

***A Comparative Assessment Of Downtown Urban
Design Policies And Practices Of Four Cities:
Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Minneapolis.***

By:

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***A Practicum
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of***

Master of City Planning

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PETER W. MANDRYK

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Abstract

This practicum is a comparative assessment of the urban design policies and practices of Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Minneapolis, and Winnipeg. The experiences of each city have been examined on the basis of policies, guidelines, plans and implementation methods, and compared to Winnipeg to provide assistance in the improvement of Downtown urban design practices.

The comparative assessment has shown that Winnipeg needs to make changes in Downtown design policy. There must be a direct plan of action, and commitment on behalf of Council to formulate concrete design policies. Winnipeg should consider a formal system of design review, and a design review panel independent of Council, and there must be a set of Downtown design guidelines put in place to improve the situation.

Vancouver is the best example studied. They have a balance between planning principles, implementation techniques, and political climate. Calgary and Regina do not have this same sense of balance, and there is a great deal political intervention in the planning process. Calgary has made mistakes in the past, and have made changes to improve the situation in their over built Downtown. Regina is a city that is in need of development, and any development is accepted because it is seen as good development. Minneapolis is the only American example. It has a distinct Downtown plan that has been updated to keep pace with changing needs of the city. Minneapolis does not use design review because they feel it would create a Downtown that is too rigidly designed.

DEDICATION

This practicum is dedicated to my wife Paula and my parents William and Lena Mandryk for their continued moral support and encouragement throughout my many years in university.

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I thank Geoff Bargh, Basil Rotoff, and Ross McGowan for their advice and guidance in the completion of this practicum.

GLOSSARY

Direct Control (D.C.) : Used in Calgary it is a urban design technique where a developer agrees to a contract with the city to develop a site of certain height, size, shape, materials, etc. A D.C. agreement is quite strict and does not allow for changes. The development must correspond exactly to the terms of the contract, and any changes must be renegotiated.

Downtown District (D.D.) : Downtown District of Vancouver, British Columbia.

DPA : Development Permit Application.

D Zone : Downtown Zone of Regina, Saskatchewan.

FAR, FSR : Floor Area Ratio or Floor Space Ratio is a figure obtained when the area of all floors of all buildings on a site (measured to the extreme outer limits of the site) is divided by the area of the site.

Heritage Density Transfer : In Calgary, when a developer does preservation work on an historic building he can earn bonus and transfer floor area to another site in another area of the City.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this practicum is to provide a comparative assessment of the downtown urban design policies and practices of three Canadian cities; Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, and one American example; Minneapolis, Minnesota and discuss how the City of Winnipeg can, or cannot, benefit from the experiences of these cities. The urban design practices of each city shall be discussed through the examination of the mechanics of implementation of policies, guidelines, etc. The effectiveness of each city's particular system will be determined through the use of the planners opinions on how successful their city has been in formulating urban design policies etc. In essence, urban design principles, their implementation, and their effectiveness for each of the above mentioned cities shall be examined, and used to explore possible lessons for the City of Winnipeg in its endeavors to achieve effective downtown urban design policies.

In 1986 the City of Winnipeg formulated a downtown zoning by-law which encompasses urban design policies. However, to date, the actual implementation of those urban design policies have been put only to limited use. This practicum will attempt to aid the City of Winnipeg in its endeavors to create an effective urban design policy through observations based both on the positive and negative experiences of urban design policy and implementation in the four cities studied.

There are several reasons that the four cities were chosen for study, and each shall be examined in turn. The main reason for selection was based on similar population size to Winnipeg, with the exception of Regina, Saskatchewan which is smaller.

Regina has a close proximity to Winnipeg, and has many of the same physical features, that is to say that both cities are prairie cities. Their climates are also similar in that they have long severe winters. They have the

same types of design problems such as pedestrian protection from the elements.

Calgary, Alberta was chosen primarily because it has a population that is quite similar to Winnipeg and can also be considered a 'winter city', although these are not as harsh as in Winnipeg or Regina.

The City of Vancouver, British Columbia, excluding the surrounding suburban areas, also has a population that is similar to Winnipeg. Vancouver was chosen not only because of the similar population size, but because this city has set the standard in Canada, if not North America, for design controls and urban design techniques.

Like Calgary and Vancouver, Minneapolis Minnesota is quite comparable to Winnipeg in population, and it is also a winter city in a prairie setting. In essence, Minneapolis shares many of the same physical and climatic features as Winnipeg and it will provide an example of an American approach to downtown design and control.

The approach that will be used will be in the form of case studies. Each city will be examined individually on the basis of their downtown urban design policies, practices and implementation techniques. In addition, the effect of the political organization and processes on urban design in each city will be compared.

Finally, the successes and failures will be assessed based on the personal statements of the planners in each city, (along with the literature that was collected.)

Winnipeg is examined in the same way, but recommendations based on the experiences of the cities that are being studied will be put forward. These may be useful to the City of Winnipeg.

The first chapter provides background information on what urban design is and its justification. It will discuss the aspects of urban design; policies, plans, guidelines, programs, political and administrative frameworks

that are required to produce quality urban design.

Chapter two examines how the City of Vancouver deals with downtown design controls. The principles, practices, and implementation techniques will be examined and assessed. The effect of city politics will also be examined.

Chapters three, four, five, and six deal with the cities of Calgary, Regina, Minneapolis, and Winnipeg respectively, in the same fashion as chapter two.

Chapter seven contains the comparisons between the study cities and Winnipeg. Each city is compared with Winnipeg. Conclusions will be drawn from the negative and positive experiences of each city. From this, recommendations are made for the City of Winnipeg that will, hopefully, provide a framework for formulating effective downtown design policies.

CHAPTER ONE
WHAT IS URBAN DESIGN? WHAT ARE ITS' PRODUCTS?
WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Urban design is "that branch of planning primarily concerned with the functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment and the ways in which those relationships can be consciously improved. As such, urban design is directly involved with many substantive areas of planning, including housing, transportation, open space, institutional services, commerce, and industry".¹

The practice of urban design is based on the assumption that the "physical environment can be designed, and that a desired physical form can be created through the use of various design methods."² It considers economic and political positions, and urban design is generally understood to function as "part of the public sector, where it can serve to stimulate, guide, and influence actions of the private sector".³

Urban design is not a new field, and it has existed as long as man has existed. However, what has changed is the "contexts and approaches of urban design".⁴ An important step in the evolution of urban design is the "industrial revolution in Europe which essentially directed the attention of design away from individual service to an autocratic ruler and towards a pluralistic 'public' of clients".⁵ Urban design has been known by various names at various times. It was referred to as "town planning" in Europe and

¹ International City Management Association. The Practice Of Local Government Planning (Washington D.C. 1979) p.354.

² *ibid.* p.354.

³ *ibid.* p.354.

⁴ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.2.

⁵ *ibid.* p.3.

later "city planning" and "urban planning" in the United States. "The field has also been shaped by major professional and theoretical trends such as, the city beautiful and city functional era; systems analysis; structuralism; the semiotic approaches of the 1960's; and most recently, the incrementalism and neorationalism of the 1970's".⁶

Urban design began to emerge as a distinct subfield of planning during the 1950's and 1960's. It was during this period that the huge urban renewal programs were taking place in many American cities, but urban design is not an outgrowth of these programs. Urban design became important because "the urban renewal projects created many new opportunities for large scale intervention in the city planning and building process. A negative side effect is that, urban design's close association with urban renewal programs tainted and continues to confuse the thought of many about the methods and potential of the field".⁷ A common error is to view urban design as only 'large scale architecture'. Some large scale architecture may be referred to as urban design, but large projects are certainly not the only focus of urban design.

At the turn of the century there was a definite failure of city or urban planning in many cities. By the 1960's and early 1970's, the consequences of this failure "redirected planning practice and theory to the root problems of public policy and political economy. There was a change of emphasis, and together with urban renewal, created a need for a new focus or discipline within the planning field: urban design".⁸

⁶ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.i.

⁷ *ibid.* p.3.

⁸ *ibid.* p.3.

Urban design contributes to the larger field of planning by providing tools to help create a balance between the pressures for new development and the pressures for conservation. In order to achieve such a balance, urban design activities are divided into three general categories: "the determination of what is to be protected, or conservation; the determination of where and how development investments are to be located, or development focus; and the determination of appropriate physical forms and types of use, or development character".⁹

Development focus forms a large part of urban design practice and is basically a continuation of large scale private sector development projects, building complexes, or infrastructural facilities. "It involves the strategic location of development and conservation investments so as to produce a positive environmental, social, and economic impact on adjoining uses. In a declining urban environment public and private investments can be located so as to make the most of positive impacts".¹⁰ This can be seen in the 'similarity' in size of most Downtowns. Most central business districts tend to "concentrate within 150 acres of land, or a twenty minute walk across dimension. Within this convenient walking range there is maximum opportunity for a variety of interrelated uses and services to economically support each other".¹¹

In areas experiencing development, there must be a consideration of locations that are non disruptive to the present environment (views, historic sites, etc.) and infrastructure. There is a correlation between development focus and conservation, and care must be taken "to protect adjacent lands, buildings and open space".¹²

⁹ International City Mgmt. Assoc. The Practice Of Local Government Planning. (Washington D.C. 1979) p.355.

¹⁰ *ibid.* p.355.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.356.

The conservation orientation focuses on environmental quality and is at the other end of the spectrum, often at odds with the real estate market's attempts to control it. "Conservation involves the use of nonrenewable resources to achieve a workable, comfortable environment. This includes consideration of almost every aspect of the environment: the conservation of valuable, non replaceable open land; the conservation of energy through efficient transportation options as well as through climate responsive building design; and the conservation of historic, scenic, or otherwise serviceable buildings and landscape".¹³

With regard to preservation in urban design, it can be seen that it is finally receiving the attention that it deserves. In the past, most planners and designers have focused solely on making new creations, and they have, in many instances ignored existing, older structures. "Older buildings provide a cohesive strength that is absent in much of the contemporary design going on today and they also establish an orderly framework for future development".¹⁴ There is good and bad preservation, and there are many visible examples of this. Compromise is a poor substitute for a thoughtful preservation program.

Development character establishes the appropriate quality of development with regard to "three dimensional physical form as well as to type and location of uses".¹⁵ Wherever possible, there should be a reduction of the disruptive impacts of new buildings inappropriately related to their surroundings. "Compatibility means that there should be visual harmony between existing and new development".¹⁶ Hedman views this as designing

¹² Intl. City Mgmt. Assoc. The Practice Of Local Government Planning. (Washington D.C. 1979) p.356.

¹³ *ibid.* p.354.

¹⁴ Hedman, Richard. Fundamentals Of Urban Design. (Washington D.C. 1984) p.8.

¹⁵ Intl. City Mgmt. Assoc. The Practice Of Local Government Planning. (Washington D.C. 1979) p.355.

¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 355.

in 'context'.

Through designing in context there should be "visual linkages between existing buildings, and any new project should continue to create this cohesive overall effect".¹⁷ The new building should enhance the character of the setting, and try to maintain the key unifying patterns that make a particular area unique. Visual linkages are not something only a professional could understand, but are simple basic features that most people can easily see for themselves. "A building need not copy the exact characteristics of its neighbors, but it must support and share the same fundamental characteristics with them".¹⁸ Areas that have a number of old buildings have a definite sense of cohesiveness and they work together to create an overall effect 'greater than the sum of the individual parts'. This unity should not be disturbed, and it should be treated very carefully because once unity is damaged, it may take years before the mistake can be redressed.

The character of the surrounding environment is not always considered by designers and many new projects seldom share any of the qualities of the established patterns of visual unity. As mentioned, designing in context has its merits, but in some cases designing in contrast can be quite exciting. Contrast can be seen in many ways. For example "buildings of civic importance are set apart by design and placement to underscore their importance. The practical reasoning for this is that a few special buildings provide accent and focus, but if all buildings seek to contrast the result is chaos".¹⁹

In the 60's and 70's contrast was seen to be overused and abused, and its effects have been destructive at times. Effective contrast is an

¹⁷ Hedman, Richard. Fundamentals Of Urban Design. (Washington D.C. 1984) p.9.

¹⁸ *ibid.* p.9.

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.11.

important design consideration, but the nature and limits of contrast is the key to making it work for cities and not against them. "If contrast is not used correctly and tastefully, there could be problems because like a large and easily visible infraction, many small infractions can be devastating, and can effect a larger area".²⁰

Development character is also determined by the mix, type, and intensity of use, and the "diversity of uses in close convenient proximity enhances the quality of life for cities and their inhabitants".²¹ A realistic approach to urban design must incorporate all three orientations, and urban design should aim for balance among the three. "Urban design has to be aimed to serve the entire public at large, not just a select few, because the key to a successful urban design process is the public".²²

Urban design is more than a beautification process, but an important function of planning that deals with the physical quality of the environment. There is more involved than the layout of buildings, the quality of the environment and the effect on the people using the space must also be considered. This is a hard task to undertake, because designers cannot always design every element and component of a particular site because in many areas, there is existing buildings that must be dealt with. The design must be made to fit into the existing environment so that there is not an overwhelming amount of conflict between the existing and the new.

"Urban design is that part of the planning process that deals with the physical quality of the environment, and is seen to extend from the exterior of individual buildings outward, with consideration of positive and negative effects of individual buildings on each other's interiors".²³ In other

²⁰ Hedman, Richard. Fundamentals Of Urban Design. (Washington D.C. 1984) p.11.

²¹ Intl. City Mgmt. Assoc. The Practice Of Local Government Planning. (Washington D.C. 1979) p.355.

²² Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.4.

words the spaces between buildings are essentially the domain of urban design, but the main question lies in how these spaces are to be designed?

Over the years planners have focused on the more physical aspects of design: internal pattern and image and external form and image, and for the most part neglected the environmental and functional aspects. "This could be due to the fact that the physical aspects are more oriented toward the form making area of urban design".²⁴ However, "the environmental aspects must be considered and such factors as wind, sun access, view, and natural elements such as trees and greenspaces, always contribute to successful urban design".²⁵

There are many variations in analysis of urban design, and this has lead to a variety of policies, plans, guidelines, and programs in different cities. However, "all cities base their urban design on some or all the following elements:

1. Land Use
2. Building Form and Massing
3. Circulation and Parking
4. Open Space
5. Pedestrian Ways
6. Activity Support
7. Signage 8. Preservation" ²⁶

Land use is one of the key elements of urban design because "it determines the basic two dimensional plans on which three dimensional spaces are created and functions are performed".²⁷

A land use plan that has been developed with land use policies determines the relationship between plan and policy and provides a basis for

²³ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.6.

²⁴ *ibid.* p.7.

²⁵ Whyte, William. The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces. (Washington D.C. 1980) p.37.

²⁶ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.8.

²⁷ *ibid.* p.8.

assigning appropriate functions to specific areas. Two major problems associated with land use policies have been: "(1) a lack of diversity of use in an area, and (2) a failure to consider environmental and natural physical factors".²⁸

In recent years, cities have become aware of the fact that the plan is not only the only product of design, and other products are needed for successful urban design, and they now realize there are "several frameworks that they can use to control the development of the city and at the same time create a high quality sensory environment".²⁹

Regardless of scale, urban design has two types of output: process oriented and project oriented. Developing an urban mall in the downtown is an example of a project oriented product. On the other hand, "developing design guidelines for downtown developments is a process oriented product, as is an urban design plan for the entire city. A realistic urban design process should include both types of products".³⁰

One major problem associated with the traditional practice of urban design has been its orientation toward project versus the combination of process and project. One shot planning was the project approach to urban design that envisioned the whole city as project and developed futuristic designs on paper. Shirvani likens this to designing a house or a building without much consideration of the necessary factors. The formulation and articulation of the physical development plan is the central focus of planning and physical development should be dealt with regardless of the type of products and scale. "This is a return to that old fashioned field of physical city or land use planning; but it is simultaneously more focused and yet more amply connected to other concerns, and given a sharp sense of humanistic

²⁸ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process, (New York, 1987) p.8.

²⁹ *ibid.* p.143.

³⁰ *ibid.* p.143.

purpose".³¹

The products of urban design can be classified into four major groups: policies, plans, guidelines, and programs.

"Design policies are indirect design methods that include regulatory means of implementation or investment programs and other means of causing direct designs to be implemented".³² In other words they are primarily a framework for the overall design process. Strategies can also be a part of framework and they should identify and demonstrate all the advantages the urban design may bring to an area and explain these advantages to the public.

"Policies are a framework for action but such a framework must be flexible enough to allow specific design to take place, but planners should not get lost in policy making. The major problem associated with policies is the policy maker is not usually a designer, nor has he consulted one".³³ Therefore, the policies are usually boring and uninteresting and could not produce a high quality urban environment. Few cities have produced a realistic set of urban design policies but many realize their value and are beginning to structure planning process within which such policies can result.

The plan is the most essential of all products of urban design. "Whether it is product or process oriented, the plan should be developed within the framework of the policies".³⁴ This is a key issue because in the past there has either been a plan without understanding the realities of the setting for that plan, or there have been too many policies and no plan.

Physical plans have had many problems, mostly centered around the relationships between the plan and the institutional process through which

31 Lynch, Kevin. The Image Of The City. (Cambridge, 1986) p.47.

32 Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.144.

33 *ibid.* p.144.

34 *ibid.* p.145.

the plan is implemented. It is clear that we need a plan that focuses on the physical development of the city, and there are many environmental constraints and demands to which a physical plan should be responsive. "The emphasis on process and plan attempts to bridge the gap between the plan and its implementation".³⁵

Developing urban design guidelines and urban design plans is not enough to address the specific elements of urban physical form. Planners have translated the urban design plan into specific guidelines to ensure quality at the microscale. "Guidelines do not necessarily result in more control or restriction but they do develop a design framework at the district, street, or even project scale".³⁶ They may also present alternative approaches for a specific design element such as a plaza, and they are intended to ensure built form quality.

A city is pieced together from many parts at different times, with each part having a different physical character and function. An urban design plan can deal with design issues in terms of the relationship among these parts. Plans will focus on specific areas of a city, districts of specific character and in need of specific treatment.

Some cities may choose design guidelines that focus on specific physical elements that could be designed and built in various parts of the city. They may even identify criteria for suitable location, but each city must decide the particular organization and style of guidelines that will accomplish the design goals of that city.

Guidelines are either prescriptive or performance oriented. Prescriptive guidelines attempt to establish a framework within which individual designers must work, as in floor area ratio requirements (FAR). For example a FAR in the downtown of 12 means that the floor area of a proposed building may not be more than 12 times the area of the site.

³⁵ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process, (New York, 1987) p.146.

³⁶ *ibid.* p.147.

"Performance guidelines provide the designer with various measures and criteria as well as methods of calculation, while leaving the concept of development up to the designer".³⁷ Instead of saying the FAR=12 is the limit, performatory guidelines might specify the amount of sunlight required in the open space and surrounding area, capacity of infrastructure to handle the additional load by the building, required landscaping, etc.

The advantage of performance guidelines is that they apply standard measurements to all sites but do not demand standard forms that may or may not be appropriate for all sites. Therefore the physical form can vary depending on the site location. "They are also more flexible than prescriptive techniques and have creativity and innovation in the hands of the designer and planner".³⁸

Urban design guidelines should include the following sections: "1) purpose and objectives of guidelines, 2) classification of major and minor issues to be covered, 3) applicability, and 4) examples illustrating some applications".³⁹ Each of these areas is important and if some areas are emphasized more than others, confusion between architects, developers, planners, etc. could result. Many guideline systems do not discuss applicability; and if they do, the criteria, conditions, and so on, are not fully explained or illustrated.

In order to achieve good design, sometimes a community will try using design guidelines, and they will hopefully prove to be effective. The problem with design guidelines is that they are often in the form of verbal injunctions, and most are loaded with good intentions. "In design, words can be quite slick and a verbally skilled person can be quite evasive, especially before an audience of non designers where it is easy to make token gestures fully meet the criteria. This type of thing goes on everyday, and a better

³⁷ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York, 1987) p.150.

³⁸ *ibid.* p.151.

³⁹ *ibid.* p.152.

solution would be an elective context of composed drawings and or photos of different buildings to serve as the model context for design purposes".⁴⁰

Examples of graphics, photos, etc, should; wherever possible, be included to help provide visual examples.

A design program usually refers to an implementation process or sometimes, to the overall process. Contrary to the belief of many planners and designers, planning and design do not end when construction is completed. If the process is not followed through after construction, many projects could develop into a problem area.

The administrative framework required for the implementation of urban design has two parts. "The first is the organization within which the design function is administered, and the second is the techniques cities use to implement design. Cities are presently organizing their administration of urban design according to the following orientations: city hall; third sector; and a combination of the two. All three types must work cooperatively with the private sector to ensure success."⁴¹

There are three types of city hall oriented models: "1) ad hoc, 2) dispersed, and 3) centralized. The ad hoc model is problem focused and temporary, and it may be a design committee or outside group, that helps the city for a certain period of time on a specific project".⁴² Within this process a team of professionals come to an area, study it, and make design recommendations. Public officials, and citizens are usually involved. Small communities that can't afford a permanent urban design group may be persuaded to use this model .

In the dispersed model, responsibility for urban design is shared by several city agencies. The redevelopment agency, planning department, and

⁴⁰ Hedman, Richard. Fundamentals of Urban Design, (Chicago 1984) p.21.

⁴¹ Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process, (New York 1987) p.158.

⁴² *ibid.* p.159.

transportation department, may all handle urban design matters, and each agency deals with the particular design issues that may fall within its general responsibilities. "An overall policy and commitment to design may be missing, and this may result in an unevenness in achieving urban design goals. Some examples of cities that use this model are: St. Paul, Baltimore, New York, Los Angeles, and Seattle".⁴³

Both the ad hoc and the dispersed models are in frequent use because they enable a city to move toward and participate in urban design before making a commitment to a centralized agency.

The centralized model is the most efficient and administratively productive of the city hall oriented models. "Here, the urban design function is under the control and supervision of a single office. This can be seen in: San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee".⁴⁴

Regardless of which model a city chooses to administer urban design, cooperation with the private sector is always critical to the success of urban design efforts. "Because of budgetary restraints private money must be sought to build and rebuild the city. A partnership between the city and the private sector is necessary because it can save time and problems for both parties, and can create a better product in a shorter time".⁴⁵ All in all, the most efficient urban design model is a highly centralized one that maintains district communication and coordination with the private sector.

The ground rules for successful urban design processes are: "a well established planning program, a clear statement of purpose, a procedural description, a well developed financial program, citizen participation and lobbying".⁴⁶

43 Shirvani, Hamid. The Urban Design Process. (New York 1987) p.161.

44 *ibid.* p.162.

45 *ibid.* p.162.

46 *ibid.* p.162.

CHAPTER 2
THE DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES
OF VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

This chapter will examine how the City of Vancouver deals with urban design in its downtown area. It focuses on the urban design objectives and principles, the techniques of urban design, the political process with regard to urban design, and the administrative process for implementation.

In the mid 1970's, there was a reaction against development in Vancouver on several fronts. First of all, the citizens wanted to know more about the types of development that were taking place in their city. Secondly, the design profession wanted more flexibility because the rules as they stood in the 1970's, were seen as being too rigid to allow for good design and good development. In response to this the city developed a comprehensive system of zoning which allowed for flexibility in design, administered by city planning staff as well as guidelines which are contained in two volumes titled LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES. The city was divided into various districts, with each district having its own set of design guidelines which are accompanied by illustrations and descriptions how the developer could achieve maximum benefits from the zoning by-laws. "The LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES are revised and updated occasionally, but not as often as they should be".⁴⁷ The guidelines contained in the two volumes are not by-laws, and they only serve to guide the developer in the proper design direction. The downtown guidelines allow for flexibility, and in several areas, a .75 FAR can almost be doubled to a 1.5 FAR if the developer follows the guidelines that have been set out for him. "Guidelines must be examined and balanced one against the other, and compromises have to be made by the

⁴⁷ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver. Interview, November 18, 1988.

developer and the City in order to have good design".⁴⁸ Vancouver does not believe in a prescriptive method of planning and design because the City feels it would be too rigid, and would lead to the lowest common denominator in design.

Ray Spaxman, Director of Planning, feels that "up to now, the design controls have been fairly effective with an average of seven out of ten projects seen as successful developments".⁴⁹ From an urban design point of view Vancouver relies on the architect and the developer to interpret the guidelines to the best of their ability, and this is sometimes a very difficult process. The design process is seen as a combined team effort, between planners, architects, landscape architects, etc., and if one of these people cannot interpret the guidelines effectively it will not produce a satisfactory development. Good design cannot be legislated, and good design cannot be achieved through guidelines alone. In essence, it comes down to the ability of the architect working within the specified guidelines, to produce good design.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* November 18, 1988.

⁴⁹ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver. Interview , November 18, 1988.

Urban Design Objectives And Principles

The Downtown District (DD) is the regional centre of commercial development, and it contains the greatest concentration of the working and shopping population within the region. "The well being of this concentration of people requires more than the customary regulatory mechanisms in order that the buildings, the open spaces, the streets, the transportation systems and other components of the urban scene can be arranged appropriately for the benefit of the general public."⁵⁰

"The main intent of the Official Development Plan and the accompanying guidelines, is as follows:

- (1) to improve the general environment of the Downtown District as an attractive place in which to live, work, shop and visit;
- (2) to ensure that all buildings and developments in the DD meet the highest standards of design and amenity for the benefit of all users of the downtown;
- (3) to provide for flexibility and creativity in the preparation of design proposals;
- (4) to encourage more people to live within the DD;
- (5) to support the objectives of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, to decentralize some office employment to other parts of Greater Vancouver by discouraging office developments considered inappropriate in the DD".⁵¹

This Official Development Plan By-law provides the general

⁵⁰ City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.4.

⁵¹ *ibid.* p.4.

framework for the preparation of development plans for all individual buildings or complexes of buildings.

For many years only commercial (with some light industrial) uses have been permitted throughout the Downtown. In order to increase the variety, amenity and safety of Downtown, well designed residential uses will be both permitted and encouraged throughout the Downtown. A mix of uses within single developments or in neighbouring sites is also permitted and encouraged.

According to Section 1 of the Downtown Development Plan By-law, "the following uses may be permitted, subject to such conditions and regulations as may be prescribed by the Development Permit Board:

- (a) office commercial;
- (b) retail commercial;
- (c) other commercial;
- (d) residential;
- (e) hotels;
- (f) light industrial;
- (g) public and institutional;
- (h) social, recreational and cultural;
- (i) parks and open space;
- (j) parking area and parking garage".⁵²

Section 2 of the Downtown Development Plan refers to "retail use continuity" which is the provision and permanent maintenance of continuous pedestrian oriented retail store type display windows or other equal and suitable display as may be approved by the Development Permit Board.

Vancouver's Downtown is and will remain the highest density commercial area within the City and within the Greater Vancouver Region. "This will be based on the following objectives:

- (a) participation with and encouragement of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's policies for Regional Town Centres;

⁵² City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.7.

- (b) encouragement of residential use within the Downtown;
- (c) encouragement of a mixture of uses in single developments; and
- (d) high standards of design in the Downtown".⁵³

In order to help an applicant plan and design a development and to guide City officials in assessing DPA's, (Development Permit Applications), design guidelines have been established by council. The guidelines vary from area to area (but only the DD guidelines will be discussed) and must be consulted along with the by-laws when preparing a DPA.

The Downtown Design Guidelines for Vancouver prescribe the general criteria for new development and form the basis for the preparation of, and approval of development proposals. The design guidelines are also intended to encourage increased awareness of the immediate and overall environment. It is important to note that the densities listed in the Official Development Plan are maximums and not always necessarily attainable. "In order to achieve the optimum density for any particular development, these guidelines will require close scrutiny and analysis by the architect and developer."⁵⁴

The design guidelines replace the previous yard requirements, which were the light angle controls and daylight obstruction angle requirements associated with regulatory Zoning District Schedules. The design guidelines allow for greater flexibility and variation, and a more interesting design is thus possible. In essence, "the design guidelines are intended as a quality control basis upon which to base design decisions and judgements".⁵⁵ The design guidelines do not require literal interpretation, but they will be taken into account in the consideration of a DPA. The Development Permit

⁵³ City of Vancouver. Downtown Design Guidelines. (Vancouver 1985) p.8.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* p.1.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p.8.

Board may, in its discretion, "refuse or require modification to a DPA proposal, for failure to meet the standards of these guidelines in whole or in part".⁵⁶

The actual design guidelines for the Downtown District (DD) are divided into five sections. Section 1 deals with public open space, and the general objective is to provide varied, accessible, and, where appropriate, inter connected open spaces to be used by a wide range of people throughout the year. "These spaces should provide areas for resting, and visual relief in terms of landscaping, also spaces for group activities, and in some cases spaces for larger public gatherings. The guidelines for public open space cover the following areas:

- (A) Public Open Spaces at or near grade
- (B) Semi-Public Open Spaces at or near Grade
- (C) Semi-Public Open Spaces Below Grade
- (D) Semi-Public Open Spaces Above Grade and on Low Roof Levels
- (E) Open Space Links"⁵⁷

Social and Cultural Amenities are covered in Section 2, and the general objective of this section is to provide social and cultural amenities in addition to the various public space requirements, in order to achieve a vital downtown. It is also an attempt to preserve as much of the historic townscape of the City as possible and to preserve structures which feature materials and spaces that would be difficult to achieve today.

Where viable communities exist in Downtown, their presence should be maintained and reinforced. These communities are sometimes non-residential such as the financial community in the area of Hastings and Howe, or the shopping retail communities which derive their character from the predominance of an ethnic group. To strengthen these communities, it is advisable to encourage the presence of people working or living Downtown

⁵⁶ City of Vancouver. Downtown Design Guidelines. (Vancouver 1985) p.1.

⁵⁷ ibid. p.4.

during the full 24 hour day and to attract a wide range of visitors and users throughout. "The guidelines for Social and Cultural Amenities cover the following areas:

- (a) Social and Cultural Amenities
- (b) Preservation and Conservation
- (c) Mixed Uses on a Single Site".⁵⁸

Section 3 deals with Views, and the City has set specific guidelines to protect and, create new views from the pedestrian levels of any public and semi-public space. Views should include the following:

- (a) Views of the mountains and the water from street level and especially from street ends ending near the waterfront.
- (b) Views of landmark buildings, art works, and special landscape features of Downtown.
- (c) Views and vantage points for viewing major pedestrian activity, and views of the most important activities of the City, such as the Port.⁵⁹

Environmental considerations such as provision of sunlight, weather protected pedestrian routes, and relatively wind free open spaces are covered in Section 4. These types of criteria are necessary in new building design and within the total urban environment to ensure continual pedestrian use and a vital Downtown. "The general objective of this section is to show that the man made environment of Downtown should be landscaped wherever possible in order to create a balance between man made and natural forms".⁶⁰

"This section is divided into the following areas:

- (A) Sun and Shade
- (B) Rain and Snow
- (C) Wind and Calm
- (D) Noise Conditions
- (E) Introduction of Nature".⁶¹

⁵⁸ City of Vancouver. Downtown Design Guidelines. (Vancouver 1985) p.9.

⁵⁹ *ibid* p.9.

⁶⁰ *ibid*. p.11.

The Physical Design of the DD is dealt with in Section 5. The general objectives of this section are to have a physical urban environment in the DD of a very high quality. New structures should observe energy conserving principles and include such related design features as are possible within the economic constraints of the building. "The mass and height of new developments should minimize negative environmental effects such as are outlined under: wind, sun shade, view, and other guideline categories. Regardless of total heights, new developments should create a pedestrian development along their major sidewalks which is attractive to, and in scale with the pedestrian".⁶² "This section is divided into the following areas:

- (a) Architectural Design
- (b) Bulk and Height
- (c) Relationship to the Immediate Area".⁶³

Vancouver pays a lot of attention to the pedestrian, and there is a set of guidelines for the DD called Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection. The Planning Department in Vancouver would like to see people at ground level as opposed to under or above ground. Weather protection has been of concern to Vancouver citizens for many years. "This is understandable, as measurable precipitation in the form of rain and snow occurs on the average about 40% of the days of the year. Weather protection is therefore an important factor affecting pedestrian movement and public amenity within the central area of the City".⁶⁴

In the last few years there has been much concern expressed by the Development Permit Board, the Urban Design Panel, and others involved in

⁶¹ City of Vancouver. Downtown Design Guidelines. (Vancouver 1985) p.14.

⁶² *ibid.* p.14.

⁶³ *ibid.* p.16.

⁶⁴ City of Vancouver. Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection. (Vancouver 1986) p.1.

the DPA approval process, regarding the need for a clear understandable policy towards the encouragement of pedestrian weather protection as part of development within the DD of the City.

"There is a need for better clarification and coordination of policy guidelines for the DD as a whole, and for the various sub areas within it, so that City policy towards the provision of pedestrian weather protection as part of DPA's may be made more explicit and understandable to all concerned".⁶⁵ The Downtown Design Guidelines make mention of rain and snow protection, but they are quite general in nature.

The Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection Guidelines are a more detailed set of guidelines, that are the City's attempt at making pedestrian weather protection a part of the DPA process.

"The objectives of these guidelines are:

(A) Weather Protection:

- (i) The Development of a comprehensive continuous pedestrian weather protection system in the form of awnings, canopies, building recesses and arcades, along significant pedestrian public streets and through private development areas.
- (ii) The provision of adequate weather protection for pedestrians at significant waiting and gathering places

(B) Livability and Amenity:

- (i) The encouragement of greater movement of people on foot and by public transit within the DD.
- (ii) The emphasis of the pedestrian function of public streets and the provision of a supportive environment for such activities as window shopping, and other active pedestrian street uses.

(C) Shopping Area Improvement:

- (i) The further enhancement of the appearance of special pedestrian oriented shopping districts which already have an established character due to the presence of small scale awnings and canopies.

⁶⁵ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

- (ii) The improvement of the economic viability and advantages of established shopping areas, by creating areas which are useable in all weather without having to go underground".⁶⁶

The Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection Guidelines are easy to understand, and are accompanied by drawings of protective canopies and awnings that are quite easily interpreted. The sketches all contain people walking and shopping in the DD, and show the need for such amenities in a City such as Vancouver that receives a large amount of precipitation.

⁶⁶ City of Vancouver. Central Area Pedestrian Weather Protection. (Vancouver 1986) p.2.

Techniques Of Urban Design In Vancouver

In Vancouver, zoning regulates the development of property in the city by encouraging compatible land uses and buildings. "Zoning reflects Council policy based on community goals for the future of the city and its neighbourhoods".⁶⁷ Vancouver is divided into many zoning districts, each shown on a map called the Zoning District Plan. The Zoning and Development By-law gives, for each district, a list of permitted uses and regulations. Some regulations are contained in official or area development plans which apply to certain comprehensive development districts.

"The regulations in each district control land use and the location, height, bulk, floor area and design of buildings. They also set parking and loading requirements, building lines, setbacks and yards and open spaces".⁶⁸

In each district, many uses are permitted outright, but in some cases, many uses are conditional and therefore subject to certain conditions. Some regulations may be varied or relaxed, usually within certain limits. "Conditions and limits of relaxation of regulations are usually stated in the by-laws but are set specifically by those City officials charged by Council with deciding upon development permit applications--The Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board".⁶⁹

In August 1983, the City of Vancouver created by-law 4911 to amend by-law 3575, being the Zoning and Development by-law. This amendment allowed for the establishment of a rezoned Comprehensive Development District to be known and described as the "Downtown District

⁶⁷ City of Vancouver. Zoning And Development Permits In Vancouver. (Vancouver 1987) p.1.

⁶⁸ *ibid.* p.1.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* p.1.

(DD)".⁷⁰ (See areas outlined in black on map 2.1 appendix)

The only uses permitted within the said areas and the only uses for which development permits may be issued, as prescribed in detail in the "Official Development Plan By-law No. 4912, are:

- (a) commercial uses;
- (b) residential uses;
- (c) institutional uses;
- (d) industrial uses (light);
- (e) parks and open spaces;
- (f) public uses and facilities;
- (g) other ancillary permitted uses".⁷¹

"Entrances to buildings, including offices, hotels, banks, financial institutions, shall not exceed a total of 25 feet of frontage unless they otherwise provide approved retail continuity".⁷² Subject to such conditions, regulations and design guidelines may be determined by the Development Permit Board: (and where indicated on map 2.2 appendix), "retail and similar uses shall be required on the street frontages so identified; and shall be encouraged on the other street frontages so identified".⁷³

In order to increase the residential population, and stimulate mixed use within the DD, Vancouver has a bonusing system that promotes the substitution of residential floor area for non residential floor area. However, the density for residential use cannot exceed 3.00 in any area of the DD. (see map 2.3 appendix) In Vancouver "floor space ratio" or FSR, is the figure obtained when the area of all floors of all buildings on the site (measured to the extreme outer limits of the site) is divided by the area of the site.

There are bonuses for a provision of social and recreational facilities where such a need has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Development Permit Board. In such an instance, the Board may authorize, for

⁷⁰ City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.1.

⁷¹ *ibid.* p.2.

⁷² *ibid.* p.7.

⁷³ *ibid.* p.7.

any building which includes one or more of such facilities, "an increase in the permitted FSR or density of a building, subject to prior approval of City Council".⁷⁴ The types of uses that are included here are to provide the DD with social and recreational amenities "primarily for the enjoyment of downtown residents and employees. These include:

- (1) facilities which provide opportunities for physical fitness;
- (2) facilities for general recreation;
- (3) facilities which provide a service to the public".⁷⁵

Some ancillary facilities such as: saunas; tennis courts; swimming pools; libraries; and other uses of a public service, social or recreational nature, are excluded from the floor area measurement, "provided that the area of such excluded facilities does not exceed 20 percent of allowable floor space ratio or 10,000 square feet, whichever is the lesser".⁷⁶

In determining the increase in floor area or density that may be authorized, the "Development Permit Board shall consider:

- (a) the construction cost of the facility;
- (b) any costs to the developer of continuing maintenance required for the facility;
- (c) the rental value of the increased floor area;
- (d) the value of any authorized relaxation of other restrictions".⁷⁷

If social or recreational facilities meet the required criteria, "such facilities shall be preserved in the public domain by way of a registered agreement and operated by the City or its delegates".⁷⁸

⁷⁴ City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.15.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* p.15.

⁷⁶ *ibid.* p.15.

⁷⁷ *ibid.* p.16

⁷⁸ *ibid.* p.16.

Vancouver has an abundance of greenspace areas in many of the DD back lane areas, along with fountains, sunspaces, atriums, and the like. Because of the abundance of such public spaces, one would think that the City bonuses for such amenities, but this is not the case in Vancouver.

Greenspace developments in back lanes are seen as positive developments, but the Zoning By-law for the DD does not permit the City to bonus for these types of spaces. Bonusing is only provided for specified uses that there are a specific need for, such as day care centres etc. "There is no bonusing for greenspaces, because in most cases, developers will provide these types of amenities on their own irregardless of the bonus situation".⁷⁹ Many cities give bonuses for private open space, but this is not so in Vancouver. They feel that if there is a need for an open space, it should be provided for in the zoning.

"This is the case because if bonuses were offered for such things every development would have small open spaces, and many would begin to look alike. This would not necessarily meet the need in a comprehensive sense for the whole of the Downtown".⁸⁰ This is an example of a situation where the City of Vancouver may prefer an enclosed atrium than open space, or no trees rather than trees on a particular project because the city is seen as "an experience of contrasting elements, where you go through a forest and then appear into an urban space bathed in sunshine with no trees".⁸¹

Facilities or areas which contribute to physical amenity, such as parks, plazas, arcades or ornamental elements in the landscape, are not included. "These items and others of a similar nature will be provided where appropriate, as part of the design of the buildings".⁸² If a developer does not

⁷⁹ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* November 18, 1988.

⁸¹ *ibid.* November 18, 1988.

⁸² City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.15.

conform to the agreed design, and does not provide public amenities as they are needed, the City may choose to stop the proposed development until an agreement can be reached, and the design and the amenities conform to the needs of the Downtown. However, most developers prefer to have good design, and will provide the proper amenities to improve and enhance the DD environment.

Vancouver pays a lot of attention to building height in their Zoning and Development By-law. Map 2.4 (appendix) shows the height limits in the DD, however, the Development Permit Board may, in its discretion, permit buildings which exceed the prescribed height limits, after taking particular account of the overshadowing, view obstruction, and other environmental criteria set out in the Design Guidelines. In no case, however, shall the maximum height exceed 450 feet. "This is done to make the downtown area a more pleasing place for the pedestrians, to set up and protect view corridors, and to ensure that new development is compatible with that existing in each of the many areas of the DD".⁸³

⁸³ City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.12.

Political Climate With Regard To Urban Design In Vancouver

In Vancouver, the City Council is not normally involved in the development permit process. However, Council Committees are periodically called upon to assess major DPA's and advise Council and the Board or the Director of Planning in some cases. "The Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board will occasionally refer an application directly to Council for advice before making a decision where a policy matter is involved or where a development proposal is very contentious".⁸⁴ In fact there have been cases in Vancouver where the "Mayor and Council have gotten involved in zoning issues and have actually turned down proposals because it did not conform to the design guidelines and Zoning By-law".⁸⁵

The political climate in Vancouver allows the Planning Department and the Urban Design Panel to handle the majority of the planning and urban design issues. There appears to be a balance between planning principles, implementation, and the politicians, and this creates an environment that allows for maximum output from the Planning Department with a minimum amount of intervention from politicians. The system is working and there are many examples of good design in Vancouver, however, the system is not perfect because there are also examples of bad design.

⁸⁴ City of Vancouver. The Development Permit Process. (Vancouver 1987) p.7.

⁸⁵ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

Administrative Process For Implementation

Vancouver employs a system of Discretionary Zoning whereby the design, shape, form, etc. of any development are negotiated with the developer before approval is granted. "The goal of this zoning system is to produce a livable downtown environment for visitors, workers and residents".⁸⁶ Vancouver is able to regulate urban design under the Provincial Municipal Act through a System of Development Permits. This System of Development Permits really is most often used when they are dealing with major developments. A major development is one which, because of its location, scale or context, may have a significant impact on its surroundings. "Most major development permit applications (DPA's) are reviewed by the Development Permit Board. Board meetings are open to the public and invite public participation in the review process. Other DPA's are reviewed by the Director of Planning".⁸⁷

This Development Permit Process has several important steps in regard to urban design issues. The first step is the pre-design conference. This is a meeting arranged at the request of a prospective applicant with a Development Planner. Representatives from other City Departments may also attend such meetings as required. "The purpose of the conference is to establish the basic issues affecting a development proposal".⁸⁸ It also provides the developer with a clear understanding of all important by-laws, regulations and guidelines as well as general urban design considerations that are applicable to the proposed development.

At the pre-design conference, advice from other City departments

⁸⁶ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

⁸⁷ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.1.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* p.3.

is also co-ordinated through the Development Planner, as required. Prospective applicants are encouraged to bring to the pre-design conference as much information about the site and its surroundings as possible. This information should include: rough sketches, survey plans and photographs of the site and its surroundings. "Applications are advised to familiarize themselves with relevant by-laws, plans, policies and guidelines prior to the conference. This will ensure that the discussion with staff at the pre-design conference will be both meaningful and beneficial".⁸⁹ In essence, the pre-design conference is aimed at reducing the uncertainty of the many by-laws, guidelines, plans, policies, etc. that are prevalent in the discretionary zoning system in Vancouver.

Major Development Permit Applications (DPA's) normally entail a two step process. First of all, there is a preliminary DPA, which is optional, and is intended to give approval in principle to the basic concepts of a proposal. It is then followed by a complete DPA. The preliminary DPA determines the appropriateness of the proposed use, density, form, siting, massing, relationship and impact of the proposal within its context. Once established, such determination forms the basis for the complete DPA, which requires detailed design development and technical compliance with applicable by-laws. "Municipal requirements, such as street and lane dedications and right-of-ways or easements, are also identified in the approval of the principle".⁹⁰

A preliminary DPA is strongly recommended as a means of establishing the basic principles for approval of a detailed DPA. "Preliminary DPA's require less detailed information than complete DPA's, and the permit application fee for a preliminary DPA is also considerably lower than that of a complete DPA".⁹¹

⁸⁹ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.3.

⁹⁰ *ibid.* p.4.

The complete DPA, when approved with all conditions satisfied, results in the issuance of a development permit, which authorizes the use or development of property in accordance with the City's zoning regulations. Any minor change in the layout, siting, massing, and external design of a project subsequent to the issuance of a development permit usually requires approval of an amendment to the development permit. Such minor amendments are usually dealt with directly by the Director of Planning. "Significant changes in use, density, height or design will likely require a new DPA, which is generally referred back to the Development Permit Board for review".⁹²

Major DPA's in Vancouver are processed in the following manner. First of all, as mentioned, there is the pre-design conference that is held with a Development Planner to establish basic issues for consideration and scheduling. Other City departments are contacted and involved as required. Next, the DPA is filed at the Zoning Information Counter, where the fee is paid, and the DPA checklist is filled out. It is here, that the Plan Checker reviews the history of the application and circulates drawings to applicable City departments. "While individual departments may discuss the proposal with the applicant, all application information is submitted to and disseminated by the Plan Checker".⁹³ (see DPA checklist appendix)

The applicant is now required to erect a notification sign on the site. Adjacent property owners and neighbours are notified by letter from the City, advising of the application, giving a brief description, and indicating where further information can be obtained.

The Urban Design Panel reviews all major and many other

⁹¹ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.4.

⁹² *ibid.* p.5.

⁹³ *ibid.* p.4.

significant development permit applications and provides urban design advice to the Development Permit Board or the Director of Planning. The Panel is comprised of eight members, two of whom are the Director of Planning and the City Building Inspector. The remaining six members are appointed by City Council as follows: "three members of the Architectural Institute of B.C.; one member of the Association of Professional Engineers of B.C.; a landscape architect; and the Chairman of the Vancouver City Planning Commission or his alternate".⁹⁴ In Vancouver, the Urban Design Panel was created by by-law, and the recommendations made by this Panel to the Development Permit Board are purely advisory. However, they are considered quite heavily, and in fact, are used as conditions to be satisfied for permit approval.

The design review process in Vancouver is a formal one, but the Planning Department and the City Council is quite proud of the fact that there is great enthusiasm in the architectural profession in B.C. The professional architects that are appointed to the Urban Design Panel are put forward by their prospective firms, and this seen to be part of the corporate responsibility that is prevalent in the architectural community in Vancouver. "The architects on the Panel are seen to be the best that are available".⁹⁵

The duties and guidelines for the Panel are specified in the Urban Design Panel By-law No. 4772, Schedule 4. (see appendix)

The Urban Design Panel is also involved with the Planning Department in developing urban design guidelines in the City of Vancouver.

After the design review has been completed Citizens' Planning Committees can get involved. "These committees have been established by resolution of Council from time to time in conjunction with local area planning programs, and they also review significant DPA's in their areas while

⁹⁴ City of Vancouver. The Development Permit Process. (Vancouver 1987) p.6.

⁹⁵ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver. Interview, November 18, 1988.

their programs are underway and occasionally for some time after the programs are concluded. These recommendations go to the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board (through the Development Permit Staff Committee). These meetings are open to applicants as well as the general public".⁹⁶

In certain historic areas there are permanent Citizens' Planning Committees. Several examples of these are: Chinatown Historic Planning Committee; Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee; and the First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel. "These committees also review DPA's in their areas and make their recommendations to the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board (through the Development Permit Staff Committee)".⁹⁷ (see Diagram 2.1 appendix)

Where heritage issues are involved, the Heritage Advisory Committee provides design advice to the Director of Planning , the Development Permit Board and Council. The Committee reviews all significant DPA's where heritage issues are involved and reviews all applications where buildings or sites are designated by Council under the Provincial Heritage Conservation Act. "Like the Citizens' Planning Committees, the Heritage Advisory Committee forwards its recommendations to the Development Permit Board (through the Development Permit Staff Committee). These meetings are also open to applicants as well as the general public".⁹⁸

The Development Permit Staff Committee is an inter-departmental City staff committee which reviews all major DPA's before they are dealt with by the Development Permit Board.

The committee receives presentations from a Development Planner of each application which has been scheduled for the next regular Development Permit Board meeting. "The Committee then reviews a detailed

⁹⁶ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.6.

⁹⁷ *ibid.* p.6.

⁹⁸ *ibid.* p.6.

draft report on the application which has been prepared by the Development Planner and the Plan Checker in conjunction with other City staff".⁹⁹

A typical report includes: a project description and statistical analysis; a full-scale design review by the Development Planner, with recommendation; comments and recommendations from Engineering, Social Planning, Permits and Licenses, Health, Fire and other City departments, Urban Design Panel and Citizens' Planning Committee reviews and recommendations; a summary of public notification responses; the Committee's review; and an overall summary of the major issues for consideration, together with a report summary. The report is concluded with a recommendation from the Committee to the Board. Appended to each report are copies of the applicant's design rationale and reduced plans, elevations and sections illustrating the project.

"Upon review by the Staff Committee, the staff report is amended and becomes a report to the Committee. The Committee's report is then finalized, signed by the Committee Chairman, and transmitted to the Clerk of the Board. The Clerk prepares the agenda for the next Board meeting and forwards all reports on DPA's to the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel members and all applicants".¹⁰⁰

When a DPA gets this far in the process it is ready to be presented to the Development Permit Board. This Board is comprised of: the Director of Planning, who is the Chairman; the City Engineer; and the Director of Social Planning. "They make all the decisions but are given advice in all deliberations by an Advisory Panel consisting of seven members appointed by Council. Two members represent the development industry, two the design profession and three the general public. As advisors to the Board, Panel members are polled for their opinions but cannot vote".¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.7.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* p.7.

All of the Development Permit Board meetings that deal with DPA's are open to the public. Applicants are present to discuss the application, and neighbours and others interested in the development may also attend and make presentations.

The Board first receives a presentation from the Development Planner of the Development Permit Staff Committee report. The Board then hears from the applicant and all interested members of the public. A discussion then takes place among members of the Board and Advisory Panel. Throughout the discussion, questions of all participants are dealt with through the Chairman. The Chairman then summarizes the debate and polls the Advisory Panel members for their advice. The three Board members then conclude the debate and a motion is made and voted on and the decision of the Board is announced. Decisions usually involve an approval subject to conditions, or a refusal. "The Board may, however, defer an application to allow an applicant the opportunity to produce further supporting documentation or to undertake substantial design development. Occasionally an applicant is referred to Council for advice before a decision is confirmed. When all conditions of a DPA are fulfilled, a development permit is issued by the Director of Planning".¹⁰² If a permit is rejected, an appeal can be filed with the Board of Variance within fifteen days of the date on which the development permit or the notice of refusal is issued.

Major DPA's take longer to review and process than minor DPA's because of the more detailed reviews by all City departments, the Urban Design Panel, the Development Permit Staff Committee and the Development Permit Board. These reviews, including a usually mandatory notification of neighbouring property owners, require an average of:

- 8 weeks for a preliminary DPA;

¹⁰¹ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments.
(Vancouver 1987) p.7.

¹⁰² *ibid.* p.8.

- 10 weeks for a complete DPA without prior approval of a preliminary DPA;
- 8 weeks for a complete DPA preceded by a preliminary DPA.

"Complete DPA's with preliminary approval are often referred to the Director of Planning for approval when applications are straightforward, high quality, and not controversial. Two to three weeks may be saved in this process. These processing times do not include the applicant's response and preparation time between applications".¹⁰³

Applications submitting major proposals are encouraged to obtain preliminary approval before submitting a complete application. In this way, the conceptual issues surrounding a particular development proposal are fixed at the preliminary stage. Details of the development are then resolved at the complete stage. "Since the cost of preparing detailed complete drawings and architectural models is expensive and time consuming, a preliminary application involving simple drawings and massing models is a useful means of ensuring that the fundamental aspects of a proposal are acceptable, rather than spending time, money and effort on a complete proposal which may be refused on some basic issue".¹⁰⁴

The zoning district schedules and official and area development plans that apply to many areas of the City contain discretionary elements. "Many of the listed uses are conditional and the by-laws allow for relaxations and incentives that permit developments to be planned and designed to be more compatible with existing developments in the neighbourhood and to encourage developers to include amenities that benefit the community".¹⁰⁵

Development permit applications will be made in accordance with

¹⁰³ City of Vancouver. Development Permits for Major Developments. (Vancouver 1987) p.16.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* p.16.

¹⁰⁵ City of Vancouver. The Development Permit Process. (Vancouver 1987) p.8.

the procedures in the Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575. The consideration of any development permit application will be based on the regulations and requirements of the Official Development Plan and upon such guidelines as Council may from time to time determine, including design guidelines. A significant degree of flexibility is given to architects and others in the preparation of development proposals. A significant degree of discretion is also given to the Development Permit Board in the interpretation of regulations, policies and guidelines. "Guidelines approved by Council form an integral part of the development control procedure for the DD. In approving any development permit application within the District, the Development Permit Board shall be satisfied that the spirit and intent of such guidelines has been fulfilled".¹⁰⁶

With regard to interpretation, a distinction is drawn in this By-law between "regulations and interpretive requirements as follows:

- (1) Regulations are set out for the land use; maximum standards for building density in terms of floor space ratio; maximum standards for parking and minimum requirements for loading.
- (2) Interpretive requirements are set out with respect to the permitted height of buildings, social and recreational amenities and facilities".¹⁰⁷

The Development Permit Board may relax the provisions of this plan in any case where literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship. "In granting any relaxation, the Board shall have regard to the intent and policies of this Plan, and other such policies as Council may from time to time determine, including design guidelines".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ City of Vancouver. The Development Permit Process. (Vancouver 1987) p.5.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* p.5.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* p.5.

The Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board, may relax any of the provisions of this plan where literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship in carrying out any restoration or renovation of buildings or sites on the Vancouver Heritage Inventory. Any development permit issued shall specify the heritage aspects of the building or site that merit the relaxation authorized by this section.

The Development Permit Board may, for any development which is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Inventory dated August 1986, authorize an increase in the permitted floor space ratio or density of the site, subject to prior approval by City Council.

"In determining the increase in floor area or density that may be authorized, the Development Permit Board shall consider:

- (a) the cost of the heritage-related restoration;
- (b) the value of the increased floor area; and
- (c) the impact upon livability and environmental quality of the neighbourhood".¹⁰⁹

Vancouver has become one of the best designed cities in Canada, and North America for several reasons. First of all their method of discretionary zoning allows the City and the developer to negotiate the type development that will take place. Negotiation is the key here, and in most cases the developer will strive to conform to the Zoning By-law in the DD "because if it does not meet the guidelines that are set out, the City feels that it probably is not worth developing".¹¹⁰ In several cases DPA's have been rejected because the developer would not conform, but in most cases the developer will conform to save time and money in the Development Permit Process of Vancouver. Developers seem to have a different attitude in Vancouver, and most go out of their way to produce quality developments that

¹⁰⁹ City of Vancouver. Zoning and Development By-law. (Vancouver 1983) p.5.

¹¹⁰ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

conform to the guidelines, and this can be seen in the high quality design in the DD of Vancouver. The City does stand out in regard to quality urban design, but the Director of Planning still feels: "that they could do better in the DD".¹¹¹

The main concern is the first several stories above ground level. This is the area around the sidewalks where the Planning Department wants a lively, active, pleasant environment protected from the weather. "This can be seen as working quite well on some streets, and we are quite proud of this, but producing quality urban design is seen as a team effort in Vancouver, and if the architects and planners are not up to the challenge, the development will not be very good, and the struggle will continue".¹¹²

The urban design process in Vancouver is seen to be discretionary, and there have been concerns raised with regard to the fact that there are design decisions being made by planners that have not had formal training with regard to urban design and architecture. Some feel that only professionals should be involved, but the Planning Department feels that these people along with the public that are involved, can, and do make important contributions with regard to design decisions and the urban design process.

Another problem that can be associated with the development permit process in Vancouver is the fact that it does take a considerable amount of time to complete because of the many different steps that have to be undertaken. It is believed that several of the steps could be omitted in order to save time and money for the developer. The City feels that although the system does take time, it does work, and the proof lies in the design success that Vancouver has had in its Downtown District.

Vancouver is a City that provides many examples of good

¹¹¹ Spaxman, Ray. Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, Interview, November 18, 1988.

¹¹² *ibid.* November 18, 1988.

downtown design. Their system works well for them, and the strengths lie in the fact that there is a design review body that is separate from Council. The political climate is set up to promote positive urban design, and there is little or no interference from the elected officials. Another strong point is that there is a great deal of public input in design decisions, and this is important because the public is one of the important players involved, and Vancouver feels they should be included wherever possible. Many cities would do well to examine the urban design practices and policies of Vancouver because they may be able to learn and benefit from their experiences.

Chapter Three will examine the Downtown design practices of Calgary, Alberta.

CHAPTER 3
THE DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES OF
CALGARY, ALBERTA

This chapter will examine how the City of Calgary deals with urban design in its downtown area. It will focus on the urban design objectives and principles, the techniques of urban design, the political climate with regard to urban design, and the administrative process for implementation.

During the early 1970's, (the oil boom years), the City of Calgary was enjoying an abundance of development in its Downtown. There was a great need for office development, and Calgary made it very easy for developers to build office towers. Much of the Downtown had been rezoned from residential to commercial so the city could generate more income from the higher taxes on commercial property, and stimulate Downtown growth at the same time. All development at this time was viewed as good development, and the City allowed the construction of many large bulky buildings. Urban design was not an important consideration in Calgary, and the Downtown experienced substantial growth in a very short period of time with minimal design control being enforced.

In the late 1970's when oil prices dropped, (the crunch), many oil companies left Calgary. Large office towers were abandoned and several projects under construction in the Downtown were never completed. The Downtown had developed into an area of large bulky buildings with few amenities for the public to enjoy. Because there was no longer a high demand for Downtown office development, Calgary had to assess the damage that had been done to the Downtown, and reevaluate their position in terms of Downtown urban design.

In 1978, City Council approved the Calgary General Municipal Plan which is the overall "umbrella" plan for the City, and incorporates the

most general level of objectives for the Downtown. In 1979, City Council adopted the Downtown Plan which established "a series of goals and objectives for the Downtown, and general policies which relate to land use and development, transportation, open space and other public systems".¹¹³ Council also directed the Planning Department to prepare more detailed Area Development Plans for the six sub areas recognized as part of Downtown. (Commercial Core Zone 1, Commercial Core Zone 2, Residential Areas, Special areas, Chinatown, and Parking)

"By 1982, City Council decided to pursue a non statutory policy approach rather than a statutory area redevelopment plan by-law. Subsequently, City Council established a process for the preparation of the Core Area Policy Brief".¹¹⁴ That process involved preparation of a range of alternatives for each issue by a Council appointed Citizens Options Committee and the recommendation to City Council of preferences for each alternative by the CPC, the Mayor's Committee on the Downtown and the Board of Commissioners.

In 1982, City Council received the preferred alternatives selected by each of the above bodies and directed the Planning Department to prepare a proposed Core Area Policy Brief based on the Planning Commission's recommendations. "This was approved, and amended to make up an important part of the Downtown design policy for Calgary".¹¹⁵ The Core Area Policy Brief represents a detailed policy framework to guide the future development of Downtown. "However, more specific action is required to implement its contents, including:

- (1) The improvement and constant updating of the statutory plan based on selected components of the Policy Brief, including Objectives, Public Improvements and Special

¹¹³ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary 1982) p.3.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* p.3.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* p.3.

Development Guidelines (not included in the Land Use By-law 2P80), giving special attention to the need for flexibility and discretion on the part of the Approving Authority. The Administration will report back to Council on the type of changes that will be made prior to commencing a detailed work program.

- (2) Constant revision of existing Downtown land use districts in the Land Use By-law 2P80 or the creation of appropriate new districts tailored to meet the Brief's objectives, including the zero based bonusing system, and special clauses to deal with non conforming uses.
- (3) Any necessary amendments to relevant statutory plans including the Calgary General Municipal Plan and the Land Use By-law 2P80".¹¹⁶

As indicated by the steps outlined above and the accompanying diagram (diagram 3.1 appendix), the Core Area Policy Brief is the first step in a number of subsequent actions for Downtown improvement in Calgary. The Planning Department has been proceeding with the implementation stage of the Core Area Policy Brief "with the involvement of all parties who express interest in participating".¹¹⁷

Calgary's Downtown extends generally between the Bow River and 12th Avenue S. from 14th Street W. to the Elbow River with an extension into Victoria Park East between 12th Avenue S. and the Elbow River. (see map 3.1 appendix)

¹¹⁶ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary 1982) p.8.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p.2.

Urban Design Objectives And Principles

The main goal for the Downtown is a general one in that they want to improve the whole area, and make it a better place for the people that work and spend time in the area. "Downtown Calgary has a very strong core, and 28% of the City's employment is found here. This is a very concentrated working population, and it is the highest percentage in North America".¹¹⁸

"Downtown is intended to remain as the pre eminent commercial center for Calgary complemented by residential areas, as well as the unique entity of Chinatown and the open spaces of the Riverbank area".¹¹⁹

Another goal in Calgary, like many other cities is to bring back a residential population to the Downtown. During the boom years (1970's), housing in the area suffered because of the great demand for office space in the Downtown. "Much of the area had been zoned for housing, but when the demand for office space grew, the City rezoned most of the areas set aside for housing because there was more money to be made from office buildings in taxes, etc".¹²⁰

Calgary is short in many amenities that are needed to improve the Downtown, such as parks, and other public plazas. This is due to the fact that during the boom years the City held back on many projects that would improve the downtown, because of the increased development that was taking place. The City believed that a developer would come along and undertake the projects for them. In some cases this did happen, but in most cases developers chose a DC route, and did not have to provide any public amenities. Because

¹¹⁸ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development, Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

¹¹⁹ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary 1982) p.iii.

¹²⁰ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development, Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

of this, in the last several years, Calgary has spent a lot of money on public/private developments to improve the appearance of the Downtown. These include facilities such as parks, open spaces, plazas, etc.

During the boom years in Calgary, the office space increased from 6 million square feet to 26 million square feet. (in approximately 15 years) During this time, most of the older, smaller buildings were leveled, (some were heritage buildings that were of historic value). In their place many large developments were built, but when the boom ended (in the late 1970's), and the oil prices dropped, there were many empty buildings that could not give office space away in the prime Commercial Core Zone 1. "Remnants can still be seen today with vacant lots in the area, and over 1 million square feet of vacant office space in the Core Zone 1".¹²¹

As mentioned the Downtown is divided into six different zones. The first zone is referred to as Commercial Core Zone 1 (see map 3.2 appendix) and it offers a full range of commercial, institutional, and to a lesser extent, residential uses. This is the largest zone in the Downtown, and in order to achieve high commercial densities, "three options are available with associated basic mandatory requirements:

- (a) a basic density with an additional allowance for density transfer for heritage purposes;
- (b) a zero based bonusing system which encourages features such as on site open space and pedestrian components. As well, density bonuses for off site improvements on public lands and density transfer for heritage preservation are available;
- (c) beyond a certain high density level, a project would be subject to a specialized Design Control application and decision by City Council, with respect to the additional on and off site amenities".¹²²

¹²¹ City of Calgary. Downtown Handbook Of Public Improvements. (Calgary, 1983) p.95.

¹²² City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.11.

The mandatory requirements are fundamental to these three approaches, and they include features such as: at grade open space; a +15 system; at grade pedestrian circulation; amenity space associated with residential units.¹²³

The second zone in Calgary's Downtown, is the Commercial Core Zone 2. (see map 3.3 appendix) This Zone, like Core Zone 1, has been developed with a full range of commercial, institutional, and residential uses. However, the densities for the area are considerably less. For example, "a completely residential development might achieve 11 FAR while a mixed commercial/residential project could combine up to 8 FAR of commercial with the remaining 3 FAR of residential".¹²⁴

The base density allocation of 5 FAR in Commercial Core Zone 2 allows development to proceed on sites subject to meeting the following basic mandatory requirements: at grade open space; provision for the + 15 system; at grade pedestrian circulation; and amenity space associated with residential units.

Encouraging housing in the Downtown is an important objective of the Downtown Plan. The Eau Claire and East End areas represent ideal opportunities for housing given their proximity to the Riverbank. "Both areas can become high density residential precincts that afford the amenities of Downtown living: easy access to offices, shops and entertainment in the Core accompanied by nearby park amenities and quiet streets oriented to the pedestrians".¹²⁵

A goal for developing a residential area such as this is to ensure there is "flexibility in design to allow for protection of the environmental

¹²³ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.17.

¹²⁴ *ibid.* p.13.

¹²⁵ *ibid.* p.9.

quality of the Riverbank as well as fostering sunlight penetration to the neighbouring streets and providing useful consolidated open space through sensitive site treatments in terms of landscaping, building heights, building placements and yards. There should be a dominance of residential use but there must be opportunity provided for a larger component of retail and commercial uses than the present zoning allows. The built form of the residential projects should exhibit flexibility in terms of height and lower parking requirements within this designation".¹²⁶

Chinatown is a unique ethnic area within the Downtown that includes a variety of activities, occurring both night and day. Chinatown is an area allowing a mixture of residential and commercial uses quite distinct from the Commercial Core. The objective for Chinatown is to protect the cultural and architectural heritage of the area. Studies have been undertaken, and Council is taking steps to preserve and protect the area.

The Riverbank area is recognized as a special area because it is the only major park space within the Downtown. It is also a critical link and destination within the City-wide open space and pedestrian trail system. Recognizing this, there are two main objectives for the Riverbank. "The first is to create a continuous, attractive setting in the Downtown for diverse recreational activities which satisfy the local community and regional needs. The second objective is to improve the accessibility to and the visibility of the Riverbank for people who are working and living Downtown".¹²⁷

The only real environmental issue that has come to the forefront has been sunlight access. There are standards for sunlight access in most areas of the Downtown, especially the Core Zone 1 areas nearer to the Riverbank. Basically, the buildings should be built lower in the direction of the river. There has been success with this, but it is seen as being relative because "some

¹²⁶ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.18.

¹²⁷ *ibid.* p.24.

of the buildings in the Downtown are so large that even a fairly large building near the river will look small next to them".¹²⁸

Because of the strong core of employment in the Downtown, parking in Calgary has been a problem. In order to curb this problem all new buildings must have parking underground. Only 50% of the needed parking is allowed on site, and the rest of the parking is off site.

¹²⁸ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development, Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988

Techniques Of Urban Design In Calgary

There are several options that a developer can turn to in the Commercial Core Zone 1 for the determination of density. First of all, the developer of a site in this Zone has the option of providing a commercial development up to a maximum of 7 FAR subject to providing the basic requirements. "For the purpose of encouraging density transfer for heritage preservation, an additional 2 FAR may be earned by a project which has secured development rights from a Downtown heritage building to the satisfaction of the Approving Authorities".¹²⁹ (see diagram 3.2 appendix)

A second option is to go to the bonusing system. The developer of a site in Commercial Core Zone 1 would have the option of pursuing a project under a zero based bonusing system. A bonusing system balancing the provision of public features with increased density has been applied to Calgary's Commercial Core for some time. It is believed that bonusing of this type has a number of benefits in Calgary. It provides a consistent means of evaluating complex and diverse proposals without stifling imaginative solutions. "Zero based bonusing provides choices for developers and the City in terms of which bonusable features are provided in a particular development, and it is also believed that it rewards good performance".¹³⁰

"The framework for the bonusing system ensures satisfactory provision of the basic mandatory features supplemented by the provision of desirable on site amenities, which in combination could earn up to 15 FAR from the zero base".¹³¹

Within the upper categories of this range (up to 15 FAR), there is an option of density accruing through the transfer of development rights

¹²⁹ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.9.

¹³⁰ *ibid.* p.10.

¹³¹ *ibid.* p.11.

from Downtown heritage buildings. To achieve densities between 15 and 20 FAR, "additional bonus density can be accrued exclusively from off site improvements and density transfers for heritage preservation purposes. Wherever a density of over 20 FAR is requested, a specialized Direct Control application is necessary for Council's consideration to determine the appropriate additional amenities, both on and off site".¹³²

Density transfer is considered an important aspect of planning and urban design in the Downtown area. It is important for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of heritage sites along with the promotion of large scale development in Core Zone 1. "The building form in this zone will be considered relative to its individual merits and impacts rather than being evaluated against lengthy rules regarding yards and heights".¹³³ (see diagram 3.3 appendix)

There is also off site improvements that can be considered when negotiating for bonuses. A developer can build something that the City feels is a necessary element, and a bonus of increased density can be awarded. However, if a developer does not want to build something that would increase his density through bonusing, he can increase density by giving the City money to build something that they feel would improve the Downtown. "The amount of bonus is based on the amount of money that the developer gives to the City".¹³⁴ These off site improvements compensate for a larger project by offering amenities to the people who work Downtown. All bonuses must be earned, and so much is awarded for park space, and a statue in the park, etc.

There is a bonus system available in Commercial Core Zone 2,

¹³² City of Calgary. Downtown Handbook Of Public Improvements. (Calgary 1983) p.81.

¹³³ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary 1982) p.11.

¹³⁴ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988

"but it is a bonus of 3 FAR, and it would be available for the following amenities:

- (a) Open space at grade and at the +15 level,
- (b) Indoor public spaces,
- (c) +15 bridges over public rights of way,
- (d) Contributions to off site public improvements,
- (e) Heritage improvements through density transfer,
- (f) setback, uses at grade, benches, landscaping, arcades and artwork".¹³⁵ (see diagram 3.4 appendix)

The bonus system for the Commercial Core Zone 2, has been structured in such a way that it promotes less dense developments on smaller sites, and it is beginning to become more successful than it has been in the past. Like Commercial Core Zone 1, the building form will be considered on its individual merits and impacts rather than being evaluated against lengthy rules regarding yards and heights. Again the only major environmental concern is that of sunlight access.

"Presently the East End and Eau Claire districts are zoned for the highest density residential development under the Land Use By-Law 2P80:

- (a) permitting a maximum height of 17 storeys;
- (b) allowing a density of 130 or 160 units per acre, depending on the size of the development site;
- (c) requiring 40 percent at-grade landscaping, with additional rules pertaining to front, side and rear yards, lot widths and parking".¹³⁶

Council has changed the zoning in these districts to provide for

¹³⁵ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.14.

¹³⁶ City of Calgary. Calgary Planning Commission Report. (Calgary, 1983) p.19.

"greater flexibility in built form, reduce parking requirements and increase the component of retail and commercial use within the projects".¹³⁷

In order to enhance and protect development in Chinatown, Council is presently preparing a Redevelopment Plan that will provide policy direction for the area. "The new Plan shall address the ability to provide for retail, residential and commercial in a manner that reinforces a sense of vibrant community and creates a cultural enclave as well as addressing the realities of a strong commercial base".¹³⁸

In order to control parking, Calgary uses a technique where the developer would give money to the City to build a parking lot off site where there is a road that can handle the increased traffic flow. The City buys the land, manages the parking lot, and also keeps the revenues that are generated. The city can now put the parking lots where they should be placed, and they include amenities such as parks above them for the public to use and enjoy. It is a good solution to a problem, and it gets unsightly parking lots out of view. "The developers however, do not like this method, and would rather have all of the parking and parking revenues for themselves".¹³⁹

During the boom years in Calgary, the zoning rules in the major commercial area (Commercial Core Zone 1) were out of date and they were not prepared to cope with the type of large scale development that would occur, and the developers knew this. The zoning rules needed to be replaced, and there were no acceptable plans to correspond to this. Because of this most developers applied for a DC and most were accepted because they were given favorable reviews by the pro development politicians who preferred to take the DC route to large scale development. In the Downtown, developers were anxious to buy property, and get a DC approval. They would start large

¹³⁷ City of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief. (Calgary, 1982) p.19.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* p.21.

¹³⁹ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

projects, and sell them during construction to make huge profits because of the inflated property values. After the zoning was approved, some projects went ahead with no intention of ever being completed, and were sold during construction for a rather large profit. There are several examples of buildings that changed hands during construction that to this day have not been completed because of the zoning. The zoning under a DC only allows for a specific project, of specific size, color, material, number of parking stalls, etc. "A developer cannot do anything else legally without having the zoning changed again, and this can be quite costly in terms of dollars and time for the developer, but this is one of the problems associated with direct control".¹⁴⁰

During the boom years Calgary also used spot zoning to cope with the heavy development that was taking place. Spot Zoning occurs when a City rezones specific sites in order to allow particular developments to take place, irregardless of the present zoning. This was seen to substantially reduce the stability that the Zoning provides in regard to property values, and they were seen to fluctuate. Another problem was the fact that no one really knew the rules with regard to development and design because it could be a different set of criteria for every site. "It was costing some developers more money to get less space than their neighbours down the street because the neighbour had better political connections, and this was not fair. However, it did allow a person to come in with a really good project and build it where zoning did not allow it with a minimum of problems associated with it".¹⁴¹

Most design criteria in Calgary deal with bonus elements for glazing, skylighting, public space, etc. in return for a density provision. Over the years the system has changed in Calgary, and they feel that they are

¹⁴⁰ City of Calgary. Calgary Planning Commission Report. (Calgary 1983) p.17.

¹⁴¹ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

learning from their mistakes and making changes for the better. During most of the boom years, the bonus system really rewarded +15 spaces and other internal spaces. The result of this is an abundance of bulky buildings, that are built right to property lines without a minimum of pedestrian movement.

"There are many of internal spaces, at ground level, as well as at the +15 level, but this type of development has had a negative effect on the life at street level. There has been a shift in systems, and although the system today still favours the +15 connections, it also favors provisions for outdoor space and pedestrian circulation at ground level, and provides good bonusing for significant public park and plaza types of development".¹⁴²

In Calgary, under the Zoning By-law, there are no design guidelines. The zoning rules are all they have. The zoning is structured in such a way that there is a great deal of discretion built in to the system. This is due to the fact that the Planning Act of Alberta, and the City Zoning By-law has allowed for a great deal of discretion to be used by the Planning Department, the Development Officers, and the Planning Commission with regard to the zoning rules. This is one of the main reasons that there is so much negotiation that takes place before a project can get underway. "Under this system, a project that does not conform to the zoning rules could be approved, and a project that conforms to every letter of the law could be refused".¹⁴³ In Vancouver if a development does not conform to the guidelines, etc. it, most likely, will be refused a development permit until changes are made, and an agreement can be reached through negotiation.

There is no discretion allowed in terms of use, (unless it is under a DC) because if it does not conform to the zoning there is nothing the Planning Department can do about it. With regard to height, bulk, and setbacks there is a great deal of negotiation that takes place between the

¹⁴² Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

¹⁴³ *ibid.* November 17, 1988.

developer and the Planning Department, "and it is a give and take situation that sometimes works in Calgary's favour, and sometimes in the Developer's favour".¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Administrative Process For Implementation

With certain exceptions, most new construction in Calgary requires the property owner to apply for a development permit as well as a building permit before any work can begin. "The development permit process is intended to ensure not only that new development is architecturally compatible with existing buildings, but that the intended use does not adversely impact the community. The Land Use By-law therefore controls such things as: (1) Allowable Uses, (2) Building Height and Area, (3) Private Amenity Space, (4) Landscaping".¹⁴⁶

Under the Land Use By-law, land uses are listed as either "Permitted" or "Discretionary". Generally speaking, permitted uses are for relatively straightforward projects while discretionary uses are for the more complex developments. With a permitted use, a development permit will be issued by a Development Officer quickly if the project meets the rules of the By-law in every respect. "If it does not, a relaxation of the rules will be considered which, if granted, is advertised and is appealable to the Development Appeal Board".¹⁴⁷

Discretionary uses are reserved for more complex projects where it is difficult to prescribe satisfactory rules in a by-law without seeing details of the project. A discretionary use application will be evaluated on its merits, having regard to any approved community plans or Council policies affecting the site. "The Approving Authority has some flexibility in requiring modifications to a project even though it appears to meet the rules".¹⁴⁸

Calgary employs a planning system that allows for direct control zoning districts. (DC's) "If a developer applies for a land use direct control

¹⁴⁶ City of Calgary. The Calgary Land Use By-law, An Overview. (Calgary 1982) p.1.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* p.1.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* p.1

district for a specific development, the direct control refers to a set of land use rules, that specifically apply to that particular development on that particular site".¹⁴⁹ Nothing else can be constructed a direct control zoning approval will only allow that particular building to be constructed on a specific site. These applications must go through the Planning Department, for negotiations, but the Planning Department does not have the final say on such matters.

The Planning Department takes care of the negotiations, and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission. "The Planning Commission is basically a technical review body, and meetings are closed door and the applicant cannot be present. They base their decision solely on the information that has been given to them".¹⁵⁰

Along with the five Council members, there are administrative members who are automatically on the Planning Commission as part of their jobs. This is made up of the Director of Planning, Director of Engineering, Director of Parks and Recreation, and the Director of Social Services and they always have a seat on the Planning Commission. The four members of the public either apply, or are nominated for these voluntary positions on the Commission, which are selected by Council. "These citizens have, in the past, been developers, architects, lawyers, and other people who are members of the development industry".¹⁵¹ For any projects that members have an interest in, conflict of interest rules apply.

The Planning Commission makes decisions on development permit applications (DPA's) and advises Council on any zoning changes. The Planning Department takes care of the technical work, policy reports, and any area redevelopment plans. "However, any work that Planning does must be

¹⁴⁹ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.* November 17, 1988.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.* November 17, 1988.

approved by the Planning Commission. In essence, the Planning Commission is also a review body for the Planning Department".¹⁵²

Once Council makes a decision on the zoning or a direct control district (DC) then they delegate authority to the Planning Department and the Planning Commission to study and make the decisions about a specific project. "Council can only make decisions on zoning and zoning rules, or land use designations. (see diagram 3.5 appendix) However, if a project were a very important one that required rezoning, they would look at the project right from the beginning, and do the negotiating with the developer themselves".¹⁵³

If a developer applies for a development permit within the zoning rules, negotiation would take place with the Planning Department. They would make recommendations to the Planning Commission, and it would be accepted or rejected.

In Calgary, design review is seen as a formal endeavor. However, it seems to be on a much smaller scale than that of Vancouver. The design review is done in-house by the Planning Department, and it is also done at the Planning Commission level.

Public involvement only takes place at the Planning Commission level. This involvement is quite limited because, for the most part, the public that is involved is usually some part of the development community ie. developers, architects, etc.

Calgary, Alberta is an example of a city that experienced huge growth during the oil boom years of the early to mid 1970's, and then experienced a great decline in development when oil prices dropped. The City was developing very quickly, and many Downtown areas were rezoned from residential to commercial so that the City could generate more revenue through taxes, etc.

² Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988.

³ *ibid.* November 17, 1988.

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CHAPTER 4
THE DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES OF
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the Downtown urban design practices of Regina Saskatchewan. It will examine the urban design objectives and principles, the techniques of urban design, the political climate with regard to urban design, and the administrative process for implementation.

In Regina Saskatchewan, the Downtown contains the greatest concentration of buildings as well as the greatest concentration of people working, shopping and visiting the City.

Since the late 1970's there has been a strong renewal in the Downtown based on incentive from the Downtown Business Association to help rejuvenate the area. The area was seen as declining, and was losing out to the competition of the suburban malls. The Downtown Business Association started the process by approaching the City and the Planning Department and having them examine the Downtown. The concern for urban design stemmed from this study because the Downtown had to be improved to stimulate activity and rejuvenate interest in the area.

Urban Design Objectives And Principles

The Planning Department has looked at the assets and liabilities of the area, and discovered that the Downtown has a comfortable pedestrian environment that they are trying to preserve through design guidelines that are geared to pedestrian comfort in the shopping area.

The main focus of the guidelines is to produce a comfortable Downtown environment for the people who work and shop in the area.

"The Downtown is a specific Zone under the Regina Zoning By-law and its purpose is to:

- (1) ensure that Downtown is an attractive place in which to work, shop, visit and live;
- (2) ensure that new developments contribute to the Downtown environment as a place for people; and,
- (3) to provide a flexible framework for the preparation of development proposals".¹⁵⁴

In the Downtown Zone (D Zone) there are five main zoning schedules which apply:

- (a) PUD - Planned Unit Development
- (b) PS - Public Service
- (c) DC 1 - Downtown Core 1
- (d) DC 2 - Downtown Core 2
- (e) DC 3 - Downtown Core 3 (see map 4.1 appendix)

Within the DC 1, 2, and 3 zones there are 10 variations of permitted height and or permitted FAR. The intent behind the basic pattern of zones is to produce a high density commercial core with lower density and

¹⁵⁴ City of Regina. Regina Zoning By-law. (Regina, 1987) p.5-3.

height zones between the core and the surrounding residential areas. Over the years there have been amendments to permit specific developments to occur.

Techniques Of Urban Design In Regina

Although the zones are designed to produce definite separations in uses, heights, etc, it is barely noticeable when the three DC zones are compared in terms of major land use categories. (see diagram 4.1 appendix)

If all of the uses are more or less the same what is the point of having different zones in the Downtown? "There are many interesting and unanswered questions that come out of a review of the permitted and discretionary uses in the three basic zoning schedules".¹⁵⁵ The PUD zoning schedule is even more difficult to understand, and the Zoning By-law section 4.11.1. for permitted uses states: The following are permitted uses in PUD zones: "Planned Unit Development in accordance with the regulations controlling Planned Unit Development within the City of Regina; and Section 118 (2) of the Planning and Development Act".¹⁵⁶

This creates some confusion because there are simply no references, either in the Provincial legislation (Section 118.2) or elsewhere in the Regina "RSVP" (a study undertaken to get feed back from the public on design issues for the Downtown, and instill a sense of communication between the Planning Department and the general public) as to what are the permitted uses or the controlling legislations. "Legislation with so many uncertainties and, in some cases providing no indications of the City's objectives, is inconsistent with the purpose of zoning. Zoning is intended to indicate what can happen rather than what has happened".¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, "single use zoning" is generally not productive in the Downtown where the aim is to achieve an animated mixed use core. "To clear up the confusion that can occur,

¹⁵⁵ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. Interview, November 15, 1988.

¹⁵⁶ City of Regina. Urban Design Issues For Consideration, And Guidelines For Development in Downtown Regina. (Regina, 1982) p.13.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* p.13.

the City of Regina must continue to review and amend the zoning controls for the Downtown Area with a view to achieving a clarification of the intent and a process that can incorporate qualitative objectives".¹⁵⁸

A unique feature that is contained in the Regina Zoning By-law is the fact that in the D Zone there must be retail uses on all ground floors. There is to be no approval of development that does not meet these requirements. However, Council can, at its discretion, reduce the amount of retail space that is required by a new development. This can only be done by Council, and the development officer who issues the development permit cannot do this himself. "This is another example of the many guidelines and policies that are quite useless in Regina because Council can reverse any planning or zoning decision it wants through the discretionary process".¹⁵⁹

With regard to the design guidelines themselves, they appear in a Downtown design guideline book and are repeated in the Regina Zoning By-law, but they do not have any effect on the Zoning By-law. They are only provided as a convenience for the developer who is more likely to read only the Zoning By-law as opposed to the design guidelines themselves. These are only guidelines, and are not binding in any way, shape, or form. They are present so that the developers will know what to expect from the City in terms of a review of the project. "Because of the Provincial Planning and Development Act, there are many points of the guidelines that cannot be enforced, but they are considered when making a decision on a discretionary use".¹⁶⁰ An example of the Provincial Planning and Development Act limiting the City's power in terms of enforcing guidelines is in regard to encouraging the provision of transparent facades with well lit windows at street level. "The City can only deal with the lighting, but the Planning and Development Act will not only allow them to deal with the window treatment.

¹⁵⁸ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. Interview, November 15, 1988.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.* November 15, 1988.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* November 15, 1988.

Another example of this deals with building materials and landscaping. These are definitely untouchable under the Act, and the design guidelines only give information on how the City would like to see the development, they make no pretension that it is a regulation. The design guidelines are only a qualitative basis for interpretation".¹⁶¹

In the D Zone, under the Regina Zoning By-law, there are both permitted and discretionary uses. They are basically the same list of uses, but they differ in the size of the development. For the most part, permitted uses are usually handled quickly by the Planning Department if the FAR is less than 2, and the height is less than 12 meters. Where an application for a development permit is made for a permitted use, the Development Officer shall issue a development permit "where the development is in conformity with the Regina Zoning By-law, and the Planning Act of Saskatchewan".¹⁶²

With regard to discretionary uses, it can be seen that any development that exceeds the height limits and/or the FAR limits in the D Zone is seen as a discretionary use. "A permit may be issued at the discretion of City Council for a discretionary use if:

- (1) there is compliance with the regulations and special regulations of this zone;
- (2) specific development standards have been established to the extent deemed necessary to achieve the objectives of the general development standards for this zone; and,
- (3) it has been demonstrated that the intent of the design guidelines of this zone have been carefully considered".¹⁶³

The City is less concerned about building height because there is a problem with the soils with regard to supporting a foundation for very tall

¹⁶¹ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. Interview, November 15, 1988.

¹⁶² City of Regina. Regina Zoning By-law. (Regina, 1987) p. 2-1.

¹⁶³ *ibid.* p.5-4.

buildings. "However, if a developer wanted to construct a 100 story building he could as long as it did not block the sun (especially in winter) on a shopping street, or generate huge drafts in the Downtown".¹⁶⁴ "(However, Council would probably approve it anyway)"¹⁶⁵ In Regina, high rise buildings are seen as a positive landmark rising off the flat prairie.

A developer can go along with the guidelines as much as he wants to, but any major changes must be approved by Council. The guidelines have been helpful in terms of creating an awareness in the development community. They have lead to increased sensitivity to issues expressed in the guidelines such as: developments being compatible with adjacent uses; wind and sunlight, and open public spaces. Wind tests are now an important part of the design of a structure, and Regina has been a pioneer in these types of studies. They feel this type of study is helpful to the developer as well as themselves.

¹⁶⁴ City of Regina. Regina Development Plan, Part G. Downtown Plan. (Regina, 1984) p.7.

¹⁶⁵ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. Interview, November 15, 1988.

Political Climate With Regard To Urban Design In Regina

The political climate in Regina is very development oriented, and in most cases, do not enforce the rules and guidelines they have created.

Council has all the decision making power, and "where the Planning have come up head to head with a developer who neglects the guidelines, and only wishes to construct a building that does not fit in, Planning has always lost".¹⁶⁶ With no formal design review body to rule on such a problem, Council has always voted in favor of the development because in Regina, any type of development is seen as good development. "Planning believes that even if they could have strict design control regulations, Council would just change the regulations to allow for the development".¹⁶⁷

Planning relies on an understanding with the architects and developers in the development community, that the City wants to achieve a better Downtown environment. Most developers go along with this and try to conform to the guidelines, and Planning feels that the response has been positive. "However, without the benefit of a formal design review body, many developers can neglect the guidelines and still receive support from Council, and this is the main problem associated with Downtown design controls in Regina".¹⁶⁸

A prime example of the problem of having no formal design review is the Regina Convention Centre. Wind studies on models of the project showed that it would be almost impossible for the pedestrian to walk or open doors at street level, and the downdrafts were also cold and unbearable. The Planning Department recommended that the project should not be granted a building permit because of the problems with wind generation. Council ignored this recommendation, and approved the development because of the

¹⁶⁶ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. Interview, November 15, 1988.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.* November 15, 1988.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* november 15, 1988.

spinoffs it would have in terms of jobs, taxes, etc. It is believed that a formal design review body would not have allowed the development without significant changes.

Administrative Process For Implementation

Once the DPA has been filed the development officer shall review the application, advertise the application in the Saturday newspaper, and post a sign on the affected property. "The development officer then prepares a report to the Regina Planning Commission, who review it and put forth recommendations to Council for final decision".¹⁶⁹ (see diagram 4.2 appendix)

Once a permit has been issued, and is not being undertaken in accordance with the Regina Zoning By-law, the Planning Act of Saskatchewan, or the development standards specified by Council, Council may have the development officer revoke the permit, until the developer again complies. In Regina, development permits are valid for two years from the issuance by the development officer.

"If a permit is rejected by Council, the applicant may file an appeal with the Development Appeals Board which is composed of nine appointed members from Council, and the Planning Department. If the permit for a discretionary use is still not approved, there can be no further application to develop or rezone the same property to the same use for a year following the date of Council's denial".¹⁷⁰

The Regina Planning Commission is made up of several Councilors, the Director of Planning, and several architects that work for the Regina Downtown Business Association, who give design advice from the Business Association's perspective. The design review is very informal. The City does not have formal design review. "The design review in Regina cannot be anything more than informal and advisory because of the Provincial Planning Act which limits the City's power with regard to design issues".¹⁷¹ It is done purely in house by the Planning Department and the Planning

¹⁶⁹ City of Regina. Regina Zoning By-law. (Regina, 1987) p.2-1.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* p.2-5.

¹⁷¹ Braitman, Barry. Planner, City of Regina. November 15, 1988.

Commission.

Formal Design Review has been discussed in Regina since 1983. However, it is felt that an urban design panel can only be effective if the approving authority (in Regina-City Council) acts upon their advice. "Therefore, a real commitment on the part of the approving authority as opposed to token recognition is essential".¹⁷²

An alternative to an urban design panel that Regina has been considering, is the delegation of approval authority. This idea is based upon the reality that seldom do the members of Council have knowledge and expertise in the areas of design. The delegation to a civic official or a committee of officials is common practice in Canada. "The official committee could, with Council's approval, seek appropriate advice when needed, and if a situation arises when no satisfactory compromise or conclusion can be reached, then a report can be submitted to Council for opinion and advice. It can be said that a person or group, competent to exercise design judgements and provide advice is necessary in a strategy for the effective use of urban design principles and guidelines".¹⁷³

Regina has improved its Downtown in the last several years, but, for the most part, their hands are tied with regard to strict design controls because of the Provincial Planning and Development Act. The City has done some good work, but changes must be made in order to have more control on the types of design that are taking place, and the addition of a formal design review body would be a step in the right direction.

The Planning Department has a limited amount of planning power because Council has final say on all planning issues. There seems to be an imbalance between the politicians, the planning principles, and the implementation of planning techniques. There is a zoning by-law, and a set of guidelines for development and design, but the political system does not work

¹⁷² City of Regina. Urban Design Issues For Consideration, And Guidelines For Development In Downtown Regina. (Regina, 1982) p.75.

¹⁷³ *ibid.* p.76.

with the Planning Department to put the system in motion and synchronize all of the parts. The principles are in place, but they are often ignored by Council to allow for any type of development whether it is good or bad. (ie.

Convention Center)

Regina is a poor example of how to design a Downtown. It is a City that is anxious to have any type of development, and Council will allow it regardless of what the Planning Department suggests. There is an imbalance between planning policies and the political climate, and the result is a Downtown that is limited in positive examples of urban design.

Chapter Five examines the Downtown urban design practices of Minneapolis Minnesota, in order to provide one sample of how an American city deals with urban design.

CHAPTER 5
THE DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES
OF MINNEAPOLIS MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Minnesota, is the only American example that is to be studied. This chapter examines the urban design objectives and principles, the techniques of urban design, the political climate with regard to urban design, and the administrative process for implementation.

The Downtown design policies and guidelines are contained in the Metro 2000 Plan, "which continues a 30 year tradition of cooperative planning and action uniting the private and public sectors".¹⁷⁴ There has been success through these types of joint efforts, and the Minneapolis Downtown is nationally renowned because of it.

This cooperative planning program began with a commitment in 1957 to work together toward a strong downtown, and drafting of the first Downtown Plan in 1959. "The planning process, since then, has uniquely combined the professional planning expertise of the City's Planning Department with the special expertise of the Downtown Council of Minneapolis, now an organization of about 400 downtown business and professional firms".¹⁷⁵ Since 1959, the Plan has been updated three times; the Metro 85 Plan (1970), the Metro 90 Plan (1978), and now, the Metro 2000 Plan.

"Each edition of the Plan, has helped to provide the rationale to create and guide a new wave of development".¹⁷⁶ However, the plans alone do not cause development. There must be "input and action from governmental,

¹⁷⁴ City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan.
(Minneapolis, 1988) p.7.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* p.7.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* p.8.

business, and community leaders. Each is necessary; none is sufficient alone".¹⁷⁷ In the last twenty years, the private public partnership has lead to "a downtown property increase; produced a large increase in employment (to an estimated 120,000 jobs in 1987); stimulated major investment in new office buildings (about 770,000 square feet of space is being added each year on the average); and generated a larger resident population than ever before".¹⁷⁸

177 *ibid.* p.7.

178 City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan. (Minneapolis, 1988) p.7.

Urban Design Objectives And Principles

"The Metro 2000 Plan is based on the following criteria: (see map 5.1 appendix)

- (1) A compact retail core extending from Fifth to Eleventh Streets on Nicollet Mall;
- (2) A densely built horse shoe shaped area for tall office buildings surrounding the retail core, with a concentration of financial institutions on Marquette Avenue;
- (3) A secondary ring of less densely built office buildings extending to the ring of parking garages;
- (4) 'Emphasis areas' for entertainment, government, conventions, education, technological research, and health care; (see map 5.2 appendix)
- (5) Major residential neighborhoods on the periphery;
- (6) A design that limits vehicular movement and encourages pedestrian movement within the core;
- (7) A system of open spaces to contrast with and thereby heighten the intensity of downtown buildings and activity; and
- (8) Firm borders in the freeway ring and the River to set Downtown off as a special place".¹⁷⁹

Overall, Planning feels that the Downtown has developed well because of the guidelines, and the Plan, but there are particular cases where they tend to conflict because they prevent a developer from building a project he wants to build. Conversely, they require the developer to build something that he really does not want to build. "Many developers resent the guidelines,

¹⁷⁹ City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan. (Minneapolis, 1988) p.5.

but most conform, and the overall effect has been beneficial for the Downtown. In most cases, if the developer does not conform to the rules, he will not be allowed to build where he wants to".¹⁸⁰

There are five design elements that merit special emphasis in Downtown development: a sense of place, a sense of unity, a sense of time, a sense of encounter, and a sense of theater. (see design elements Minneapolis appendix)

A sense of place is an important aspect because "Downtown must present a strong image of a central place for the City, the metropolitan area, and the Upper Midwest. This should be conveyed: historically (through building preservation); economically (through the emphasis of a high density core); culturally (by promoting mixed use developments); commercially (by concentrating assorted merchandise in one central marketplace); and physically and visually (by the density and height of buildings and the quality of design)"¹⁸¹

The image of Downtown as a central place should be enhanced by preserving "a sharp edge to the Downtown core through zoning, and to the central area at the river and freeways, with:

- (a) "Gateways" that highlight the act of entering Downtown, particularly on approaches from freeways and bridges, followed by
- (b) increasing intensity of development along approaches to the center of Downtown, and finally,
- (c) arrival at a central place, a climax, the Nicollet Mall".¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

¹⁸¹ City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan. (Minneapolis, 1988) p.41.

¹⁸² *ibid.* p.41.

"Downtown Minneapolis has a sense of unity and the quality of a single place comprised of many complementary zones, knit together by its visual relationships and movement systems".¹⁸³ This is achieved by: having central stores surrounded by tall office buildings; having internal circulation through streets, paths, skywalks, and transit routes; and having landmarks and identifiable districts guiding people to the Downtown area. "Downtown unity is best developed by:

(i) Enhancing the present system of sidewalk and skyways, making them legible, safe, attractive, easy to use, with views always of what's ahead or accessible.

(ii) Extending the present pedestrian system".¹⁸⁴

Downtown has a sense of time, "and this should instill a sense of being on the move". "There should be steady paced development and a renewal of plans to allow for the changing needs of the Downtown".¹⁸⁵

A sense of encounter relates to the unique opportunities and experiences that are prevalent Downtown, and a sense of theater helps to emphasize "the Downtown's reputation for being different and fun".¹⁸⁶

These elements are an important part of the Metro 2000 Plan because they cover all issues of urban design. They deal with the many social, cultural, economic, and historical aspects that must be considered when trying to produce positive design guidelines.

¹⁸³ City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan. (Minneapolis, 1988) p.42.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.* p.42.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.* p. 42.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.* p.42.

"A vibrant Downtown is a downtown that considers more than just urban design. To be successful, all of these elements must be considered, and made to work together".¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

Techniques Of Urban Design In Minneapolis

Minneapolis began using zoning in 1963, and they feel that it has been a great device for containing development, and especially pushing the taller buildings to the center of the Downtown. The City does use a form of discretionary zoning in that they do provide some bonuses (in FAR) for specific amenities such as skywalk systems etc. "However, they are finding it to be a bit of a nuisance because most new developments include amenities on their own, and they are included in the development contract with the City. The City is using discretionary zoning less and less, and it may be written right out of the next new Zoning By-law".¹⁸⁸

"In the past, Minneapolis also tried spot zoning, but realized that it was a mistake because it was too hard to control, and it created too much confusion amongst developers in the Downtown area".¹⁸⁹ They only used it for several years, and they dropped it. Spot zoning is now illegal in the United States because of the negative results that are produced.

Today it is difficult to rezone a site in Minneapolis because of the Local Option Agreement. This agreement is reluctant to have the City initiate zoning, so an arrangement has been created where a person seeking to change the zoning must get, on a petition, the signatures of 2/3 of the property owners within 200 feet of the site in question, before it can be introduced in Council. If the petition is not signed, Council will not receive the application, and this makes it very difficult to rezone in Minneapolis. There have been many complaints about the arrangement but it is a difficult time consuming process, but it has meant that the zoning ordinances have stayed about the same for 25 years. "This allows people to rely on the fact

¹⁸⁸ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

that the zoning will be the same today as well as tomorrow, and this creates a sense of stability".¹⁹⁰

Design guidelines were specifically developed for individual projects in 1981. By 1986, this broadened, and general design guidelines for the entire Downtown were created. The City also hired a Design Planner to help undertake this responsibility because Minneapolis now saw an importance for urban design guidelines. These guidelines are general types of guidelines, and by themselves, are not by-laws or ordinances. However, they become the basis for ordinances, especially zoning ordinances. "These guidelines are the general planning that underlies the system of zoning by-laws or ordinances. The guidelines have been very effective in guiding development, and play a very important role in the way the Downtown grows and develops".¹⁹¹

Any guidelines that refer to a particular project, do so, because the City probably has something to do with that project. In such a case the City has usually financed the project to some extent. The City may have had to buy the land, build a parking garage, or provide interim financing to the developer. "When this is the situation, the City and developer negotiate, agree on terms, and sign a contract, where the design guidelines become part of the agreement. The terms of this contract become absolute, and are legally binding".¹⁹² An example of this type of agreement can be seen in the City Center Project of 1975. In this case, the Downtown property was purchased by the City several years earlier. When the developer approached the City about developing the site, the City agreed. As part of transferring that land to the developer, the guidelines were included as part of the contract. The developer, was required by the guidelines, to build only in specific sites, with a specific

¹⁹⁰ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

¹⁹² *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

(mutually agreed upon) design, height (although there are no height restrictions, they must be agreed upon before a permit is granted), bulk, etc. "The contract was totally binding, and any changes were a problem the City was not ready for".¹⁹³

The City was not prepared to handle changes that developers have a tendency to make during construction. In the case of the City Center Project, the developer made changes to the point where the City had to alter the contract in order for the project to proceed. The City's hands were tied because they had nothing to turn to in regard to changes in design after construction had begun. The developer forced the City into changing the guidelines in order to have the development completed. The result of this example is a shopping mall that is a good deal less in terms of design than the City had expected or had negotiated for. In this case, the City lost out, and because of public outcry on the development, the City changed their policies so that they are now prepared to deal with developers such as this, and the guidelines are tighter and tougher with regard to development. "Now, the City of Minneapolis is holding most developers to the letter of the contract and the design guidelines".¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

Political Climate With Regard To Urban Design In Minneapolis

The political climate in Minneapolis is pro development, but Council only intervenes in the development of larger projects where the City may become involved in financing and development. "In these situations, Council is often seen as being overly generous in granting the financing".¹⁹⁵ Because the mayor has the power to veto, many financing decisions are often vetoed by him. This usually goes back and forth in Council, until a decision is finally reached. It takes 9 votes out of 13 to overturn the mayor's decision. "In many cases, Council is more generous than they have to be, and more generous than they ought to be".¹⁹⁶

In the past, the City viewed any development as good development, because of the increased revenues, taxes, etc., but they have learned from their mistakes and they are getting better in terms of their design decisions. In one example, the City had to take back a shopping center that was not doing well because it was built in an area that did not need or want another shopping center. The City financed project failed, and the City is looking at other options for the empty shopping center. "At the time, the Administration was not very receptive, and they believed that all development was good, so many projects were constructed that never should have been. Because it is not, and has not been, a strong mayor situation it is harder to educate the 13 Councilors to vote for or against a particular project, than it is to educate 1 person (mayor) to vote on a project. The situation is quite similar today with regard to informing Council on the pros and cons of a project".¹⁹⁷

There is a good relationship between the politicians, planning

¹⁹⁵ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.* April 10, 1989.

principles, and the implementation techniques. There seems to be a balance between them, and they are working together to produce quality urban design through the Metro Plan 2000, and the accompanying design guidelines. The political system has, in the past, made some mistakes in approving projects that were not right for the Downtown. However, they have learned from their mistakes, and the political system provides a good support for the creation and implementation of urban design principles.

Administrative Process For Implementation

Minneapolis has no formal design review process or review body. The City stayed away from design review because they felt that "it would give them too many standard architectural ideas and they feared that this would be reflected in a rigid Downtown design. Minneapolis wanted more variety in their design, and they felt that the use of design review would limit their ability to produce a vibrant Downtown".¹⁹⁸ The City felt they made a good decision, but like most other cities, (even cities with formal design review) they have examples of good and bad design, but they are learning from their past mistakes and are trying not to repeat them.

The process for rezoning is a difficult one, and for projects that cover more than 40 acres, City Council takes charge of the development approval process because it would be much too difficult to get a petition signed with a project of this size. This is seen to save both time and money for the City and developer.

If a developer wants to build a project that conforms completely to the zoning requirements and the design guidelines, and requires no financial assistance from the City, he can take out a building permit without any type of intervention from the City or the Planning Department. The plans, however, would have to be submitted, checked against the Zoning By-law and an environmental impact study would have to be undertaken, but these are mainly for information purposes, to let people know what type of development is taking place. There is no height limit in the Downtown, but they are very strict in regard to bulk, and change in bulk could result in the refusal of a building permit.

In a situation where the developer conforms to the rules, the

¹⁹⁸ Cummings, John. Director of Downtown Planning and Policy. Minneapolis. Interview, April 10, 1989.

Planning Department can express opinions on the plan, but cannot make the developer change the plans. The City and Planning Department can only become involved in cases where the plan exceeds the zoning requirements , or the developer needs help assembling land, etc. (see diagram 5.1 appendix)

Today, zoning in Minneapolis is guided under the Metro 2000 Plan, and the essentials of the Plan were first set down in 1959, and have been continually updated and improved. The Plan is highly integrated in the sense that all of the components must work together in order to create an overall positive Downtown development. The area must not be rigidly designed because the different areas in the plan are not perfectly homogeneous. Their designation only suggests the predominant use or the use around which implementation techniques revolve. Downtown as a whole represents one very large mixed use development. "As long as the primary objectives of centrality, completeness, and compactness are realized, Downtown should develop with the freedom that leads to variety, spontaneity, and the excitement of the unexpected".¹⁹⁹

Minneapolis is a city that has stayed away from formal design review and a design review panel because they felt that it would give them too many standard architectural ideas and they feared this would be reflected in Downtown design. The system has worked well in Minneapolis, and aside from a few mistakes where bad design is prevalent, the results have been positive. Being the only American example, Minneapolis did not appear to be very different in terms of goals and ideas for the Downtown area.

Minneapolis and Vancouver provide the two best examples of Downtown design practices and policies, However they do differ in several ways. First of all, Vancouver has design review and a design review body that operates independent of Council. Minneapolis feels that design review would

¹⁹⁹ City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis Metro Center Metro 2000 Plan. (Minneapolis, 1988) p.10.

promote strict architectural ideas and create a Downtown that is rigid in design. However, Minneapolis has a standard set of design guidelines that must be adhered to, and although they do not realize it they are themselves promoting a rigid type of design in the Downtown. Without design review, or a design review panel, there is no chance to review designs, and there is little flexibility involved. Minneapolis could benefit from the example that Vancouver has set.

Chapter six examines the Downtown urban design practices of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CHAPTER 6
THE DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICES
OF WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

This chapter examines the urban design objectives and principles, techniques of urban design, political climate with regard to urban design, and the administrative process for implementation in Winnipeg.

In 1986, the City of Winnipeg began to reconsider the Downtown Zoning By-Law, and they realized that it did not promote the type of development the City wanted to achieve. On February 10, 1988, the new Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law No. 4800/88 came into effect. By-Law 4800/88 is the implementation of Council's policies with regard to Downtown development, and "it will provide the structures necessary to accomplish appropriate Downtown development through the cooperative efforts of the public and private sectors".²⁰⁰

Downtown is that area of Winnipeg which has experienced the greatest intensity of development and the greatest mixture of uses. The Downtown has the most diverse physical structure of the urban area containing not only the City's tallest buildings, but single storey shops and under developed sites devoted to parking. In addition the area represents the greatest concentration of capital investment, both public and private, within the City of Winnipeg. "And in terms of employment, the Downtown provides over 25% of all jobs within the City".²⁰¹

The area was predominately a manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale and retail district. Due to increased technologies and better, less expensive transportation methods, most of these activities have shifted away

²⁰⁰ City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1986) p.1.

²⁰¹ City of Winnipeg. Plan Winnipeg Environmental Planning Component. (Winnipeg, 1980) p.91.

from the area. Today, Downtown is largely a retail center with specialization in such things as service employment, government, financial institutions and entertainment.

Urban Design Objectives And Principles

It was the opinion of City Council that Winnipeg's Downtown should be more than an employment and shopping center, and the new Zoning By-Law 4800/88 is intended to promote the area as a twenty four hour activity center of high design quality. Downtown has shown some signs of this through the North Portage Development. "Some new businesses have been attracted to the Downtown, (North of Portage) and this has created new jobs and additions to the Downtown's economy, and its tax base".²⁰² However, it is the intention that the new By-Law will further enhance a renewed interest in the Downtown in other ways and also stimulate development on the south side of Portage Avenue.

Slowly, people are beginning to rediscover the Downtown and some are returning to live in the area. This type of resident population is a catalyst for further Downtown development because it will support services that are not needed by a purely daytime population. "A resident population makes Downtown an activity center at all times of day".²⁰³

There are significant areas of special character in the Downtown, which provide for unique experiences because of their "historical, ethnic, architectural, functional or natural importance. These contribute to the richness of diversity that is so necessary in the Downtown".²⁰⁴ In order to fully enjoy the special areas of the Downtown, walking is seen as the most desirable way to get around. The pedestrian environment must be comfortable, interesting, and convenient in order to project an image of an area that wants to have people walking around and enjoying the sites or shopping, etc.

²⁰² City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1986) p.2.

²⁰³ *ibid.* p.2.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*p.2.

"The new Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law is intended to provide the structures and standards capable of directing and sustaining Downtown development based on the following themes:

- (i) a public and private partnership is necessary for sustained improvement within the Downtown;
- (ii) a resident population is a vital ingredient in the Downtown;
- (iii) character areas contribute to the uniqueness of Downtown Winnipeg;
- (iv) a friendly environment for pedestrians unifies the Downtown and facilitates long term economic viability".²⁰⁵

This By-law will replace existing zoning regulations which were adopted over twenty years ago, and are no longer adequate to promote this type of development in Downtown Winnipeg. "By-law 4800/88 is a Zoning By-law of the City of Winnipeg regulating and restricting the use of land and location of buildings and structures in a portion of the City Centre-Fort Rouge Community commonly referred to as Downtown Winnipeg".²⁰⁶

Over the last several decades, the area has been weakened because of the shift of many Downtown uses to the suburban areas. "The result has been a loss of vitality as the Downtown has become less relevant to a significant portion of the population".²⁰⁷ Because of this shift, the land requirement also changed, and smaller four to six storey buildings were replaced by twenty to thirty storey ones.

²⁰⁵ City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1986) p.2.

²⁰⁶ City of Winnipeg. By-Law No. 4800/88 Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1988) p.12.

²⁰⁷ Fenton, Robert. Land Reclamation: A Strategy For Inner City Stabilization. Institute Of Urban Studies, University Of Winnipeg. p.3.

The projected levels of development for the foreseeable future are unlikely to create a demand for downtown land sufficient to stimulate normal redevelopment of all the area for Downtown purposes. "Thus, underutilized buildings, vacant lots, and extensive surface parking will continue to dominate the environment of Downtown Winnipeg".²⁰⁸

This type of Downtown environment cannot be overcome by spot redevelopment. By concentrating existing activity in a 20 or 25 storey building on a small building site, "activity is being drawn from the rest of the Downtown thus spreading the problems of vacancy and decay even more widely".²⁰⁹

Although some people are moving back into the area to live, a larger proportion of the population continues to prefer to live in suburban residential subdivisions. "New development in the Downtown is, as a result, likely to be of an infill nature which functions on an incremental property by property basis".²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Fenton, Robert. Land Reclamation: A Strategy For Inner City Stabilization.
Institute Of Urban Studies, University Of Winnipeg. p.4.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.* p.4.

²¹⁰ *ibid.* p.4.

Techniques Of Urban Design In Winnipeg

The new Zoning By-law is generally aimed at downzoning, establishing limits on the size of new buildings, and encouraging a larger number of moderate buildings throughout the Downtown. It is intended that this will give more land owners a market for building by spreading the benefits of redevelopment into more areas of the Downtown. "These limits will encourage development that uses City services more efficiently (such as residential development that promotes twenty four hour activity and vitality), distributes opportunities for development more fairly, and will not depend on drawing tenants away from existing Downtown buildings".²¹¹ This will be achieved through the down zoning of most of the Downtown area. However, it is intended that the area not be down zoned to the point of rejection by developers. Its purpose is to spread development to a moderate level throughout the area. Through bonusing for amenities, (such as skywalks, parks, etc.) development can be stimulated, but it can also be controlled, and it is hoped Downtown can be developed in such a fashion that the area is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. This downzoning is seen as one of the stronger points of By-Law 4800/88.

Bulk

Winnipeg has nine Bulk Range Districts (BR1-BR9) in the Downtown, and these are used to divide the area by building size using FAR as the criteria. (see bulk range criteria and map 6.1 appendix) These bulk ranges have been established in order to prevent developers from constructing buildings that are seen as the area (such as the development behind the Fort

²¹¹ City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg 1986) p.3.

Garry Hotel) and to help contain all of the large developments in BR9 in the Portage and Main area. "The concept of downzoning, and the delegation of the Bulk Range Districts is an attempt to "spread the density of development more evenly over the Downtown area, and hopefully, provide linkage and continuity of activity, particularly at street level, from one area to another".²¹²

The bulk regulations have neglected environmental objectives that are common in other cities. "Excluded from the by-law are:

- i) Solar and light access, particularly for open spaces and residential developments.
- ii) To provide for a coherent hierarchy of urban form, the purpose of which is to assure harmonious relationships between (a) buildings, (b) the immediate visual environments, and (c) the overall Downtown design framework".²¹³

With regard to the urban design of the Downtown, Winnipeg intends to provide guidelines which are contained as part of Zoning By-law 4800/88. "These are concerned with certain issues of an architectural nature and they separate the issues of use, character, bulk, height, landscaping, policy framework, etc. from contributing to the overall process".²¹⁴ While the City of Winnipeg is committed to a set of Downtown urban design guidelines, so far none have been completed.

Design Review

The design review designations are areas of Downtown that receive special treatment with regard to design review. There are six

²¹² Department of City Planning. A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law In Relation To The Planning Of Downtown Winnipeg. (Winnipeg, 1987) p.21.

²¹³ *ibid.* p.22.

²¹⁴ *ibid.* p.24.

designations:

- (1) Historic Design Review (HW)
 - (2) Chinatown Design Review (CH)
 - (3) Broadway Design Review (BR)
 - (4) Legislature Design Review (LB)
 - (5) Riverbank Design Review (RB)
 - (6) Pedestrian-level Design Review (PL)
- (see map 6.2 appendix)

The HW, CH, BR, LB, and the RB all have one thing in common in that they only apply to details of the exteriors of buildings. The only design review designation that applies to details of the interior of a building is the Pedestrian-level Design Review (PL). "It applies to details of the interior of a building, insofar as such details affect pedestrian circulation and safety or the enhancement of the pedestrian environment in respect of sidewalks and other pedestrian areas".²¹⁵ Of the six design review designations the PL is the largest and covers the majority of Downtown. "However, it is classified as a general area of pedestrian level review whereas Downtown is composed entirely of separate character areas".²¹⁶

Because each of the six Character Areas is unique, there are separate regulations for each area. However, each regulation is applied as an overlay, which overlap one another. (see map 6.3 appendix) This leads to confusion and serves to weaken the By-law. "The By-law should recognize all the precincts which make up the downtown (ie. Portage Avenue, Central Park, etc.) and replace the 6 sets of requirements with simple regulations relating directly to each of them".²¹⁷ The regulations in Vancouver are separate for each area of the Downtown, they are easy to understand, and they do not overlap.

²¹⁵ Department of City Planning. A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law In Relation To The Planning Of Downtown Winnipeg. (Winnipeg, 1987) p.14.

²¹⁶ *ibid.* p.26.

²¹⁷ *ibid.* p.26.

Housing

The City has been promoting residential living in the Downtown for about twenty years, "and new housing in the area, as well as other development have helped to promote the Downtown as an exciting place to live".²¹⁸ People who live Downtown support shops and services, and use City amenities and services all day long. The new Zoning By-Law is intended to protect the existing residential neighbourhoods, (south of Broadway, and north of Ellice) by restricting the areas to housing, and shops and services normally associated with residential living. (see maps 6.4 and 6.5 appendix)

The promotion of residential development in Downtown is achieved by allowing mixed use development "through the provision of bonuses for mixed use residential developments that will promote and maintain an attractive and functional residential character".²¹⁹

²¹⁸ City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1986) p.4.

²¹⁹ *ibid.* p.4.

Political Climate With Regard To Urban Design In Winnipeg

The political climate in Winnipeg is very 'pro development', and in several cases this has led to the construction of projects that have a negative effect on the Downtown environment. This has often resulted in a project being approved contrary to the recommendations of the Planning Department. If a development will increase the revenue in taxes to the City, in all likelihood, it will be approved often regardless of the effect it has on the Downtown environment.

The political system and urban design principles and techniques must work together to produce good design. This is not the case in Winnipeg because the principles are generally weak and consequently, the political system does not synchronize with the urban design process. City Council is involved in all aspects of the planning process, and this has not been conducive to promoting good development. The politicians have no plan or strategy to guide their decision making process, and they only have the by-law to consider. The result is that decisions tend to be made with shortsighted objectives.

The Downtown Design Board is made up of the members of the Committee of Planning and Community Services. These four Councilors, who are part of a Council Standing Committee, have a considerable amount of control on criteria that are to be established in the construction or remodeling of a building, and they could block development at this stage. These Councilors may or may not be educated in urban design, and for the most part decisions are based on how they interpret the guidelines as to "appropriateness" of colours, materials, setbacks, etc. "The Board meets from time to time, but on occasion they may appoint an Advisory Committee or Committees, for the purpose of preparing or reviewing guidelines, or for the

purpose of providing advice to the Board".²²⁰ "This underscores the timidity of the political realm to enter into any kind of true participatory process".²²¹

²²⁰ City of Winnipeg. Downtown Zoning By-Law 4800/88. (Winnipeg, 1988) p.VII-3.

²²¹ Department of City Planning. A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law In Relation To The Planning Of Downtown Winnipeg. p.8.

Administrative Process For Implementation

The development permit process in Winnipeg is quite complex. If it is a small development, or several changes are going to be made to a building, the process is less complex. An application is made to the Development Examiner, who reviews the plan for compliance of existing zoning by-law. If it conforms, it is passed on to the Plan Examiner who reviews the plan to check for compliance with building codes, fire codes, etc. If the plan complies, it is approved, and a building permit is issued at the Permit Department. (see diagram 2.1 appendix) However, if a zoning variance is needed, it must be approved at a public hearing. Signs must be posted on site, and the proposed variance must be advertised in the newspaper. If the variance is granted at the public meeting, a written order is granted and re-examined by the Development Examiner, who in turn, passes it on to the Permit Department who issue the building permit.

For a major Downtown development, the process is somewhat longer. An application for approval by the Downtown Design Board shall be made to the Director of Planning, and shall be accompanied by plans drawn to scale.

After the plan is examined by the Director of Planning, it is passed on to the Acting Co-ordinating Group (ACG). This is the stage for design review. There is negotiation between the ACG and the developer, and a contract is agreed upon prior to public hearings on the zoning agreement. The contract is based on the type of development, size, FAR, location, materials, setbacks, etc. The ACG is made up of the Area Planner, the Head Land Development Officer, and representatives from City departments such as Parks and Recreation, Waterworks, Streets, etc. In total the ACG is composed of about thirty people.

After the contract has been dealt with, there is a public hearing for the rezoning of the site. The meeting must be advertised in the newspaper, and signs must be posted on site to notify the public of the hearing. The Committee on Planning and Community Services (or the Downtown Design Board) is present at the hearing, and if the rezoning meets public approval, it is approved and is passed on to the Executive Policy Committee (EPC). The EPC also votes on the project, and if they approve it, it is passed on to Council where it will receive two readings at the first meeting it is brought up. It must receive passage on both readings in order to be read at a second meeting. Here it will receive a third reading and passage of an amended zoning by-law. (see diagram 6.1 appendix) This is a long drawn out process, and there is no formal design review body to cause such a slow process.

If an application is refused, the Downtown Design Board shall record the reasons for such refusal, and shall provide a copy to the applicant on request.

Wind Impact

Any development permit application must be accompanied by a Wind Impact Statement based upon scale model simulation analysis.

Winnipeg seems to put a great deal of emphasis on the effect that wind has on the pedestrian environment. However, many projects have been constructed and continue to be constructed (TD Tower Portage and Main) that help to increase the wind speed at ground level. If the results of wind studies are not to be taken seriously, why should they be carried out? Instead of acknowledging the test results at their convenience, the Downtown Design Board, and City Council should try to incorporate the results of the tests into the design agreement between the developer and the City prior to approval and construction of a development.

Conclusion

Downtown is the area of greatest private and public investment in the City. Along with investment in the shops and services, there is also investment in other amenities such as bridges, utilities, parks, walkways, and many public services. "It is the intent of the new Zoning By-Law, to allocate the future investment to those areas of the Downtown in most need and where the return in benefits is greatest".²²² However, the By-law falls short in almost all of its features. The only positive feature of the by-law is a commitment to downzone Downtown. This is a step in the right direction, but there must be a commitment from Council to produce design guidelines, and change the political process to allow for a wider based design review process, through a formal design review body, independent of Council.

Winnipeg has made mistakes in the past, and will continue to make mistakes because "there is no specific plan of action, outlining goals, objectives and substantiated policy alternatives. Simultaneously, a truly participatory process of formulation should be undertaken".²²³ By-law 4800/88 should be reexamined, and amended to promote more positively, a Downtown that will improve and regain the importance that it has lost over the years.

Chapter Seven provides a comparison of the design practices of Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, and Minneapolis with Winnipeg.

²²² City of Winnipeg. A Backgrounder To The Proposed Downtown Zoning By-Law. (Winnipeg, 1986) p.3.

²²³ Department of City Planning. A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law In Relation To The Planning Of Downtown Winnipeg. (Winnipeg, 1987) p.4.

CHAPTER 7
A COMPARISON OF THE DESIGN PRACTICES
OF VANCOUVER, CALGARY, REGINA, AND MINNEAPOLIS
WITH WINNIPEG

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comparison between Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Minneapolis, and Winnipeg. The first city that was examined was Vancouver, British Columbia. This city is exemplary in positive downtown urban design which adheres to a comprehensive set of guidelines that are used positively to help regulate design in the Downtown area. The guidelines are purely advisory, but the Planning Department and the Development Permit Board pay close attention to the guidelines and use them to guide the developer. The design process is an integrated team effort in Vancouver, and everyone involved (both private and public) must be skilled for the process to run smoothly.

It is difficult to compare Vancouver to Winnipeg because Vancouver has so much more to offer in terms of potential development opportunities which enables them to exercise strong design control as distinct from cities with less development pressure, like Winnipeg.

Vancouver has been criticized for using a lengthy process in assessing a potential development, but this process seems, on the whole, to be working well and many cities would do well to take a closer look at their system. Vancouver employs formal design review, and a design review panel (Urban Design Panel independent of Council) which is composed of professionals from the community. This panel is responsible for much of the success with good urban design in Downtown. A system of formal design review has proven to be an important asset to Vancouver.

Winnipeg, like Vancouver is criticized for its lengthy time-consuming development permits process. But unlike Vancouver, it has no

design review process, totally independent of the political process. Design review in Winnipeg is executed at the beauracratc level by the Acting Coordinating Group (ACG) drawn from different City departments, but because of vague overall urban design policy, they are limited in their contribution. The Downtown Design Board is also involved and is composed of four Councilors who make design decisions based on their interpretations of the by-law and advice from the ACG.

The by-law itself is lacking in many design issues, such as pedestrian protection, views, and pedestrian level environment with no clear commitment to policy implementation. Winnipeg fears too strong a control system would deter potential development. Vancouver's experience would not necessarily work for Winnipeg. For example, Council in Winnipeg would have to give up its detailed involvement in every aspect of the development application process. Also, Winnipeg should establish formal design review and a wider based design review panel. Like Vancouver, Winnipeg must develop a comprehensive system of urban design guidelines for each separate area of Downtown. A set of guidelines for the Downtown has been promised, but to date, they have not been completed. Like Vancouver, Winnipeg Design Guidelines should be a separate advisory document, and should be easy to understand with accompanying diagrams etc. They should provide detail, in all aspects of urban design, and like Vancouver, they should be easily understood by everyone.

Calgary, Alberta is an example of a city that has experienced extensive growth during the oil boom years of the 1970's. Downtown developed at a rapid pace at this time, and the City had little concern for the planning and design of the area. Because the area was developing very quickly, there was a great demand for land. As a result, many Downtown areas were rezoned from residential to commercial so that the City could generate more revenue through taxes, etc. Calgary paid little attention to the effect this

more revenue through taxes, etc. Calgary paid little attention to the effect this development had on Downtown, and today, the area has an abundance of large bulky buildings of poor design with few amenities to contribute to the area.

Because the Downtown developed without many of the amenities that are required such as parks, public spaces, atriums, etc. the City has spent a great deal of money to improve Downtown. Several heritage sites were destroyed during the boom years, and Calgary has also set up guidelines to protect them. In order to encourage the preservation of heritage buildings, Calgary uses transfer of development rights (TDR). If a developer works on a heritage site, he can earn bonus for another project. The system is working well, and it is promoting a successful system of heritage preservation. Unlike Winnipeg, all buildings of historic importance are protected, irregardless of their location. Winnipeg only protects heritage buildings in the HW design designation.

Calgary uses a zero based bonus system where there is a balance between the provision of public amenities and an increase of density for the developer. It is believed that this type of bonusing has a number of benefits in Calgary.

It provides a consistent means of evaluating complex and diverse proposals without stifling imaginative solutions. "Zero based bonusing provides choices for developers and the City in terms of which bonusable features are provided in a particular development, and it is also believed that it rewards good performance".²²⁴ Winnipeg also uses a bonus system for public amenities, but the bonus is much smaller than that of Calgary. Calgary felt that this would stimulate the development of many public amenities that were not constructed during the oil boom years.

Another method that Calgary uses to improve Downtown through

²²⁴ Department of City Planning. A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law Of Downtown Winnipeg. (Winnipeg, 1987) p.10.

increased amenities is to reward bonus for off site improvements. In such a case, the developer has two options. First of all he could build something the City wants on a certain site and receive bonus for this. Secondly, if he did not want to construct anything he could give the City money to develop something on their own. "However, the amount of bonus is based on the amount of money that the developer gives to the City".²²⁵ This is quite unique to Calgary, and it is helping to improve the situation in Downtown, but it is unfair to the developer who cannot afford to pay the City to increase FAR. In essence, a developer can purchase increased FAR if he does not want to add to the amenities of Downtown. Winnipeg does not have such a system to improve the amenities in Downtown.

During the boom years Calgary also used spot zoning to cope with the heavy development that was taking place. This was seen to substantially reduce the stability that the Zoning provides in regard to property values, and they were seen to fluctuate. Another problem was the fact that no one really knew the rules with regard to development and design because it could be a different set of criteria for every site. Spot zoning is no longer used, and some of the bulky buildings are a direct result of spot zoning. Winnipeg can benefit from Calgary's negative experience with spot zoning.

Calgary, like Winnipeg, has no formal design guidelines for Downtown, design being governed under the Zoning By-law. This is structured in such a way that there is a great deal of discretion built in to the system. However, this system is not similar to Vancouver because there is a large component of political intervention in Calgary. "Under this system, a project that does not conform to the zoning rules could be approved, and a project that conforms to every letter of the law could be refused".²²⁶ In Vancouver if a

²²⁵ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview, November 17, 1988

²²⁶ Cochrane, Paul. Planner, Downtown Policy & Development. Calgary. Interview November 17, 1988.

development does not conform to the guidelines, etc. it, most likely, will be refused a development permit until changes are made, and an agreement can be reached through negotiation.

In Calgary, City Council is very much involved in development decisions, and in many instances the Planning Department and the Planning Commission are purely advisory bodies. Council has a hand in most all major planning decisions, and is involved in all parts of the development process. The political system is similar in Winnipeg where Council also has a great deal of power in terms of design decisions.

Unlike Vancouver, Calgary does not have the same balance between the politicians, planning principles, and implementation techniques and the whole system does not seem to work together. There are valid urban design principles in Calgary, but there is a great deal of political intervention at every level of the design process.

Winnipeg and Calgary are alike in several ways. First of all both cities have a great deal of political intervention in the design process. Secondly, both cities use a zoning by-law to guide Downtown development. However, Calgary has a plan for the Downtown, and specific goals and intentions for the area. Calgary has a positive set of design principles, but the political climate is does not co-ordinate well with the Planning Department and the design process. Unlike Winnipeg, perhaps Calgary has learned that all development is not good development, and design must be regulated to prevent over development and an abundance of bulky buildings.

Regina is a city that is in need of development, so they like Winnipeg have a strong preference to permit any type of development in their Downtown area. Design guidelines are very informal, and they are not fully enforced because the Council is pro development. The Planning Department

advises Council on design decisions, but is often ignored when there is a conflict of design issues. There is no formal design review process, or body, to review development plans, so Council nearly always votes in favor of developments.

With regard to the design guidelines themselves, they appear in a Downtown design guideline book and are repeated in the Regina Zoning By-law, but they do not seem to have much effect on the Zoning By-law. They are strictly advisory, and because of the Provincial Planning and Development Act, they are not binding. The guidelines are in place but a developer is more likely to read the zoning by-law instead.

Although they are limited in power, there has been an increased sensitivity to issues of wind and sunlight, and open public spaces. Wind tests are now an important part of the design of a structure, and Regina has been a pioneer in these types of studies.

Regina has design principles in place, a plan, and guidelines to control development Downtown. However, because of provincial legislation, the guidelines are weakened and cannot be fully enforced. This is compounded by the fact that Council allow most proposed developments to take place. Regina still views all development as good development.

Minneapolis is a city that has refrained from formal design review and a design review panel because they felt that it would give them too many standard architectural ideas and they feared this would be reflected in Downtown design. However, the system has worked well in Minneapolis, and aside from a few mistakes, the results have been positive. Being the only American example, Minneapolis did not appear to be very different in terms of goals and ideas for the Downtown area. The zoning scheme is a good one where the taller buildings are all contained in one central area, and this is also being attempted in Winnipeg with the Bulk Range 9 designation in the Portage and Main Street area.

In Minneapolis, if a developer conforms to the zoning and the

design guidelines he can receive a permit and begin construction. Minneapolis makes it easy for developers to build if their project conforms to the design requirements for Downtown. However if rezoning is involved, the Local Option Agreement comes into play. Here 2/3 of the building owners within 200 feet of the development must approve sign a petition approving the project. This is a unique concept, and it is a good example of public participation. Winnipeg is similar, to a lesser extent, as projects must receive approval at a community committee meeting. Minneapolis has made some poor design decisions in the past, but they have learned from them, and have been constantly altering and updating their Downtown Plan. They are committed to creating a Downtown that is of high design quality.

This is an example of a city that has achieved successful design without the use of design review, or a design review panel. Design review works well in Vancouver, with the political system synchronized to the whole process. The political system in Minneapolis is set up to encourage a process without design review. It is working well because there is a balance between the political system, the planning principles, and the implementation techniques.

Winnipeg could learn from the experiences of Minneapolis, and should pay special attention to the fact that a Plan backed by commitment and effective policies, is flexible enough to handle change, and will serve to encourage quality urban design in Downtown.

Conclusion

All cities studied had several goals in mind. All wanted to promote good development in Downtown, and also all wanted to promote a Downtown residential population to make them vital living areas twenty four hours a day.

It can be seen that Winnipeg must make changes in order to

promote good urban design in the Downtown. Cities that have successful urban design such as Vancouver, all have a balance between the three actors involved in the urban design process. These actors are: planners, politicians and the public. These are the three elements of good urban design, and Winnipeg does not have the balance between them that is needed to promote good Downtown design.

Winnipeg appears to be at the start of improving the urban design process. However, there is the question of whether or not urban design can work within the existing political system in Winnipeg. There seems to be too much political intervention in the whole urban design process and this mitigates against good urban design.

In Winnipeg the politicians are involved at all levels of the process. Since there is no clear plan for Downtown, and only a set of bylaws to administer, without reference to an overall strategy, a problem in decision making is created. A plan should be put into place to provide direction to Downtown development. A plan would limit political involvement and make it more focused since it would control Downtown design through the use of guidelines and politicians would no longer need to be involved in the administrative aspects of the design process.

A clear operational role by politicians and urban designers can be achieved through the creation of a design review panel independent of council. When there is a separation between the two, and the politicians are limited in their design decision making power, the system will be on its way to promoting good Downtown design.

In all cities studied, negotiation was the main driving force behind good Downtown design. Good design cannot be legislated, it must be negotiated as a team effort between politicians, beauracrats and the public and planned out between the City and the developer.

Appendix

Vancouver.

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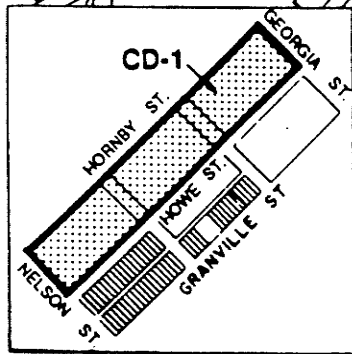
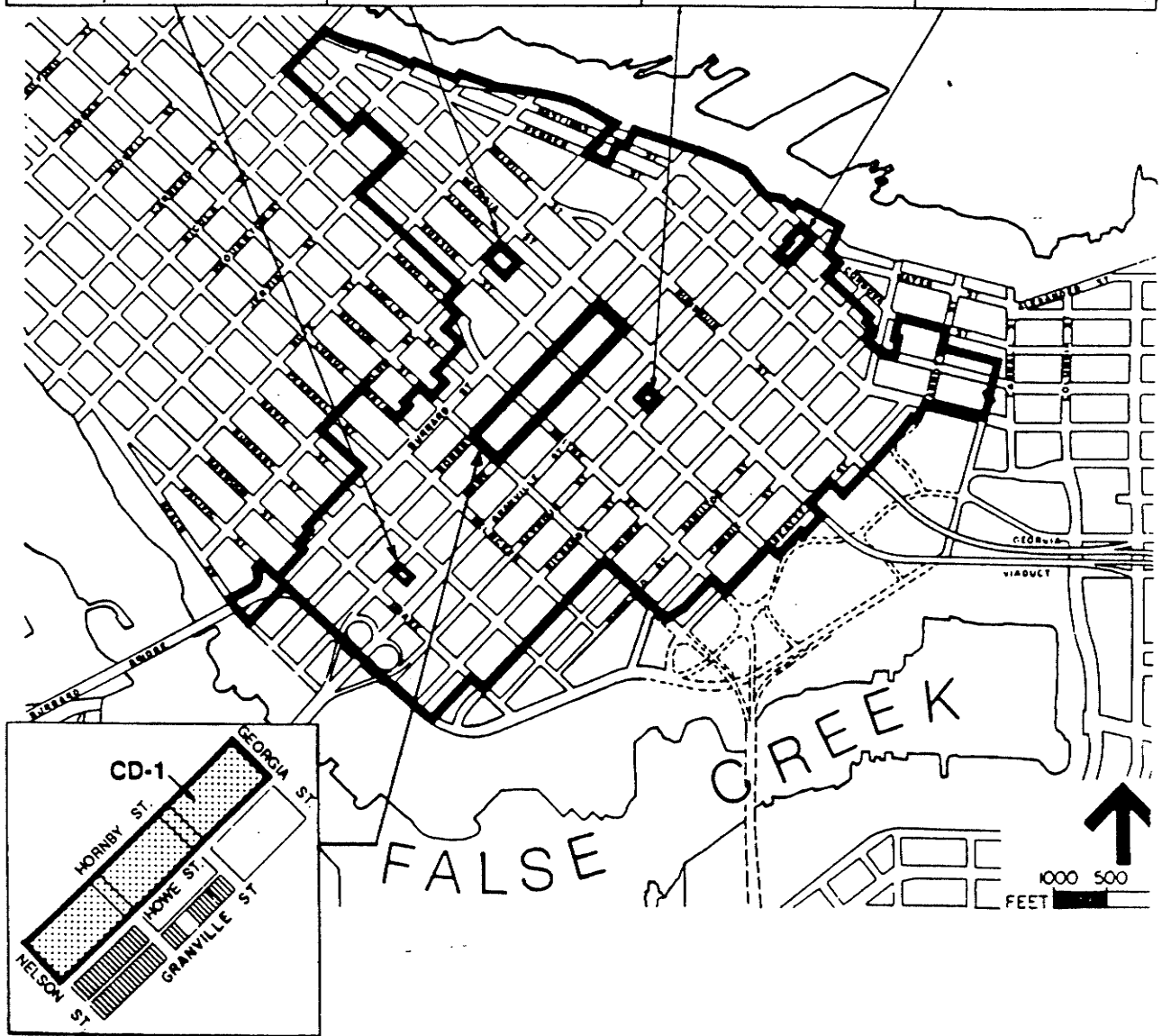
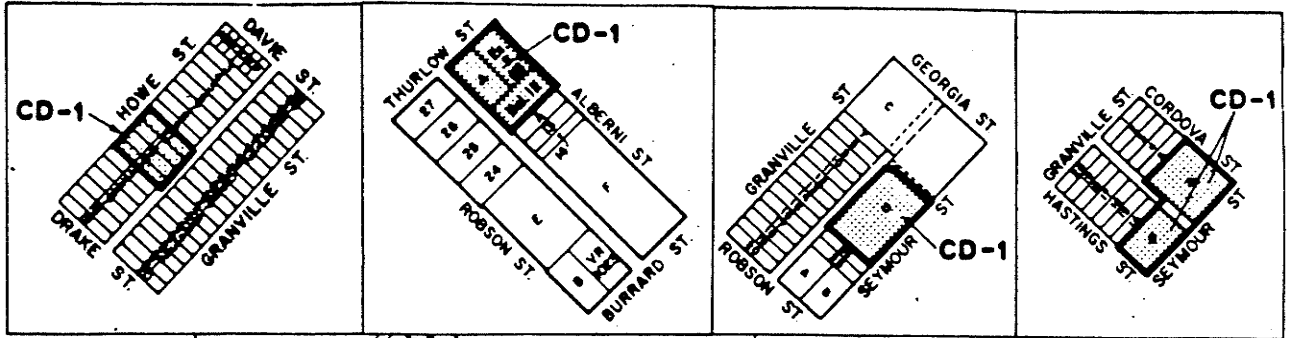
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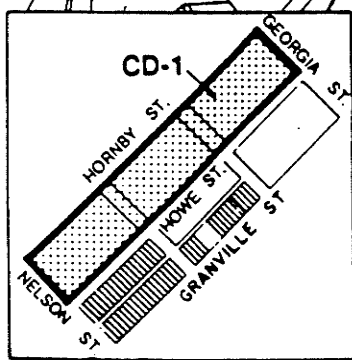
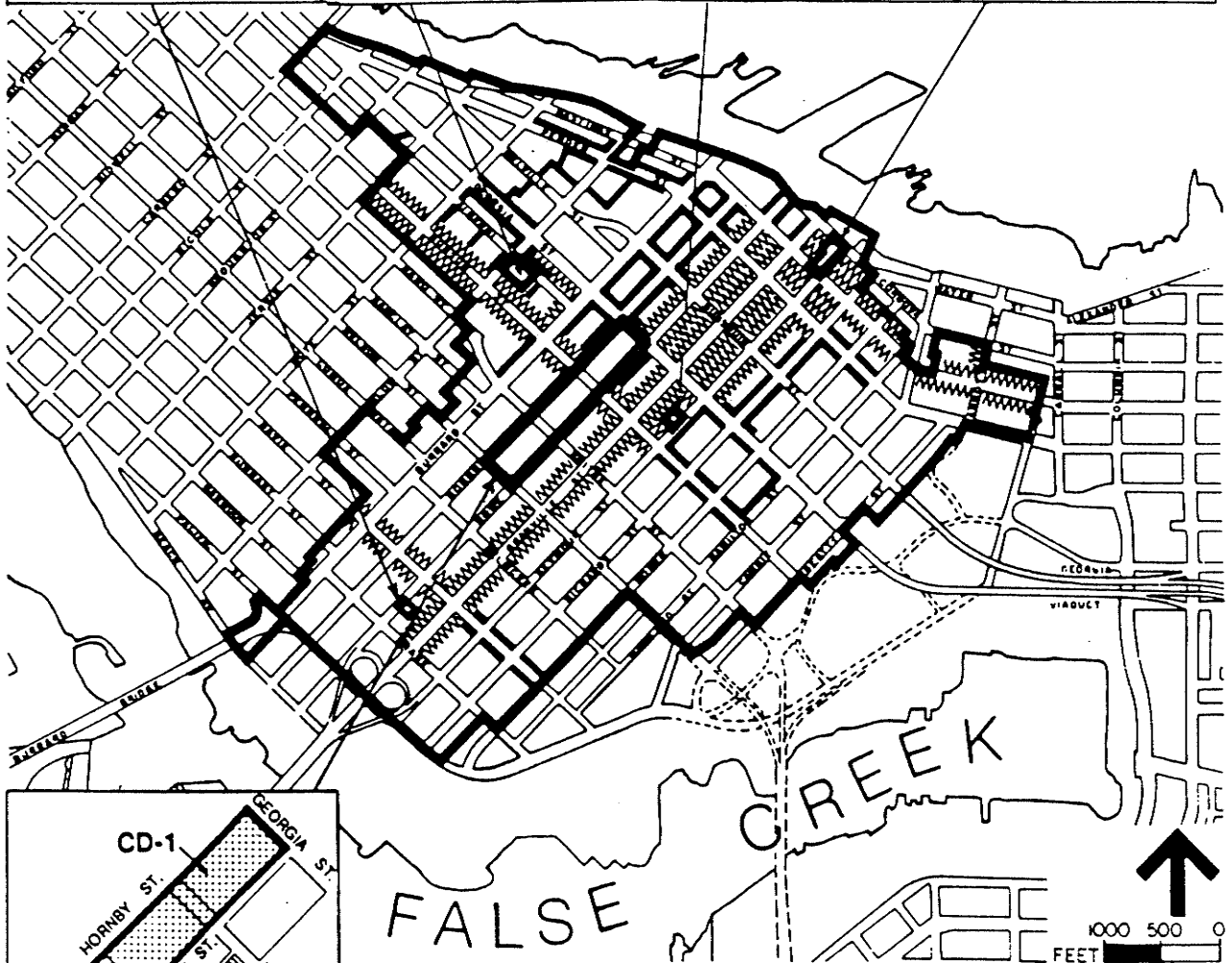
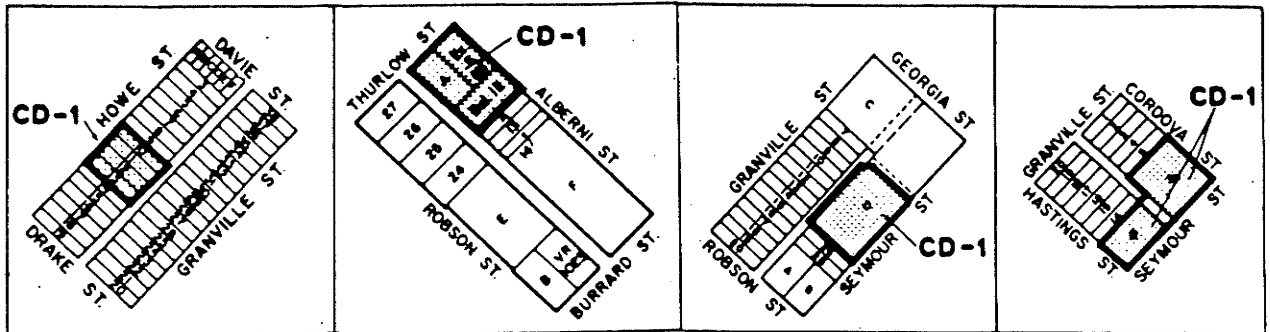
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Map 2.1 Downtown District (DD) Of Vancouver



Source: City of Vancouver Official Development Plans, DD April, 1988.

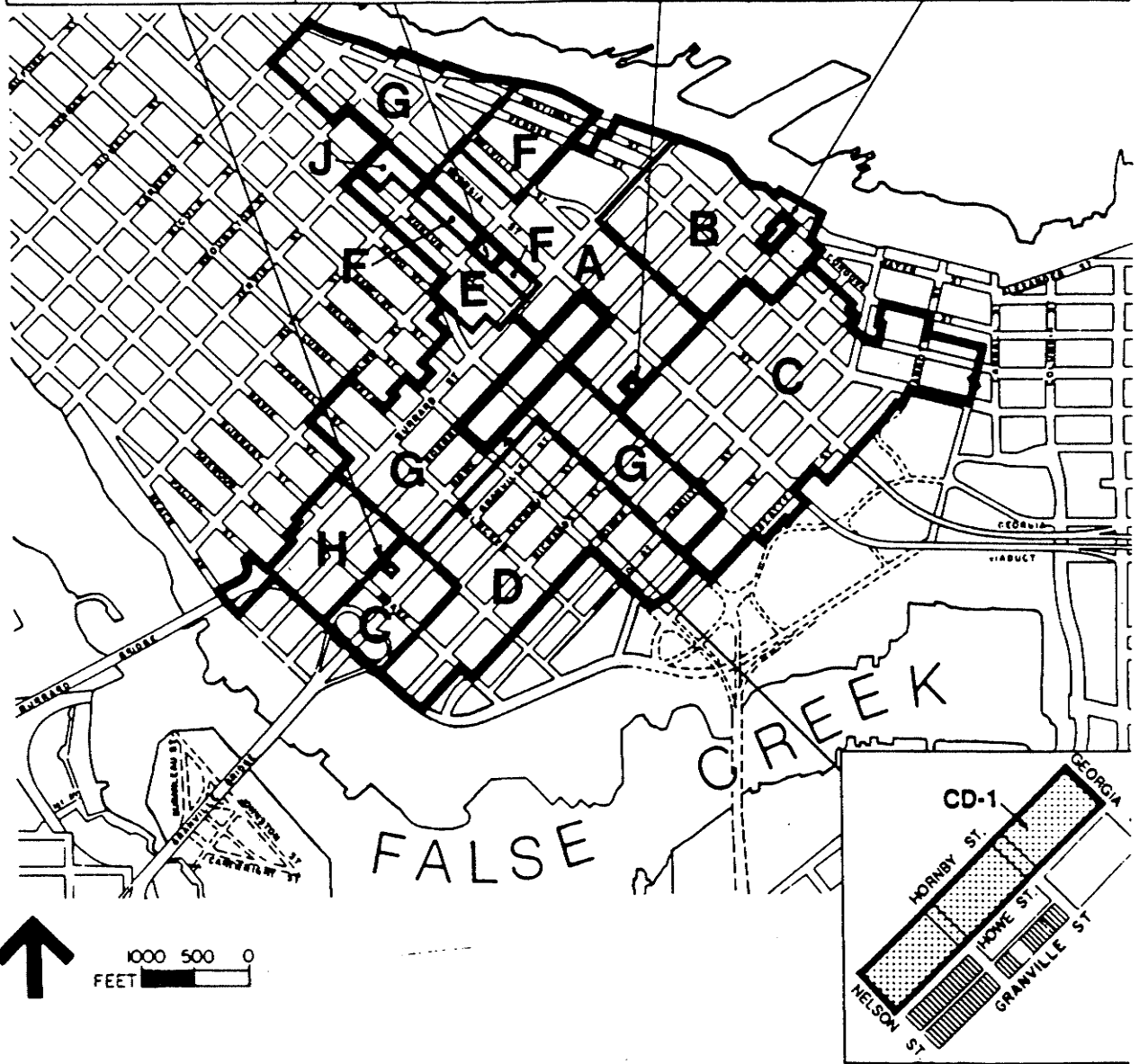
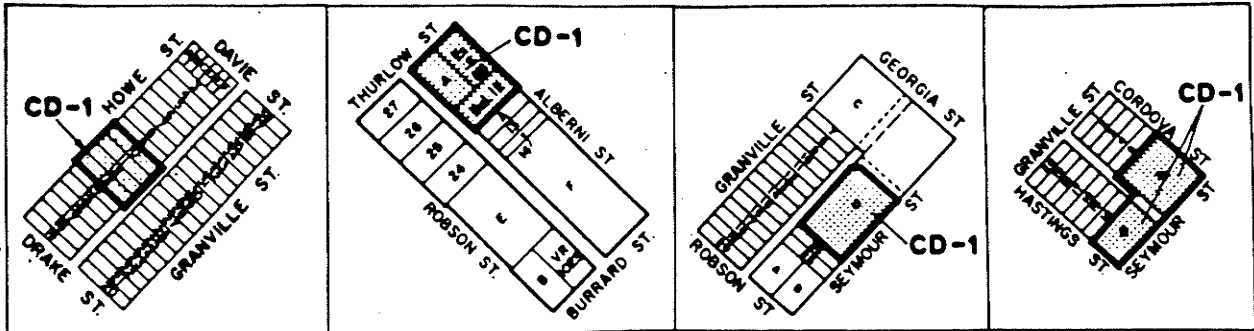
Map 2.2 Retail Uses DD



 ground floor retail uses required
 ground floor retail uses encouraged

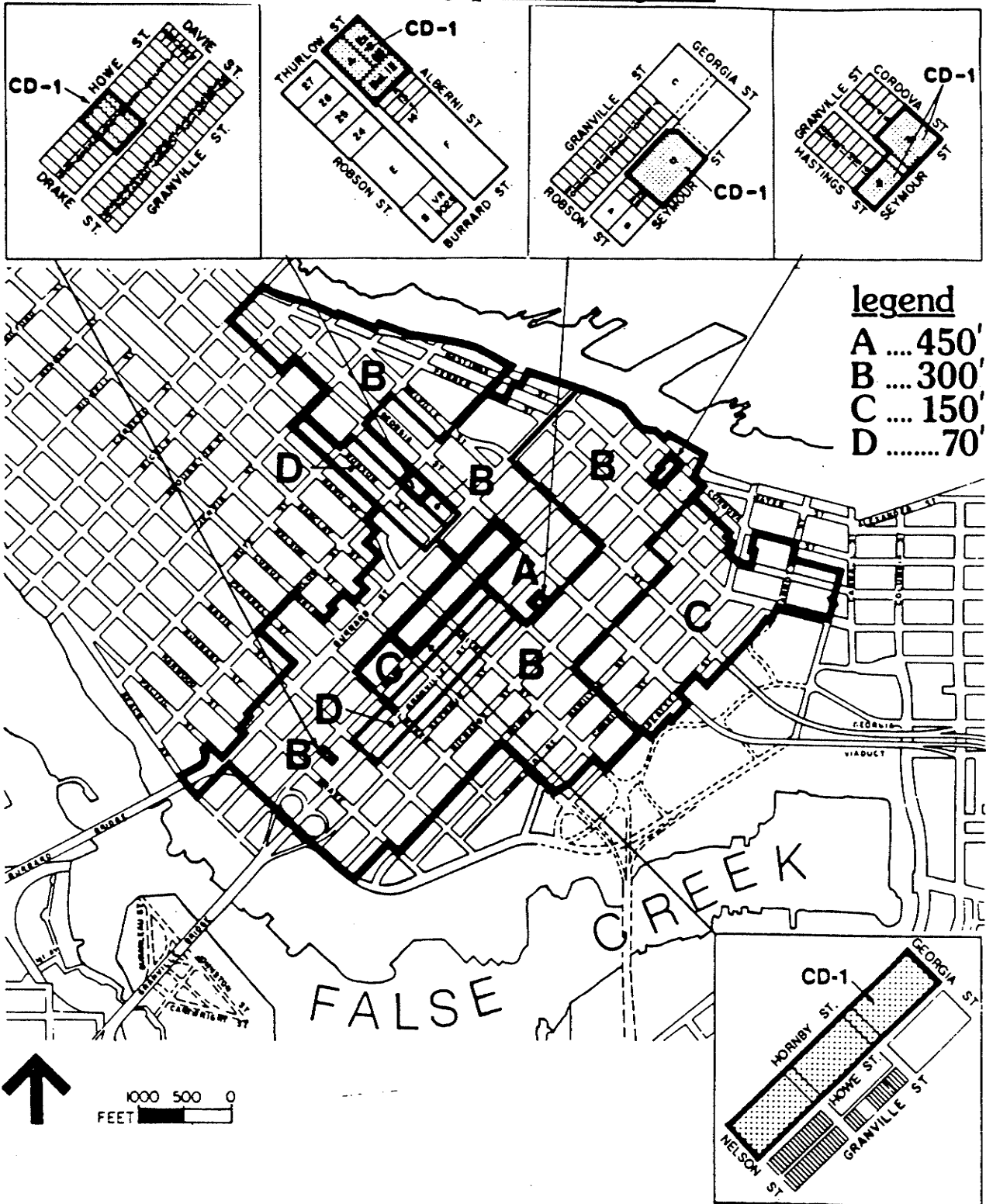
Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans, DD April, 1988.

Map 2.3 Density DD



Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans DD April, 1988.

Map 2.4 Height Of Buildings DD



Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans, DD April, 1988.

Duties Of The Urban Design Panel By-Law No. 4072

- 1) The Panel shall be advisory to Council but its reports shall go to the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board, as the case may be, and be included into such reports as go to Council from either the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board, provided that the Panel has the additional right to report to Council.
- 2) The Panel shall assist the Planning Department and Council in the formulation of design policy and criteria.
- 3) The Panel's review shall be extended to include all civic works, such as bridges, roadworks, parks, beautification projects, transit systems, civic buildings, and design competitions prior to both the issuance of competition requirements and the subsequent awarding of contracts and to give impartial professional advice directly at the appropriate level and at the appropriate time on any proposal or policy affecting the community's physical environment.
- 4) The Panel shall have the right to review those projects submitted to it by Council and have the right to select additional projects.
- 5) The Panel shall review projects in their early conceptual stages or such time as they are first brought to the attention of the Planning Department and/or Department of Permits and Licenses.
- 6) The Panel shall meet on such day or days as will enable its reports to be considered by the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board when either of them is considering any such report.
- 7) An agenda shall be prepared and circulated a minimum of one week prior to the meeting, unless prevented by exceptional circumstances.

Source: City Of Vancouver. Zoning And Development By-Law. 1983

Sample DPA Checklist.

For Preliminary DPA's

Preliminary submission material is intended to describe and illustrate the concept of a development proposal. Free-hand drawings and less formal presentation formats are therefore acceptable, provided that the information is legible and accurate.

Applicants are expected to document all technical information, based on by-law requirements, as illustrated on the *Sample DPA Technical Data Sheet* following this Checklist. Technical checks will not be made by City staff.

1.0 Descriptive Information (written)

1.1 *design rationale*, including a description of how the proposal responds to its urban design context (i.e., in siting, form, massing, architectural character, etc.);

description of development and compliance with Zoning By-law, ODPs, ADPs, applicable policies, and development or design guidelines. This will include: site dimensions, floor area calculations, density (measured by FSR and UPA as applicable), height, site coverage, setbacks, amenity spaces, number and type of dwelling units,

For Complete DPA's

Complete submission material must comprehensively and accurately describe and illustrate all aspects of a fully executed development proposal. Detailed technical data and design drawings, as described below, are required.

1.1 *same*, including: conditions of approval of any preliminary DPA. This will note how conditions have been met and identify any which are unfulfilled

FSR tracing overlay, with detailed floor area calculations

Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans.

For Preliminary DPA's	For Complete DPA's	For Preliminary DPA's	For Complete
general provisions for development of open spaces, and parking and loading		2.2 relationship to windows and balconies in adjacent buildings (if proposal is residential, i.e., <i>reflected elevations</i> of adjacent buildings superimposed)	2.2 <i>same</i>
1.2 description of <i>requested relaxations</i> , variances or increases. This will include FSR, height, setbacks, parking, loading, and the like	1.2 <i>same</i>	2.3 <i>adjacent dwelling unit layouts and uses</i> , and window locations on each floor (where applicable) and (where obtainable) with adjoining property owner's consent	2.3 <i>same</i>
1.3 description of <i>existing use of site</i> . This will include indication whether any existing residential use is rental	1.3 <i>same</i>	2.4 photographs of <i>existing streetscape</i> , including existing buildings and environs	2.4 <i>same</i>
1.4 description of <i>heritage resources</i> . This will identify whether such resources are located on or adjacent to the subject site. Heritage resources are to include: municipal and Provincial heritage-designated buildings or objects, as well as buildings or objects on the Vancouver Heritage Inventory	1.4 <i>same</i>	2.5 <i>running streetscape elevation</i> , including proposal, to illustrate its character	2.5 <i>same</i>
1.5 description of <i>social amenities</i> . This will identify location and floor area and describe provisions for operation and maintenance	1.5 <i>same</i>	2.6 comparative <i>shadow analysis</i> for all buildings over 35 feet in height, as well as any which penetrate building height envelope or height restrictions	2.6 <i>same</i>
2.0 Context		2.7 <i>view analysis</i> , showing effect of proposal on view corridors from streets and neighbouring properties. This will include plan, section drawings and view photographs (if applicable)	2.7 <i>same</i>
2.1 indication of <i>contextual relationship</i> of proposal to other existing developments within one block as appropriate (indicating use, location and height of all buildings on adjacent sites)	2.1 <i>same</i>	3.0 Site Plan	
		3.1 <i>site dimensions, legal description of property, location</i> and names of adjoining streets, lanes, and northpoint	

Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans.

For Preliminary DPA's

- 3.2 indication of *proposed buildings or additions*, with yards and setbacks and any encroachment therein
- 3.3 indication of *open space* and its use
- 3.4 indication of *relative grades* of site and ground floor levels
- 4.0 Elevations and Sections
 - 4.1 *outlines* of all elevations of proposal to establish its overall character of building(s)
 - 4.2 *building sections*, indicating relative floor levels
 - 4.3 *building envelope or height provisions* (as prescribed in Zoning By-law, ODPs, ADPs, or Guidelines) with proposed height indicated

For Complete DPA's

- 3.2 accurate indication of *proposed buildings or additions*, plus interior and exterior dimensions and proposed yards and setbacks
- 3.3 accurate indication of *open space treatment*, i.e., open areas, landscaped areas, courtyards, pedestrian areas, parking and loading. Public open space and right-of-ways are to be identified. Any screening, fences, retaining walls, curbing, surface treatment and details of access from street or lane are to be shown
- 3.4 accurate indication of *established elevations of site and ground floor levels* of all buildings relative to existing or assumed building grades, plus engineering elevations (ramps, entries, etc.)
- 4.1 *accurate elevations*, including exterior materials and finishes and colours (Scale: not less than 1/8" to one foot or 1:100)
- 4.2 *accurate longitudinal and cross-sections* (including typical door, fenestration, stair and balcony details) (Scale: not less than 1/8" to one foot or 1:100)
- 4.3 *same*

Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans.

For Preliminary DPA's

9.0 Analytical Information

9.1 *sun, shade, shadow analysis* and effects on adjoining properties and streets (10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. on September 21 and March 21)

9.2 N/A

9.3 N/A

9.4 *traffic analysis* (for major developments where impacts may be a problem)

For Complete DPA's

9.1 *same*

9.2 *micro-climate analysis*, including wind effects of proposal on immediate area (for high-rise buildings only, where requested by Development Permit Board)

9.3 *acoustical analysis*, including impact of traffic and noise sources in immediate area on proposal (for significant residential developments only, where requested by staff.)

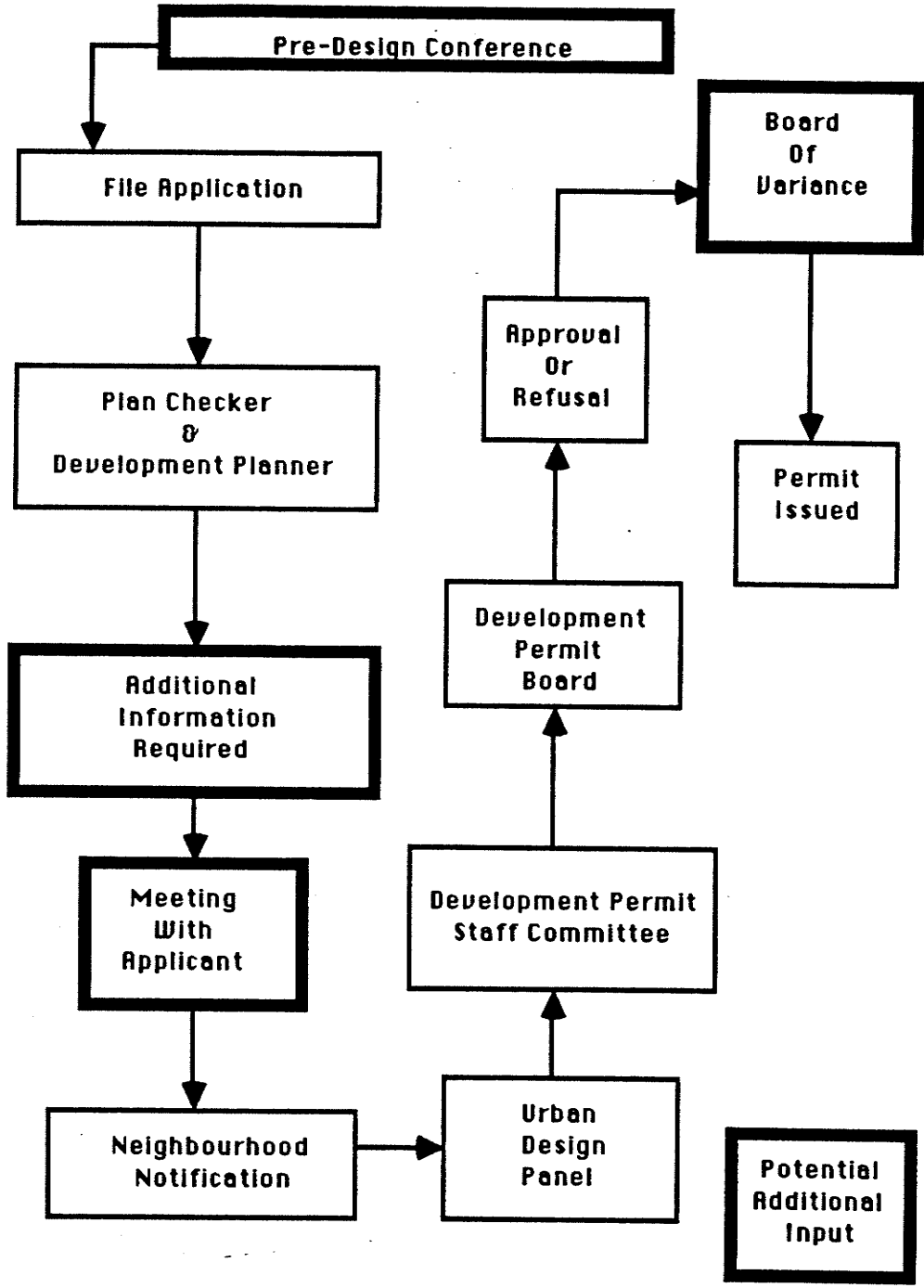
9.4 N/A

Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans.

	PERMITTED	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Site Area		____ sq. ft. (m ²) (applicable only in some zones)	____ sq. ft. (m ²)
Floor Area	____ sq. ft. (m ²)		Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail sq. ft. (m²) • Restaurant sq. ft. (m²) • Office sq. ft. (m²) • Hotel sq. ft. (m²) Sub Total sq. ft. (m²) Residential TOTAL
FSR	____ (max.)		Commercial Residential TOTAL
Parking	Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Retail • Restaurant • Hotel Sub Total • Residential TOTAL (max.)	Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Retail • Restaurant • Hotel Sub Total • Residential TOTAL (min.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Residential TOTAL spaces spaces
Loading		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office • Retail • Restaurant TOTAL	spaces ____ Spaces spaces spaces
Height	____ ft. (m) (max.) (height envelope)		____ ft. (m)
Yards	front rear sides (E) sides (W)	____ ft. (m) (min.) ____ ft. (m) (min.) ____ ft. (m) (min.) ____ (m) (min.)	____ ft. (m) ____ ft. (m) ____ ft. (m) ____ ft. (m)
Site Coverage	____% (max.)		____ %
Angle of Daylight		____°	____°
Containing Angle		____°	____°
Amenity	____ sq. ft. (m ²)		____ sq/ft/(m ²)

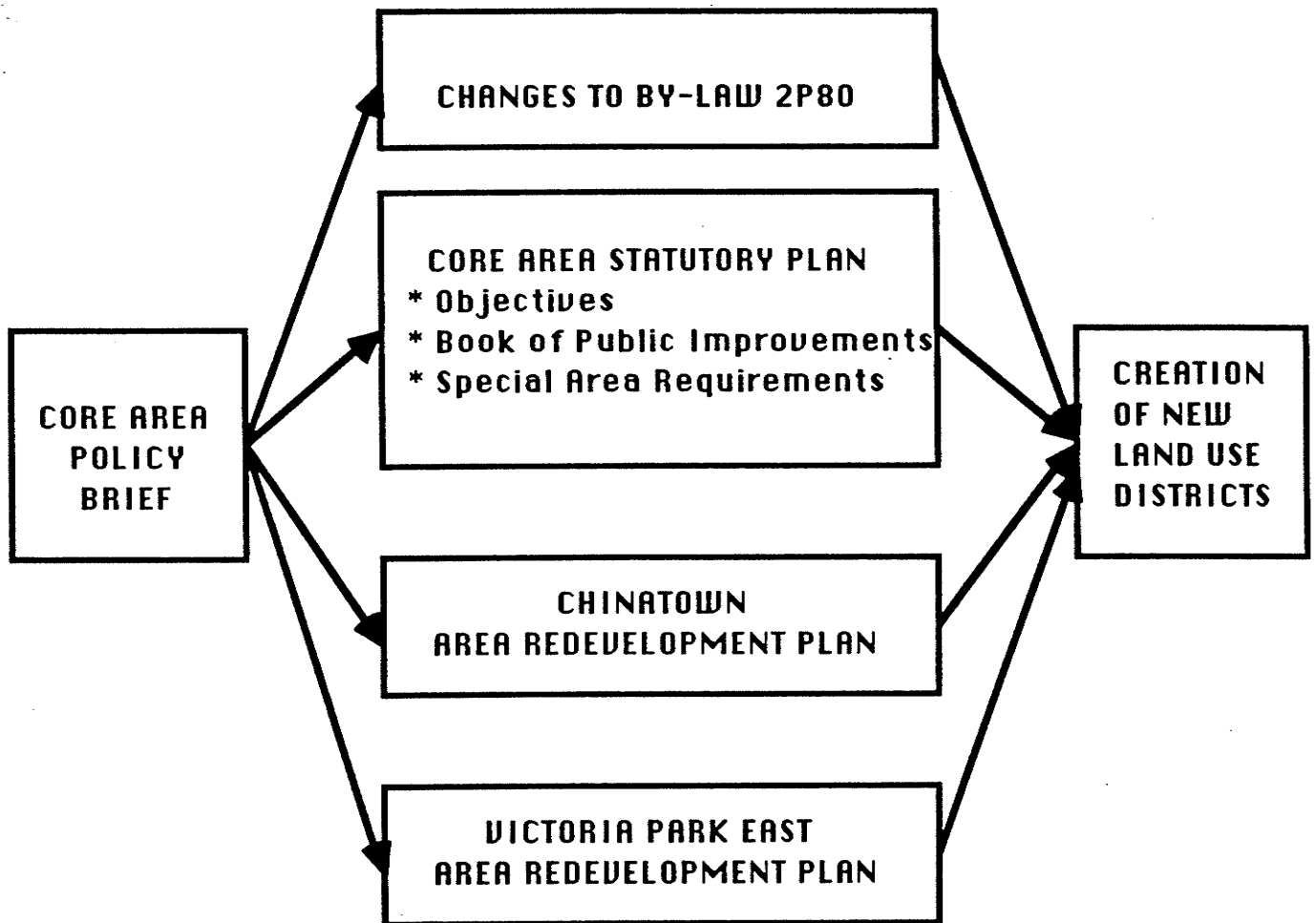
Source: City Of Vancouver Official Development Plans.

Diagram 2.1 The Development Permit process In Vancouver



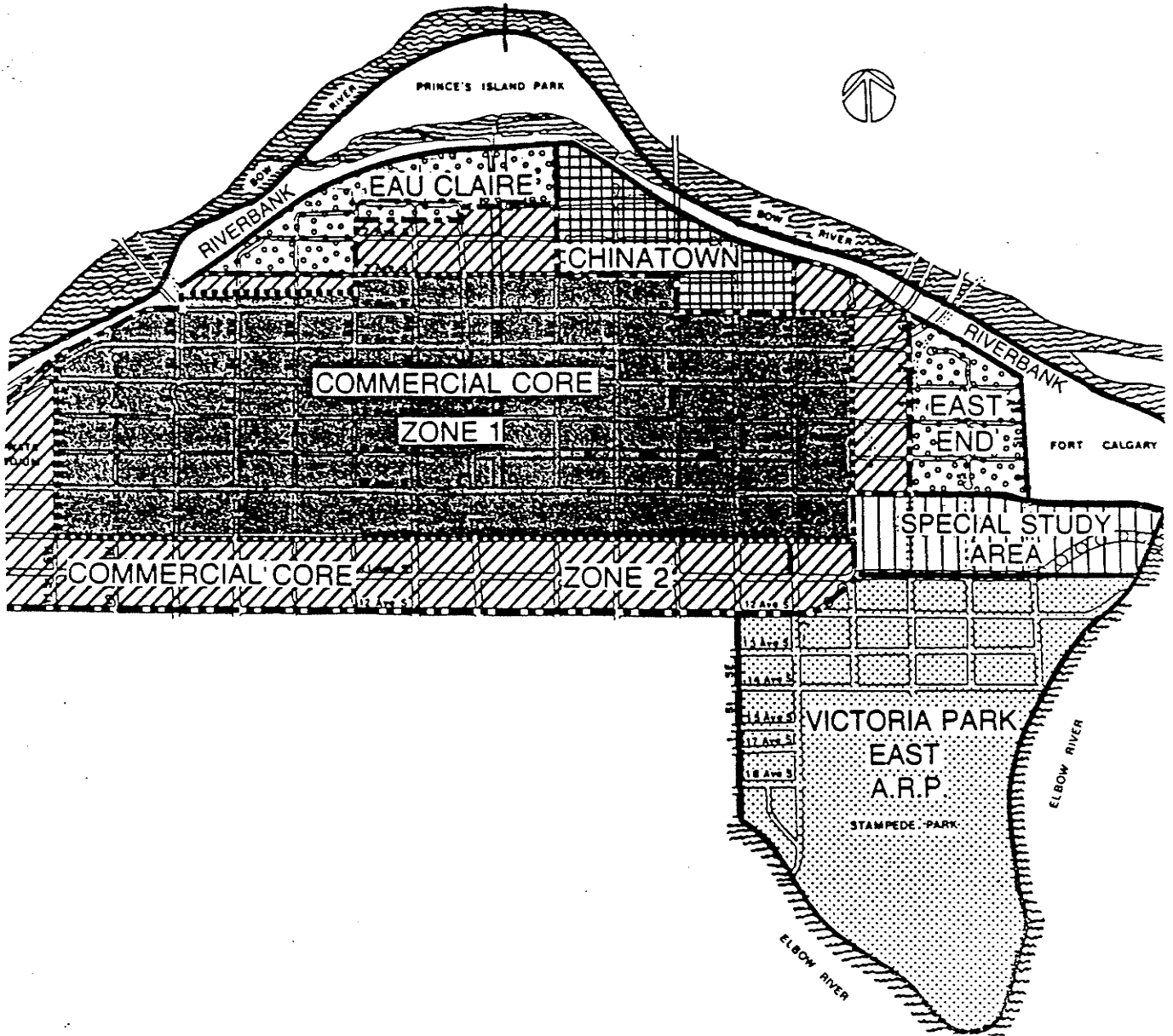
Source: City Of Vancouver. The Development Permit Process

DIAGRAM 3.1: ADOPTION OF THE CORE AREA POLICY BRIEF IN CALGARY



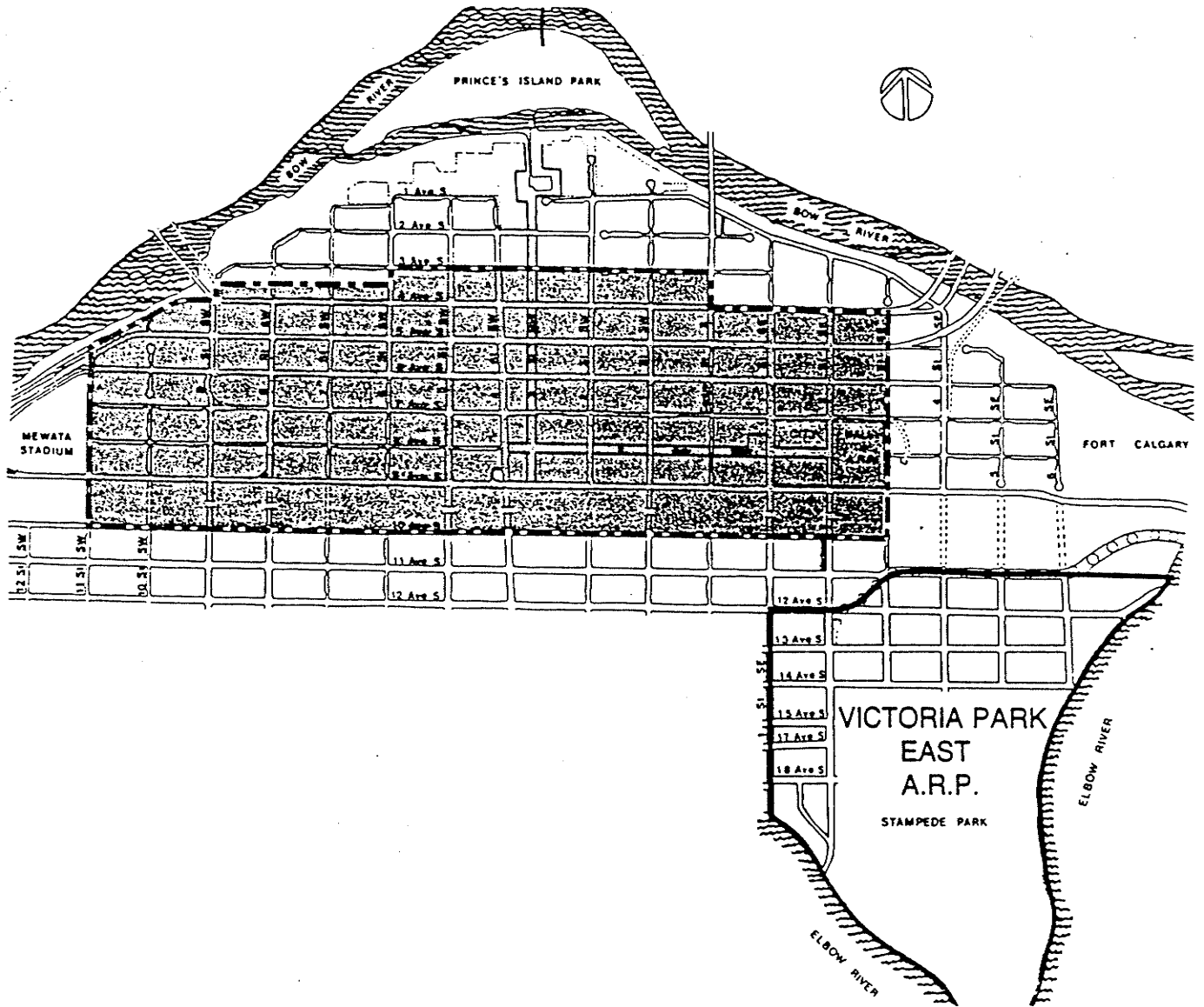
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

Map 3.1 Calgary Downtown-Sub Areas.



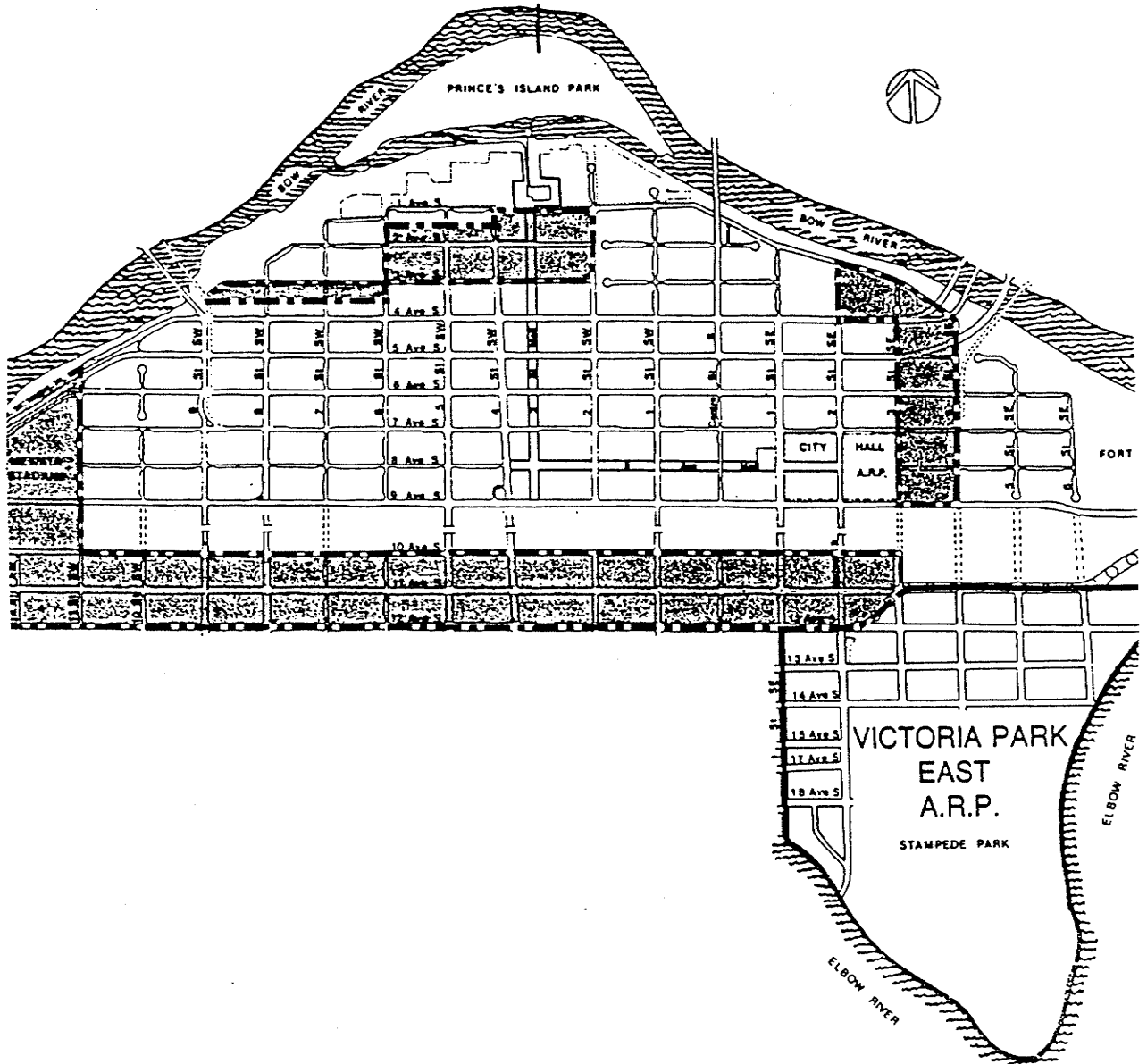
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

Map 3.2 Commercial Core Zone 1.



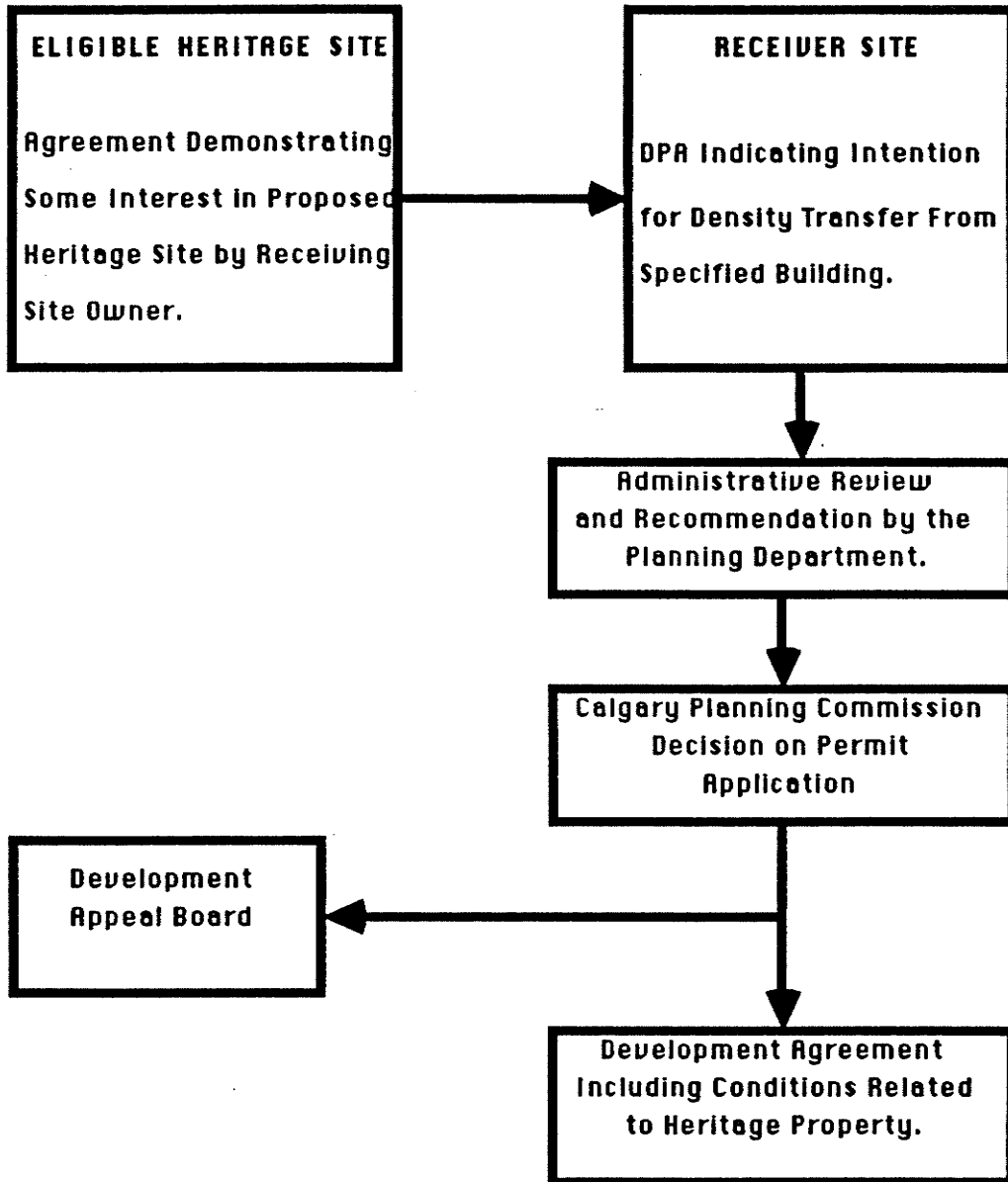
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

Map 3.3 Commercial Core Zone 2.



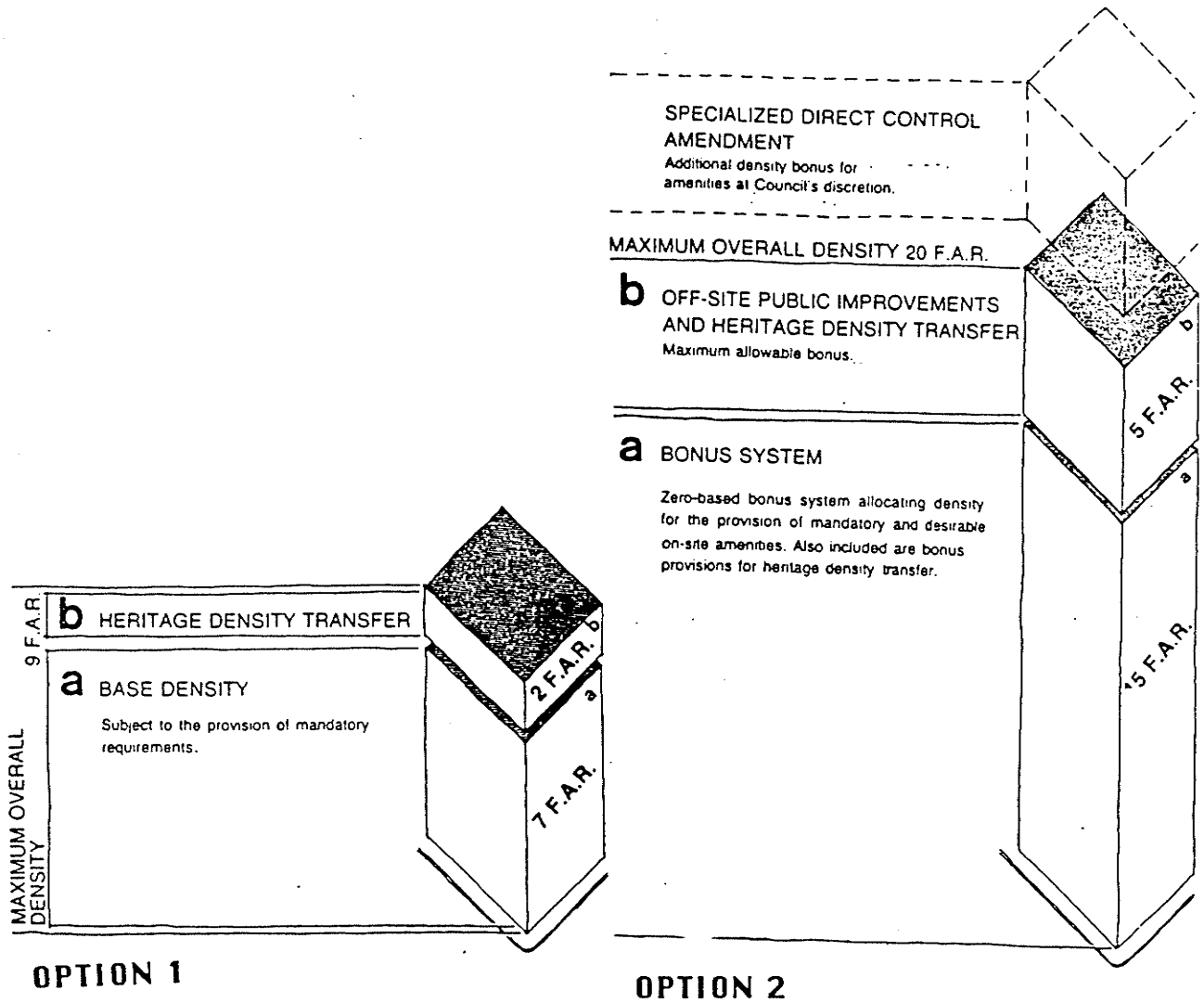
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

**DIAGRAM 3.2
THE HERITAGE TRANSFER SYSTEM IN CALGARY**



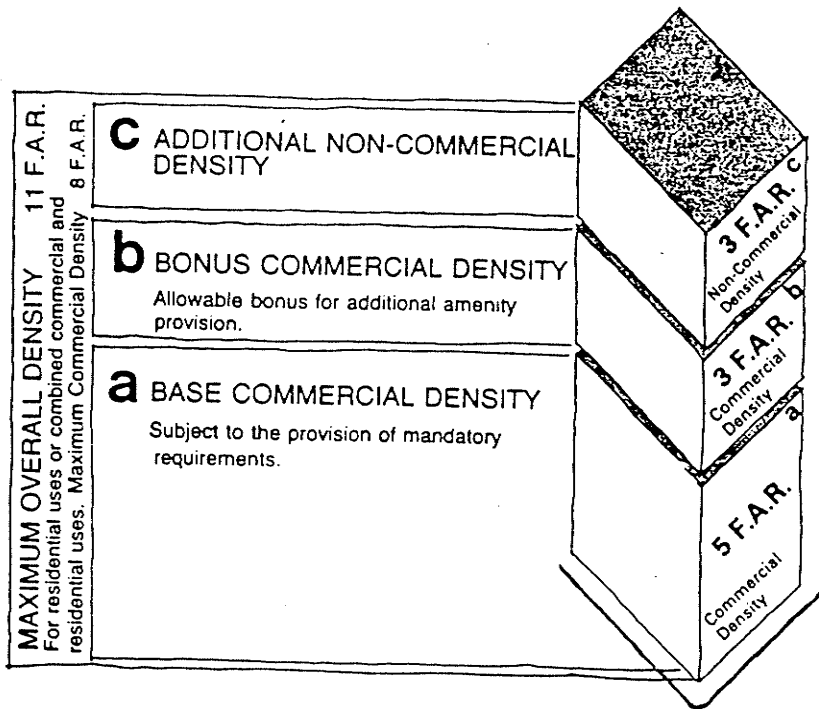
Source: Calgary Planning Commission Report, 1983.

Diagram 3.3 Commercial Core Zone 1 Density Options.



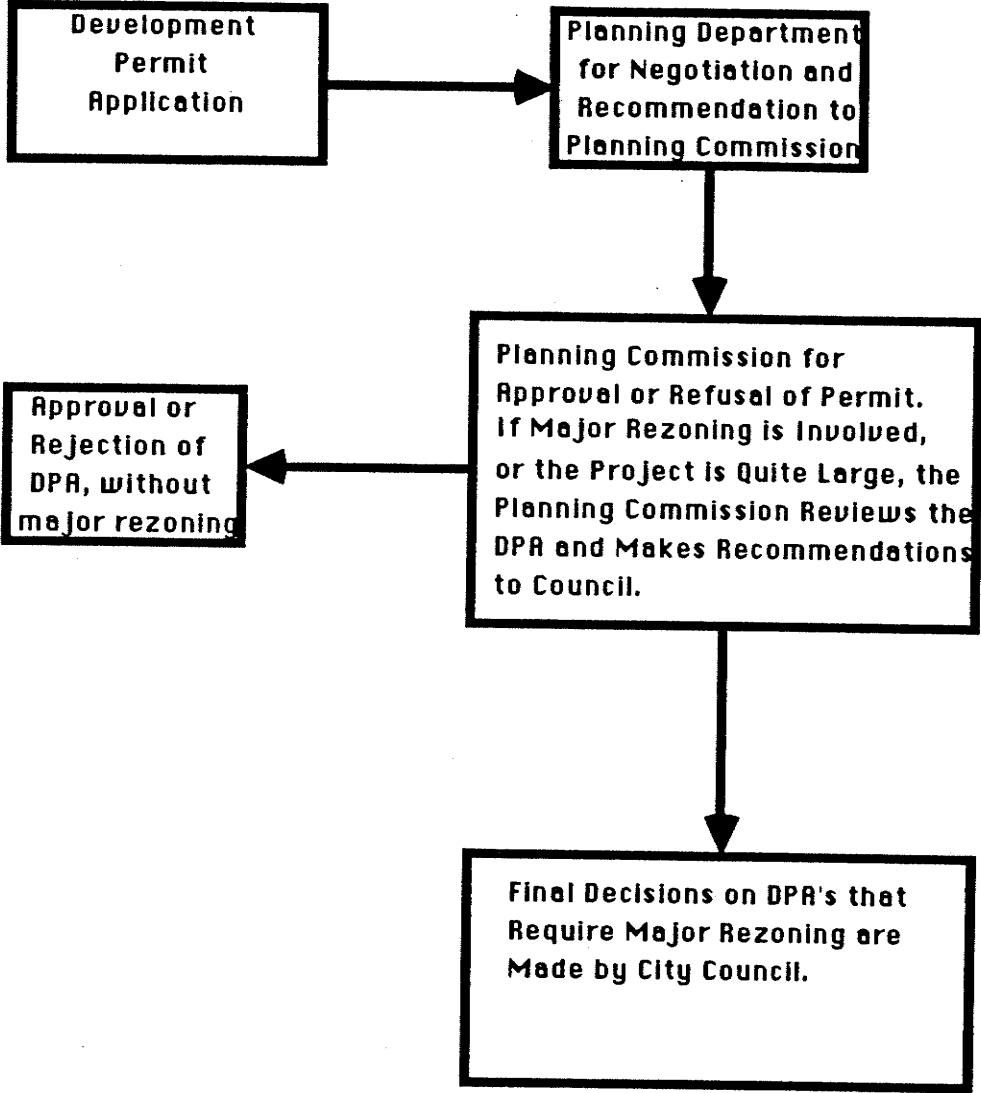
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

Diagram 3.4 Commercial Core Zone 2 Bonus System.



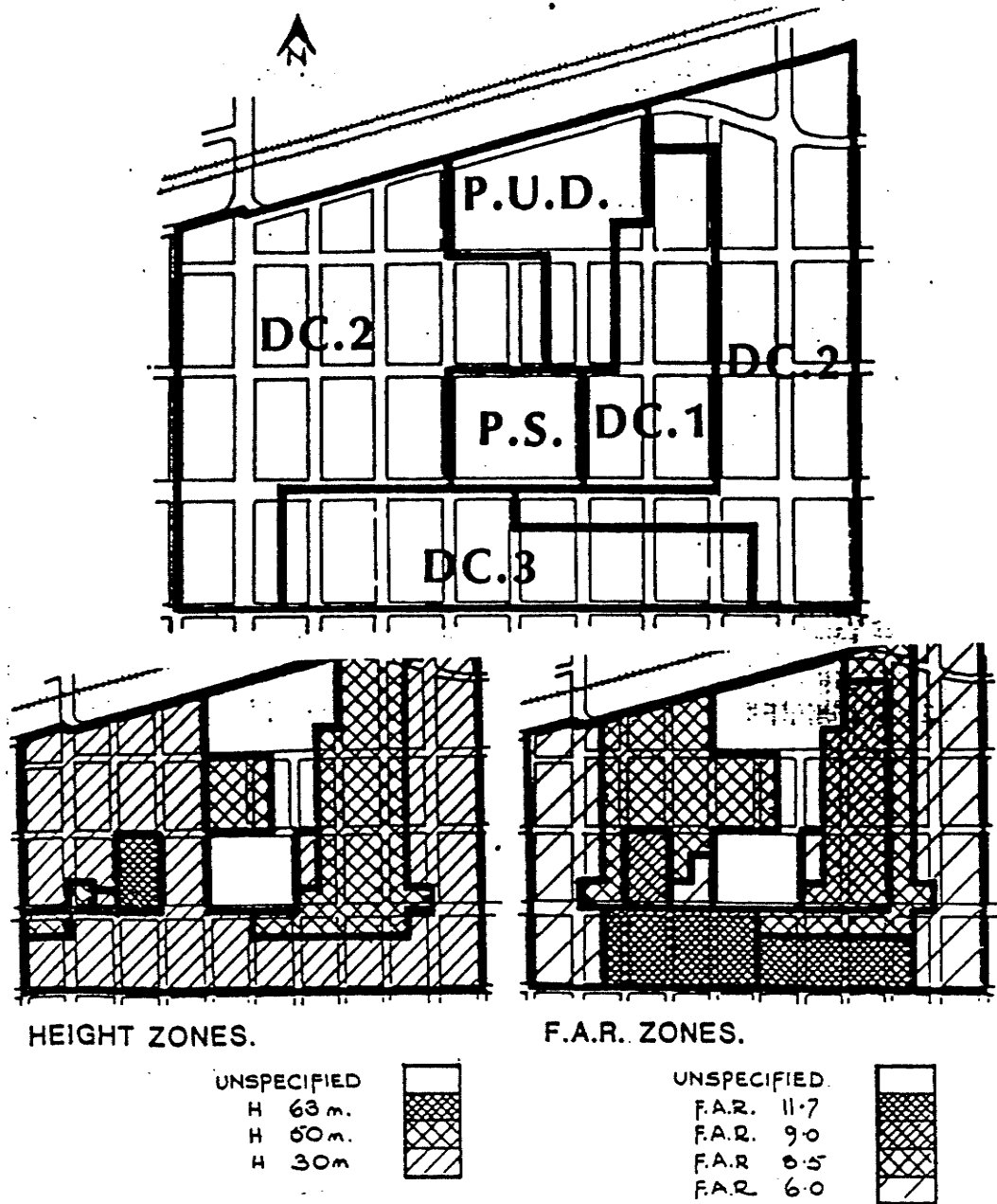
Source: City Of Calgary. Core Area Policy Brief.

**DIAGRAM 3.5
THE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PROCESS
IN CALGARY**



Source: Core Area Policy Brief, City Of Calgary, 1982.

Map 4.1 The Zoning Districts Of Downtown Regina.



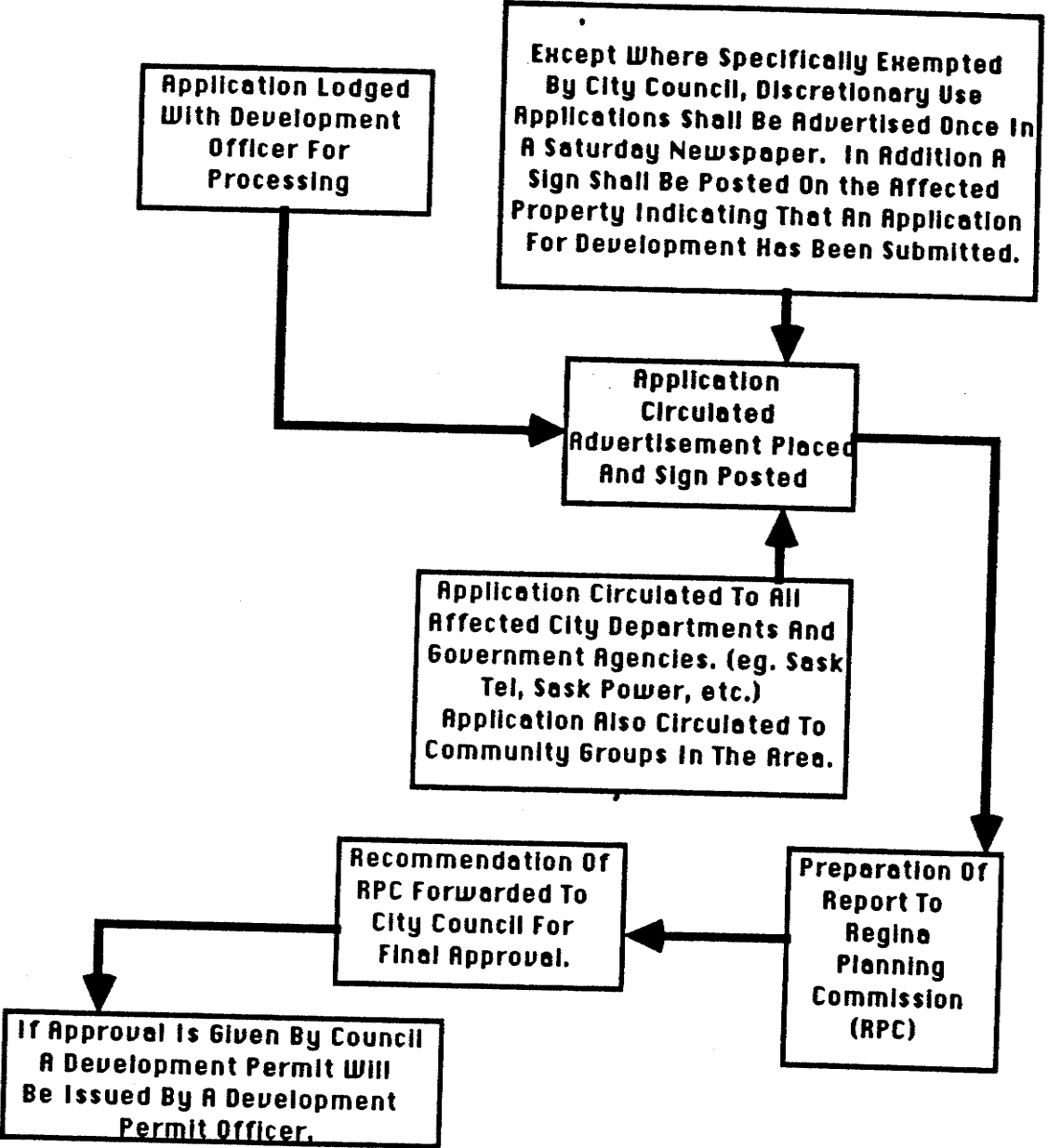
Source: Urban Design Issues For Consideration, And Guidelines For Development, In Downtown Regina.

Diagram 4.1 Downtown Core Zones Permitted Uses.

Use Category	DC1	DC2	DC3
Retail Stores	Permitted	Permitted if limited in size & then discretionary.	
Office Buildings	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Apartment Buildings	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Hotels	Permitted	Permitted	Discretionary
Parking areas	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary

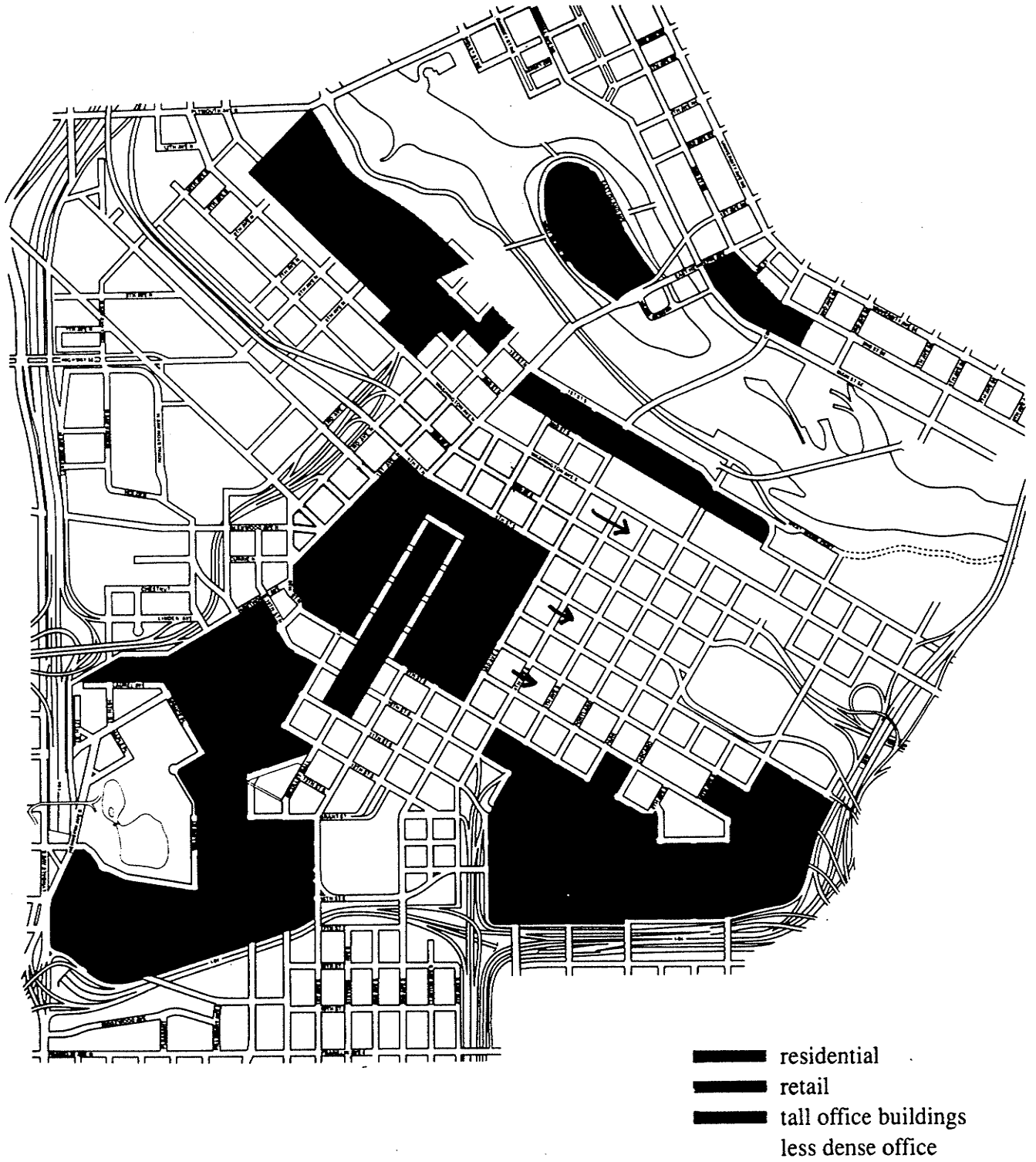
Source: Urban Design Issues For Consideration, And Guidelines For Development, In Downtown Regina.

**DIAGRAM 4.2
REGINA'S DISCRETIONARY USE APPLICATION PROCESS**



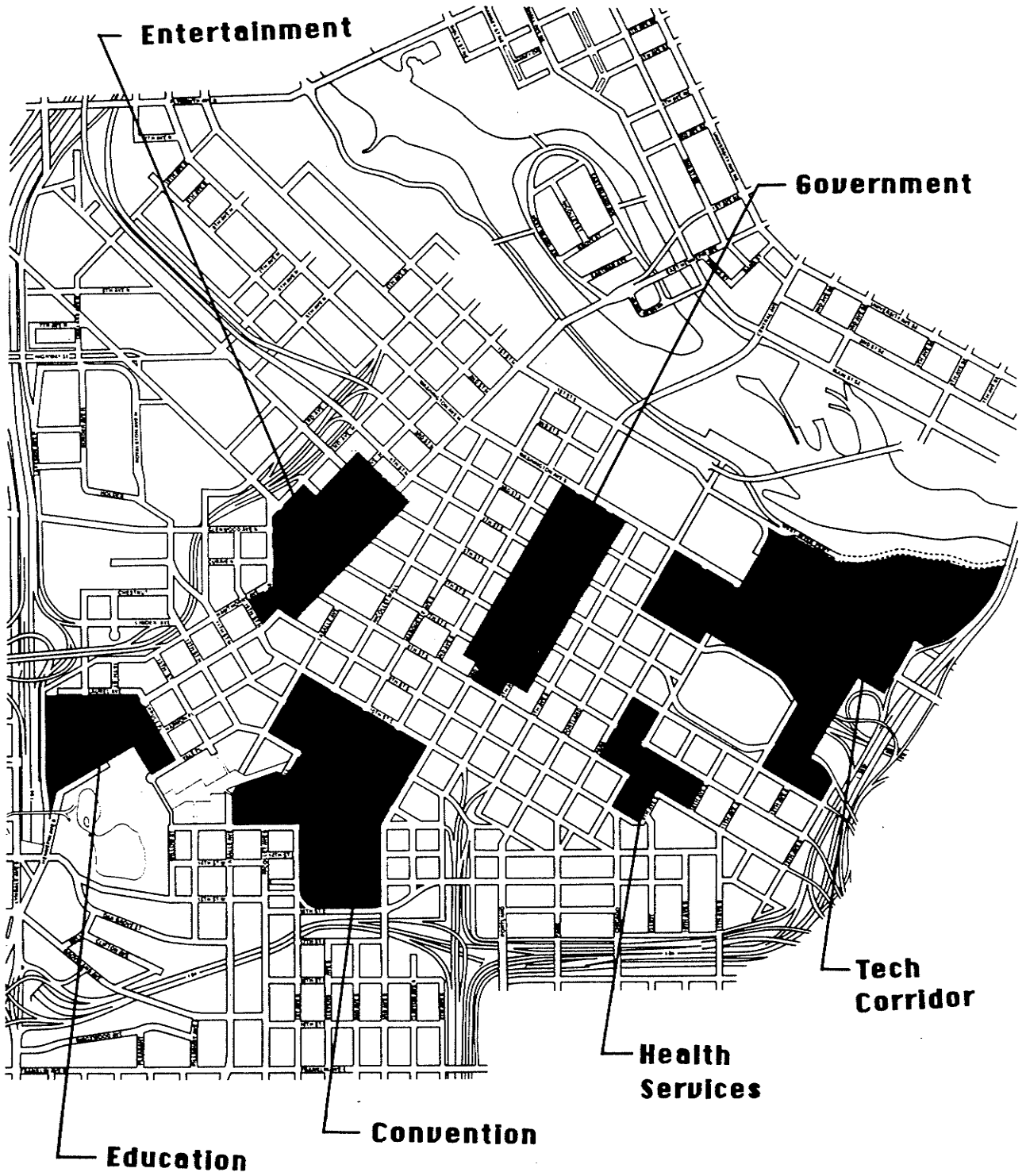
Source: Regina Zoning By-Law, 1987.

Map 5.1 Downtown Minneapolis



Source: Metro 2000 Plan/Functional Plans 1988.

Map 5.2 Emphasis Areas.



Source: Metro 2000 Plan/Functional Plans 1988.

Design Elements Of Minneapolis.

1. A Sense of Place.

- a. Downtown must present a strong image of a central place for the City, the metropolitan area, and the Upper Midwest. This should be conveyed in several ways:
 - (i) Historically, by retaining buildings symbolic of Downtown's heritage as the midwest's urban center.
 - (ii) Economically, by emphasizing in its high density core the physical presence of the City's major corporations and institutions.
 - (iii) Culturally, by providing space for the richest possible mix of public activities and places for public assembly.
 - (iv) Commercially, by concentrating a wide assortment of merchandise in one central marketplace.
 - (v) Socially, by bringing together a large number of diverse people on the streets of downtown for business, shopping, recreation, leisure, and tourism.
 - (vi) Physically and visually, by the density and height of Downtown buildings, and the quality of their individual design.
- b. The image of Downtown as a central place should be enhanced by:
 - (i) Preserving a sharp edge to the Downtown core through zoning, and to the central area at the river and freeways, with
 - (ii) "Gateways" that highlight the act of entering Downtown, particularly on approaches from freeways and bridges, followed by
 - (iii) increasing intensity of development along approaches to the center of Downtown, and finally,
 - (iv) arrival at a central place, a climax, the Nicollet Mall.

2. A Sense of Unity.

a. Downtown should have the quality of a single place comprised of many complimentary zones, knit together by its visual relationships and movement systems. This is Achieved by:

(i) Its center of stores surrounded by tall office buildings, and peopled by crowds attracted to the activity of Nicollet Mall.

(ii) Its paths, leading to the center by street, by skyways from parking ramps, by internal transit circulation, by transit from outside Downtown penetrating the core.

(iii) Its landmarks and identifiable districts, guiding anyone Downtown from store to office to entertainment to open space, to transit and transportation or to home.

b. The unity of Downtown is best developed by:

(i) Enhancing the present system of sidewalks and skyways, making them legible, safe, attractive, easy to use, with views always of what's ahead or accessible.

(ii) Extending the present pedestrian system. Very generally, the design limit for a pedestrian link is 1500 feet (four Downtown blocks, or five minutes walking time) unless a further destination is visible, or a break is encountered that diverts attention along the way, or the enjoyment of the walk is an end in itself. All of these elements should be used to stretch pedestrian time distance limits where they can help unify Downtown.

3. A Sense of Time

Downtown should express always a sense of being "on the move". This is not just a matter of people and traffic and activity, but also a visual expression of new buildings and sights against a background of retained historical landmarks and familiar views. Steady paced development that avoids over building markets is more a project than a design criteria, but it does suggest care to screen vacant buildings sites and fill empty store windows.

More broadly, it calls for renewal plans to be always under consideration, and before this plan takes effect, work should begin on its successor.

4. A Sense of Encounter.

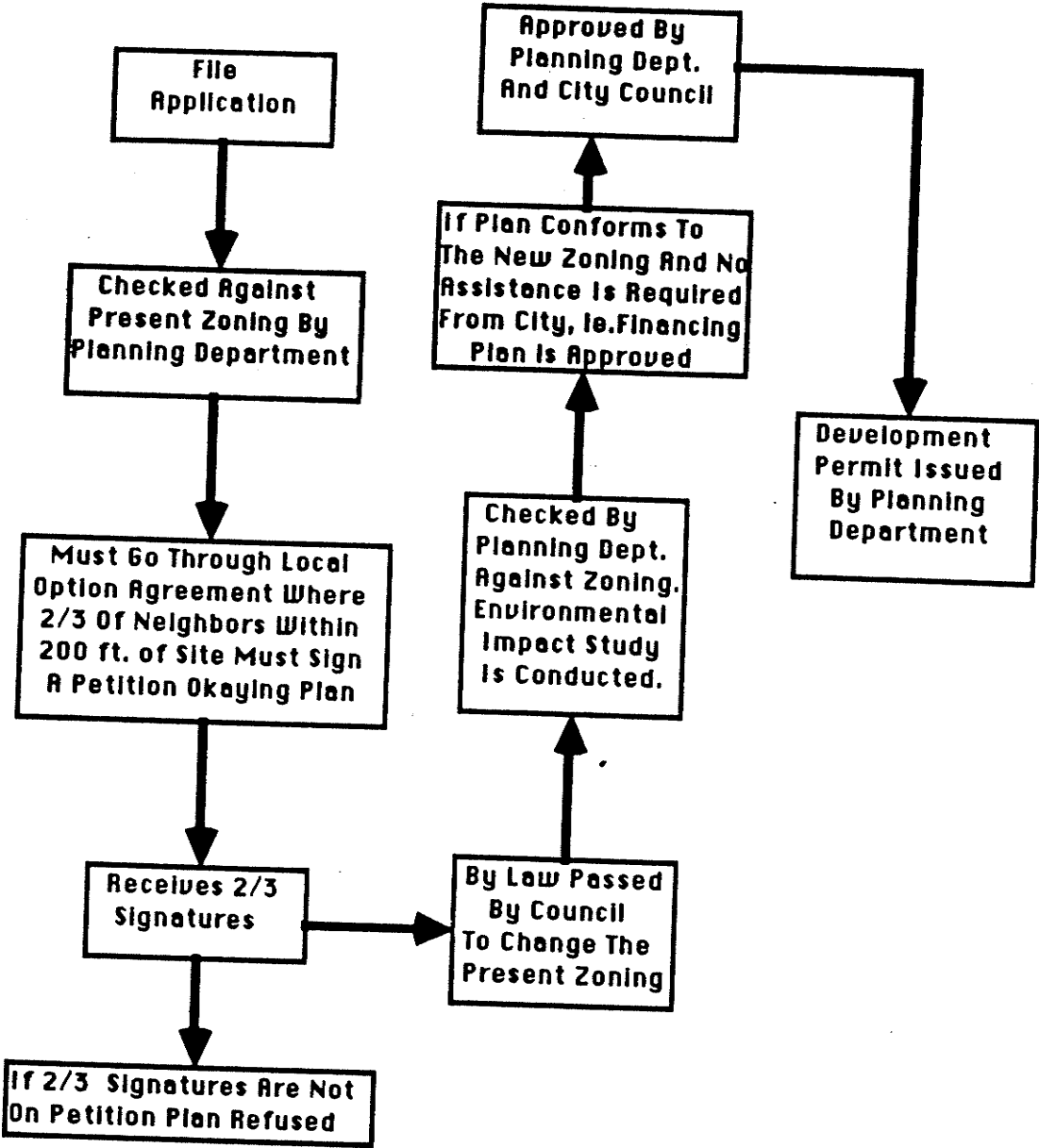
Downtown offers a unique opportunity for an experience excitingly different from the increasingly isolated and private environments of spread out suburbs, closed in shopping centers, and personal automobiles. Careful design can make it a place that can be used by all yet not dominated by a few. By putting large numbers on key sidewalks, designing paths that concentrate rather than disperse activities, limiting automobiles in favor of pedestrians, and arranging for impromptu "events" like street musicians and sidewalk artists, Downtown can become a place of cosmopolitan excitement in sharp contrast to its competition.

5. A Sense of Theater.

In earlier years, going Downtown meant getting dressed up and going through a sort of ritual, a scripted event not unlike being on stage. Even if customs have changed, Downtown should still offer the opportunity for a little role playing through design elements such as promenades, overlooks, and stairways, places to see and be seen, to emphasize Downtown's reputation for being different and fun.

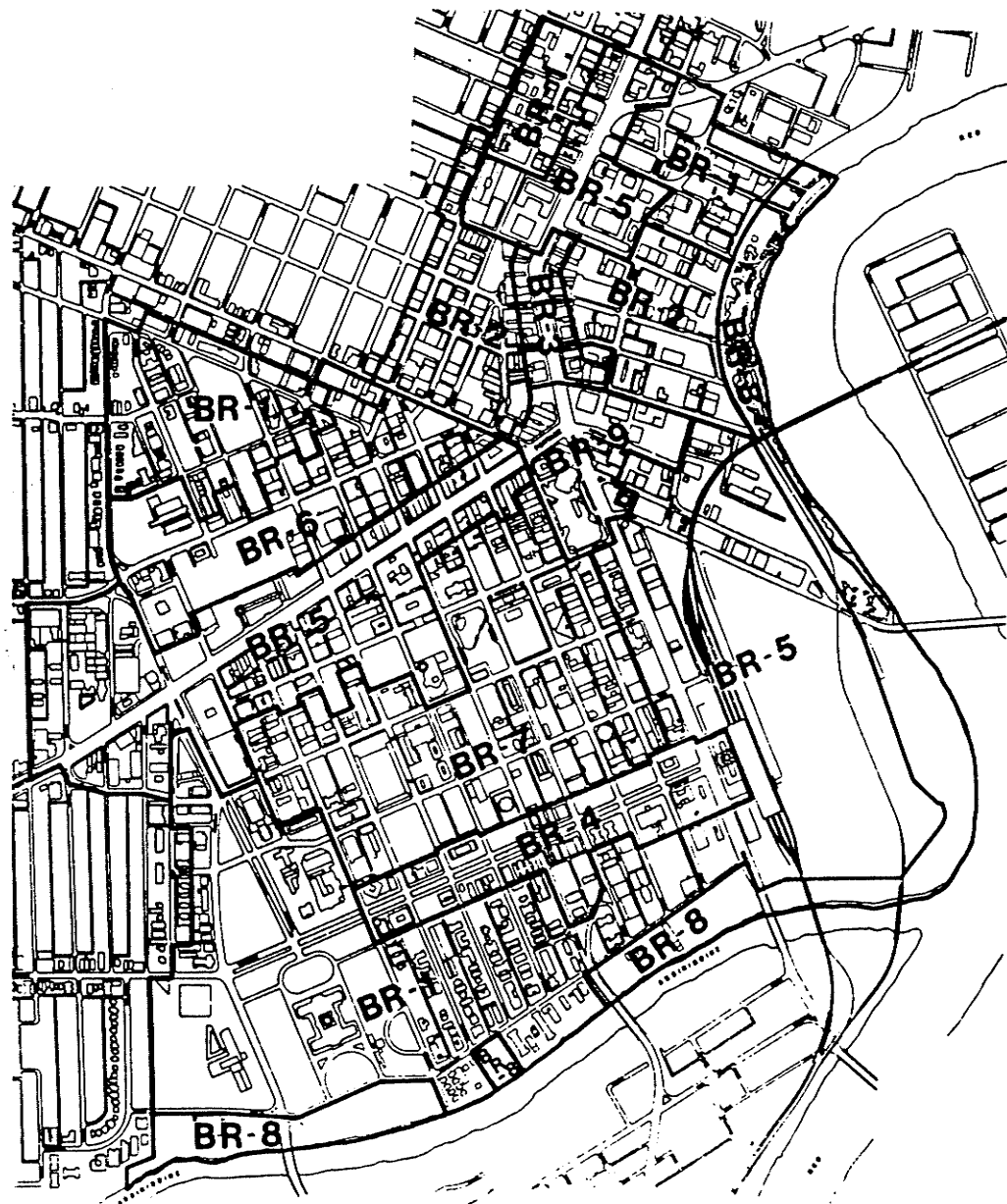
Source: Metro 2000 Plan/Functional Plans 1988.

**DIAGRAM 5.1
LARGE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
APPROVAL PROCESS IN MINNEAPOLIS**



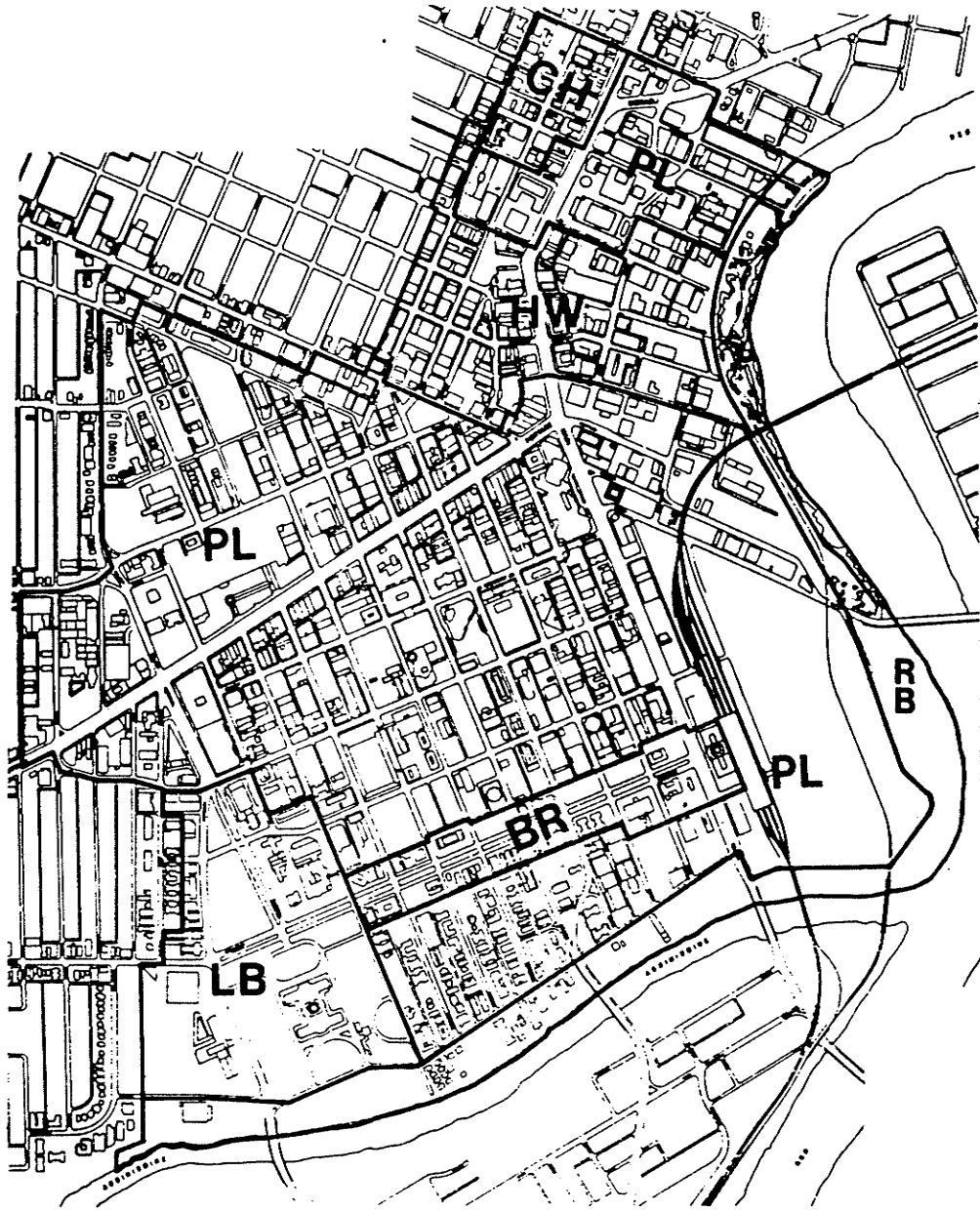
Source: Minneapolis Metro Center 2000 Plan.

Map 6.1 Winnipeg Downtown Bulk Range Districts.



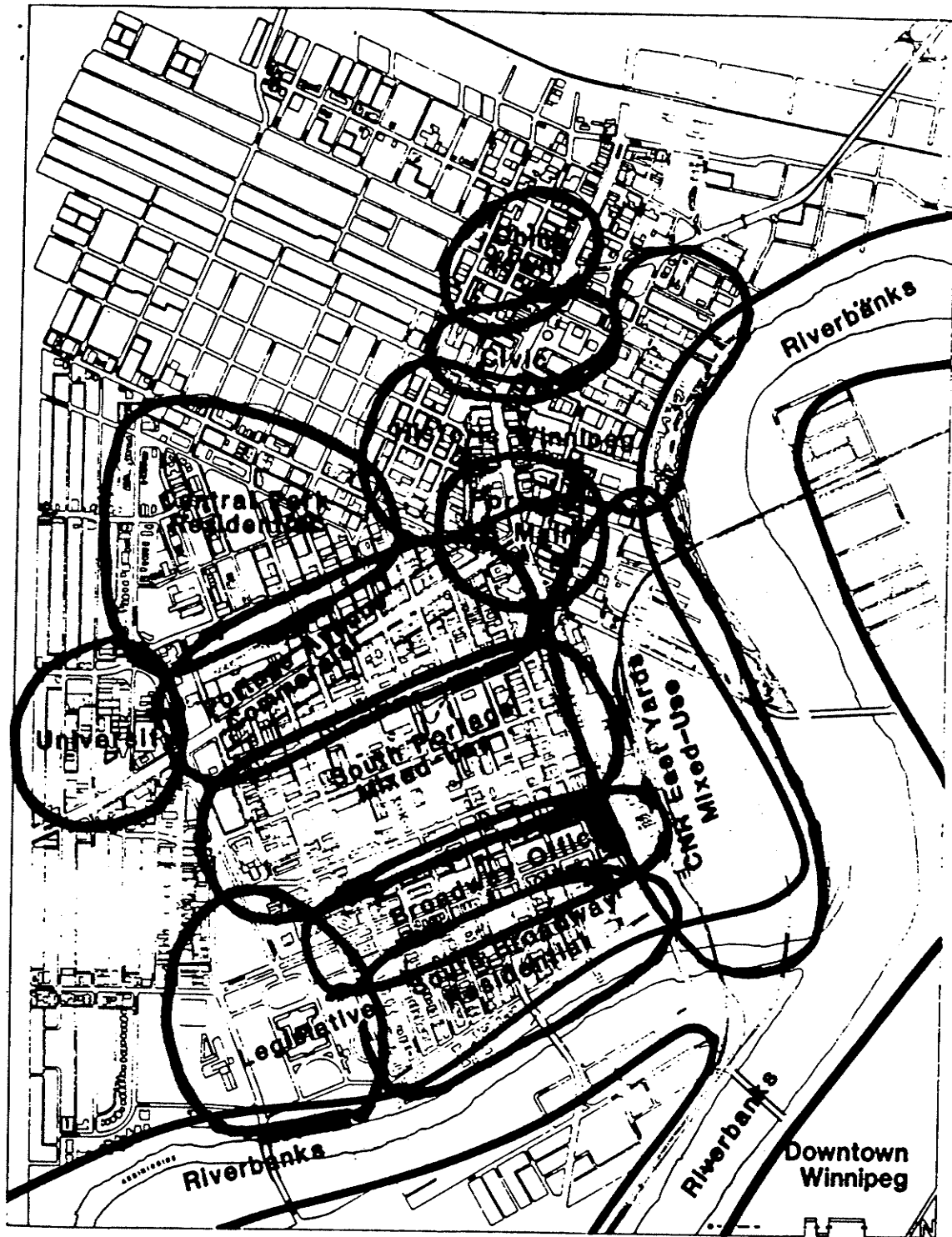
Source: Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law 4800/88.

Map 6.2 Winnipeg Downtown Design Review Designations.



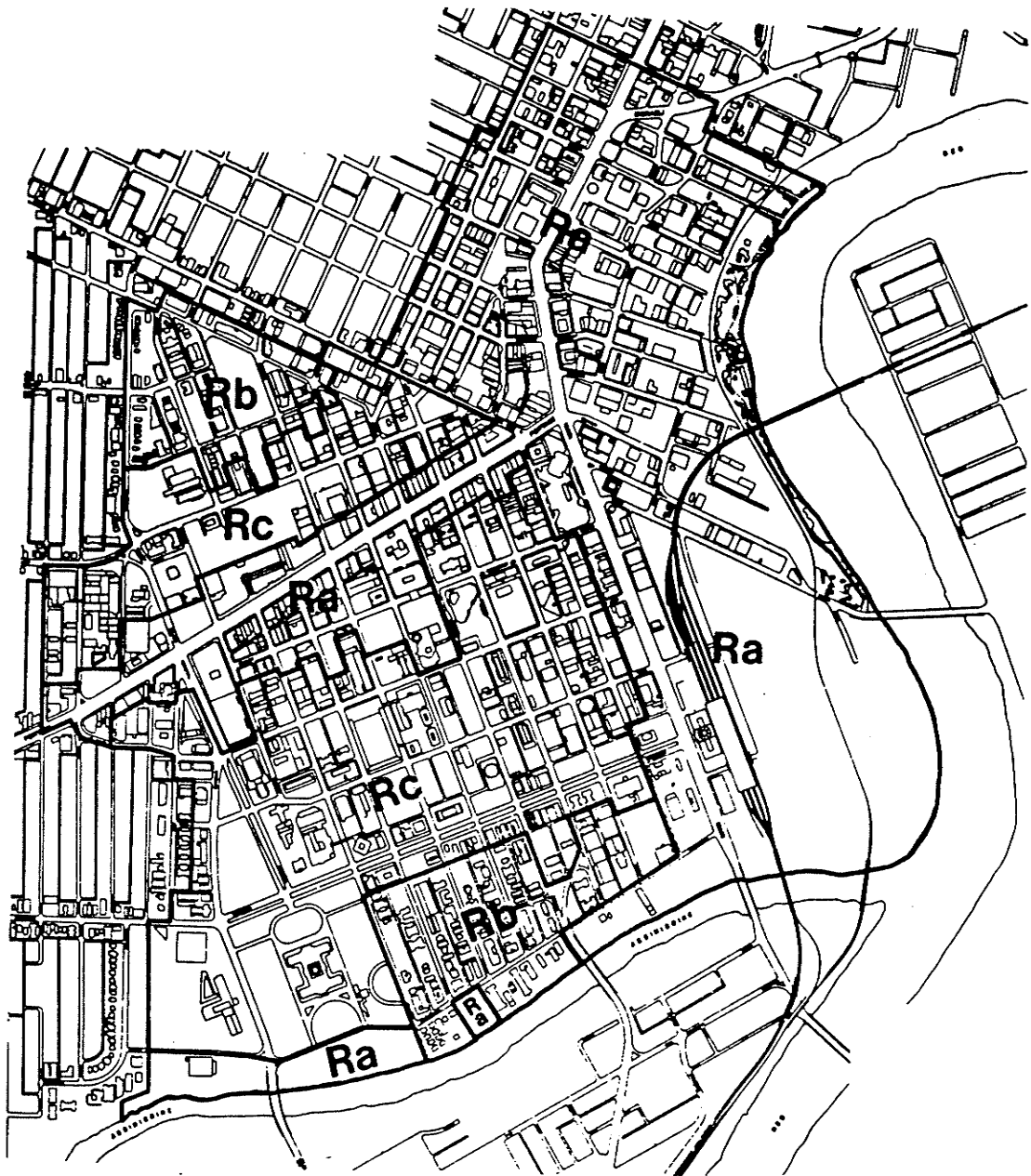
Source: Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law 4800/88.

Map 6.3 Potential Downtown Design Districts.



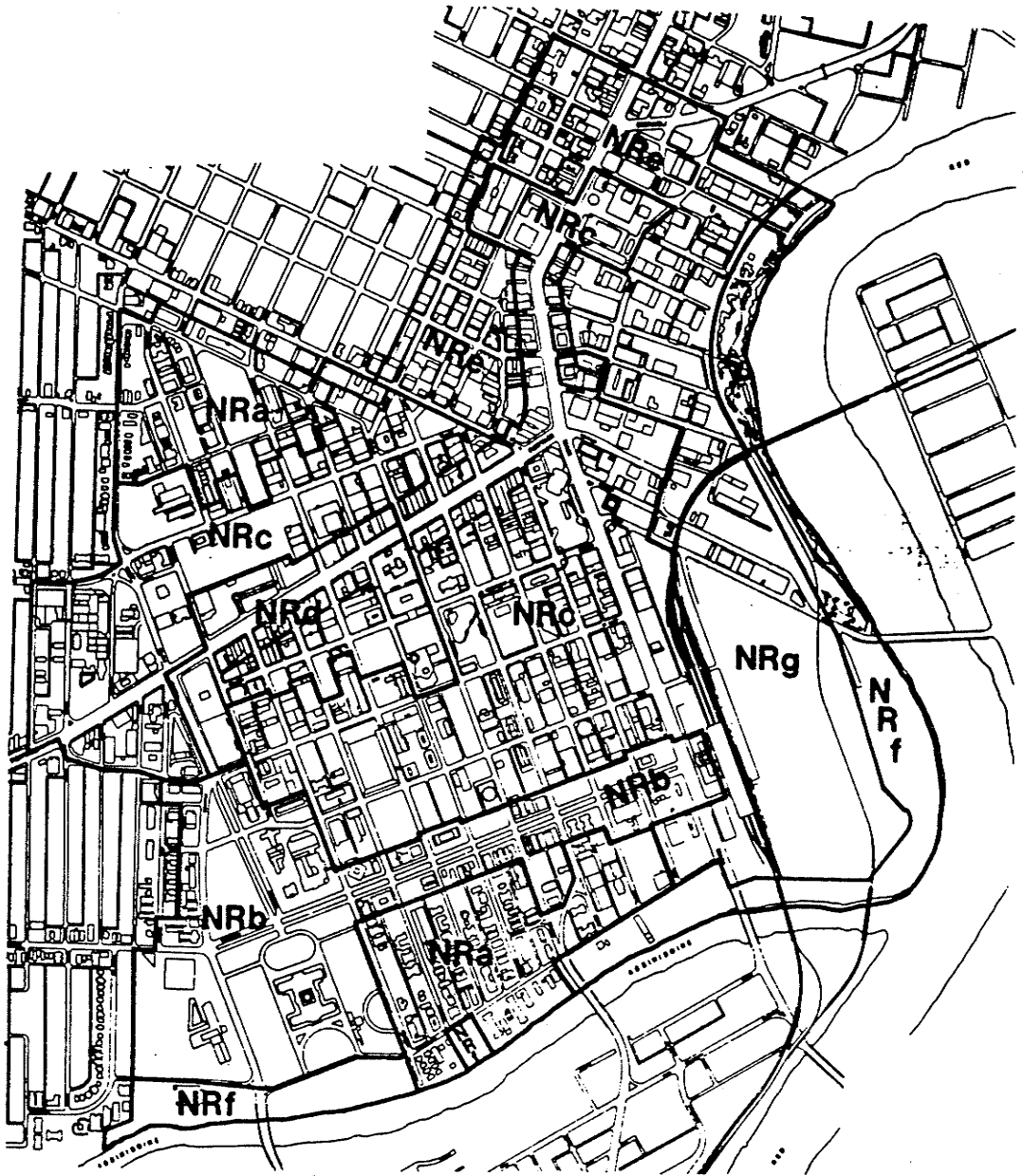
Source: A Critical Review Of The Proposed Zoning By-Law In Relation To The Planning Of Downtown Winnipeg. 1987.

Map 6.4 Winnipeg Downtown Residential Use Groups.



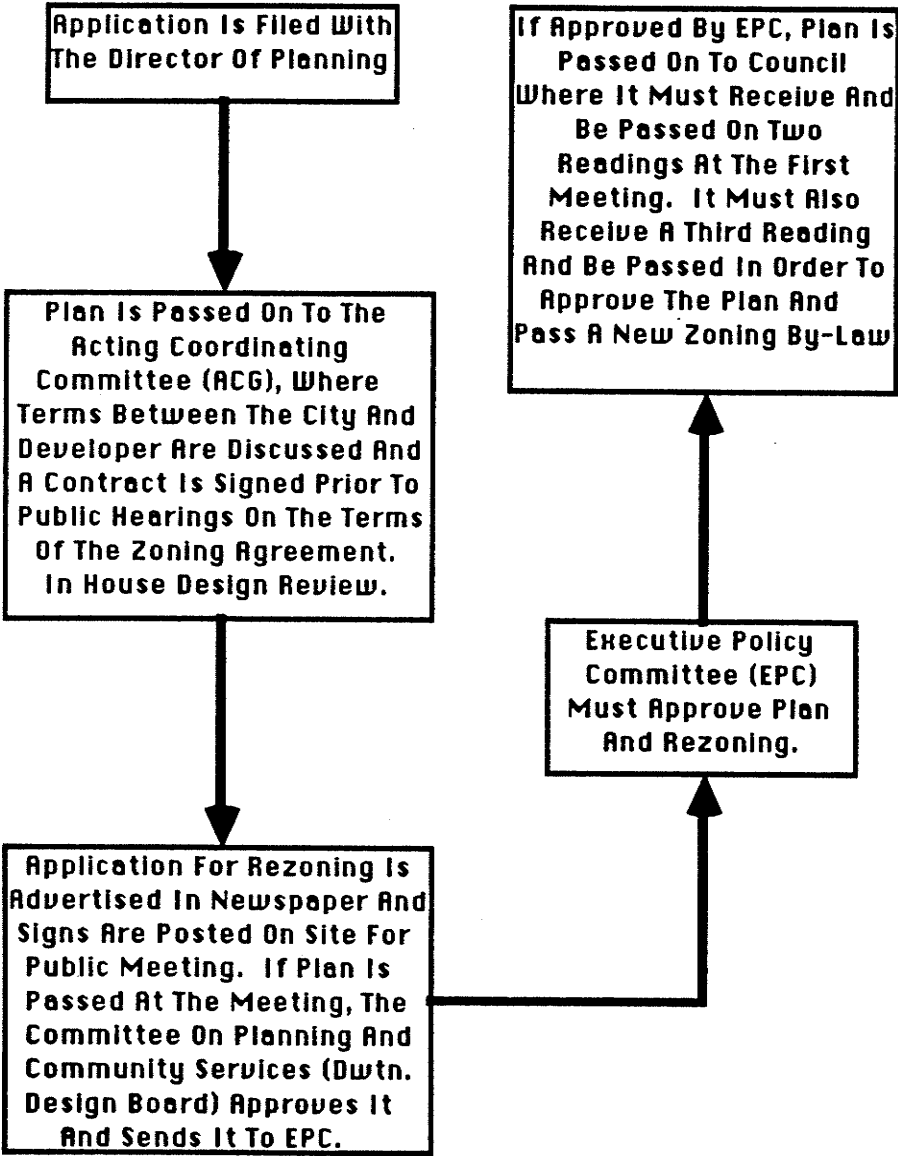
Source: Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law 4800/88.

Map 6.5 Winnipeg Downtown Non Residential Use Groups.



Source: Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law 4800/88.

**DIAGRAM 6.1
THE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL
PROCESS IN WINNIPEG**



Source: Interview Data.

**DIAGRAM 7.1 COMPARISON OF
DOWNTOWN DESIGN PRACTICES OF
VANCOUVER, CALGARY, REGINA,
MINNEAPOLIS AND WINNIPEG.**

City	Formal Design Review and Panel	Informal Design Review In-House	Amount of Council Involvement In Design Decisions	Type and Strength Of Downtown Design Guidelines
Vancouver	YES	NO	Very Little	Advisory, but are adhered to quite strictly when approving DPA's
Calgary	NO	YES	Council Intervenes when major rezoning is taking place	Guidelines exist but are strictly advisory and subject to negotiation with the developer
Regina	NO	YES	Council has power of approval on all projects and design decisions	Guidelines are very informal and do not function in any more than an advisory capacity
Minneapolis	NO	YES	Some Intervention, but Council is more involved in larger developments	Part of the Metro 2000 Plan, they are advisory, but they do hold some authority in regard to design decisions
Winnipeg	NO	YES	Councillors are involved in all stages of design approval along with EPC and City Council in cases of large projects and major rezoning	Part of the new Downtown Zoning By-Law 4800/88 there are both advisory and binding guidelines, advisory are negotiable with the developer

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