategy for revitalizing the downtown given certain known precipitating factors, and information about the cities role in the regional context.

### Chapter Synopsis

Chapter one, part of the literature review, is a history of the development of the role of downtown. It examines, the role and function of downtowns as they developed from the pre-industrial city's market core. This chapter defines the term downtown and also sets the scene for understanding the importance of the downtown to the city and in the regional context.

Chapter two introduces the concept that the old form of the downtown has in part contributed to its problems.

This chapter stresses the impact of the changing urban character on the old urban form. The old compact settlement pattern has been replaced with a more loosely organized model and this has led to serious problems in many downtowns.

Chapter three takes the problems of downtown one step further and establishes the city size and function relationship, and this relationships' bearing upon specific problems. This chapter also emphasis the importance of the retail-commercial function to a specific category of city.

Chapter four is the first of two chapters which comprise the case study. This chapter will introduce the city of Grand Forks and discuss the city-region relationship.

Chapter five investigates the specific circumstances of the downtown district of Grand Forks, and reviews and examines the response of the municipal government to these specific circumstances.

Chapter six will examine the Grand Forks case with respect to other similiar examples from the literature as a means of evaluating the specific actions taken in Grand Forks. Recommendations based on this evaluation will close this chapter.

The summary, chapter seven, will suggest that the potential for solving downtowns' problems is in the development of radical strategies which redefine the role and function of downtowns to more adequately reflect the present urban society's needs.

## CHAPTER I HISTORY - THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWNS

A careful study of the development of the whole is an essential first step in the study of any of the parts. For example, the development of the human embryo must be understood before discussions of the development of arms, eyes, or speech are engaged. The human subject though, is a complex living organism, and as such, adheres to the systematic growth pattern of living organisms. This growth pattern is called organic growth and has been applied to inanimate agglomerations such as cities in recent years. If cities do indeed exhibit such organic growth characteristics, various parts of the 'urban organism', are probably best understood if the inception and growth of the whole is clear. In the cases of cities, the rise and growth of urban places is embodied in many different theories, based on conflicting interpretations of historical remains. They range from those which stress agricultural surplus, or economic impetus, to those which rely upon religious, military or protection

considerations, as being of primary importance in the rise of cities. There are also various combinations of the above models and some additional theories of city growth as well. The most appropriate theories here, and favoured by the author, are those which consider agricultural surplus and the rise of economic activity as the main rationale for, not the emergence but continuation and growth of cities. Agricultural surplus allowed for some residents to be engaged in activities other than food related ones and these activities moved the first village to its urban status. In the framework of such theories, the origin of one particular part of the city, the downtown, district will be examined with regard to its historical origin its role and functioning. This discussion will form the basis of chapter one.

### Origins of the City

The term "city" differs from "town" or "village". The city can be considered a "higher order" of development of the village or town, and a metropolis another level of the city and megalopolis the highest urbanized order yet identified. But these terms have little relevance unless the full evolution from the original village to urban center is understood.

The earliest recognized urban settlements were in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in 3500 B.C.<sup>1</sup> This area is called the "cradle of civilization", making civilization nearly synonymous with city. In discussing this area, many scholars note that the periodic flooding of the valley provided fertile soil, which contributed to agricultural surpluses. These surpluses meant that not all citizens needed to be directly engaged in food production in order to be supported. Some citizens could provide services in exchange for food. Also, in times of famine in nearby regions, it is conceivable that food was sold to neighbouring areas or wandering tribes. In order for such trading to be viable, written records were necessary. Record keepers, and skilled persons to handle commerce were necessary. Gradually, the presence of items to trade - at first perhaps food - encouraged permanent traders who established trade in a wide variety of items, and over a period of time, regular commerce is established.

The modern city emerged as a distinct city form, thousands of years after the first urban settlements. But the attributes and characteristics of the modern city though were first formed in this period.

From its origins onward, indeed, the city may be described as a structure specially equipped to store and transmit

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1. Michael Palmer, Cities, (London: Bit. Batsforo Ltd, 1971), p.1.

the goods of civilization, sufficiently condensed to afford the maximum amount of facilities in a minimum space, but also capable of structural enlargement to enable it to find a place for the changing needs of the more complex forms of a growing society.<sup>2</sup>

The city, then, is not a collection of previously unknown activities, but is the first agglomeration of such activities in a permanent space.

What happened rather with the rise of cities, was that many functions that had heretofore been scattered and unorganized were brought together within a limited area, and the components of the community were kept in a state of dynamic tension and interaction.<sup>3</sup>

It is within the nature of the city to accommodate and encourage diversity of people and occupations, but the importance of agriculture, a non-urban function, as a catalyst in the formation of cities cannot be overlooked.

Civilization and cities developed together...In fact cities only became possible when the system of agricultural production became advanced enough to produce food surplus to support towns, where skilled craftsmen could concentrate on activities other than farming.<sup>4</sup>

The history of the city then, is a history of ever changing functions in response to changing needs of the population. While the city changes, certain key elements emerge as constant or nearly constant aspects of urban organization. The market and the market function is one such aspect. The chart on the following page clearly lists the six major eras of city development and describes the market characteristics of each.

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2. Lewis Mumford, The City In History, (New York, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc. 1961). p.30.

3. Ibid., P. 31.

4. Op. Cit., Palmer, p.2.

TABLE 1 - 1

## THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF CITIES

ERA	TIME & URBAN FORM	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	SYMBOLIC CHARACTERISTICS
Pre-City	<u>Pre-history</u> Early extended family settlements; often nomadic, ruled by kinship.	Beginning of co-operation and division of labour; necessary pre-requisites for trade.	Later settlements mainly shrines, visited periodically.
Ancient City	<u>3,000 B.C.</u> Tigrus - Euphrates valley area of the city of Ur. A walled city with religious shrine, constantly attended.	Support of ruling elite by peasant worker class. Market area evident and trade is underway with neighbouring cities.	Religious precinct with assembly and protection functions incorporated.
Classical City	<u>3rd Century B.C.</u> Planned cities with limited infrastructure, e.g. water piped in. Rise of privileged middle class.	Commerce is primary activity represented by the Agora and Forum in the Greek and Roman cities. Commerce in both ideas and goods; development of great thinkers and philosophers - Socrates.	Religion still has important role to play. Collapse of the Roman Empire encourages a return to mystic rule.
Medieval City	<u>600 A.D.</u> City services are nearly non-existent in feudal cities. There is some commerce in the market but production is distributed by lord and priests.	Market separate area yet the early feudal was basically an economy of no markets. By 11th Century, commerce and trade are reestablished and agricultural production increases.	Church is a separate area although the influence is starting to decline by the end of this period.
Mercantile City (Pre-Industrial City)	<u>15th Century</u> This city was a bridge from the medieval type of city to the modern industrial city. Manufacturing and manufactured goods take equal place in the market with agricultural products.	Rise of the craft guilds and segregation of the market into single product area and living areas. The guild is main force in the city and remains so until the rise of factories.	In place of the religious precinct, the town halls, guild halls, and civic centers appear.
Industrial City	<u>18th Century</u> The city becomes a necessary form for the continuance of industrial development which relies on a readily available large labour resource.	The outdoor market goes permanently indoors and the large scale manufacturing, necessitates external commerce on a large scale.	Finance and government become the dominant urban forms and functions of the central urban area.

Sources: Mumford, Lewis. The City in History. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1961.  
Palmer, Michael. Cities. London: Bit Batsforo Ltd., 1971.

Up to the nineteenth century, there had been a rough balance of activities within the city. Though work and trade were always important, religion and art and play claimed their full share of the townsman's energies. But the tendency to concentrate on economic activities and to regard as waste the time on effort spent on other functions, at least outside the home, had been growing steadily since the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

The industrial city maintains a well organized market area, but the goods shifted from agricultural products to the products of industry. The advances in scientific thought of this period, freed the city for the first time in its history from reliance on religious protection and the religious shrine as a singular area disappears. The industrial revolution, with its need for, manpower, brought many persons from the rural areas to live in towns. The conditions in these early industrial cities were such that the cities could not grow by natural increase. Death rates were so high, that the cities relied for expansion, on a constant in-migration from the rural areas. The cities grew in size and number during this period, since the factories required large pools of local labour to operate.

The market area of the mediieval town has diversified and solidified. It can now be recognized as the commercial core. In it are located offices and warehousing for exchanging and storing manufactured goods. The volume of

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5. Op. Cit., Mumford, p. 446.

goods produced encourages external trade and the development of methods for transportation to the far flung markets. Even though the city has come a long way since the early pre-city, the industrial city and the post industrial city still mirror certain of the characteristics of their predecessors.

The medieval market, has become the central business district or CBD, but the layout of like merchants located together, and the whole area within easy pedestrian access, remains. The CBD from its medieval origins as the market and activity center, shifts and refines its role and remains as the recognized focus of the urban area. It has been a constant and constantly involving feature since earliest urban beginning. It is a special section of the city in form and function and is regarded as such by the population.

#### What is the Downtown?

The "Downtown", "central business district", "metropolitan core", or "commercial core", are just four of the many terms which are used to refer to the urban heart. The importance of the human heart to the well-being of the body makes the term "urban heart" most appropriate. As with the human

body, an ailing or deteriorating urban heart can have serious consequences for the entire urban area.

In approaching the problem of the hearts of our cities, it is essential that we recognize the interdependence existing between them and the surrounding urbanized areas and metropolitan region. A healthy heart with a chaotic region is just as unworkable an absurdity as a metropolitan region with a dying heart.<sup>6</sup>

The urban heart then is an integral aspect and distinct part of the urban form and a key component in fiscal solvency.

The urban heart is characterized by the land use and activities which occur there. All of the names which refer to the district, reflect some aspect of its distinct form. The term "downtown" which originated in New York to differentiate between "uptown" or "midtown", described the area of Manhattan,<sup>7</sup> the cultural, social, financial, commercial core of New York. It has since become nearly synonymous with the term CBD or "central business district". Perceptually, the term has limitations in that it connotes a business center when actually there are a diversity of activities taking place, although business may dominate the area. The term metropolitan core more aptly describes

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6. Victor Gruen, The Heart of Our Cities: The Urban Cities: Diagnosis and Cure, (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1964, p. 266.

7. Ibid., p. 47.

the areas under discussion, but it too has limitations. Towns, villages and small cities, not of metropolitan stature, have an urban heart. The term commercial core, although more broad ranging in its meaning, suffers the same limitations as CBD in that it does not fully reflect the diversity of the area. It excludes cultural activities from its meaning.

For the purposes of clarity, the terms CBD and downtown which seem to be most widely used, will be used interchangeably, in this work to refer to the specific area defined below.

Raymond Murphy, who has done a great deal of work on defining and delimiting the CBD has summed up the form as such:

Traditionally the CBD has been thought of as a somewhat indefinite region of the city that nevertheless has certain distinctive characteristics. It is central, at least in terms of accessibility. It has a greater concentration of tall buildings than any other region of the city, since it normally includes most of the city's offices and largest retail stores. It is the area where vehicular and pedestrian traffic are likely to be most concentrated. It averages higher assessed land values and taxes paid than any other part of the city, and it draws its business from the whole urban area and from all ethnic groups and classes of people.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Raymond Murphy, The Central Business District, (New York: Aldine Atherton, 1972) p. 2.

It is clear from the above that the CBD is a diverse amalgam of various types of urban activities. The most critical aspect perhaps which distinguishes the CBD from neighbourhood centers, is the intensity of the various characteristics; highest land values, greatest concentrations, most accessible and most offices and stores. The CBD is the urban focal point of cultural activity as well as government functions. Civic offices and city halls are generally located in the downtown area. All of the attributes which Murphy has described for the CBD are not unique activities, but are set apart by the intensive level at which they occur in this district. The CBD then is the representation of the ultimate urban form. It is that portion of the city which has the highest intensity of those characteristics considered urban, and is recognized as such by area residents.

In addition to being the area of "greatest intensity of activity", the downtown of many older cities is also the area of first settlement and as such contains many of the oldest buildings in the city. In cities which were built largely after the introduction and widespread use of the automobile, the downtown may not be the oldest area not is it likely to be of singular distinction. In fact, cities

created or which experienced rapid growth after widespread use of the automobile have several areas which exhibit the characteristics of a downtown. In such cases, it is often the perception of area residents which is the determining factor in identifying the true CBD. The downtowns are identified in such cases as:

crucial areas for renewal. They are the base of the city's financial health and the drawing force for its people. They are the image of a city - symbol of its total environment.<sup>9</sup>

And as a recognized area: "Downtown is the single locale known to the majority of the urban population."<sup>16</sup> Whether the downtown is vibrant and alive or decaying and dying, reflects use patterns and not necessarily a perception problem. For this reason, the downtown's are perceived as having some symbolic significance, many efforts are initiated to revive the troubled downtown district.

The importance of the core as the social, cultural, commercial and public image of the urban place should ensure its preservation and continued support by area residents.

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9. Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America, Downtown Redevelopment, (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Strategy Center of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America, 1974) p. iv.

..the city core is the focus of attention and the visitor seldom ventures far outside the downtown into the less clearly mapped frontier in the suburbs.<sup>10</sup>

Urban development took many thousands of years before the present form emerged. That form, actually, is remarkably unchanged since the industrial revolution. Meanwhile, the pace of human development, has been quickened by the industrial revolution and the urban form is to some extent, inadequate. At the start of this chapter it was noted that the history of the city is of changing functions to meet changing needs of the population. The problems of many of the American cities particularly of their downtowns, are a result of their failure to meet the changing needs of the population. Further exploration of this concept will be undertaken in the following chapter.

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10. Victor Gruen, Centers for the Urban Environment; Survival of the Cities, (Toronto; Van Nostran Reinhold Co., 1973) p. 46.

## CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF DOWNTOWN PROBLEMS

As the previous chapter explains, the role and function of the medieval market core underlies the development of the modern downtown. Fundamental to this chapter is the concept that the problems which plague the American City downtown can be related to the evolution of the form and function of American cities.

Some European cities have preserved the medieval core while allowing the other areas of the city to evolve to meet the needs of the population. The North American city, which in its colonial form resembled the medieval city, abandons the core when it fails to evolve to meet the changing needs of the population. There is also cultural component operating here, wherein Europe being smaller, must use space more wisely. While the American frontier mentality allows one to abandon one site and move on. It is not the intent of this thesis to dwell on either, but to merely mention this as one component of the process which will not receive specific attention here.

The downtown embodies a particular role/function complex which shapes the spatial as well as the functional aspects of downtown. The major constraint to spatial expansion of the Old World cities was transportation. Every urban service had to be located within walking distance of the majority of urban residents. The main functions to be accommodated were religion and commerce. The industrial revolution eliminated this constraint and allowed for major modifications of the city form.

"Buying and selling, that is trade, has been the foremost function of cities throughout history."<sup>1</sup> The physical form which these activities needed at their early start was altered by technological changes which later took place.

Existing functions of cities continually change and new ones emerge, while traditional ones disappear; all this change is expressed in the changing city form. The functions of cities must serve the citizens and the urban community. As their needs change, so does the city's form.<sup>2</sup>

The CBD with its important role in city growth must also alter its form to fit changing needs. In actual fact, as this chapter will show, the CBD's of many North American cities have not kept pace with changing needs and have lost their preeminence in the urban area.

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1. Fran P. Hosken, The Function of Cities, (Cambridge Mass: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1973) p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

The following section will review, in brief, the urbanization of North America to provide contrast to urbanization of the old world presented in the previous chapter. This exercise will develop a viewpoint to better understand the differing approaches to structuring and later preserving the urban environment taken by North Americans and Europeans.

### North American Urbanization and The Downtown

The history of North American urbanization, occurring much later than the European process, differs significantly in rate and pattern. The theories regarding the origin of cities discussed previously, relate specifically to the rise of European cities, and generally to cities in North America. But North American urbanization, carried out by persons of European descent, mirrors the unique challenges and forces operating in America.

Through partaking of the global drive toward urbanization characteristic of an industrializing world, our cities nevertheless developed as a thoroughly home grown product, at least in certain aspects.<sup>3</sup>

Industrialization and urbanization occurred nearly simultaneously in North America and this fact is reflected in the function and growth of the American city.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Anselm L. Strauss, Images of the American City, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 87.

4. Unless additional reference is made (e.g. Canadian) the term American will refer to U.S. cities and North American will denote U.S. and the Canadian Cities.

The American city, quite early on, is relying heavily on long distance trade and hence the importance of transportation in its development cannot be overlooked.

There is a body of literature which deals with the location of cities, but in this discussion it is only important to note that the commerce function of cities was a major factor in location and later growth.

The location of early American cities was determined almost solely by their proximity to water transport routes. Goods fanned out from the port cities of New York, Boston, and Baltimore to other cities via river systems. Some cities were located by government plan, such as Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, but the main consideration is selecting the site was accessibility via water routes. The location of cities stressing transportation needs of industry serves to clearly relay the importance of the commerce function to cities. Both the American and the European urbanization process, received injections of new ideas and people from outside. American cities received waves of immigrants, while European cities relied on the rural to urban migration.

The difference in the development of American and European cities leads to a difference in the functioning, strength and constitution of the downtown region. The European downtown often a later form of the pre-industrial market square, is usually quite compact, spatially. For this reason it is highly selective in terms of functions and may not reflect the vitality and strength of new larger American downtowns.

The American downtowns in serving their market role, differ from the European centers. The elevator and electric train were invented when the cities were in the development stages in many cases, and thus were incorporated into the urban form. The compact arrangement of the pre-industrial city remained but the intensity of use was greatly increased.

The fact that the downtowns are nearly universally occurring, tends to suggest that some aspect of the urbanization process, requires a compact core. There are cities without a CBD, but which possess several commercial areas, each having some vestige of the compact structure and intensity of the preindustrial core. The urban form known as the CBD seems to be an important, almost necessary urban form.

The pre-industrial downtown, was the economic hub of the city. Most American cities were developed for economic reasons and grew because of the viability of their economic functions. The efforts of cities to become larger and wealthier.

...has involved the development of large downtown areas in the cities. They grew up from wharves, in the port cities, as well as from the market place hubs of traffic and commercial transactions, from the centers of government and education, and from the sites of worship or recreation.<sup>5</sup>

The American city reflects the old forces of city development, and joins these with the new forces, which foster rapid growth, and the combination creates larger urban concentrations. But the old and new do not blend perfectly. The pre-industrial market square had a clear function to perform and the city's performance of that function sustained it. The modern city's downtown is a remnant of the pre-industrial core. It does not serve the same function although it was created from this concept. The American city downtown, may very well have been an outmoded concept at its inception and thus, is in serious trouble today. Many of the old pre-industrial city cores of Europe have been preserved and transformed into attractive pedestrian areas. They may no longer act as the economic hub of the

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5. Jean Gottman, Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States; (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), p. 166.

city, but serve as the symbolic representation of the cities past. The link of the present to the past in such cities may be maintained in part by the maintenance of the historic market core.

The swift rise of the cities is a feature of American history, no less significant and dramatic than the swift march of the frontier.<sup>6</sup>

The mentality which allowed people to forsake all that was familiar and move to the frontier, is represented today in a hesitancy to preserve, but a willingness to destroy and rebuild. In the downtown of CBD of American cities this "destroy & rebuild", mentality is becoming too expensive to continue. Additionally, problems which initiate the rebuild strategy, have sometimes remained unsolved.

This section which compared the European and American cities linked the development of each to its commerce role

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6. Constance McLGreen, American Cities in the Growth of the Nation, (London: The Athlone Press, University of London 1957) p. 2.

while at the same time, suggesting that the atmosphere in which the development occurred, altered the form without seriously changing the function. It is my contention here, that the swift rate of urban change necessitated a more flexible city than previously known and the roots of present problems are based in this failure.

### The Changing Urban Scene

The limitations of technology, particularly transportation technology, put limits on the spatial expansion of the cities. Factories located on the periphery of the urban settlement, were soon surrounded by workers homes since these urban workers had to walk to work. The early industrial city lumped rural residents sometimes living in houses with livestock, in areas with factories and shops. The cityscape then, was a representation of a true omnifunctional unit. Within the limited walking confines of the city were all of the features or functions that have come to be recognized as representing urbanism. From this early form, as a close association of conflicting and complementary land uses, the city matured, and a process of selectivity started to emerge, wherein land uses began to segregate themselves. The impetus in part was provided by the emergence of health regulations and rudimentary building codes.

Although the city was refining its internal organization, it continued to grow. The size of the market for goods and services, which the city offered attracted more merchants, and other persons engaged in exchange occupations. The bigger market could not only support more merchants, but also a greater variety of merchants and services. These merchants all wanted to locate at the point on the urban plain of greatest accessibility; where the cost of friction is lowest.

Profits are derived from sales less costs, and the most accessible spot would have low transportation, and other costs, and therefore afford higher profits.

The nature of transportation costs varies with each activity, and the term must be interpreted broadly. For a retail enterprise the costs are not alone those of assembling the merchandise which stocks the shelves but also the costs of employees travel...and most important the travel costs of the customers who come to shop.<sup>7</sup>

An individual shop owner will seek to maximize accessibility at lowest cost to himself, but the price that he is willing to pay for any particular site is based on his perception of various attributes of the site and the relative weight he applies to each.

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7. Richard U. Ratcliff, "The Dynamics of Efficiency in the Locational Distribution of Urban Activities," in Readings in Urban Geography, Harold M. Mayer and Clyde F. Kohn eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago, Press, 1959) p.302.

Thus, an enterprise will pay, in rent, an amount up to the savings which it can make in transportation costs by reason of the accessibility of the site. Site rentals and transportation costs are complementary and in total represent the cost of what friction remains.<sup>8</sup>

If a store is located on a heavily travelled street, it is quite convenient for shoppers in the vicinity to visit the store. The business advantages to locating on heavily travelled streets, particularly for those merchants who rely on pedestrian traffic for a high percentage of their business, increases the site rentals for these locations. Those merchants competing for the fewer, highly travelled locations found themselves having to offer more rent than other competitors. In order to pay higher rents their expectations of return on this investment had to be greater. It is through this, rent gradient process that the specialization of the downtown occurs.

The agent of exclusion may be rent payability but its results is the creation of the "downtown" or central business district as we know it.<sup>9</sup>

Such areas as financial districts, retail districts or diamond selling districts, are an outgrowth of the selective rent paying ability, of the merchant. While some merchants

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8. Ibid., p. 302.

9. Ibid., p. 303.

Another factor in promoting concentration, although not strictly economic, does confer economic advantages. Historically, the businesses in cities, because of the need to communicate with like or complementary business, needed to be physically close. With advances in communications, physical proximity is of less importance, but continues to be a determining factor in locational decisions. Even so:

The manner in which the downtown functions is medieval in many ways. The linkage with the core are often on foot, which places an upper limit on radial extension of establishments that are linked together yet... the salvation of the downtown is the ability it has to segregate functions into coherent subdistricts which are manageable in size and shape...<sup>11</sup>

Following the industrial revolution, the city changed and grew dramatically. Continued improvements, particularly in the area of transportation and communication, allowed the city to expand spatially. What was becoming an extreme collection of activities was being refined into a less dense, more manageable unit. This refinement process continues even today, and while it creates a more manageable downtown, this specialization is not without its drawbacks.

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11. James E. Vance, "Focus on Downtown", in Internal Structure of the City, Larry Bourne ed., (New York, Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 115.

The problems created are of a physical and social nature and will be discussed separately below.

### Physical Problems

The downtown of most American cities have serious problems due to the fact that the downtown is usually the oldest section of the city, with the oldest buildings and infrastructures. The physical deterioration of the buildings leads to a deterioration of the areas' image and often, as has been the case for U.S. cities, to the death of the downtown. The main manifestation of this process is where-in the center or central focal point of the urban area becomes deserted while the outer area continues on. What this suggests is that transportation by increasing the mobility of the population, offers buyers and sellers a choice of areas to carry out transactions, and makes the dissipation of the core possible.

An examination of nearly any area of the North American city will reveal that more space is devoted to streets than to sidewalks. The more heavily travelled areas have the greatest disparity. While, cars contain a driver and sometimes a passenger, the automobile has been the greatest consideration in the development and physical design of cities.

Coupled with the increasing space consumed by travelling cars, is the increasing space needed for stationary or parked cars. For example, merchants desire customer parking to be as near to their business as possible. Cities, still relying on commercial interests, reflect their business bias and thus many congested downtown streets allow on-street parking, usually on both sides of the street, for part or all of the day. Therefore cars are a dominant factor in the city as a whole, but particularly in the downtowns' deterioration.

Along with the dual problems of traffic and congestion created by the car, a serious effect of the automobile is the night death or post five p.m. desertion. This condition is created when the CBD is virtually deserted after the office towers' staff go home. Civic and cultural centers located in the downtown to ease this trend have not been very effective. Their use is occasional and few patrons remain in the area for after theatre entertainment. The emptiness of the downtown is indicative of a shift in its role and function. The omnifunctional center has become nearly a unifunctional center, where people come only to work, but not to shop or be enter-

tained or to participate in activities.<sup>12</sup>

Another salient physical problem of the downtown, is the deterioration of the standing stock, due primarily to age. Many of the downtown buildings are some of the oldest in the urban area. These buildings suffer from a lack of appeal and cannot compete with the new office space.<sup>13</sup> Hence, new construction, which would serve as a revitalizing force, can work to hasten the deterioration of existing buildings by drawing off potential or existing tenants. Vacant or half filled structures discourage investment due to declining revenue and lowered resale value potential. The value of key properties in the downtown may exceed the building value, resulting in the demolition of the existing building and eventual redevelopment of the site. The new stock may first appear at the edges of the old downtown. Here the advantages of proximity to the downtown can be derived at slightly lower costs than in the heart of the downtown. This development, if concentrated enough, may serve to shift the focus of the downtown from the old core to the new area, hastening the decline of the old core.

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12. Victor Gruen, Centers for the Urban Environment, (Toronto: Van Nostrand, Reinhold Co., 1973), p. 97.

13. Graham Barker, Jennifer Penney, and Wallace Seccombe, Highrise & Superprofits, (Kitchener, Ontario: Dumont Press Graphix, 1973) p. 40-53.

...CBD properties are carrying assessments far out of line with those in the rest of the city and with their income earning power. This situation results in part from the comparative ease with which downtown property can be reassessed. There can be little doubt that this is one of the factors which has discouraged both extensive remodeling and new construction in the area and shifted activity to the more lightly assessed periphery.<sup>14</sup>

The above discussion of the building age must be viewed in the context of the existing form of the downtown. The fact that the downtown is surrounded by the built-up urban area, limits its expansion and also limits its ability to incorporate amenities, recently given high priority by business and residents. Thus the downtown loses the factory district on the fringe, old garment and warehouse district buildings generally, to exclusive high rise office towers. Or the office towers may first invade the residential district within and around the core and in the process eliminate the night time resident population of the downtown.

Collectively, these essentially physical problems of the downtown create an image of undesirability. It is viewed as old, unsafe at night, too crowded with people and cars,

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14. Richard B. Andrews, Urban Growth and Development, (New York: Simmons Boardman Publishing Co., 1962) p. 73.

and in short, not a good place to shop or do business. This viewpoint leads residents to abandon the downtown as a vital focal point.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the reduction in visits to the area encourages more businesses to move, leaving more vacant stores. The succession of land uses usually leads to an invasion of undesirable uses such as pornographic bookstores and movie houses or "body rub parlours."

The physical decline of the downtown and the attitudinal shift away from the area as a focus, contributes to the concentration of social problems within the area. The deteriorated buildings attract non-CBD type activities and an increasing number of low income residents. In some urban areas, land at the periphery of the CBD was held speculatively, undermaintained, in the expectation that it would be redeveloped. However, as the suburbs expanded incentives to redevelop the CBD have lessened, thereby hastening the demise of the CBD.

The deterioration of an area cannot be caused exclusively by the residents or the owners of properties. The deterioration of the CBD or any other area of the city is due to the interaction of complex forces of an economic and social nature. An examination of the various components is beyond the scope of this thesis. Reference is often made in such instances to the identifiable economic reasons,

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15. Harvey Kaiser, The Building of Cities, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) p.44.

which are based in the property tax systems in use in most North American cities.

The second category of downtown problems are social in nature. They are rooted in the changing physical and functional structure of the downtown, and solutions must recognize the interrelatedness of these physical and social components.

### Social Problems

Advances in private transportation technology, and public investment in roads, provided the opportunity for increasing numbers of persons to live farther from the high density areas surrounding the core. The age and condition of many of the downtown properties, both business and residential, discourages those tenants who have the resources to do better, from staying in the old area. Those who remain are usually forced to do so by circumstance. The result is an essentially captive residential population with low income and failing businesses, and these two factors form the nucleus of the area's social problems. The effects of traffic, noise and air pollution, exaggerated by the high density nature of development, makes the downtown less attractive for those who remain within and at the fringes,

Therefore, the exodus from and decline of the downtown, extends to the surrounding area near the downtown. The residents who can afford to move do so, while they are replaced by persons with fewer housing options, which in large part reflect income constraints. The traffic generated by these people, who can afford to work downtown, and live and shop elsewhere, make living downtown less attractive for those who remain. In discussing this process Gruen describes the events in a hypothetical city core.

Those original inhabitants who could afford it, and who were not restrained by the existence of national or racial prejudices from doing so, have moved out into suburbia, leaving the city core to a steadily diminishing population composed of those in lower and lower income groups, and to those national and racial minorities who have no other choice but to stay there... (This) process triggers a flight of retailing, cultural facilities, entertainment and most other urban functions.<sup>16</sup>

The buildings which are old, are occupied by mostly low income tenants, who cannot afford high rents. The building revenue declines and coupled with a lack or low level of maintenance, the structure further declines physically. The process of decline detracts from the desirability of the area, hastening the decline.

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16. Victor Gruen, The Heart of Our Cities; (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1964), p.78.

A major social problem in many downtowns is crime. The reasons for the emergence of crime is rooted in a complex combination of various forces operating in the downtown. The residents of the downtown area, or living near the downtown area, suffers from limitations of income, education and social constraints to mobility and the resultant frustration leads, in some cases, to committing criminal acts.

In addition to the process of flight and decline, is the additive effects of abandonment and demolition. The unattended spaces consequently created, mostly on the side streets in the downtown area, provide opportunities for crime.<sup>17</sup> The predominant population of the downtown is transient, in that they are in evidence during office hours. After closing, whole streets or sections of the downtown have little pedestrian or auto traffic. The deserted conditions, even though physical structures may be new, create an atmosphere for crime. Fear of the dark deserted areas, deters visitors and residents from venturing out at night. Even though, in some cities, the attempts have been made to reverse this trend by locating cultural facilities, such as theatres, in

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17. Oscar Newman, Defensible Space, (New York: Mac Millan Co., 1973). describes the opportunities for crime created by the physical design of structures in the neighbourhood.

the midst of the area. But many of the nighttime visitors leave the area after theatre. The factors that deter visits, business, and living in the downtown are part of the centrifugal forces of downtown development. That is, the forces which collectively repel people, and businesses away from the core.

While these forces tend to decentralize the downtown activities into outer areas, the historical dominance and centralizing forces still operate. Within this dichotomy are the roots of the present drive to save or revitalize the downtown. It has been suggested that perhaps the downtown district is an archaic urban form and as such should be allowed to fade away. Victor Gruen in his book, Centers for the Urban Environment: Survival of Cities..., voices this concern:

Are urban centers essential?...Or is their role under the impact of contemporary sociological and technological change diminished to such a degree that we should just write them off as a hopeless and outdated species.<sup>18</sup>

The concerns for the downtown as evidenced in the literature and through the implementation of downtown assist-

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18. Victor Gruen, Center for the Urban Environment: Survival of the Cities., (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1973), p. 157.

ing legislation, would tend to answer the question in the affirmative. The fact that downtown has attracted special attention and that unique methods have been developed to reverse decline and deterioration of the core is generally indicative of its perceived importance. It may not be readily apparent why a CBD is being saved, but the intangible values of the district are probably the single most important driving force.

Business and public institutions at the center have gathered to themselves the benefits of an aura of custom and prestige which developed over the years.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, the CBD has functioned traditionally as a market and also as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the central business district is of major importance to the community. The city at large has multiple roots in the area. It is reasonable to assume that whatever affects the health of this district will have repercussions throughout the urban structure.<sup>20</sup>

The CBD or downtown is an essential aspect of urbanism and although the reasons for preserving it in the face of technological changes, which seriously question its form, and function, may not be clear, the need to save it has been made clear. What remains is to understand the relationship of the problem to the city size and function. As was

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19. Op. Cit., Andrews, p. 61.

20. Ibid., p. 61.

made clear in the previous chapter, the role of the downtown dictated the physical form, consequently the inadequacy of that form is related to its inability to meet the changing needs of the population. It is this authors' contention that the limitations of size and diversity are related to the size of the city and problems are also related to city size and finally, solutions to the problems are related to city size.

#### The Problem vs The City Size-Type

In nature, diversity is to be encouraged and nurtured. A diverse ecosystem is better able to withstand insults to individual members or groups. The same principles from nature apply to cities. A city which has a variety of economic and social functions and roles, is better able to withstand the loss of any single role or function.

Some cities dominate a large region, while others are local in that, the extent of their sphere of influences is quite circumscribed. Those cities whose influence is wider ranging, must of necessity offer a greater variety of goods and services; including employment opportunities. A city whose influence is mainly local may offer fewer goods and services, including employment opportunities. The city



with the larger regional influence is a more complex city, in that it offers a greater variety of urban goods and services, consequently the loss of one part may necessitate only minor adjustments. The city which serves a local population, will focus more upon satisfying short term immediate needs, offer less variety and therefore a less complex collection of goods and services. The loss of one part, in such case, may initiate the collapse of the whole system.

The tenuousness of the less complex system is best demonstrated by the one industry towns or the instant single purpose cities. For a city that relies on gold as the main economic support, the loss of the gold industry could lead to the creation of a ghost town. This phenomenon was quite common in the American west, during the gold rush era of the 1800's. The small American city, is most likely to rely upon one or two basic economic activities for its major support. Small cities, which are located in agricultural areas, are likely to rely upon their role as an agricultural service center for its economic base. Therefore retailing activity may be the main employment generator as well as revenue generator for the city.

For small towns, or less than 10,000 people, the decline in the core retail center has been rapid. Functioning as rural trading centers in a majority of cases, they have suffered from the increasing accessibility of shopping facilities in larger neighbouring cities.<sup>23</sup>

The smaller city is less likely to have sufficient additional industry to support it and may find itself in a serious economic position if its service function is removed. The medium size city, although, depending heavily on retail trade revenue, can usually survive, the loss of part of the service function.

The importance of the retail/wholesaling activity to the small and medium size city cannot be overemphasized. It was pointed out in the section on the rise of cities, that the service/retail exchange function, was one of the earliest functions of cities. As such, the small city, still having as its main function, the service center role, can be viewed as representative of one level of development. Its position, leaves the city open to destruction brought about by the changing nature of retailing.

#### Population Growth and the Shifting Retail Arena

The process of continued city development, for all city sizes, requires a changing population base, either increasing, decreasing, aging or getting younger. Population

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23. Ibid., p. 80

is a key component, and an element of major importance, in the process of urban development.

The widespread use of the automobile, including trucks, and electronic communication equipment have allowed more latitude in making locational choices. The increased range of alternatives has meant decreasing concentration at certain sites, in favour of lower densities at the urban periphery. The importance of a single location, and the level of rents it can command, has been reduced due to the development of numerous competing locations with varying transportation times and accessibilities to the city core.

What the automobile has produced is a much greater flexibility and range of choice in location of urban developments and in travel patterns, along with a greatly increased area of accessibility... Thus, not only has residential development deconcentrated with the new freedom of choice, but so also have employment creating establishments.<sup>24</sup>

In broader terms, the urban structure is in an evolutionary state trying to conform to changing demands and use patterns of urban residents. The old form has become inadequate in relation to the present modes of operation. The rapid advancement in technology of the past few years,

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24. Harold Mayer, The Spatial Expression of Urban Growth, (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, Resource Paper No. 7, 1969) p. 43-44.

...is creating new machines, new techniques, and new organizational arrangements. At the same time, the existing plants and machines are aging and becoming less efficient, so that the new plants enjoy the competitive advantages of both newness and a more productive technology. Somewhere in the aging process enterprises must decide whether to update themselves technologically to recapture lost competitive advantages. At some point in this process, a plant may also make a new locational choice responding to differential transportation cost and site rents to take advantage of more space or better access to linked activities. Such factors work through the economic structure of the urban community to change its spatial organization.<sup>25</sup>

These recent trends towards centralization and concentration, have made unnecessary the duplication of retail activities at several sites. Hardest hit by the trend are those cities which rely heavily on the retailing and service function, as a means of support. The automobile, by eliminating dependence on fixed transit routes, which focused on the downtown, allowed the development of alternative retail concentrations. These concentrations often compete with the central city, CBD and are identified as a catalyst in the process of CBD deterioration. But the decentralization of CBD functions has occurred in response to decentralized living pattern, typified by suburbanization.

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25. Ibid., p. 44.

Suburbanization of residential development began for many American cities following World War II, and reached a high level in the late 1950's. This residential development was possible for several reasons, including the high demand for single family accommodations by returning servicemen taking advantage of G.I. loans.

...the growth of the suburbs is without question the greatest and most rapid shift in the pattern of living that has ever occurred in history. The move to the suburbs has brought equivalent economic changes. Since people have ever made markets - and where there are markets, stores have ever followed - the mass movement to the suburbs has wrought changes in the current marketing pattern.<sup>26</sup>

The regional shopping center has been one response to this process. It is one attempt by retailers to acquire the advantages of centralized locational patterns and yet be near to population clusters, while avoiding high site rentals and other disadvantages of CBD locations.

Those cities which have remained small and did not experience rapid population expansion, also did not experience the decentralization and reorganization pressures which other cities experienced. Those fast growing cities whose CBD responded to the reorganization pressures by an increase in the CBD site rents, furthered specialization of the CBD.

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<sup>26</sup>. John Wingate and Arnold Corbin, Changing Patterns in Retailing, (Homewood, Illinois: R.D. Irwin Co., 1959), p.11.

Retailing was an important function of most early cities, but not one of the world's major cities has grown large purely as a retail center.<sup>27</sup>

Part of the problem of the downtowns of smaller cities may then be that technology and changing urban form and function has made them unnecessary. The smaller city CBD and the Metropolitan CBD differ dramatically and their problems and solutions must also differ.

The smaller rural centers, involved in agricultural service and retailing, found their position eroding as rural populations declined and centralized retailing techniques, in the form of regional shopping facilities, were introduced. The smaller city CBD finds itself at a competitive disadvantage with the shopping center and its reliance on the economic function, leads to serious problems.

The large city CBD continues to offer the largest selection of merchandise of any single location. It represents the fashion center for the area. It draws heavily from downtown office employees as well as from regional shoppers. This is quite a contrast to the situation in small cities where a single shopping center can predominate and where there are usually few downtown office workers.<sup>28</sup>

In the more complex environment of the large city, it is suspected that the apparent decline of the area is a result of an interaction of complex forces of which no one

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27. Richard Nelson, The Selection of Retail Locations, (New York: F. W. Dodge Corporation, 1958) p. 21.

28. Peter S. Carysone, "Shakeout in Small City CBD's" Urban Land, Volume 30, No. 2 (February 1971) p. 11.

can be singled out. In the smaller city, the less complex urban structure allows for a clear determination of the relative impact of individual events. For some small cities the provision of shopping alternatives, is seen as a prime force in small city decline. These alternatives, shopping centers, have an unfair competitive advantage over the downtown. Controlled environments, pleasant, new surrounding and free parking make these shopping centers very attractive to the shoppers.

In most large cities, the new shopping centers are feeding off new population and the older shopping district, but are affecting downtown very little.<sup>29</sup>

For the smaller city, the effects are very dramatic and often quite immediate.

The larger city CBD can accomodate the shopping center but the smaller city CBD sometimes cannot adjust. The smaller city CBD has less diversity of function and any disturbance of its role and function can precipitate problems. In order to have a clearer idea of the various types of specific problems and the size of city in which they most frequently occur, a chart included in Appendix A , lists examples of

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29. Ibid., p. 5.

cities, their size; the stated problems of the CBD and the program undertaken to correct the problems. The chart indicates that in the smaller city, the retail function of downtown is of major significance and the solutions are aimed at improving retailing in the CBD.

The larger city, on the other hand, by virtue of physical size and diversity, can more easily accommodate, in the short run; certain regional developments. Technological advances in transportation and communication dictate that changes and shifts in one part of the urban form or structure will have an impact upon, not just the specific area of the region, but also at some level upon the whole region. The degree of impact can be mitigated by intervening factors, one of which is the complexity of functions of the specific area. The complexity of an urban area will influence the ability of the area to accommodate adverse impacts and capitalize on positive impacts or opportunities. The importance of growth and diversification and their significance to the impact of a specific event on cities, will be dealt with below. A particular example, will be used: the effect of a regional shopping center on the small and medium size city. This particular circumstance is of importance since it affects the unifying factor of the history of urban development, the market.

### CHAPTER III: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHOPPING/RETAIL FUNCTION

The market function of cities, has remained of singular importance throughout urban history. It has formed a readily identifiable thread, connecting each era of urban development with its past and bridging the gap to the future. The CBD is the representation of this market function in cities of the industrial period. The movement to revitalize and strengthen the CBD are rooted, as much in the historical significance of the area, as in its economic importance to the city.

Historically pre-industrial cities and the early industrial cities provided a certain array of goods and services to its internal population, and to the population within a certain distance of the city. The array of goods and services provided by any single city, reflects not only the population of the city and surrounding area, but is tempered by the proximity of other cities. The area over which a city distributes its influence, has in the later industrial and

certainly the post industrial period, expanded rapidly. The improvements in communication and transportation technologies, are largely responsible for this expansion of the city region.

Given the circumstances of the relationship of city size, including the size of the city's region, to the economic vitality and functional constitution of the CBD, an examination of the concepts of city, region, and their relationship to the strength of the CBD, will form an important section of this thesis. This discussion will serve to link, more clearly, the city size and role/function relationship to be examined in the case study of Grand Forks.

#### City, Region and CBD

The relationship of the city to the surrounding region and even the extent of that region, has relevance with respect to the CBD. The concept of a city dominated region has been used extensively in reference to later industrial and post industrial cities. The whole idea of a region and regional influences, is of importance because of the extension of urban influence fostered by the technological improvements in transportation and communication, and the profound effects upon the urban form. The city may now distribute its goods, services and influence outward encompassing a population equal to or in excess of its central city population.

The metropolitan (or city) region thus considered, is primarily a functional entity. Geographically it extends as far as the city exerts a dominant influence. It is essentially an extended pattern of local communal life based upon motor transportation.<sup>1</sup>

Functionally, this has meant that:

The large center has been able to extend the radius of its influences; its population and many of its institutions freed from the dominance of rail transportation, have become widely dispersed throughout surrounding territory.<sup>2</sup>

What cannot be lost in this process, is the interaction between the city and the surrounding limits of the region. The interaction may be based on employment, commerce, social or medical services and cultural or recreational facilities. The net result is that this process of dispersion, extends the area of influence of the city and consequently increases the total population served. The central place theories of Christaller and Losch, detail a relationship between population and the level of goods and services offered. If this dispersion process extends the city service area, it must also increase the order of goods and services which can be offered. The greater variety offered means, greater attracting power for the city.

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1. R. D. McKenzie, The Metropolitan Community, Recent Social Trends Monographs, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), cited by Robert Dickinson, City and Region: A Geographical Interpretation, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1964) p. 71.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

The area of influence, the region of the city, may be defined then, as the geographical area extending in all directions from the central area over which the central area has some influence. The influence may be in one activity sphere or in several spheres and may include providing job opportunities, cultural or recreational activities, or particular goods and services. The limits of a region may be measured by telephone calls, car trips or other indices of levels of interaction. The index may be refined to also consider the characteristics of the population or occupations, but of prime importance to the concept of regions is the process to determine the specific criteria to be used in defining a region.

A region is an area which is homogeneous in respect to some particular set of associated conditions, whether of the land or of the people, such as industry, farming, the distributions of population, commerce, or the general sphere of influence of a city.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of the city-centered regions, criteria more frequently relate to economic interrelationships, but not always.

The concept of dispersed activity patterns as embodied in the definition of region, is in stark contrast to the centralization model represented by the CBD.

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3. Ibid., p. 3.

Originally in an auto-free era, the CBD manifested a spatially compact physical form which related to the scale at which interaction and influence could occur. The population of the pre-industrial city were located within a small area and most of the institutions, services and opportunities for this urban population were centrally located. This was a necessary arrangement since the majority of the population travelled by foot. The CBD then, is one urban form which allows for the greatest concentration in the smallest space. This area was formed by centralizing forces, of which transportation and communication limits, comprised a significant part. In general, centralizing urban forces are referred to as centripetal forces.

In contrast, dispersion of the population, made possible by the transportation and communication advances, has also meant that the CBD and other urban functions could disperse. Many individual businesses and entire functions left the downtowns for peripheral locations, better suited to their activity. This dispersion factor has changed the urban form and structure and led to specialized downtowns and specialized cities.

The most fundamental change today is the specialization of function by place, made possible by cheap mechanized transport, so that activities and institutions that were formerly concentrated within one town are now spread over a wide area.

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 The modern city is consequently no longer a compact settlement unit.<sup>4</sup>

For this reason, the CBD has lost its role as the nexus of all activity. Many downtowns have specialized to the point where the diversity of form and function, which made them viable and vital, has been lost. In many major American cities, specialization has created central business districts peopled by white collar workers who live primarily at the periphery of the city.

The CBD is devoid of life after 5pm and on weekends. This specialization process has created a wide range of serious problems for the downtowns. The concentration of office facilities within the downtown is in one sense economically viable in that it generates tax revenue for the city and creates a positive white collar image of the city. On the other hand, the concentration of office towers creates difficulties in that corridors of tall buildings generate high winds, and traffic congestion results from the high

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4. Ibid., p. 12.

densities created by vertical development of the core. While the high densities may be desirable for renters and owners of office space, since high site rents are spread over many users, the physical and social problems resulting from such an arrangement may be more readily apparent.

The concentration of retail facilities in the core is not without its negative side effects, both for the customers and the owners. Large retailers in central areas can generate revenues in excess of equal to high rise office space. Yet, many move from the area, or at least their major facility is no longer located there. The central location, once a prerequisite for customer access, in modern times has become a detriment. Poor traffic circulation caused by congestion and a lack of ample, free, proximate parking and a lack of amenities, all contributes to customer inconvenience. The modern market customer, unlike his pre-industrial city counterpart drives to the market instead of walking.

The CBD is usually the oldest part of the city, and the buildings located there are some of the oldest and newest. For the retailer, many of the facilities have been in use for some time, and the buildings which many of them

occupy, are quite old. These old buildings are in some cases, deteriorated, at worst, and unsuited to modern merchandising techniques, at best. The CBD retailer, then, is at a disadvantage in comparison to his competitor located in a new outlying area.

The discussion to follow examines the impact of city size on the CBD and its ability to function, by identifying three general categories of city sizes. Bearing in mind that there are a number of ways in which cities can be ranked but the method chosen, should be related to the characteristic being measured. The rank of a city, then, may be determined using such data as population size, functional diversity, or service delivery costs (economies of scale). In this particular document, the relationship which is of importance in the ranking is the population size and functional diversity. These two factors are dependent variables in most cities, so that usually, as population size increases, the level of functional diversity increases.

The underlying concept here is that there is a relationship between city size and functional diversity such that the smaller the city, the more acutely it reacts to events which alter its functional diversity. This concept provides the framework within which the following city size categories are identified. In Appendix B is a tabulation of urbanized areas by size which shows a clustering of cities under 500,000, two major peaks in that cluster being under 100,000 and 100,000 - 250,000. Large cities then, are identified as those in excess of one million population. Smaller cities, are divided into medium with

250,000 - 500,000 and small cities with 25,000 - 250,000. It is within this context that the activity patterns and process of the CBD will be examined.

The omnifunctional downtown of the pre-industrial city, was vital, alive and growing. Some would argue that the circumstance which allowed medieval or pre-industrial downtowns such vitality, mainly pedestrian and foot linkages throughout, is no longer operative. Vitality of a pre-industrial city core was provided by the mix of residential and commercial uses which, through the process of specialization, have been all but eliminated. The CBD has become in many cities, strictly a business and/or commercial core.

The CBD operates at various and varying levels of diversity. The degree to which an individual city can disperse its diverse functions and maintain economic continuity, is related to the size of the population that it serves.

Large Cities - The large American city, population approaching one million or more, probably covers a large geographic area in terms of its influence. It will serve as the central focal point for a diverse population and may include several suburbs or smaller centers within its region. The downtown district of such a city will probably have specialized and contain mainly employment activity in

the form of corporate offices. Throughout the urban region, many different types of industries, services and cultural/recreational activities are available. These activities have, of necessity, decentralized with the dispersal of the population.

It is reasonable to expect that as any community grows, the center will become more and more remote from the edges of the urban settlement. As this occurs dispersed shopping areas must of necessity spring up to serve community convenience.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas, the dispersal of shopping follows population, the dispersal of industry is more a function of the high costs of central city land, and where no benefits accrue from such a location, economic and convenience functions move these industries from the central area to the edge. Examples of such industries would be light manufacturing and some wholesaling activity.

For centrally located activities which find themselves functioning, paradoxically in an increasingly high cost part of the region, the lower transportation and land costs outlying locations will be appealing alternatives when new investment (i.e. locational) decisions are to be made.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Richard B. Andrews, Urban Growth and Development A Problem Approach, (New York: Simmons - Boardman Publishing Corp., 1962) p.p. 78-79.

6. Lowdon Wingo Jr., "Urban Space in a Policy Perspective: An Introduction," in Cities in Space: The Future Use of Urban Land, ed. by Lowdon Wingo Jr. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 14.

The large city CBD, by virtue of the expansion pressures stemming from population and commercial growth, is being pressured into specializing, through which is created, a more efficient urban form in which activities can operate. Segregation of uses within the region, and specialization of the core, are two ways in which the urban form attempts to respond to the changing needs of the population. The large city does not suffer an aggregate loss of jobs and functions because of this process, but reorders them within the urban region into a more efficient and responsive urban form.

Small Cities - The small (25,000 to 250,000) city, or the medium size city (250,000 to 500,000) is affected by pressures similar to those operating on the large center. Specifically, pressure for dispersion, and reconcentration in a more efficient urban form. The smaller city, and its consequently smaller region, limits the amount of control which these cities have over regional developments. Often, regional developments, around small and medium cities, are located in an area of overlap of two or more regions of nearly equal size. Whereas the larger city will not necessarily lose power, prestige or functions, by their dispersion within its region, the smaller city may well

suffer from this process, and its limited ability to control regional developments.

The larger city, from a functional perspective, is omnifunctional at the regional level. The central city population may support, in whole or in part, many of the activities, located throughout the region. The CBD serves as a co-ordinator for activities and services in the outlying locations.

Within the CBD, may be located, branch offices of outlying services. Paperwork for manufacturing enterprises or warehouses may be handled by a CBD location. The historic role of the CBD as the nexus of activity, encourages and may dictate, the location of some facility in the area, even though actual operations are carried out elsewhere. The advances in communication technology telephones, telex, and computers, have eliminated the pre-industrial merchants need to be located within easy walking distance of his competitor. Even so, the symbolic need remains and consequently entire areas of the CBD may be devoted to a single activity. But the service facilities are located in outlying areas also since service for people locates near the people. In total though, the level, diversity and number of services

located in a region reflects the needs of the regional population. The CBD may become one service node among several with an added attraction of historical or symbolic significance.

The smaller city CBD may be relying quite heavily on one particular industry or activity for its livelihood. This unifunctional city lacks resilience to the loss of an activity or function and thus does not welcome, and in some cases cannot endure dispersion of its central activities.

In the very small city, population of 10,000 the CBD is used for local shopping. It is mainly the local retail convenience center.

...the function of the retail district in small towns is a rural trading center for apparel, hard lines, food (and) drugs...<sup>7</sup>

To the smaller city CBD, retailing may not be the primary activity, but the only activity.

One common element in the rise of cities, was the presence of the market. The market and market related functions were crucial to the initial development of the city.

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7. Richard L. Nelson, The Selection of Retail Locations, (New York; F. W. Dodge Corporation, 1958) p. 34.

Many of the towns which expanded beyond their original functions, diversified and grew by the addition of commerce and trade-related functions. Of the towns which remained small, many were located poorly with respect to the later transportation developments. They were largely agricultural service centers and remain albeit on a smaller scale, as such. The shrinking farm population did little to provide incentive for population and industrial growth necessary for the diversification of a town into one having significant commerce and trade activities. These small towns continue their original functions, as markets to rural agricultural areas.

Cities and towns may rise as specialized producers themselves, but many are supported exclusively by their role as market centers. As such they are neither more nor less than a cluster of retail and service establishments located in a place that<sup>8</sup> provided a convenient point of focus for consumers.

Any changes in consumer shopping preferences or patterns will have immediate impact upon the unifunctional CBDs of these cities.

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8. Brian Berry, Geography of Market Centers and Distribution, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1967) p. 3.

The cities that grow manage to acquire and maintain population, diversity and evolve beyond the traditional market focus. The reasons why some cities grow and others wither and die, or stagnate, is related to their ability to attract growth in population and industry. This in turn relates to their ability to provide a viable location for activity.<sup>9</sup>

Cities of all sizes are affected to some degree by changes which occur within the region. The city region concept assumes a willingness on the part of the consumers and employees to travel a given distance. A small city may have a region which exists only because it corresponds to its position in a system of cities. Hence, two or three small towns, 25 or 30 miles apart, may share a geographical region if they provide complementary goods and services. The regions of such systems of cities are fragile and are as prone to effects from development within the region, as are the single towns and regions.

#### The Regional Shopping Center As A Dynamic Force In Small and Medium Size Cities

The term regional shopping center, as used here, will denote an enclosed, climate controlled collection of

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9. In more details concerning location theory and city growth see Brian Berry, Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1967) and Walter Isard, Location and Space Economy: A General Theory Relating to Industrial Location, Market Areas, Land Use, Trade and Urban Structure, (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1956)

stores and shops that may include offices and other facilities, such as meeting rooms or hotels, as part of the single structure or located in the vicinity. It is usually located 25 to 30 minutes outside of the built up urban area. This larger regional shopping center is designed to service 100,000 thousand shoppers, located within a 30 minute driving time.

For the shopping center located near smaller towns, the best location is,

"At or near the intersection of a major highway going around the city..."<sup>10</sup>

In this location the center is best located with respect to people from other rural areas and small towns, and the nearby central city. For shopping centers located in the region of a large metropolitan city, the center itself must be not only accessible but of sufficient size to offer the diversity which will draw shoppers away from the central city. Such centers usually contain two or more major department stores to serve this function.

In the big cities, the locational problem is somewhat different when the very large centers are considered. If they are large enough to result in major interception from other large outlying shopping districts or perhaps to compete with downtown, they begin to be sizable enough to create substantial generating power of their own. What is required primarily is a "franchise" position in regard to a heavily populated trading area, with a relatively low possibility of competition. "Interception" as such is not so important as good accessibility.<sup>11</sup>

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10. Op. Cit., Nelson, P. 180.

11. Ibid., p. 180.

The regional shopping center then locates with respect to the dispersion pattern of shoppers. In other words, it attempts to carve a market place from the CBD of the major city and surrounding rural and residential areas. The regional shopping center is suited to the changing lifestyle and residential preference which has to some extent, negated the need for small retail centers.

In recent years, the continuing decline in rural population, the reduction of travel time to nearby metropolitan centers, and the development of larger, more attractive shopping centers have negated the potential advantages that local population growth and increased consumer buying power might otherwise have been expected to bring downtown business districts.<sup>12</sup>

For the rural family, the trip to town was traditionally a family affair, and the larger regional center offers far more to the family than the smaller city CBD. In addition to a pleasant climate controlled shopping environment and ample free parking, the regional shopping center offers major department stores with lower prices and bigger selections than local merchants can offer. The potential market for the smaller city CBD is not large enough to sustain both a regional shopping center and a vital CBD. The shopping center then in most cases survives, while the CBD position is eroded until it functions as a convenience center.

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12. State of Iowa, Office for Planning and Program, Division of Municipal Affairs, Downtown Improvement Manual for Iowa Cities, (Des Moines, Iowa: State of Iowa, June, 1978), p.4.

The problem remains then that:

For many smaller cities, especially the small ones faced with declining population and loss of business, maintaining the economic strength of downtown is crucial to the survival of the city itself.<sup>13</sup>

The introduction of the regional shopping center, by luring shoppers away from downtown, also creates a disadvantageous investment situation in the downtown. Disinvestment makes the downtown less attractive to shoppers, and the downtown suffers a permanent loss of shoppers. It is a circular self-perpetuating process, wherein decline is a disincentive to investment, which then furthers decline.

As buildings become older, neglect and absentee ownership take their toll. Buildings with narrow fronts, two and three stories tall, and high ceilings and poor lighting were not adapted to changing merchandising techniques, nor appealing to the customer.<sup>14</sup>

The role of the regional shopping center in this process is a quickening agent. The downtown must previously, at some level, have been an unsatisfactory retail facility if shoppers and businesses leave for alternative locations.

The State of Iowa offers many examples of small and medium size cities which function as agricultural service

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13. Ibid., p. 1.

14. Op. Cit., Iowa Downtown, p. 4.

towns. The downtowns of these cities are fighting for survival in an increasingly centralized retailing atmosphere. But instead of getting help for the downtown, many cities were plagued with "a new threat to the already weakened downtown...the shopping center." 15

### Signs of Shifting Concerns

The small city at one time actively solicited the shopping center. Unaware of its potential, the regional shopping center was once embraced by small and large cities alike as a spur to development; a way of attracting people to the town area, and as a source of additional tax revenues. The opposite has been the case especially for the small retail oriented CBD, and

(G)radually, municipalities began to realize that these huge suburban shopping centers could siphon off commercial traffic from the downtown core and they began to oppose these regional developments. 16

The regional shopping center is the ultimate dispersion, offering the greatest contrast to the old downtown. It is in the process of interaction between the CBDs and the regional shopping malls, that the mall, "by encouraging the

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15. Ibid., p. 5

16. Anthony Whittingham, "Downtown Welcome Matt for Developers," The Financial Post, Toronto, No. 19, 1977.p.27.

exodus of both shopkeepers and shoppers to the suburbs... only hastens the decay of the downtown areas."<sup>17</sup> Recognizing the adverse impacts of the regional shopping center on the city, the battle against such developments is underway. Burlington, Vermont (Pop. 38,000) and Hadley, Massachusetts (Pop. 3,800) are two towns which recently fought against the development of a regional shopping mall in their areas.

In the Burlington case<sup>18</sup> it was stopped, whereas in the Hadley<sup>19</sup> instance, the mall was delayed by opposition but was finally built. The importance of these two cases is that a legal precedent was set for opposing regional shopping developments on the basis of their having a negative environmental impact.

It is a significant indication of shifting concern that malls are being opposed but a more fruitful exercise would include an examination of the CBD to determine what physical and/or social elements make it a less than satisfactory retailing center. The next step would entail developing responses to counter those unsatisfactory aspects

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17. Ibid.,

18. Time, "A Pall Over Suburban Mall," Time Canada Ltd., Toronto: November 13, 1978.

19. Jay Neugeboren, "Mall Mania," Mother Jones, San Francisco: May, 1979.

of the existing CBD. A problem-solving model such as this, offers a more complete and long term solution to problems than the negative approach alone.

Whatever the future decision is, in the individual case, and however achieved, the rising costs of energy are forcing some families to seek housing in the city rather than suburban locations. If the stores followed the people out, given incentive, the stores will undoubtedly follow the people in again.

The first signals of change began several years ago as developers of regional shopping centers, the suburban behemoths that followed the interstate highway systems out into the rural areas began reconsidering strategy...the gasoline shortage and the recession of 1973 reinforced this trend as the public made fewer and fewer trips to the large regional centers miles from their homes.<sup>20</sup>

The whole problem of retailing in the CBD, should be solved by giving consideration to improving the competitive advantage of the CBD. It is important though, that such approaches be well underway in advance of a major loss of shoppers. There are shopping dollars enough for many smaller city CBD's to survive, if the downtown is attractive and

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20. Ed McGahill, "Downtown Welcome Back Small Shopping Centers", Planning, June 1966, p. 15.

offers something special. Along these lines, unique solutions are being proposed and include such strategies as, preservation of the downtown, and redevelopment of selected parts to conform to some single theme. Gastown in Vancouver, Yorkville in Toronto and Old Town and New Town in Chicago, are several examples of this approach. Other cities are trying to create the shopping center atmosphere in the downtown by developing malls along the main shopping street. These malls, if successful in the initial stage, may be enclosed in part at a later date.

These approaches rely upon a relatively small initial municipal investment and expect private investment to carry the process. A third strategy of greater significance to the larger cities are the shopping center in-town. This approach relies almost exclusively on private investment, although the municipal government may provide zoning bonus, or reduce costs or requirements for infrastructure. In such cases, a private developer may rehabilitate an existing structure or build a totally new structure to serve as an enclosed shopping facility. It may have a major store, but the smaller developments rely on attractive and unique boutiques to draw customers. These developments often have

good access via public transportation as well as parking ramps nearby.

The competition for shoppers is not a play for a limited shopping dollar, since incomes in the U.S., that is real personal incomes, have been rising quite steadily since the 1960's. The shopping center has prospered while the CBD has experienced declines in activity throughout this time.

Regardless of the size of the community, many of these inner city business districts have suffered decay over the past years when the regional shopping center flourished.<sup>21</sup>

The future of retailing, in the smaller city CBD, can go either way, but for each case, the most favourable direction will take amount of the specific circumstances. The cities of the sun-belt in the U.S. are experiencing rapid population growth and large regional shopping centers are still being built. These new shopping centers are more spectacular than the earlier generation and have learned the advantages of mixed-use. The original regional center focused upon retail activities, while the new style regional centers combine shopping and office space as well as hotel and entertainment facilities.

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21. Ibid.

There is no question that the growth of the large regional centers will slow down because of the present overstoreing and relatively decreased growth levels in many major metropolitan areas ... because of the costs today, you have to combine shopping centers with office buildings and apartments.<sup>22</sup>

To a great extent though, the alternative development strategies, of mixed use and shopping centers in-town, have been used primarily for larger cities. Only recently has their applicability to smaller centers been investigated.

### Towards the In-Town Center

The problems of how to protect the downtowns from the inevitable drain of shops and shopkeepers are still being explored and the most adequate solution appears to be the shopping center in-town.

If the downtowns of the smaller cities are to be preserved, the fact of changing retail patterns, must be addressed directly. The smaller cities are trying the mixed-use/shopping center in-town concept and concentrating on smaller projects with more specific focus.

Initially, development of mixed use projects was confined to larger metropolitan areas, (i.e. population one million or more). Increasingly, however, such projects are spreading, albeit at a smaller building scale, to medium and small size communities where they tend to be located in the CBD.<sup>23</sup>

Such developments often take advantage of the current concern with preservation and convert existing abandoned or underutilized buildings, which sometimes have some historical significance,

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22. Ibid., p. 17.

23. Peter Carusone, "Shakeout in Small City CBD's", Urban Land, Volume 30, No. 2, February, 1971.

into mixed use/shopping centers. The attractiveness of the center is bound in the uniqueness of such redesigned structures and the specialty shops, which usually locate in such places. This type of revitalization called adaptive reuse, is quite appropriate in many of the older towns and the older sections of large cities, which have an architectural or cultural history reflected in the buildings. The rehabilitated buildings are frequently located on a street, which may be converted into a pedestrian mall, as part of the revitalization strategy.

The conversion of the buildings and the creation of pedestrian malls, are less expensive than the total urban renewal type approaches and hence offer workable alternatives for smaller cities. What remains are the problems of traffic congestion and parking, which must be dealt with at the same time as improvements are made in other areas, if such in-town developments are to be successful. Usually this is done by adding parking spaces where a specified amount of time is free with merchant issued stamps. Public transit may improve, but this may do little to relieve congestion, if ridership does not increase dramatically.

Many ... cities are experimenting with the pedestrian mall - a street closed to motor traffic where shoppers

can walk freely. The financial results have been mixed; some shopping areas had bigger profits after the conversion, but in other cities the stores experienced a decline. The success of such an experiment depend largely on adequate parking facilities near the mall or good public transport.<sup>24</sup>

Table 3 - 1 on the following page, summarizes the information in the chart in Appendix A, by city size. Here the relationship of city size and revitalization project type, can be seen. What emerges, in this regard, is that the pedestrian mall has been the most widely used approach in the past and whereas in smaller cities this may constitute the only downtown revitalization project, in larger cities it may, more often, be one part of a total program.

While this has been the trend in the past, the future need not necessarily mirror the past, and indeed new schemes to revitalize the downtown are gaining in popularity. One such approach is the shopping center in-town, which relates to the increasing concern about the rising costs of energy and increasing interest in the inner or central city.

The development of the in-town center is the single most important change in shopping alternatives since the development of the regional shopping center. It is also an important innovation in downtown revitalization and perhaps, is the best current renewal approach. The following chapters examine, in detail, the circumstances

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24. Emrys Jones and Eleanor Van Zandt, The City: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, (London: Aldus Books, 1974) p. 150.

TABLE 3-1  
REVITALIZATION PROJECT BY CITY SIZE

City Size (in thousands)	Number of Cities	Revitalization Project Type*							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Less than 10	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	1
Over 10 to 30	4	2	3	0	3	1	2	2	1
30 to 50	5	5	2	1	3	0	4	1	2
50 to 100	13	10	7	2	8	3	7	5	0
100 to 150	5	5	1	0	4	2	3	2	0
150 to 200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
200 to 300	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
300 to 400	5	3	2	0	3	3	4	2	0
400 to 500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
500 to 600	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
600 to 700	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
700 to 800	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
800 to 900	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
900 to 1000	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
more than 1 million	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>

- \*KEY:
1. Pedestrian mall, scenic walking system at grade or above street level.
  2. Adaptive reuse or restoration of building.
  3. Totally privately initiated redevelopment.
  4. Parking ramps and other traffic related improvements.
  5. In-town shopping center.
  6. Private developments spawned by public investment.
  7. Adding restaurants, parks, shops and cultural facilities.
  8. Housing added in or near the downtown area.

which prompted one city to initiate a shopping center in-town project as part of an attempt to stabilize and revitalize the downtown, and evaluates the appropriateness of that action.

#### CHAPTER IV GRAND FORKS AS A REGIONAL CENTER\*

The City of Grand Forks is located on the eastern border of North Dakota approximately midway between the South Dakota and Manitoba borders, and serves as the employment center for its 'twin city' across the Red River into the State of Minnesota - East Grand Forks. It is well located with respect to Interstate Highway 29 which runs north and south along the western edge of the City and Highway 2 running east and west through the City. These highways connect the City with other major population centers within and outside of the state. The city is also served by the Burlington Great Northern Railroad, other road transport facilities, as well as three commercial airlines operating from the International Airport. The city is located within the Red River Valley and as such is prone to spring flooding. (See Map 1, page 86.)

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\*The majority of the information in this section is taken from the Draft of the Grand Forks Master Plan, presently awaiting refinement and adoption. Acknowledgement for this information is given to Bob Ulland, planner, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Within the state, the City of Grand Forks is a major metropolitan center and is the county seat, and offers many goods and services commensurate with this designation. It is the home of the University of North Dakota. The Grand Forks Air Force Base, is located 15 miles west of the City and has a population of approximately 13,000. The North Dakota State Mill, the North Dakota State School for the Blind and the Immigration Border Patrol, are all located in the Grand Forks area. There exists then a diversity of activities within the city.

Like many of North Dakota's cities and towns, the agricultural service function was a primary force in the early development of the town. The city of Grand Forks function, as an agricultural service center, is still an important part of the city's economic base.

#### Population

Table 4-1, below shows the population of Grand Forks from 1890 to 1976 at specific intervals.

TABLE 4-1  
NUMBER OF RESIDENTS, GRAND FORKS, ND  
1890 - 1976

YEAR	POPULATION	INCREASE	%CHANGE
1890	4,979	-	-
1900	7,652	2,673	+53.6
1910	12,478	4,826	+60.0
1920	14,010	1,532	+12.2
1930	17,112	3,102	+22.1
1940	20,228	3,116	+18.2
1950	26,836	6,608	+32.7
1960	34,451	7,615	+28.4
1970	39,008	4,557	+13.2
1976*	42,581	3,573	+ 9.2

\*Special Census taken by the City, September 16, 1976.  
Source: U.S. Census of the Population 1890 - 1970 as  
given in Draft: Official Master Plan of the City  
of Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1979.

In relation to the four major population centers in North Dakota, Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismark and Minot, the fastest growing from 1960 - 1970 was Bismark, the state capital. Much of the growth is attributable to the general trend of growth in government. Table 4-2 on the next page, lists the populations of these four cities in 1960 and in 1970 and the percentage of change in the period.

TABLE 4-2  
 POPULATION CHANGE OF NORTH DAKOTA COMMUNITIES WITH  
 25,000 OR MORE INHABITANTS  
 1960 - 1970

COMMUNITY	1960 POPULATION	1970 POPULATION	%CHANGE
Fargo	46,662	53,365	+14.4
Grand Forks	34,451	39,008	+13.2
Bismark	27,670	34,703	+25.4
Minot	30,604	32,290	+ 5.5

Source: U.S. Census of the Population 1960, 1970 as given in Draft: Official Master Plan of the City of Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1979.

The increase in the population of Grand Forks was largely due to natural increases rather than migration, which had stabilized in the period 1970-1976,

...the city of Grand Forks, primarily because it is a metropolitan growth center, has experienced a natural increase in all years from 1960 - 1970.<sup>1</sup>

For much of North Dakota, as was true for many of the rural areas of the United States, the period 1950 - 1970 saw smaller communities lose population due to out-migration.

The larger centers in the state though, experienced considerable

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1. City of Grand Forks, Draft: Official Master Plan of Grand Forks, (Grand Forks: City Planning Department of City of Grand Forks, 1979) p. 10.

population gain...

The surrounding rural areas contributed to this population growth, as many rural residents have moved to these growth centers to secure better employment and educational opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

Grand Forks for the short term is expected to continue to grow through the maintenance of population during their childbearing years.

Population growth due to natural increase and the expansion of employment opportunities are the primary factors responsible for growth. The City of Grand Forks is classified as a metropolitan service center because the community provided goods and services to an eighteen county region with a population of approximately 250,000 people... In summary, continued economic growth and employment opportunities in Grand Forks will foster continuing population growth.<sup>3</sup>

### Economic Growth

Since employment is recognized as an integral part of population growth, the economic base of the area can give some clues as to the level of expected growth and in what specific employment sectors this growth will occur. The City of Grand Forks has a diversified urban economy. In addition to education and government facilities, the City of Grand Forks performs additional economic functions which effect the region comprised of northeastern North Dakota and Northwestern Minnesota.

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2. Ibid., p. 12

3. Ibid., p. 13-14

Some of these functions include: a major metropolitan trade center (including both retail and wholesale goods); and educational center; a medical center; a governmental center; and a primary market distribution and processing center for agricultural commodities produced in the surrounding area.<sup>4</sup>

Many of these facilities are reproduced at Fargo, North Dakota, 75 miles to the south, but no such duplication exists to the north, hence the major drawing area is the north and immediately south of Grand Forks.

The area is highly specialized in agriculture and depends upon agriculture as its basic industry. As is typical of most areas' economies that are dominated by agriculture, all but two counties in the Grand Forks Economic Trade area have been declining in population.<sup>5</sup>

For the less diversified town—the one more wholly dependent on agriculture — this nationwide phenomena of declining rural population, has presented serious problems for the urban center. In Grand Forks, the major industries are concerned with farm produce processing activities, notably potatoe processing, sugar beet processing and prepared food manufacture. Several smaller industries involved in dairy products, seed processing, grain milling and the production of chemicals and fertilizers used predominately in agriculture, are located in the area.

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4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 18

The trade area of Grand Forks,\* includes eighteen counties and the Province of Manitoba. The area relies, as to a great extent on this trade activity since the industrial base of the city is small and the potential for expansion, remote. One major drawback to any large scale industrialization, has been the severe winter climate the Red River valley experiences, approximately four months of the year. The other drawbacks has been, the geographic distance of the city from the mass markets of the U.S.<sup>6</sup> Because of these constraints to industrialization no new large industries are expected in the area. Employment expansion, if it occurs, will probably take place in the retail trade sector, which has shown steady and significant expansion from 1968 - 1978.

Table 4-3, on page 87, indicates that in terms of number of employees, retail is only exceeded by the government sector.

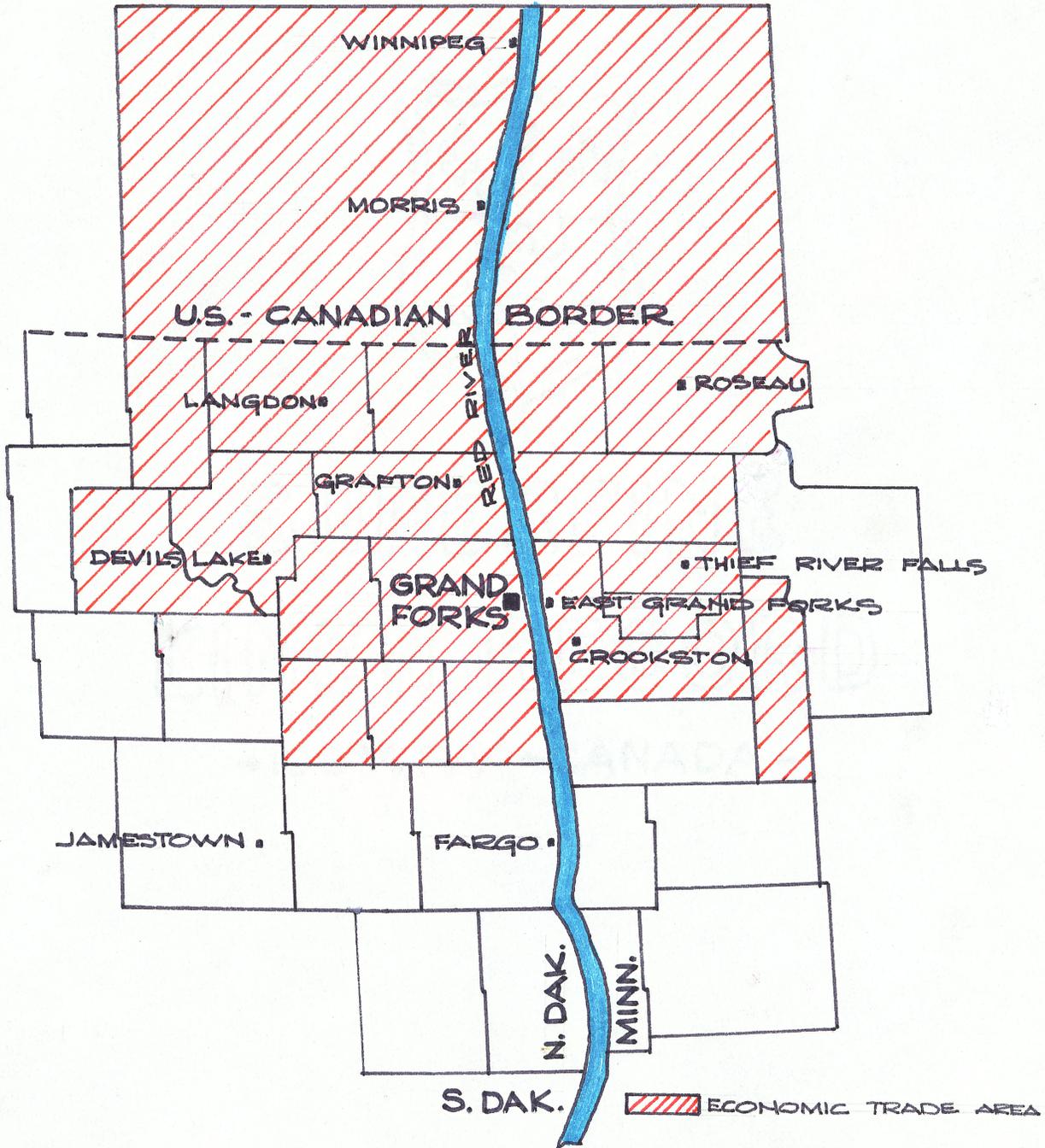
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6. Ibid., p. 18.

\* Map 1, page 86, shows the trade area or economic trade area of Grand Forks. The planning department of the city consider this area to be the geographical extent of the area from which the city draws retail shoppers.

MAP 1

GRAND FORKS ECONOMIC TRADE AREA



SOURCE: SOURIS-RED-RAINEY RIVER BASINS  
COMPREHENSIVE STUDY, VOLUME 2  
GRAND FORKS PLANNING OFFICE

TABLE 4-3  
NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT TREND\*  
GRAND FORKS, ND

EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978
Construction	631	778	994	1073	1244	1378
Manufacturing	1110	1429	1239	1728	2087	1412
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	1516	1615	1507	1752	1917	1894
Wholesale Trade	432	427	498	680	747	772
Retail Trade	3366	3494	4435	4127	4964	6086
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	489	566	664	779	829	941
Services	2858	2781	3097	3266	3758	4118
Government	5009	5276	6256	6762	7140	7200
Total	15411	16356	18192	20167	22416	23801

SOURCES: Employment Trends - Community Employment Survey  
North Dakota Employment Security Bureau, 1968-1978, as  
in, Draft: Official Master Plan of the City of Grand Forks, 1979.

\* Excludes domestic service, self employed and unpaid family workers. Includes Grand Forks Air Force Base.

A closer examination of the components of retail wholesale expansion for 1972-1978 at two year intervals, is provided by Table 4-4. It can be seen here that the most significant gain, as reflected in an increase in the number of establishments, has been in the number of clothing stores. Their number increased by 81.25% in the six year period examined. This represents, 26 establishments added, to the thirty-two which existed in 1972.

TABLE 4-4

TRADE AND SERVICE FIRMS, GRAND FORKS, ND  
1972, 1974, 1976, 1978

FIRM TYPE	(number of firms by year)			
	1972	1974	1976	1978
<b>TRADE</b>				
Retail				
Building Materials				
Hardware and Farm Equipment	24	22	25	30
General Merchandise Stores	20	9	10	12
Food Stores	26	21	22	26
Auto Dealers & Gas Stations	58	54	55	55
Clothing Stores	32	35	36	58
Furniture & Home Furnishings	26	24	26	29
Eating & Drinking Places	64	66	67	81
Misc. (Drugs, Liquors, Etc)	67	83	92	105
TOTAL	<u>317</u>	<u>314</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>396</u>
Wholesale	73	82	99	107
TOTAL, TRADE	<u>390</u>	<u>396</u>	<u>432</u>	<u>503</u>
<b>SERVICES:</b>				
Hotels, Motels, Etc.	47	32	42	42
Personal Services	75	67	75	73
Misc. Business Services	36	44	38	60
Repair Services	54	46	78	71
Amusement and Recreational	10	11	9	18
Medical and Health Services	54	50	60	56
Legal and Other Prof. Services	49	50	51	51
Educational Services	11	4	6	10
Social Services	--	15	19	25
Non Profit Organizations	76	54	66	59
Misc. Services & Other	--	5	8	8
TOTAL, SERVICES	<u>412</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>452</u>	<u>473</u>
<b>FINANCE, INSURANCE &amp; REAL ESTATE</b>				
Banking and Finance	23	20	23	24
Insurance	54	58	60	63
Real Estate	55	49	53	58
TOTAL	<u>132</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>145</u>

SOURCE: Employment Trends, Community Employment Survey - North Dakota Employment Security Bureau, 1972-1978. as given in Draft: Official Master Plan of the City of Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1979.

Grand Forks is considered to be the dominant economic trade center for the eighteen county trade area, shown in Map 1 page 86. Generally it is thought that;

the demand for rural goods and services has been limited by the decline in rural population, affecting the amount and type of goods and services provided to the surrounding area.<sup>7</sup>

The situation in Grand Forks differs from this. Here the increase in the population of the City and rising income levels and regional buying power has necessitated improvement and expansion of retail opportunities. Most of the major construction within the city over the past few years has focused upon increasing and improving the retailing role of the city. In this regard the city has recently completed two such facilities, the City Center Plaza Shopping Mall and the Columbia Regional Shopping Mall.

#### Retail Activity in Grand Forks

Grand Forks is referred to in its Master Plan as a 'metropolitan growth center', meaning that it can expect to experience growth in both population and employment because of the large variety of opportunities and develop-

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7. Ibid., p. 24.

ment incentives which are provided by the state and the city. The presence of a strong retail sector, as employment data and sales information suggest, would further support the role of Grand Forks as a regional supply center. The retail activity though, is scattered, with five major concentrations emerging: Columbia Regional Shopping Mall, South Washington Street, Gateway Drive (US Highway 2), I-29 Interchange and North 42nd Street, and the CBD. (See Map 2, page 91.) The largest of these are the CBD, Columbia Mall and South Forks Plaza which is located along Washington Street.

#### The Columbia Regional Shopping Mall

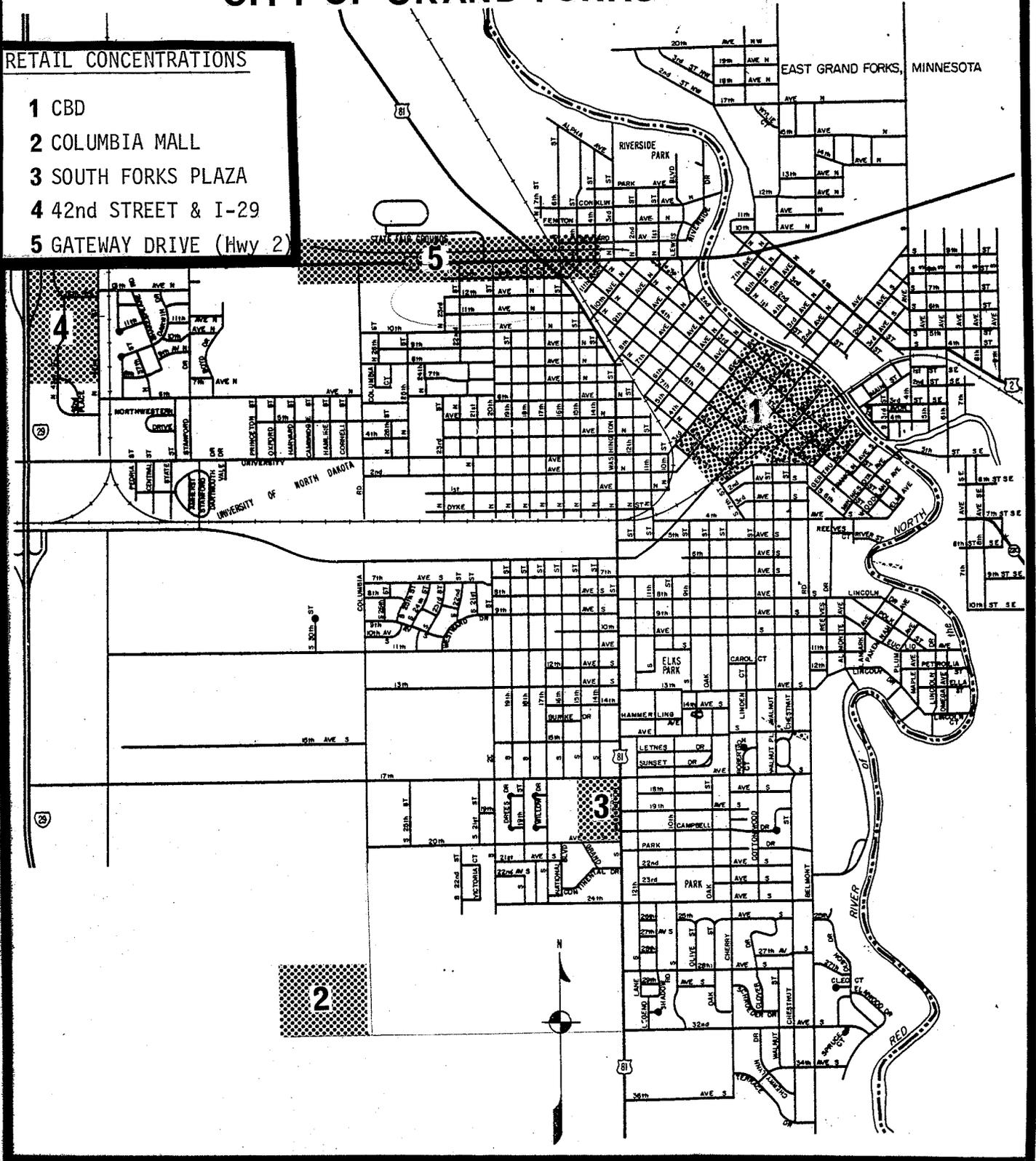
This is the newest retail concentration in the area. It is located (see Map 2, page 91) to service shoppers from throughout the region. The mall presently contains a Dayton, Penney, and Target Stores, as anchor stores, and opened in August of 1978. A fourth anchor store is expected to open in the Fall of 1979. Already, the development of this shopping center complex has encouraged the development of apartment buildings, planned unit developments (PUD) and other residential developments, in the vicinity. It has also necessitated some improvements to Columbia Road and a planned extension of this road to join Highway 2. Commercial development along the improved Columbia Road South and 32nd Avenue South, is also expanding.

# MAP 2

## CITY OF GRAND FORKS

### RETAIL CONCENTRATIONS

- 1 CBD
- 2 COLUMBIA MALL
- 3 SOUTH FORKS PLAZA
- 4 42nd STREET & I-29
- 5 GATEWAY DRIVE (Hwy 2)



The Columbia Mall is the largest and most modern commercial shopping center in the Greater Grand Forks trade area, and will become the major catalyst for additional commercial development in the southwest section of the community.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, as with most regional shopping facilities;

...highway, oriented commercial development should be expected to continue and expand on available sites within close proximity to the Columbia Mall Shopping Center in the future. Presently, commercial development on these available sites near Columbia Mall is being undertaken by a number of retail finance and motel/restaurant concerns.<sup>10</sup>

#### South Washington Street

The commercial development along Washington Street U.S. Highway 81, is primarily, highway oriented and includes such activities as service stations, restaurants, motels, automobile sales and liquor stores. The major retail node on this street is the South Forks Plaza Shopping Center, located at 17th Avenue South and South Washington Street. This was the major shopping center outside of the downtown, until the opening of Columbia Mall. The South Forks Plaza Shopping Center is old and the diversity of external store fronts indicate that the

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9. Ibid., p. 59.

10. Ibid., p. 60.

center was enclosed after it had been in use for a time. This plaza grew by adding on and thus the parking provided is inadequate. The stores in the plaza do not offer the quality and variety of either downtown or the new Columbia Mall. The two major stores in this location are, Sears and K Mart. The Plaza is surrounded by strip development along the street on either side and the residential neighbourhoods towards the rear and front.

#### Gateway Drive (U.S. Highway 2)

Gateway Drive commercial area is very similar to South Washington Street. The commercial development is mainly highway oriented, and mixed with some industrial development. Gateway Drive is less aesthetically pleasing than Washington Street, so much so that the Master Plan makes note of the unfavourable impression offered by Gateway Drive:

When entering Grand Forks from the West on Gateway Drive, very little of this strip development is aesthetically pleasing to the travelling public eye.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Ibid., p.58.

### I-29 Interchange and North 42nd Street

This commercial area is in the construction stage. At present there is a single concentration of facilities under one roof, Colony Square, which include two movie theatres. This building is a small enclosed shopping entertainment center and in addition to the theatres, includes, a large liquor store, two restaurants, and two pubs. A large complex, planned for the area, will be called the Village Planned Unit development and will include an enclosed neighbourhood shopping center, a bowling alley as well as additional commercial facilities. This entire area, is expected to serve the nearby University of South Dakota Campus, and the new residential development presently under way in the area.

### The Central Business District

The Central Business District (CBD) of Grand Forks is the largest and oldest commercial area. It is divided into two parts by the presence of the Burlington Northern tracks at grade, running along Kittson Avenue. A second distinction in the area is a higher density economic inner core and an outer transitional core. (See Map 3.)

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The inner area is dominated by commercial retail and service facilities such as department stores, banks, government and professional offices. Located in this area is the new City Center Mall. This inner area is largely contained by a ring road, recently completed, which runs along Kittson Avenue at the South and 1st Avenue North at the north. The outer area of the CBD contains the rail and warehouse facilities along the river as well as some interspersing of residential sites. The City Hall and Central High School are located at the boundary of the inner and outer CBD areas.

Financial activity dominates the commercial service sector in the area. The downtown contains three banks, three drive-in banks, and five savings and loans. Two department stores (Griffths and Norbys) are complemented by some smaller establishments and most recently the activities contained in the City Center Plaza Shopping Mall. The major activity in the CBD seems to be retailing and banks, but there are some non-commercial land uses scattered throughout the area. Such activities are federal, state, county, and local government offices, Grand Forks Central High School and the Armory Auditorium.

The outer area contains railways, abandoned industrial sites, and some active industries, is particularly along the river frontage between University Avenue and Kittson Avenue. To the south and north are "both single family and multiple dwelling units with many of the units in deteriorating condition." <sup>12</sup> The western edge of the downtown was an urban renewal area and funds obtained under this federal program allowed for sewer separations and extensive road repair and improvement, including portions of the ring road.

The activities of the CBD and the four commercial concentrations in the City, reflect its heavily economic dependance on its retail/commercial service role. The changing nature of urban society, discussed in previous chapters of this work, has necessitated a re-evaluation of the need for centers of this type. The highly mobile modern populations, often pass up smaller centers for the convenience of a larger one. For cities such as Grand Forks, which rely on their retail/service role, problems have arisen, and these cities have taken various steps to resolve them.

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12. Ibid., p. 55.

The following chapter will examine the specific problems which are prevalent in Grand Forks downtown. Grand Forks is supported by its retail/commercial activities as opposed to industry, and viable retail/commercial nodes are of extreme importance. The importance of the CBD to towns and cities generally and as a major commercial node in Grand Forks, highlights the necessity to deal with it as of prime importance to the well being and continued existence of the city.

CHAPTER V WHAT'S WRONG IN DOWNTOWN GRAND FORKS  
AND WHAT'S BEING DONE

A CBD must be recognized not only as a physically distinct area, that is one that offers variety and opportunities, in quantity unique to the urban area, but it is conceptually unique also, in that the CBD is that part of the urban area which is most widely recognized by residents and embodies the image of the area. Visitors as well as residents need a pleasant, healthy, viable, image of the CBD if their conception of the area is to be a positive one.

While image is improved via physical alterations and improvements, these alone are not sufficient to ensure a positive image of the area. Some of the characteristics, and hence image of the CBD, are linked with activities. Providing infrastructure and opportunity for a given activity is only part of the solution since the existence of a facility does not guarantee use.

People must feel that they can come downtown for a given activity. They must perceive of the CBD as a proper, safe and adequate place for engaging in a given activity. The image of downtown as a place of work is still quite strong in North America, and many people work downtown.

...(I)n America's large urban areas, a significant percentage of the region's employment is still downtown.<sup>1</sup>

But the single activity of working at the location is insufficient to create a viable downtown. A downtown with constraints to activity, - physical or social - cannot be a viable center, unless the total package of constraints are modified or eliminated.

If a particular city has a problem in its downtown, the seriousness and even its designation as a problem is strongly related to the role/function of that downtown. A problem, by definition should interfere with the existing or desired order, and such order is determined by the role/function complex which dictates urban form. The role of the city of Grand Forks is as a metropolitan service center. Its primary function is to provide goods and services of various types to the local and regional

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1. Kenneth Halpern, Downtown USA: Urban Design in Nine American Cities., (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978) p. 17.

population. In this capacity the city of Grand Forks is a regional retail center and hence its most outstanding problems would be those which in some way reduce the city's effectiveness or potential, in the retail sales area. Those problems which the city has focused upon and the solutions they have attempted to apply, in the aggregate, concentrate upon improving the actual retail sales or the potential of the city in this area.

#### The CBD of Grand Forks' Problems

The City of Grand Forks has some problems in the downtown and has taken certain actions to alleviate them, but in order for the action to be effective, there must be a clear understanding of the problem. This would allow the solution to be formulated in respect to the most complete data thus increasing its potential to solve a given problem. In Grand Forks, the problems are related largely to the widespread use of the automobile and the deterioration of existing buildings but these physical problems have created some social and image problems. The solutions taken thus far have been primarily physical in nature and ineffective against social, and to some extent the image problems of the city.

The downtown area in Grand Forks, has been suffering from declining retail sales for the past twenty, and significantly, the past five years.

Property values in the downtown area have been falling in recent years. Several stores have sold out. Others have moved to Columbia Mall or other outlying shopping areas.<sup>2</sup>

The city has approached the declining retail sales problem through public relations campaigns which emphasize that Grand Forks is a nice place to shop. The problems go much deeper and the solutions, to be effective, must also go much deeper. The declining property values in the CBD are both a result of declining retail sales and part of the cause.

The buildings are old and the declining value, reflects age, but also reflects the congestion costs created by automobile traffic. "The major problems in the CBD are related to the automobile, namely large traffic volumes and limited off-street parking."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the downtown has in many respects, become an unattractive place to do business. This fact coupled with the discouragement offered by the severe winters and extremely hot summers, has precipitated an atmosphere of dissatisfaction

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2. Phil Matthews, "A Mall for All Seasons", Fargo Forum, Fargo, North Dakota, February 4, 1979, p.12.

3. City of Grand Forks, Draft: Official Master Plan of Grand Forks, (Grand Forks: City Planning Dept., 1979.) p.56.

downtown. Such circumstances allowed the introduction of what became an additional negative factor, that is a climate controlled regional shopping center, located just outside the city.

It is important to grasp the problems of the CBD prior to the mall opening, to understand the situation after the mall opened. The City's officials identified four major problems of the CBD: parking, traffic circulation, old buildings and vacant stores and loss of major retailers. Two of these problems are related to the automobile and so far the City's actions have focused on accommodating the automobile. Only recently has the City made any attempt to address the other two problems.

Parking - The CBD of Grand Forks, as is the case in many CBD's allows metered parking on some portion of nearly all the streets in the downtown. This reduces the carrying capacity of the road and slows traffic flow, particularly during peak periods. Additionally, one of the major downtown streets, Demers Avenue, is a state highway and provides direct access to the CBD from I-29 and also access to the downtown of East Grand Forks. This highway serves as a conduit for through traffic unrelated to the downtown.

The very importance of this road creates traffic congestion, and the use of parts of the roadway for parking further aggravates the problem.

There are nine parking lots operated by the Grand Forks Parking Authority and several private parking lots. A tenth city lot, a 430 car multi-storey parking ramp, has recently been added.

Circulation - Due to the congestion caused by parked cars, traffic circulation is another problem in the downtown. The downtown presently has mainly one way streets to facilitate circulation, but recent construction activity in the downtown, made it very difficult to travel by car for several months. Traffic circulation problems reached crises proportion as many streets were closed or narrowed to single lanes, with the construction of the separate storm/sanitary sewer system, and the ring road and overpass.

Old Buildings - In the downtown of Grand Forks many of the downtown buildings are 80 to 100 years old. They are either one storey or two storey, with apartments or offices on the upper floors. These structures are closely spaced

so there is little opportunity for expansion. Basement space, in many of these buildings is nearly useless due to periodic seepage problems in the downtown. It is impossible for these older buildings in the downtown, to adapt to modern merchandising techniques, and customer service modes.

The changing needs of retailers have also taken their toll on the old retail store. The heavy facade, manually operated elevator, and imposing counter separating buyer and seller have changed. Newer stores with a bright interior where goods are displayed to encourage browsing and self-service, are the modern trend. Departments are separated by plants or carpeted walkways. Cashiers are centrally located and handle items from several locations or store-wide. The J.C. Penney store moved from the downtown for reasons largely related inadequacies of their buildings.

Vacant Stores and Loss of Major Retailers - The condition and age of the buildings has been in large part responsible for creating a willingness or necessity for retailers to move from the downtown to newer facilities. A major retailer has an image to maintain nationally and an outdated, poorly maintained facility does not contribute

to a positive, viable image. Vacant locations in the vicinity of a major retailer decrease pedestrian activity and create an image of abandonment in the area. Store owners do not want to be located next door to an empty storefront.

The downtown, in order to be vital, must be constantly in action. It needs people on foot, moving from one location to another. Vacant stores discourage foot travel and window shopping. Vacant stores also discourage merchants from locating in an area because it looks unprofitable. In an article in the Fargo Forum, the mayor of Grand Forks, Cyril P. O'Neill expressed concern that some of the buildings in the downtown area were underutilized. "The mayor pointed out that there are worries caused by several downtown buildings that are standing empty."<sup>4</sup> The inadequacies of the existing structures, meant they were no more desirable to a new tenant than they had been to the old business which moved out. These structures could not compete with more modern structures. The need to locate downtown became secondary to the need for an adequate and pleasant facility.

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4. Op. Cit., Matthews, p. 12.

While the old structures, in the downtown were unattractive to merchants, a new medical center on the edge of town meant the closing of several people generators in the vicinity, namely the old hospital, (two blocks from the downtown) and the Grand Forks Clinic which also moved to the new medical center. The loss of these people generators meant a loss in potential customers and intensified the unattractiveness of the downtown, particularly to new businesses.

The problems of downtown Grand Forks culminated with the development of the Columbia Mall at the periphery of the city; they were not precipitated by it. The retail sector in the downtown was failing. Serious problems were emerging related to parking, circulation, old buildings, and vacant stores. That is not to say that the mall did not have some serious impact upon the downtown. The most serious adjustment the downtown had to make probably concerned the exodus of major retailers, Penney and the Straus Men's Store, from the downtown to the mall. These moves were in the case of Penney, inevitable because of the inadequacy of the existing facility. In the case of the Strauss, the reasons were not made public. As far as can be determined, unlike the Penney Store, which had announced plans to relocate previously, the Strauss had announced

no such plans. The mall, then simply made the moves easier by providing alternative locations, which from the retailers point of view were potentially quite profitable, and eliminated for the merchants, the expense of building a new facility.

The Columbia Mall exacerbated some existing problems of the downtown. But it has also become a problem in that it has increased customer flight from the downtown.

#### Solutions to CBD Problems

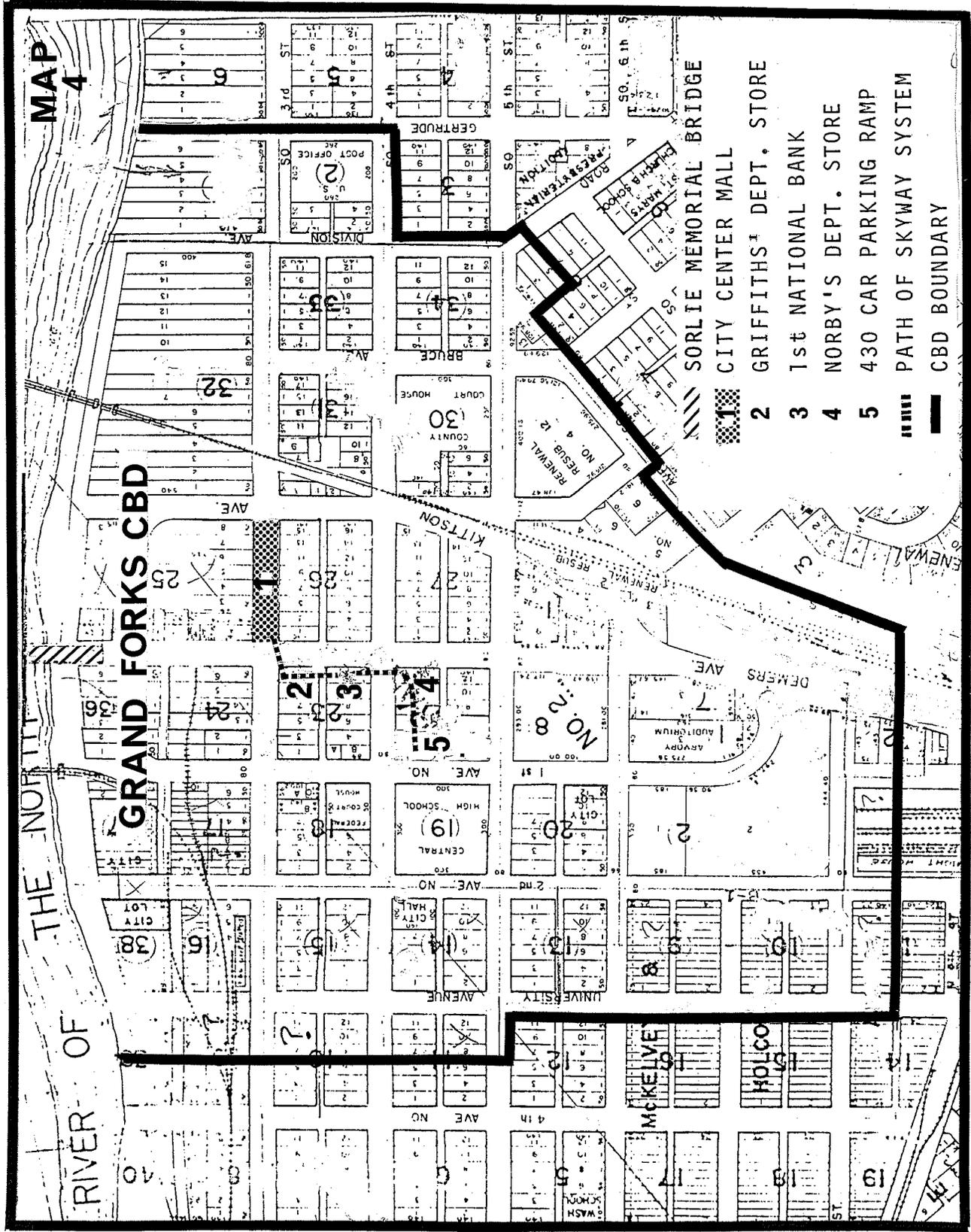
The problems of the Grand Forks CBD delineated above revolve, in large measure, around the automobile and its impacts on urban forms and uses. The deteriorating neighbourhood around the edges of the downtown were not mentioned by city officials as a major problem. But this area designated as a urban renewal area which provided a great deal of the funding for certain improvements aimed specifically at assisting the retail function of the downtown.

The role and function and indeed the life forces of the city is linked to the viability of its retail function and this then is the major thrust of projects and improvements. The urban neighbourhood adjacent to the CBD, though, is

MAP 4

RIVER OF THE NORTH

GRAND FORKS CBD



- 1 SORLIE MEMORIAL BRIDGE
- 2 GRIFFITHS DEPT. STORE
- 3 1st NATIONAL BANK
- 4 NORBY'S DEPT. STORE
- 5 430 CAR PARKING RAMP
- ▤ PATH OF SKYWAY SYSTEM
- ▬ CBD BOUNDARY

potentially useful in strengthening the downtown and the retail sector of the city generally.

The parking problem stems from a shift in lifestyle and the low density nature of development in the city of Grand Forks. These factors necessitate the use of personal transportation for work, shopping and leisure. There is a bus system, recently bought by the city, but service is quite poor, and it only serves a small area of the city. The downtown, the focus of many of the trips made by car, suffers from traffic congestion caused by on-street parking. This parking limits the road capacity of the road significantly. Many studies of the parking situation in cities conclude that merchants feel that it is important to have parking at their door. They fight for the retention of meters even when it is obvious that congestion could be eased if parking lanes were eliminated.

Another source of traffic through the downtown of Grand Forks is the cars of residents of East Grand Forks, who work in Grand Forks and commute daily via the Sorlie Memorial Bridge, which exits onto a downtown throughfare, DeMers Avenue. Bob Ulland, a planner with the city of Grand Forks says that East Grand Forks is predominately a bedroom

community of Grand Forks.<sup>5</sup> These heavy traffic volumes then must be accommodated.

If, as suggested, the downtown is to continue as a heavy traffic area, it is imperative that some other provision is made for cars, particularly during the day. The city decided that it was necessary to increase the parking capacity and the increased capacity should also provide good access to major shopping sites. The city chose a site on First Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets for a new 430 car parking ramp. This facility opened in late 1978. It is conveniently located for potential monthly users, that is employees in the various governmental facilities in the downtown and occasional shoppers. It is within warm weather walking distance of stores and eventually a skywalk system is proposed to connect the parking ramp to shopping facilities. When this is complete, a significant reduction in on-street parking is expected.

The parking ramp is the major solution used by the city to ease the parking problem and resulting congestion

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5. Bob Ulland, Private interview, City Hall, Grand Forks, North Dakota, March 29, 1979.

in the downtown. The city has recognized, for whatever reasons, that workers and shoppers in the downtown will be coming by auto and therefore the automobile must be accommodated.

Circulation - In recognition of the widespread use of the automobile in the CBD, the City of Grand Forks has taken steps beyond the provision of parking, to eliminate congestion and ease travel for through traffic. In this regard, the city has recently completed the construction of a ring road around the inner core of the CBD. (See Map #4) Going east, the road splits at DeMers Avenue with one portion of the ring road dropping south of DeMers Avenue, to 1st Avenue North. On the north is Kittson Avenue. A section of the ring road running north and south between Kittson and 1st Avenues North, is intersected by the Sorlie Memorial Bridge. If this ring road begins to perform as expected, through traffic need no longer stay on DeMers Avenue to get to the Sorlie Memorial Bridge since either the north or south link of the ring road will serve that purpose.

Another inhibitor of circulation in the CBD were numerous at-grade railway crossings. Part of the ring road project is the skyway overpass on DeMers to facilitate

traffic flow over the rail lines. Other at-grade crossings within the CBD are being improved to accommodate faster traffic, with less discomfort to riders. Such crossings are being smoothed with additional pavement to eliminate bumps.

The present pattern of one-way-streets, also means of improving traffic flow, will remain unchanged for the present.

#### Old Buildings, Vacant Stores and Loss of Major Retailers -

These three problems will be dealt with as one since they are so closely related in terms of solutions taken.

There are several projects which are designed to deal with the problem of old and unattractive buildings: the sewer separation project financed with urban renewal funds, the pedestrian skyways to connect the major downtown stores, and the City Center Mall, financed through special assessment of benefiting merchants.

The sewer separation project was to separate the storm sewer system from the sanitary sewer system. Such a project should eliminate sewage back ups and seepage which occurred in downtown building basements making them unsuitable for

merchandise storage and display. The downtown is located such that its longest side is on the Red River, and consequently, even in years when direct flooding of the River is not a problem, seepage due to high water levels exists. According to the Mayor, Cyril P. O'Neill, at certain times of the year, the streets would be crisscrossed with hoses as owners of downtown property pumped out the basements. During such times the streets were nearly impassible.<sup>6</sup>

The construction of the pedestrian skyway system has not started yet, but the sites have been agreed upon. The system will cross the following streets using existing buildings: Fourth Street at DeMers, the lane between Fourth Street and Fifth Street, DeMers from the north to south, at Third Street and joining the City Center Mall. Once the system is complete it will be possible to park at the city parking ramp and shop at the City Center Mall, Norbys and Griffiths (these are the three retail nodes in the downtown) without going outside.

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6. Mayor Cyril P. O'Neill, private interview, City Hall, Grand Forks, North Dakota, March 29, 1979.

The most dramatic solution taken is the development of the City Center Mall. This Mall, was created by covering over and enclosing the existing Third Street South between Kittson Avenue to the south and DeMers Avenue to the North. (See map#4.) John Cook, who is chairman of the Mall Authority, said,

We feel that the mall will serve to centralize the retail district. We think it will give us the opportunity to attract some new stores and to upgrade the downtown area.<sup>7</sup>

The constitution of the mall authority, a nonpolitical body, by Council, indicates the high degree of public-private co-orporation needed to achieve a goal of this type.

The appropriateness of these various approaches to the problems of the CBD which the city took, will be discussed in the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter will examine in detail the Columbia Regional Shopping Mall's impact on downtown and specifically its relationship to the development of the City Center Mall in downtown Grand Forks.

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7. Op. Cit., Matthews.

The Impact of Columbia Regional Shopping Mall on the  
Downtown of Grand Forks

The downtown, although aware that it was in need of rehabilitation and rejuvenation, seems to have been paralyzed in its attempts to gather concensus and direction and thus initiate the necessary action. The regional shopping mall, at the edge of the city, provided the necessary impetus and spirit of co-operation which led to the City Center Mall and other improvements in the downtown. In large part the regional mall is responsible for the City Center Mall, and although this can be classified as perhaps a positive spin off from the regional mall, that judgement is not made without reservation. It may very well be too little too late for the downtown.

The Columbia Regional Shopping Mall is located at the western edge of the city, with direct access from Interstate 29 (I-29) for shoppers from the region and Highway 81 (South Forks Road) for local shoppers. The regional mall was a private project, with Dayton's as the major shareholder. The interesting aspect of this mall is that the Mayor of Grand Forks personally sought out a mall developer for the area. He felt that Grand Forks needed a regional shopping center because potential customers were

passing up Grand Forks' downtown for shopping malls in the Fargo area. It was also suggested that Canadian trade was passing Grand Forks to shop at the malls in Fargo. It is somewhat unusual that Grand Forks would seek a regional mall at the periphery since the trend is moving away from such development, toward downtown and inner city shopping developments.

The mayor viewed the downtown's problems as largely physical. Streets were in poor condition, many were periodically closed during the sewer separation project (1975-1978) basements flooded regularly, and there were about three empty storefronts on Third Street which were unable to get tenants. "He felt that the regional mall was necessary because the whole pattern of downtown was changing." He said, "...as times change, the whole picture of the downtown changed."<sup>8</sup> His efforts were directed toward maintaining and capturing potential customers who because of the congestion and lack of parking space and the unexciting appearance of the downtown, were shopping outside of Grand Forks altogether. He felt that a regional shopping center would attract these customers, including Canadian visitors from the Winnipeg area. The mayor in outlining his hopes

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8. Op. Cit., Mayor's interview.

for the Columbia Mall said:

The regional center is going to draw new customers or customers who presently go elsewhere for certain things. The overflow of regional shoppers will spill-over into existing shopping areas.<sup>9</sup>

The regional mall has been open for nearly a year now and the downtown has undergone some significant changes, and an increase in retail sales is not among them.

The most noticable and immediate impact of Columbia Mall on the downtown was the loss of the Penney store from the downtown area. In a retail oriented downtown, which Grand Forks certainly is, this is a very important loss. The remaining department stores in the downtown are local and a identifiable national retailer in a downtown can serve as a drawing power for occassional shoppers.

Prior to the opening of the Columbia Mall, the downtown had four main retailers; Norbys, Griffiths, Strauss and Penney's. The Penney and Strauss stores have relocated in the Columbia Regional Shopping Mall. This has meant that the downtown was losing a certain number of customers since these two retailers left. More importantly, the mall

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9. Ibid.

had as a certainty, these former downtown customers.

In the downtown, remained the Griffiths and Norby's stores. The downtown presently lacks a large variety store such as Woolco or Ben Franklin, and the mayor indicated that the lack of a store of this type in the downtown is of major concern. In contrast, the regional mall has a very large Target store, which functions as a third anchor store along with the Penney and Dayton for the regional facility.

The Dayton Store, is a family owned, Minneapolis based store and is new to the North Dakota region. It can expect many customers who come out of curiosity. Customers who have heard of the glitter and spectacle of the larger cities such as Minneapolis, and expect that a store from that area will be particularly unique, will come initially to the mall for that reason. The Dayton Store, has a reputation for carrying high quality merchandise and this store then, could potentially draw from the Fargo region as well, since it is the only Daytons in the state.

For the downtown the loss of the Penney Store and its subsequent relocation in the mall coupled with the drawing force of the Target and Dayton stores, has led to a continued and accelerated decline in sales in the downtown.<sup>10</sup> The regional mall itself, simply served as an alternative for dissatisfied customers and merchants in the downtown. It did not breed, necessarily the dissatisfaction. A subtle shift away from the downtown was already occurring and the mall partially ensures that a part of the shift will remain within the Grand Forks region and not shift to Fargo.

Another downtown retailer, who moved to the new regional center, was Strauss, a local men's clothing store. Not much can be found on the store's motivation for re-locating. What is of interest, is that the site of this store was redeveloped into an adult bookstore. This development was greeted with alarm by the merchants involved in the City Center Mall project since this facility is located directly across the street from the Kittson Avenue entrance. Although this particular facility is tastefully executed, it could encourage the development of additional like facilities and lead to degrading of the area. It is

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10. Op. Cit., Ulland interview.

a development, which should be carefully monitored, since the block on which it is located does have some vacant storefronts, and the railway cuts the block in two. A further note concerning this area: directly across the railway tracks on the opposite side of the street from the bookstore is a large vacant site, the result of a recent fire. This is one area of the downtown which has the greatest potential to develop in a complementary or disparaging direction.

Overall, the single most dramatic, although indirect impact of the mall remains the development of the City Center Mall. This mall expresses the desire of the remaining downtown merchants to survive the competition of the Columbia Mall.

#### The City Center Mall

The City Center Mall officially opened on May 17, 1979. It is not fully rented as yet and vacant store fronts have been decorated with displays of merchandise from other stores, in Grand Forks, or interesting information. The purpose of this is to foster a sense of prosperity in the mall, which vacant storefronts would not do. The mall it-

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self is well designed in that the original atmosphere of Third Street is maintained. Many of the original building fronts have been maintained and second storey apartments or rooms are still intact. There is a sense that a roof has been placed on an existing street with little alteration to the street. This is in essence, what has been done; the completed mall is visually and aesthetically less than expected. The mall is 400 feet long, thirty (30) feet high and eighty (80) feet wide. The exposed steel structure of the ceiling gives the feeling of a factory or aircraft hanger. There is a fountain located at one end of the mall, but it is so tall that it encourages one to look up and see the incomplete ceiling treatment. When entering the mall on a fairly bright day, it is dark inside. There is a real ~~air~~ or sensation of being enclosed. This is in direct contrast of most suburban shopping malls, which convey an outdoor atmosphere. In spite of these shortcomings, the City Center Mall does provide a climate controlled area for shoppers in the downtown area.

'We felt that it was essential - when we saw shopping centers coming - that we do not lie down and play dead,' said Attorney Thomas P. Elroy, a prime mover of the project.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Op. Cit., Fargo Forum.

The coming of the Columbia Regional Shopping Mall was just the incentive for the City of Grand Forks to go forward. A proposal for an enclosed mall for the downtown had been discussed for several years, but no action had been taken. A 1972 consultants report, commissioned by the Grand Forks urban renewal agency, mentioned retailing as an important Grand Forks employer.

Perhaps one of the largest future growth prospects for the Grand Forks area is in the field of retailing and the associated side influences that increasing the effectiveness of local retailing could have on allied services and other activities. Even though anticipated market area population growth will not be significant, Grand Forks is underdeveloped from a retailing standpoint and the city could do much to expand in this and associated fields.<sup>12</sup>

The report goes on to say, concerning the downtown's role as retailer for the city, that:

...if no additional major retailing developments transpires in the central business district it is unlikely that downtown volume opportunity will increase in future years. In fact, without changes, the downtown district will continue to lose important within the market area and it is probable that volume opportunity might well decline in absolute terms as a direct result.<sup>13</sup>

Even so, in 1975, planning was still at the very preliminary stages and an approved site had not been selected. It seems

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12. Viking Corporation of America, Downtown Grand Forks Retail and Motel Development Analysis, (Grand Forks: Urban Renewal Agency, November 30, 1972), p.8.

13. Ibid., p. 14.

as if the mall would be an issue for a few months and then die away. The Columbia Mall and related events, loss of the Penney Store and Strauss from the downtown, provided the necessary impetus to finalize and go forward with plans for the City Center Mall.

The Penney Store was the only national retailer in the downtown. When the store announced plans to move into the Columbia Mall, when it was completed, downtown merchants began to panic as they realized that not only would the downtown be losing this important retailer, but it would be losing them to a new and expanded location in the Columbia Mall, the new competitor. Former Penney customers could follow them out to the regional mall and discontinue coming to the downtown.

New merchants could not be attracted to a downtown, with large vacant stores, because such an area looks unprofitable, particularly if locations are available in the more modern Columbia Mall. The downtown needed major rejuvenation if it was going to compete with the shopping center on the outskirts and have a chance of surviving. The president of the 1st National Bank of Grand Forks,

Richard Wold said,

We believed that there was enough vitality within this part of the Red River Valley to support a large shopping center on the perimeter as well as to work for the revitalization of the downtown area.<sup>14</sup>

The regional shopping center, Columbia Mall, did not arrive in Grand Forks to provide the Penney Store with an alternative site, nor to spur redevelopment of the downtown, but in response to the growing retail market in Grand Forks that was being under serviced by the antiquated and problem plagued downtown. It was also, on the part of the city a concerted attempt to strengthen the city's retail dominance in the region and to overall, enlarge that region.

The downtown then, and its problems cannot be viewed as relating only to the mall, but must be seen as a package of problems, which include a retail alternative for shoppers. The approach taken by the city in terms of solving the problems should be a total approach. Improved parking and a downtown shopping mall are not the ultimate solution, but are single parts of a total solution, which should go further to consider the changing nature of the city and its highly mobile inhabitants.

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14. Op. Cit. Fargo Forum.

## CHAPTER VI: ASSESSMENT OF THE GRAND FORKS CASE

The City of Grand Forks was suffering from a decline in retail activity. It sought to remedy this situation by first, soliciting and getting a regional shopping mall for the area and secondly, developing a mall in the downtown district. The two projects were not undertaken in any coordinated effort and it can be argued that the regional mall in fact, constituted the major impetus for the downtown mall. In each case, the project was considered to be a solution to declining retail activity, but in actual fact, this has not been the case. So that, while some additional consumers may have been attracted to the area, evidence indicates that the fragmentation of retailing over two sites, has really strained this part of the city's economy.

### Current Situation - Columbia Regional Shopping Mall

The Columbia Regional Shopping Mall has been open for slightly over a year. In that time it has drawn a significant number of shoppers away from the downtown, As evidenced by declining sales in the CBD.<sup>1</sup> But the regional mall itself does not appear to be enjoying brisk business. On several occasions, visits to the mall revealed many stores with few, if any, shoppers. The mall avenues themselves were sparsely populated. Friday night is the traditional shopping night in Grand Forks, so even though the Mall stores are open every night, it can be expected that they would enjoy their busiest night on Fridays. A trip to the Mall on two Friday nights, one in July and in August, revealed very few shoppers. Those who were there, were largely in the Target Store.

The photos on the following page, were taken on a Saturday, between 11 and 12 AM. This was considered a time when the greatest number of families could be expected, since the Saturday chosen was the week before schools in North Dakota reopened, following summer vacation. Winnipeg shoppers could also be anticipated, since this Saturday was two weeks before Winnipeg schools reopened. In actual fact, Columbia

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1. Op. Cit. Ulland interview and Mayor's interview.

Regional Shopping Mall was very lightly populated. Many of the stores were empty or near empty and few people were noticed carrying parcels, which would indicate that not many purchases were being made. The map of the Shopping Center below will assist in identifying the location of the following photographs which show the interior of the mall.

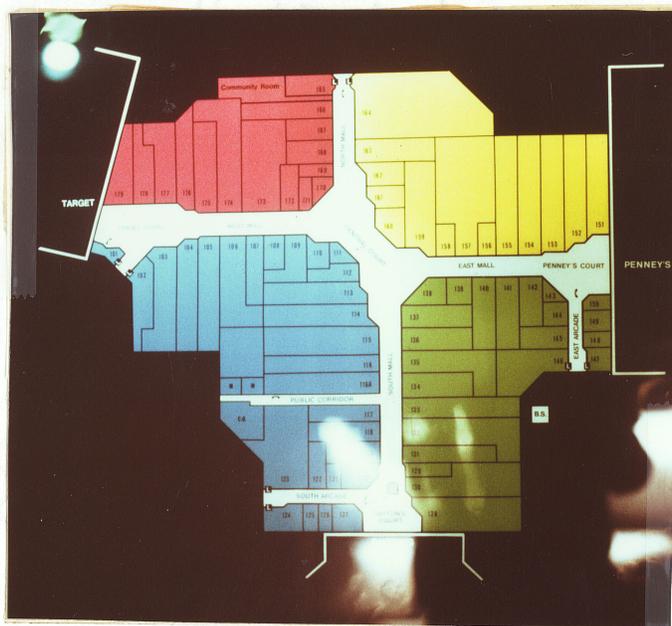


Photo #1 shows the main seating area of the Mall, the Central Court.

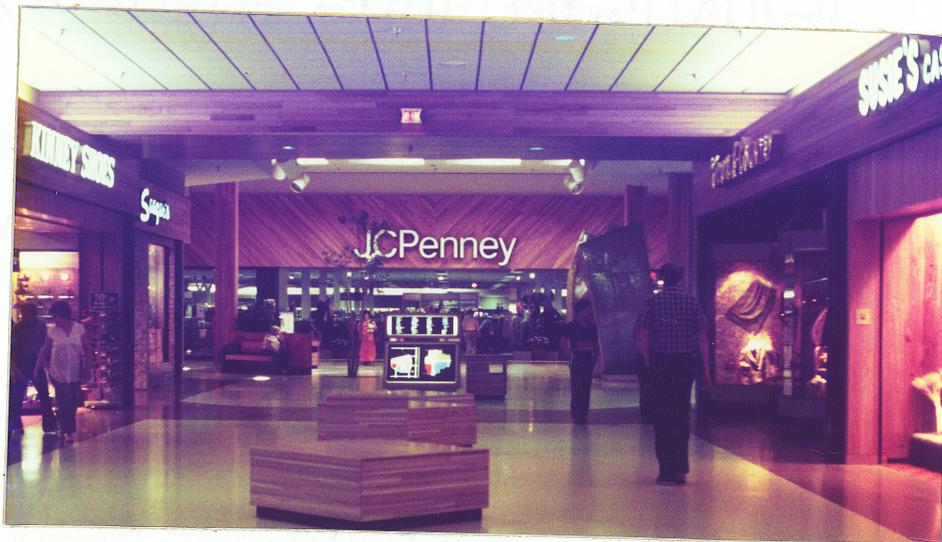


As can be seen in the diagram of the Mall's layout, this area was situated to intercept traffic from all sections of the mall. Also, to stimulate use of this area, certain food concessions were placed in the immediate vicinity; an ice cream store, and a bakery are two of the nearest.

Photo #2 shows a view of the above seating area from a different perspective. The few clusters of people do not represent a significant number when viewed in relation to the size of the mall.



The J.C. Penney Store is one of the major retailers in the mall. It is familiar to Grand Forks Area residents, since it was formerly located in the downtown. Photo #3 shows the Mall approach to the Penney Store.



There are very few shoppers in evidence. This photo was taken on a Saturday between 11 and 12 AM, as were all the others; but it is important to note that this should be a busy time for the Mall and particularly the Malls' major retailers. Yet this does not seem to be the case.

An observation of cars entering the Mall and their origin, as noted by license plates, was undertaken. To count as many cars as possible of local origin, and regional origin, two observation sites were selected. The I-29 entrance, and 32nd Avenue entrance are the main entrances to the Mall. The I-29 entrance was considered to be the logical entrance for regional shoppers, since the Interstate would most frequently be the best way for regional residents to travel. The 32nd Avenue entrance is off the extension of Washington Avenue, which is the major arterial from the central city to the Mall.

The regional Mall stores open between 9:30 and 10:00 AM on a Saturday. This day was chosen as being the most likely day that non-local shoppers would be using the Mall, and the time was considered early enough to observe those local persons who would arrive at or near opening time. By observing until near noon, regional shoppers from even the farthest

extent of the region, Winnipeg, would have ample time to arrive. The results of this observation showed the following:

TABLE 6-1  
ORIGIN OF CARS ENTERING COLUMBIA MALL

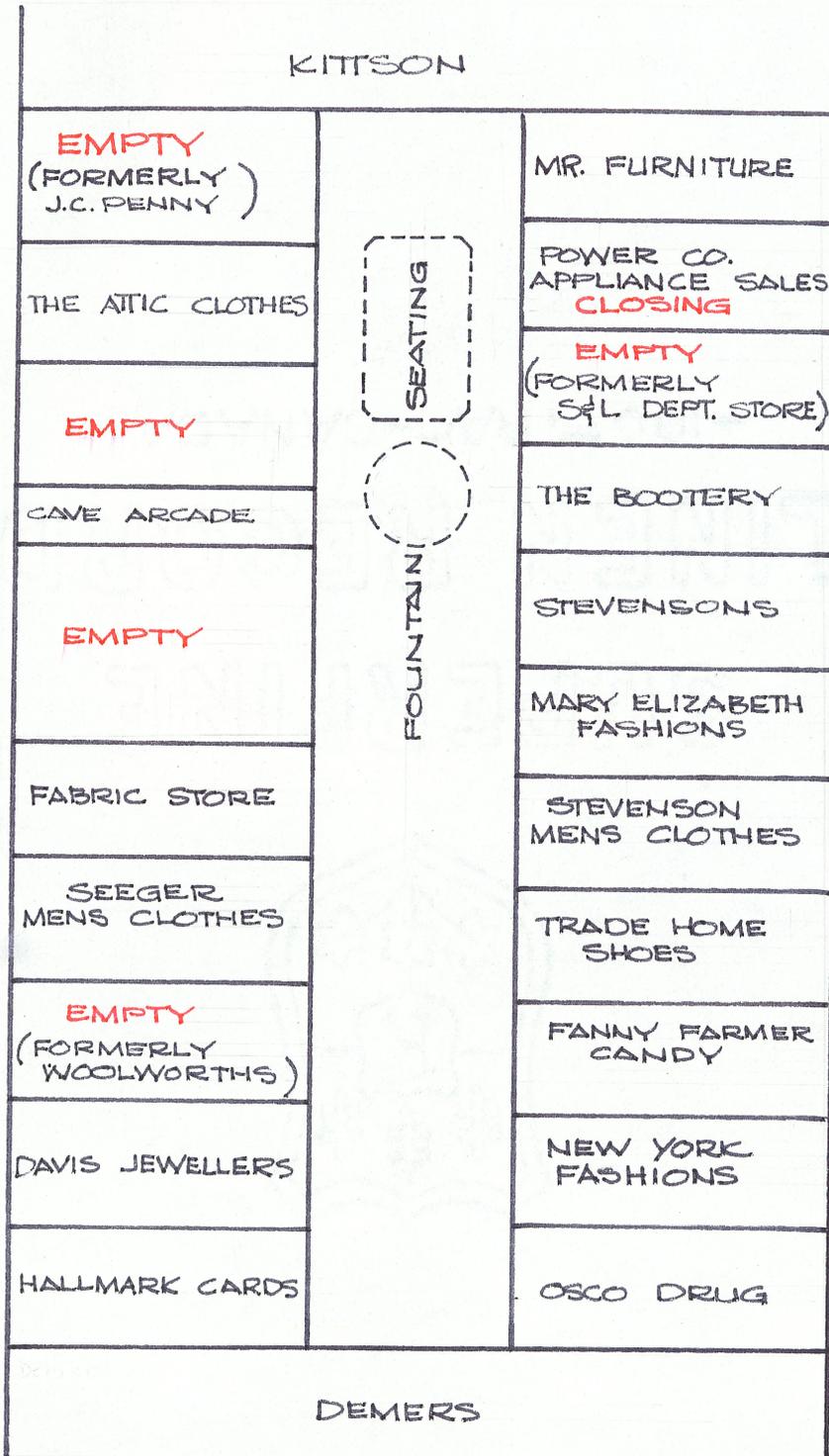
Origin	No. of Cars	% of Total Entering
North Dakota	238	61.81
Minnesota	66	17.14
Manitoba	61	15.84
Other	20	5.19
Totals	385	99.98

In addition to noting the license plates, the number of occupants was examined to determine the percentage of shoppers who had brought the family, presumably to spend a large part of the day at the Mall. Most of the cars had one or two occupants, and it was also noticed that some cars were leaving the Mall as early as 10:30AM. This fact suggests that the Mall serves as a convenience center for some portion of Grand Forks population, and not as the regional facility expected by its promoters.

### Current Situation - The City Center Mall

The City Center Mall was officially opened in mid-July of 1979. The Mall was created by enclosing a one block portion of Third Avenue. Some of the stores which had been on the street prior to its enclosure, relocated before the construction was undertaken. Among these, is the J.C. Penney Store whose large facility is still vacant, fourteen months after the store moved. The stores that remained continued to do business during the construction of the Mall. Now that construction is complete, the Mall Authority is concerned about the number of vacant stores. In an effort to reduce the impact of the empty units, the Mall Authority has used the vacant store windows to display the merchandise from other area stores. This measure has given the Mall a more lively appearance than it would have with the darkened vacant stores offering sharp contrast to the occupied units. The diagram on the following page shows the layout of the City Center Mall, identifying those that are vacant. Shopping centers are designed to move shoppers between two or more anchor stores. In this way, smaller retailers can benefit from the drawing power of major national retailers which serve as the anchor stores. In the City Center Mall the large number of vacant stores serve as a deterrent to the shopper, discouraging casual shopping. The photo #4, on page 135 shows the rather

# CITY CENTER MALL DIAGRAM MAP 5



Large S. & L. Department Store which is vacant. The window display consists of jackets from a local downtown store. The contrast between the occupied store at the extreme left and right of the vacant shops are in sharp contrast. The darkness of the Mall interior reduces this contrast somewhat, at eye level.



In the above photograph, the central structure is a waterfall and seating area. The City Center photographs were taken also on a Saturday, one week prior to school opening, yet there are no shoppers in evidence here either.

In addition to the empty stores in the Mall, a major negative feature of the Mall is the atmosphere within. The Mall as described, resembles a large aircraft hanger. The interior lighting and fixtures do little to disspell this feeling. The circular light fixtures shown in photograph #4 above, are the only interior light in the Mall with the exception of the individual store lights. In photo #5 below, the contrast, between the very sharp light of day and the interior of the Mall, is vividly illustrated.



These two photographs, 4 & 5 show virtually no signs of activity in the Mall. In fact there was very little activity

in the downtown area, and it was a very pleasant day weather-wise, for shoppers. Photo #6 below shows the approach to the Griffiths store, just outside the Demers Avenue entrance of the City Center Mall. The Griffiths Store was identified in the foregoing chapter as one of the major downtown stores. The expectation is that such a facility should generate, automobile and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity. Yet, the photograph shows very little activity of either kind.



Neither the City Center Mall, nor the downtown, would appear to be doing brisk business on this Saturday morning. Observations of the downtown on Friday nights and two other Saturdays, revealed the same low levels of activity. The

City Center Mall then, has failed so far to increase significantly, downtown shopping.

### Implications for Grand Forks

Grand Forks has approached the problem of a declining downtown from the view that the major problems relate to decisions made by residents and visitors to shop in other areas. They attribute this shift to the old and antiquated form of the existing downtown. Their solution is to incorporate some of the attributes of the shopping centers to draw customers into the downtown. Hence they chose to build a climate controlled mall in the downtown and additional parking and pedestrian links between the Mall and the remainder of the downtown.

There are two immediate problems with this approach; 1) it assumes that it is strictly a new physical form of retailing, which is drawing people from the downtown and; 2) that redesign of the downtown to resemble the shopping center will reverse the shift of shoppers away from the area.

The City of Grand Forks is assuming that as a regional retail node, the core must remain the retail center in spite of changing patterns of consumer preference, in terms of

locations or conditions for shopping. Although, the activity of retailing may be central to the economy of Grand Forks, the format for the activity, should not be constrained by traditional modes. The new form, which retailing has taken, is the regional shopping mall, and this form is rooted in the changed needs of consumers and merchants. To transplant the physical form without recognition of these facts, is too in essence, ignore factors responsible for the shift in the first place.

For those cities in which retailing is of primary importance, the effect of a regional shopping center or any major shopping development, can be detrimental. Strategies to mitigate the impacts of such developments require advance study of the existing population and their shopping habits, as well as the potential of the shopping center to draw additional, instead of intercepting existing, shoppers.

The City of Grand Forks, made a decision to try to interest a developer in locating a shopping center in their area. When the various interested developers put forth proposals, a study was undertaken by the city to determine the most suitable site, of four that were proposed by the developers. The city planning department was given the task of setting criteria and evaluating the sites.

The city planning department evaluated the sites using the following parameters;

...that a major regional shopping center must be integrated within the Grand Forks urban structure.

.....  
Because regional shopping centers are significant urban growth catalysts, the location of a regional shopping center must be consistent with the desired pattern of the City of Grand Forks.

In final analysis, the decision was not based on the planners' recommendations. The Daytons site was chosen even though it was in direct conflict with these policy goals and directives. In referring to the Dayton site, the report says;

...the shopping center site is located beyond the existing urban structure and according to land use projections to the year 1990, it will be located on the edge of the City of Grand Forks in 1990.<sup>2</sup>

The desired growth site, as indicated from this report, and the draft master plan, is to the southeast, not to the southwest, as this location will encourage.

The difficulty which both malls appear to be experiencing specifically, is low user levels. This could be a result of an incorrect response to the city's problems in the downtown, or an incorrect assessment of the real problem.

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1. City of Grand Forks Planning Department, Analysis of Proposed Regional Shopping Centers, (Grand Forks: Grand Forks Planning Department, 1974), p.4.

2. Ibid. , p. 1.

The regional shopping center is a new urban retail form which has evolved slowly, and to redesign the inner core to reflect the shopping center motif, does little to respond to the evolutionary process of urban development. To superimpose the setting, at the central location, will not ensure success.

The downtown of Grand Forks does not appear to have become the urban region's retailing focal point, since the opening of the City Center Mall. The Columbia Regional Shopping Mall, also appears not to have fulfilled its expectations. It is suggested in this work that the failure is due to improper analysis of the problem, leading to improper, or partial, solutions.

The City Center Mall and improvements in the downtown should have been made in advance of the Columbia Regional Malls' opening. Once shopping or any behaviour pattern, has been changed, the ability of events to change the pattern back to the original is minimal.

The municipal level of government is limited in its ability to control the urban area outside of its jurisdictional boundaries. Through internal taxing policies, it can either encourage or discourage, development to,

whenever possible, locate within its jurisdictional boundaries. Through internal taxing policies, it can either encourage or discourage, development. In terms of the city which relies heavily on regional retailing for its economic stability, the options are few. It must, at all costs, discourage regional shopping alternatives. In the face of such alternatives, it must make the central city CBD able to compete successfully, with the regional alternative. The effort to improve the CBD, in the process of making it more competitive, must be initiated in advance of the opening of a regional shopping alternative.

Secondly, municipal governments are dependent on higher levels of government for partial or total funding of any projects undertaken. In the U.S., the urban funds are available for specific projects or parts of projects. It is then, imperative, that the municipal government interested in CBD projects, understand clearly the parameters of these programs in order to reduce proposal refusals.

The most important tool which the municipal government can use, is to show support for those merchants who are in the downtown area, and assist them in programs to strengthen the CBD retailing sector. The services of

the city planners might serve to assist the CBD merchants in proper identification of their strenghts and weaknesses, relative to other retail nodes.

The minicipal government is not able to control the region and regional events directly, but by initiating certain programs or projects, they can indirectly influence what goes on in the region. The CBD is the central-most point in the urban centered region and thus had the potential to exercise some leverage over that region, by controlling what goes on inside itself.

The City of Grand Forks made an error in soliciting the regional shopping mall. The effect in the downtown has created some concern. The intitation of the City Center Mall project has the potential to strenghten the downtown over the long run. The rising costs of energy, and the recentralization trends that are just taking hold in the U.S., indicate that the central areas, will be very important in the not too distant future. In this regard the suggestions below are general recommendations for improving the City Center Mall facility, which could be very important in any attempt to strenghten the downtown. The two suggestions are related to the design of the facility, since part of its failure to attract tenants

and shoppers may be related to this factor.

1. The City Center Mall's interior design must be improved to create a light, outdoor atmosphere, common to most new mall.

2. The merchants in the CBD have found it difficult to compete with the long hours of the stores in the regional facility. Special events could be held on some of the nights when the City Center stores are open to attract shoppers. Additionally, the stores themselves must agree on the open nights and maintain them if they are going to attract shoppers on a regular basis.

The problems of the CBD of Grand Forks exist because the city cannot support two widely separated retail nodes in addition to the smaller retail opportunities which already exist. The optimum solutions for the city would involve a reordering of concerns. At present the emphasis is on making the CBD a retail node of such import that it will supercede all others in the area. What may be a more viable and realistic approach would entail examining the regional context of the city to determine if retailing could be better handled at a location outside the CBD, for general items. If so the CBD's role may be more appropriate as a speciality retail center. The shopping center in-town, The City Center Mall, is a unique facility in the region and such in-town centers are well suited for speciality stores.

## CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY

This thesis has examined the historical development of the downtown, its role and function, and prospects for its future. While the reasons for its development in the past are clear, the future of the area is in doubt. The central function of the downtown, the market function, is being challenged by the new modes of living made possible by high speed communication and transportation. For those cities where the market function of the downtown remains the prime function, the prospects for the future revolve around those cities willingness to change.

The future expectations of retailing cities is linked to their ability to maintain those functions it has in the downtown other than retailing, attract new functions, and redefine its role and function in view of the modern circumstance. It is only in doing the latter that the city can even attempt to address, in an adequate manner, the problems it faces.

The form which cities took, was dictated by a desire for efficiency in performing certain functions. Originally, this meant that the business core of the city was a compact unity wherein, physical and communication linkages were easy to establish and maintain. Advances in technology have made such a format, unnecessary, and the city, if it is to continue to fulfill its mandate, must of necessity, change. The direction and resources for assessment, decision-making and action, lie in part, with the municipal. Indeed the first action must come from them.

The problems of the core are not always city centered, and the city cannot usually control regional encroachments, such as regional shopping centers. To this extent then, the city must react to such events. The reaction should focus on the challenge in which there is a winner and a loser. Instead, the response should consider accommodation and complimentary development. The downtown can seldom, directly, challenge the regional shopping center, since it is a unique urban form which is also a response to conditions. The conditions which created the two forms are different and each was to serve a different purpose. The CBD has a symbolic role in the urban fabric which should be enhanced. The City of Grand Forks is trying to regain its retail

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A  
 SAMPLING OF NORTH AMERICAN CITIES WHICH  
 HAVE INITIATED DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT  
 AREA

City Name, Size, (Improvement cat.)	1970 (Pop)	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Project	Proposed and Completed Project
Ann Arbor, Mi.	99,797	Redevelopment of the downtown area to create downtown neighbourhoods which would bring vitality and variety to the area.	Projects include rehabilitation and conversion of some existing structures, development of New downtown park. Retail and commercial facilities have been planned on neighbouring sites while many new establishments are taking space in refurbished buildings.
Baltimore, M.D.	905,787	Revitalize decaying district at the edge of the CBD.	Projects include a park, walkway playground system along the water front, replacing of decayed structures, with cultural facilities, such as a museum, planetarium sports playing field for amateur and professional sports, floating restaurant, and other tourist and visitor related developments. Additional developments spawned by the improvements include office/retail high rises, and a hotel.

City Name, Size, 1970 (Improvement Cat.) (Pop.)	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Beaumont, Tx. 117,548	Downtown lacked a strong definable image: vacant land and empty buildings missing urban amenities, declining retail sales, contributed to the problem.	Encouraged private developments to locate downtown Civic Plaza riverfront park, hotel/conventions center, new police and jail, court and library facilities.
Binghamton, N.Y. 64,123	To preserve the shopping and historic district; capitalize on already existing and underutilized parking facilities and spur additional developments.	Major project is a covered pedestrian mall in the CBD. The enclosed main street will add 45,000 sq. ft. of new retail space on an upper level which would give a view of the historic district, and also expand the CBD's retail capacity.
Boston, M.A. 641,053	Beautification of downtown create more pedestrian space and improve pedestrian movement.	Sidewalks widened, plexiglass canopy arches, brick sidewalk, are all planned improvements.
Brockton, M.A. 89,040	Deterioration in the downtown area.	Plaza to be built around old Victorian City Hall, will work as activity center and pedestrian link between public retail/commercial facilities downtown. Included is rehab of abandoned post office, and privately owned newspaper facility and new retail-office complex with parking.
Burlington, Vt. 38,633	Downtown decline accelerated by shopping mall in the area.	Downtown mall created to spark additional redevelopment and new development in the area.

City Name, Size, 1970 (Improvement Cat.) Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of -Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Eugene, Or. 76,341	Substandard downtown structures auto-pedestrian conflicts, congested streets and high vacancy rates were prevalent in the downtown area.	27 new buildings, 46 rehabed, and major retail expansion including, pedestrian mall, expanded free parking downtown, and 2 traffic loops are planned for the area.
Fort Worth, Tx. 393,463	Revitalization of downtown.	Shopping mall-in-town which included two 20 storey office towers, a tri-level shopping mall centered around a skating rink, and a free privately owned subway connects shopping mall to a 7,000 car parking ramp. A high-rise hotel, 45 storey office tower and a new public library are planned for the area.
Frederick, M.D. 23,641	Revitalization of the historic downtown district.	Sixty commercial properties in the downtown were improved and consequently new commercial activity was attracted. Expansion of post office and county courthouse on new sites downtown, 400 car parking garage and mini park built. Privately rehabed movie theater becomes performing arts center, and rehabilitation of historic buildings bounding the commercial core, form an improved residential district which includes a 131 unit apartment building for the elderly and handicapped.

City Name, Size, (Improvement Cat.)	1970 pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Freeport, N.Y.	40,412	To reduce vacant sites in the downtown, and to improve business and the physical appearance of the downtown.	Pedestrian mall, which encouraged storeowners to upgrade facades and expand business; and the addition of 30% more free parking, and reduction in the number of vacant stores is expected to help downtown business.
Fernandina Beach FL.	6,955	Revitalization of downtown via restoration.	These projects concentrated in facelifts of existing downtown buildings to make them more attractive. The physical improvement included removal of over street wiring and other infra-structures; creation of mini plaza at street crossings, renovation of old railway station and creation of two plazas in the downtown. Additional private development has contributed improvement in the area.
Hull, Quebec	63,560	Large scale revitalization of the downtown was needed to combat the deterioration of historic central business district which was well advanced.	Projects will eventually, almost totally rebuild the downtown. They focus on an office building and courthouse, the Place du Centre in-town-shopping mall and the Place du Portage in-town shopping mall. The former has a 760 car garage and is connected to the 2,400 car garage at the latter.

City Name, Size, 1970 (Improvement Cat.) pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Kalamazoo, M. 85,555	Continuing deterioration of the downtown.	Pedestrian mall, additional parking, new office/hotel/conference center are planned.
Lansing, Mi. 131,403	To make downtown more accessible.	Traffic flow improvements, including angle parking on frontage roads, parking and pedestrian mall anchored by the Penny's and Knapp's stores, and second level bridge walkways are also planned.
Manistee, Mi. 7,723	Need to add amenities and revitalize the downtown.	Park built by the city served as a catalyst for revitalization of the downtown, evidenced by a decline in vacant stores, and new businesses locating in the area. senior citizens housing has been built, and a park, to provide a pedestrian link from downtown to a new marina.
Mankato, N. 30,895	The downtown was old and deteriorated. The city wanted to stimulate, through public actions and commitments, private investments in redevelopment and rehabilitation.	First stages included; selective demolition, creation of new traffic pattern and provision of parking. Projects include enclosed pedestrian malls, high rise apartment, Holiday Inn hotel, and two parking structures, with a 457 car capacity. This mall, when complete, will use alleys as well as front streets to complete the pedestrian system.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Merced, Ca.	22,670	Rehabilitation of the downtown area.	To stimulate private sector rejuvenate the downtown, the city backed and helped develop a loan assistance plan for such projects.
Middletown, Oh.	48,806	Rejuvenation of the deteriorating downtown district.	Rehabilitation projects for the area concentrate on creating a fully enclosed, climate controlled mall, by enclosing two of the main business streets. Specific improvements include, 700 car parking ramp, new city hall, an arts center, senior citizens apartment complex, women's center, United Way building, plus an open walkway and plaza to unify the area.
New Orlean, La.	593,471	Desire to create an atmosphere in the downtown that would increase magnetism and correlate existing features such as Vieux Carre and the Canal Street Stores.	Two large plazas are planned, Poydras Plaza, a retail/commercial facility linked directly to the superdome and the New Hyatt Regency Hotel, and Piazza D'Italia, a plaza with a central function surrounded by retail, restaurant services, and commercial space. For Canal Street pedestrian area, connections to downtown, multilevel pedestrian areas, and a Grand Galleria, 200 feet high is planned. On the Wharf an old working wharf is being converted into shops, restaurants, music halls and other tourist oriented facilities.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.) Pop.	1970 Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
New Rochell, N.Y. 75,385	Revitalize downtown.	Street and sidewalk improvement and commercial building renovation were spurred by the development of a walkway, connecting two shopping sections of the downtown. Along with the new library/cultural facility, included in the improvements is a 1,000 car garage, appropriate street furniture and lighting on the walkway.
Norfolk, V.A.	307,951 Redevelopment and conservation of the waterfront area near the downtown.	Extensive rehabilitation of existing structures, adaptive re-use and new construction, will combine to transform deteriorated, mostly vacant sites, filled with obsolete waterfront uses, industrial buildings, docks and rail facilities, into a pedestrian plaza and lively activity area.
Norman, OK.	52,117 Need to preserve the CBD	Private merchants organized to preserve and refurbish downtown buildings to attract shoppers and additional business to the area.
Philadelphia, P.A.	1,948,609 Revitalization of the area near the downtown, for use as a principal shopping street for low income residents, and to stabilize and revitalize the area surrounding the downtown.	The Gallery on Market Street east is a large shopping mall which, connects two large department stores, which have attracted additional large retailers to the area.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Pomona, Calif.	87,384	Downtown revitalization.	Pedestrian mall, with parking for 2,000 cars, is expected to spur development by the private sector.
Portland, OR.	381,877	Functionally obsolete structures downtown.	Rehabilitation of old, unused buildings into three level retail facility, was privately undertaken. This has stimulated further private plans for downtown improvements.
Portland, Me.	65,877	The old core of Portland, which focused on the port, was deteriorating as port activity declined.	Rehabilitation started because of the good accessibility of the area to the main downtown and the reasonable price of sites. Old buildings in the area have been cleaned up, preserved, and are now being used. The city was not initially involved in the projects.
Richmond, V.A.	249,621	Obsolete factory space deteriorating the downtown viability.	Rehabilitation and use conversion of the buildings and 680 space car parking ramp, are planned for the area.
San Bernadino, Calif.	104,394	General rehabilitation of the downtown district.	Enclosed mall shopping center downtown which links three department stores; one existing and two new stores. Included was 1,124 parking space in a 3 level parking ramp with space for 2500 cars. Connected to the mall is a civic cultural center created by closing one block and focusing on a public pedestrian plaza at the center of which is an old city hall which is to be converted into a theatre.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Sioux City, Ia.	85,925	To preserve historic commercial core to strengthen and revitalize the downtown retail and residential aspects.	Major plan underway includes, parking garages, pedestrian skywalks and street level malls, and new major department stores.
St. Catharines, Ont.	109,780	Downtown suffered from competition with shopping centers. Loss of large downtown retailers.	Improved parking via parking stamp program, sidewalk reconstruction and upgrading and pedestrian mall created in the downtown.
St. Cloud, Mn.	39,691	Major problems downtown resulted from heavy traffic flow in the area and need to revitalize downtown was hampered by the problem.	The city built a new bridge which took traffic via traffic loops around not through the downtown. Secondly, one street was turned into a pedestrian mall and downtown parking was increased.
St. Paul, Mn.	309,714	Desires upgrading of the downtown.	Multi-use development project for downtown consists of a hotel twin office/retail/commercial structures, 500 car parking ramp, and a multi-use public plaza.
Summit, N.J.	23,620	Downtown beautification and ultimately, to integrate downtown into tight pedestrian units.	Initial investment includes, development of mini, or pocket parks on vacant lots, with connecting walkways which lead to an enlarged and improved parking facility. Part of the project involves the refinishing of the adjacent store walls, including bay windows and displays, building of a waterfall/fountain and pool.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Thunder Bay, Ont	108,440	To eliminate the city's skid row area and replace it with commercial facilities which will enhance municipal income and trigger other development in the downtown.	The projects included; a 450 parking garage, pedestrian mall with 32 shops, offices, restaurants and services, and walkways which house shops and connect nodes such as Eatons and the Marketplace department store to the mall.
Toronto, Ont.	713,130	Eaton store, a major downtown facility, needed a new facility on Yonge Street, which in the vicinity of the store, was deteriorating and unattractive.	The development of a major shopping center in-town was the primary project.
Tulsa, OK.	330,350	To revitalize the downtown and make it more competitive with suburban shopping centers.	The city has built a pedestrian walkway system which links the Tulsa Civic Center, a cluster of government offices, with the downtown shopping area, and joins the Williams center development in the downtown, to a riverside park. Also planned is an activity plaza, a marina, ferry landing, amphitheater and other people gathering projects and parking facilities.
Washington, DC.	756,510	General decline in the downtown in the past, due to the encroachment of suburban shopping alternatives in the region.	Pedestrian mall, residential complex and additional commercial buildings, are planned for the downtown area.

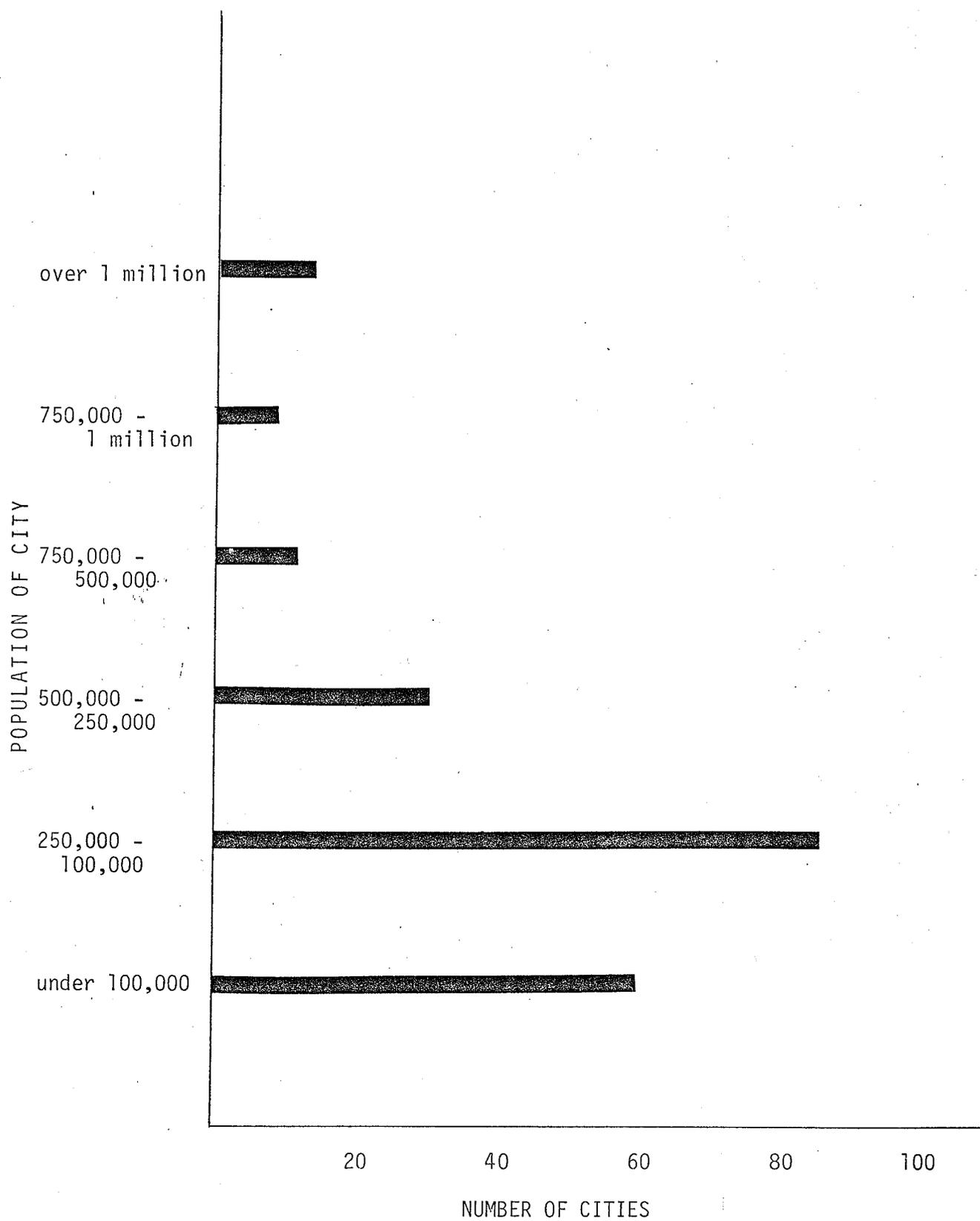
City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Washington, PA	19,827	Decline in the CBD was major problem due to the 4 shopping centers surrounding the downtown, high vacancy rates, and declining property values.	Project approach was to improve public spaces and renovate old downtown building fronts. Also included is a public plaza with fountain, clock, decorative lighting, and music; multi-level parking garage for 427 cars renovation of country courthouse, a mini-shopping center developed from a vacant department store and a senior citizen housing project within walking distance of the square.
White Plains, NY.	50,346	Serious deterioration has not really started in the area, but merchants see a need to modernize and improve the downtown. The City government supports this effort.	Central city mall on 4 levels will enclose two existing downtown stores, also to be included are shops, restaurants, cimenas, and meeting rooms. The mall has sparked interest in locating a hotel downtown also.
Yonkers, NY.	204,000	Major stores had closed leaving, old, unattractive, vacant store-fronts. Regional malls had encouraged commercial sprawl which damaged the downtown retail sector.	23 million civic complex which will include, 18 storey office building, underground garage, a new police command center, a new library, a county office building, a colonade and triangular pedestrian plaza, repaved walks, a fountain and refurbishing of store fronts throughout the Getty Square shopping district. Improvements are expected to encourage the development of 2500 units of middle and upper income housing above a riverfront railroad station, and two major department stores have located in the area.

City Name, Size (Improvement Cat.)	1970 Pop.	Problems Faced/Stated Goals of Projects	Proposed and Completed Projects
Yonkers, N.E. -cont...			The improvement and realignment of a major road, Nepperhen Ave. leading to Getty Square, is expected to channel more prosperous, residential Yonkers, westward to the waterfront.

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APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B  
DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. CITIES BY SIZE



Source: \_\_\_\_\_, The Odyssey World Atlas, (New York: Golden Press, 1967), p186.

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