The Urban Street as Public Place:

Re-Establishing Downtown Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, as a Great Street

by

J. Glen Doney

A Practicum

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of City Planning

Department of City Planning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

© May 1995

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

THE AUTHOR HAS GRANTED AN IRREVOCABLE NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENCE ALLOWING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA TO REPRODUCE, LOAN, DISTRIBUTE OR SELL COPIES OF HIS/HER THESIS BY ANY MEANS AND IN ANY FORM OR FORMAT, MAKING THIS THESIS AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED PERSONS.

L'AUTEUR A ACCORDE UNE LICENCE IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA DE REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER OU VENDRE DES COPIES DE SA THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES PERSONNE INTERESSEES.

THE AUTHOR RETAINS OWNERSHIP OF THE COPYRIGHT IN HIS/HER THESIS. NEITHER THE THESIS NOR SUBSTANTIAL EXTRACTS FROM IT MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED WITHOUT HIS/HER PERMISSION.

L'AUTEUR CONSERVE LA PROPRIETE DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON AUTORISATION.

ISBN 0-315-99105-4

Canada

Name C. Glen Dorsey

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

ARCHITECTURE — SUBJECT TERM

0729 — SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS
- Architecture 0729
- Art History 0377
- Cinema 0900
- Dance 0378
- Fine Arts 0357
- Information Science 0723
- Journalism 0391
- Library Science 0399
- Mass Communications 0708
- Music 0413
- Speech Communication 0459
- Theater 0465

EDUCATION
- General 0515
- Administration 0514
- Adult and Continuing 0516
- Agricultural 0517
- Art 0273
- Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
- Business 0688
- Community College 0275
- Curriculum and Instruction 0727
- Early Childhood 0518
- Elementary 0524
- Finance 0277
- Guidance and Counseling 0519
- Health 0680
- Higher 0745
- History of 0520
- Home Economics 0278
- Industrial 0521
- Language and Literature 0279
- Mathematics 0280
- Music 0522
- Philosophy of 0998
- Physical 0523
- Psychology 0525
- Reading 0535
- Religious 0527
- Sciences 0714
- Secondary 0533
- Social Sciences 0534
- Sociology of 0340
- Special 0529
- Teacher Training 0530
- Technology 0710
- Tests and Measurements 0288
- Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS
- Language
  - General 0679
  - Ancient 0289
  - Linguistics 0290
  - Modern 0291
- Literature
  - General 0401
  - Classical 0294
  - Comparative 0295
  - Medieval 0297
  - Modern 0298
  - African 0316
  - American 0591
  - Asian 0305
  - Canadian (English) 0352
  - Canadian (French) 0355
  - English 0593
  - Germanic 0311
  - Latin American 0312
  - Middle Eastern 0315
  - Romance 0313
  - Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY
- Philosophy 0422
- Religion
  - General 0318
  - Biblical Studies 0321
  - Clergy 0319
  - History of 0320
  - Philosophy of 0322
- Theology 0469

SOCIAL SCIENCES
- American Studies 0323
- Anthropology
  - Archaeology 0324
  - Cultural 0326
  - Physical 0327
- Business Administration
  - General 0310
  - Accounting 0272
  - Banking 0770
  - Management 0454
  - Marketing 0338
- Canadian Studies 0385
- Economics
  - General 0501
  - Agricultural 0503
  - Commerce-Business 0505
  - Finance 0508
  - History 0509
  - Labor 0510
  - Theory 0511
- Folklore 0358
- Geography 0366
- Gerontology 0351
- History
  - General 0578
  - Ancient 0579
  - Medieval 0581
  - Modern 0582
  - Black 0328
  - African 0331
  - Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
  - Canadian 0334
  - European 0335
  - Latin American 0336
  - Middle Eastern 0333
  - United States 0337
- History of Science 0585
- Law 0398
- Political Science
  - General 0615
  - International Law and Relations 0616
  - Public Administration 0617
- Recreation 0814
- Social Work 0452
- Sociology
  - General 0626
  - Criminology and Penology 0627
  - Demography 0938
  - Ethnic and Racial Studies 0631
  - Individual and Family Studies 0628
  - Industrial and Labor Relations 0629
  - Public and Social Welfare 0630
  - Social Structure and Development 0700
  - Theory and Methods 0344
- Transportation 0709
- Urban and Regional Planning 0999
- Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
- Agriculture
  - General 0473
  - Agronomy 0285
  - Animal Culture and Nutrition 0475
  - Animal Pathology 0476
  - Food Science and Technology 0359
  - Forestry and Wildlife 0478
  - Plant Culture 0479
  - Plant Pathology 0480
  - Plant Physiology 0817
  - Range Management 0777
  - Wood Technology 0746
- Biology
  - General 0306
  - Anatomy 0287
  - Biostatistics 0308
  - Botany 0309
  - Cell 0379
  - Ecology 0329
  - Entomology 0353
  - Genetics 0369
  - Limnology 0793
  - Microbiology 0410
  - Molecular 0307
  - Neuroscience 0317
  - Oceanography 0416
  - Physiology 0433
  - Radiation 0821
  - Veterinary Science 0778
  - Zoology 0472
- Biophysics
  - General 0786
  - Medical 0760

EARTH SCIENCES
- Biogeochemistry 0425
- Geochemistry 0996
- Geodesy 0370
- Geology 0372
- Geophysics 0373
- Hydrology 0388
- Mineralogy 0411
- Paleobotany 0345
- Paleoecology 0426
- Paleontology 0418
- Paleozoology 0985
- Palynology 0427
- Physical Geography 0368
- Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
- Environmental Sciences 0768
- Health Sciences
  - General 0566
  - Audiology 0300
  - Chemotherapy 0992
  - Dentistry 0567
  - Education 0350
  - Hospital Management 0769
  - Human Development 0758
  - Immunology 0982
  - Medicine and Surgery 0564
  - Mental Health 0347
  - Nursing 0569
  - Nutrition 0570
  - Obstetrics and Gynecology 0380
  - Occupational Health and Therapy 0354
  - Ophthalmology 0381
  - Pathology 0571
  - Pharmacology 0419
  - Pharmacy 0572
  - Physical Therapy 0382
  - Public Health 0573
  - Radiology 0574
  - Recreation 0575
  - Speech Pathology 0460
  - Toxicology 0383
- Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences
- Chemistry
  - General 0485
  - Agricultural 0749
  - Analytical 0486
  - Biochemistry 0487
  - Inorganic 0488
  - Nuclear 0738
  - Organic 0490
  - Pharmaceutical 0491
  - Physical 0494
  - Polymer 0495
  - Radiation 0754
- Mathematics 0405
- Physics
  - General 0605
  - Acoustics 0986
  - Astronomy and Astrophysics 0606
  - Atmospheric Science 0608
  - Atomic 0748
  - Electronics and Electricity 0607
  - Elementary Particles and High Energy 0798
  - Fluid and Plasma 0759
  - Molecular 0609
  - Nuclear 0610
  - Optics 0752
  - Radiation 0756
  - Solid State 0611
- Statistics 0463

Applied Sciences
- Applied Mechanics 0346
- Computer Science 0984
- Engineering
  - General 0537
  - Aerospace 0538
  - Agricultural 0539
  - Automotive 0540
  - Biomedical 0541
  - Chemical 0542
  - Civil 0543
  - Electronics and Electrical 0544
  - Heat and Thermodynamics 0348
  - Hydraulic 0545
  - Industrial 0546
  - Marine 0547
  - Materials Science 0794
  - Mechanical 0548
  - Metallurgy 0743
  - Mining 0551
  - Nuclear 0552
  - Packaging 0549
  - Petroleum 0765
  - Sanitary and Municipal 0554
  - System Science 0790
- Geotechnology 0428
- Operations Research 0796
- Plastics Technology 0795
- Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY
- General 0621
- Behavioral 0384
- Clinical 0622
- Developmental 0620
- Experimental 0623
- Industrial 0624
- Personality 0625
- Physiological 0989
- Psychobiology 0349
- Psychometrics 0632
- Social 0451

THE URBAN STREET AS PUBLIC PLACE:

RE-ESTABLISHING DOWNTOWN PORTAGE AVENUE,

WINNIPEG, AS A GREAT STREET

BY

J. GLEN DONEY

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

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

© 1995

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this Practicum, to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this Practicum and to lend or sell copies of the film, and LIBRARY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this Practicum.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the Practicum nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-wise reproduced without the author's written permission.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my practicum committee, my advisor, Geof Bargh, readers Ian Wight and Kent Smith (president and C.E.O., Forks Renewal Corporation and North Portage Development Corporation), and former reader, Christine McKee, for their constructive criticism and insightful suggestions which have contributed greatly to the quality of my work.

I would also like to thank the merchants of downtown Portage Avenue, and the key informants, whose participation in my survey provided me with the essential information required to gain an understanding of the issues pertaining to the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

As well, the staff of North Portage Development Corporation must be thanked for their assistance in providing me with information regarding the nature of the Corporation and the qualities of Portage Place.

I must also thank my family and friends. They have given me unfailing support and encouragement which has enabled me to overcome the difficulties associated with completing the practicum.

Abstract

Portage Avenue, in downtown Winnipeg, is one of the best-known streets in the city, and indeed in Canada. Frequented by residents and visitors alike, the street is an important symbol of the city. However, the potential of downtown Portage Avenue to remain a positive symbol of the city is compromised by a number of problems that affect the vitality and image of the area. The objective of the practicum is to determine solutions that will address the problems associated with downtown Portage Avenue, and that will re-establish it as a Great Street - described by Allan Jacobs as a place that is comfortable for, and attractive to, pedestrians.

The issues and solutions associated with downtown Portage Avenue are determined by surveying merchants in the area and key informants. These findings are compared and contrasted with recent surveys and other data pertaining to the downtown, and to downtown Portage Avenue in particular.

The issues that are relevant to the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street are primarily the degree to which the area accommodates general vehicular traffic, parking, transit operations, pedestrians, and street-oriented businesses. The solutions include the reconfiguration of the Portage Avenue right-of-way, landscaping, erecting signage identifying parking locations, standardizing parking rates in private lots, expanding the "Easy Streets" parking token program, and implementing an improvement program that would encourage property owners to renovate their buildings. In addition, solutions associated with Portage Place are the improvement of skywalk connections with the sidewalks, the encouragement of tenants to use their on-street entrances, the erection of canopies and banners, and the improvement of the bus waiting areas.

The practicum concludes by recommending to the client, North Portage Development Corporation, actions it can take that will contribute to the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

List of Figures

		PAGE
Figure i.	Plan of downtown Winnipeg, NPDC area and study area.	xvii
Figure ii.	Study area, as seen from above.	xviii
Figure iii.	Structure of practicum.	xxii
Figure 1.1.	Building height and street width - street definition.	11
Figure 1.2.	Building spacing - street definition.	12
Figure 1.3.	Trees - visual continuity.	13
Figure 1.4.	Tree spacing - effectiveness.	14
Figure 1.5.	Beginnings and endings of streets, Barcelona.	14
Figure 1.6.	Building texture - visual interest.	16
Figure 1.7.	Transparency of buildings.	18
Figure 1.8.	Central Boston, 1929 - figure-ground.	24
Figure 1.9.	Central Boston, 1980 - figure-ground.	25
Figure 1.10.	Three types of spatial linkage.	26
Figure 2.1.	Renaissance Centre - isolated from surroundings.	38
Figure 2.2.	Second level compromises street.	40
Figure 2.3	Eaton Centre retains activity along street.	44
Figure 3.1.	Plan of downtown Winnipeg, study area.	48
Figure 3.2.	Importance of downtown Winnipeg.	51
Figure 3.3.	Importance of plan for downtown Winnipeg.	52
Figure 3.4.	Downtown Winnipeg attributes - rating and importance.	55
Figure 3.5.	Transportation mode of downtown workers.	57
Figure 3.6.	Study area land use and storefront vacancies.	63
Figure 3.7.	Plan of Portage Avenue.	64
Figure 3.8.	Vacant building, Portage Avenue.	71
Figure 3.9.	Portage Place and other NPDC developments.	73
Figure 3.10.	Portage Place - plan views.	75
Figure 4.1.	Plan of reconfiguration proposal, Portage Avenue.	98
Figure 4.2.	Graham Mall - amenities.	100
Figure 4.3.	Pedestrian-scaled lighting, Osborne Village.	107
Figure 4.4.	Portage Village Inn.	112
Figure 4.5	Building height - shadows.	124
Figure 4.6.	Linkage plan of Portage Place.	131
Figure 4.7.	Portage Place facade.	133
Figure 4.8.	Skywalk, as seen from the street.	135

		PAGE
Figure 4.9.	Skywalks - effect on Portage Avenue facades.	135
Figure 4.10.	Figure-ground plan of Portage Place.	137
Figure 4.11.	Portage Place, as seen from the street.	138
Figure 5.1.	Organizational structure - solution implementation.	163
Figure 5.2.	Organizational structure - solution implementation.	164
Figure 5.3.	Organizational structure - solution implementation.	165
Figure 5.4.	Organizational structure - solution implementation.	166

List of Tables

		PAGE
Table 3.1.	Ranking of Winnipeg, rating of downtown.	50
Table 3.2.	Factors affecting safety perception, downtown.	54
Table 3.3.	Importance of public safety, downtown.	54
Table 3.4.	Downtown parking issues.	58
Table 3.5.	Downtown land use.	60
Table 3.6.	Traffic, transit, and person-movement volumes.	65
Table 3.7.	Mode of transportation for shoppers, downtown.	66
Table 3.8.	Parking location for shoppers, downtown.	69
Table 3.9.	Pedestrian counts, between The Bay and Eaton's.	76
Table 5.1.	Qualities of a Great Street and associated solutions.	153
Table A.1.	Residents' use of downtown, Canadian cities.	169
Table A.2.	Responsibility to initiate change downtown.	169
Table A.3.	Positive and negative features of downtown.	170
Table A.4.	Reasons for (not) shopping downtown.	171
Table A.5.	Rating of downtown features.	172
Table A.6.	Rating of downtown attributes.	172
Table A.7.	Recommended changes for downtown.	173
Table A.8.	Downtown use, by purpose.	174
Table A.9.	Permission for food cart vending downtown.	174
Table A.10.	Rating of climate.	175
Table A.11.	Features of shopping downtown.	175
Table A.12.	Large downtown retail centres visited.	176

Contents

	PAGE
Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	xiii
Problem Statement	xiii
Objectives	xvi
Study Limitations	xvii
Structure and Method of Practicum	xx
Chapter One	
Urban Design Theories: The Street as Place	1
1.1 The Social Function of Public Places	1
recognizing the importance of public places	2
the need for public places	3
the social function of public places	4
1.2 The Downtown as Marketplace	6
the pedestrian environment	6
attractiveness of the downtown	6
choosing downtown	7

PAGE

1.3 The Street as Place 8
places for people to walk and sit 9
responsiveness to climate 10
definition 10
visual interest 14
transparency 17
complementarity and diversity 18
quality and maintenance 19
accessibility 20
contrast with other streets 22

1.4 Urban Design Approaches 23
figure-ground theory 23
linkage theory 25
an integrated approach 27

Chapter Two
Urban Design Interventions: Qualities of Retail/Mixed-Use Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks 29

2.1 Rationale for Internalizing Pedestrian Space 30
rationale for internalizing pedestrian space 30
suitability of internalizing pedestrian space downtown 31

2.2 Positive Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks 32
encourage downtown viability 32
physical comfort and safety 33

PAGE

2.3 Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks 34
the internalized pedestrian environment 35
privatization of space 35
detriment to public places 37
a transformed urban fabric 40
the visual impact 41

2.4 Changing Attitudes Towards Internalized Pedestrian Space 42
changing attitudes 42
positive examples 43

Chapter Three
Downtown Winnipeg's Portage Avenue and Portage Place: The Study Area and Its Context 46

3.1 Downtown Winnipeg 47
the importance of downtown 49
demographics 52
crime and safety 53
transportation and parking 55
land use 59
the physical environment 61

3.2 The Study Area 62
Portage Avenue right-of-way 63
parking 68
land use 69
Portage Place 72

3.3 The Survey of Key Informants and Study Area Merchants 77
goal of survey 77
method of survey 78
the survey participants 80

PAGE

Chapter Four

Downtown Portage Avenue and Portage Place:
Issues and Solutions Arising from the Survey,
Associated with the Study Area 82

4.1A Issues Arising from the Survey,
Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way 83
general traffic 83
availability of parking 85
public transit 86
the pedestrian environment 87
safety 89

4.1B Solutions Arising from the Survey,
Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way 92
allowing on-street parking 93
reconfiguration of the right-of-way 97
landscaping 106
parking signage 108
increased police presence 109

4.2A Issues Arising from the Survey,
Associated with the Study Area Land Uses 110
cost of parking 110
buildings along downtown Portage Avenue 111
retailing and other activities 114
Window Park 118

4.2B Solutions Arising from the Survey,
Associated with the Study Area Land Uses 119
standardized parking rates and "Easy Streets" 120
creative use of commercial signage 122
allowable building height 123
building renovations 125

PAGE

4.3A Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place 125
street connections 129
alternative pedestrian routes 129
stores on Portage Avenue 131
skywalks 134
transit waiting areas 136
a transformed urban fabric 136

4.3B Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place 139
additional skywalks 140
improved street connections 141
encourage uses which use on-street entrances 142
canopies and banners on Portage Place 143
improved bus waiting areas 143

Chapter Five
Re-establishing Downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street: The Role of North Portage Development Corporation 146

5.1 Making the Street a Place 146
places for people to walk and sit 147
responsiveness to climate 148
definition 148
visual interest 149
transparency 150
complementarity and diversity 150
quality and maintenance 151
accessibility 151
contrast with other streets 153

PAGE

5.2 North Portage Development Corporation's Role in Implementing the Solutions 154
endorse 156
propose 157
create 157
negotiate 159
coordinate 160
prioritize 161

5.3 The Great Street 167

Appendix A
Tables 169

Appendix B
Data for Table 3.9 177

Appendix C
Survey of Key Informants and Study Area Merchants 183

Bibliography 185

Introduction

Portage Avenue, in downtown Winnipeg, is one of the most well-known streets in the city, and, indeed, in Canada. Frequented by residents and visitors alike, the street is an important symbol of the city. However, the potential of downtown Portage Avenue to remain a positive symbol of the city is compromised by a number of problems which affect the vitality and image of the area. That problems persist along downtown Portage Avenue is of particular concern to North Portage Development Corporation. With a mandate to address the physical and social decline of the central core of Winnipeg, the Corporation, along with private interests, facilitated considerable redevelopment of four consecutive blocks of downtown Portage Avenue. Given the investment made in the area, it is essential that the current problems be understood in terms of their causes and possible solutions. As well, recognizing the importance of Portage Avenue as a symbol of the city, it is appropriate that North Portage Development Corporation's potential role to re-establish downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, as defined by Allan Jacobs, be examined.

Problem Statement

In 1981 the City of Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba, and the Government of Canada entered into the Core Area Initiative agreement "to facilitate redevelopment, rehabilitation, and revitalization of the downtown core area"[1] of Winnipeg. This action was in response to the decline in the physical and social environment of the core area of Winnipeg, that began when housing, retailing, industry, and office functions relocated from the downtown to the suburbs. At the time the Core Area Initiative began, there was a real and perceived problem of decay and erosion of the city's image and sense of vitality, brought about by the

---

1 North Portage Development Corporation, *Final Concept and Financial Plan for North Portage Redevelopment* (North Portage Development Corporation, Winnipeg, 1984), page 9.

degeneration in the character and quality of downtown property, the lack of public amenities, and a reduced level of safety and cleanliness.

In December 1983 North Portage Development Corporation was established by the three levels of government to redress the decline by planning, coordinating, and implementing redevelopment of the area of downtown Winnipeg bounded by Colony and Balmoral Streets, Hargrave Street, Notre Dame Avenue, and the lane south of and parallel to Portage Avenue (see Figure i).

Together with the private sector, institutions, and government agencies the Corporation has redeveloped large portions of the mandated area. Development completed to date includes: $10 million in roadway and service improvements on adjacent city streets; 252 units of seniors housing in Kiwanis Chateau and Fred Douglas Place; Place Promenade with 376 units of market rental housing and 20,000 sq. ft. of street level retail space on two new pedestrian-oriented streets; Information Systems Management Corporation's 100,000 sq. ft. business and computing centre; and One Canada Centre with 280,000 sq. ft. of office space.[2]

The most significant component of the redevelopment was the construction of Portage Place, a facility consisting of 200,000 sq. ft. of retail space, 36,000 sq. ft. of commercial office space, an IMAX theatre, the Prairie Theatre Exchange, Famous Players cinemas, the downtown YM-YWCA, skywalk connections to The Bay and Eaton's, Edmonton Court - an indoor public amenity space, and 1100 underground parking stalls.[3] Portage Place, spanning four blocks on the north and south sides of Portage Avenue, has significantly transformed downtown Portage Avenue. The facility has greatly expanded the amount of downtown retail space, provided new climate-controlled pedestrian routes parallel to Portage Avenue, necessitated the closure of two downtown streets at Portage, and dramatically altered the visual character of several blocks along Portage Avenue.

---

2 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1991).
North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).

3 Ibid.

Clearly, this is an integral part of the broad strategy of North Portage Development Corporation to reverse the decline in the physical and economic environment of the downtown core area of Winnipeg. However, it is apparent that real and perceived problems of decay and erosion of the city's image and sense of vitality continue to persist. Problems are particularly evident along Portage Avenue, east of Memorial Boulevard. Casual observation reveals that these blocks have a significant number of vacant and run-down buildings, have a notable presence of panhandlers, and are lacking in on-street pedestrian activity. Given the extensive redevelopment of Portage Avenue between Colony/Balmoral Street and Hargrave Street with One Canada Centre and, most importantly, Portage Place, one must ask the following questions:

- Why do problems persist in the downtown Portage Avenue area after redevelopment?
- What are the current problems of downtown Portage Avenue?
- What pre-Portage Place problems continue?
- What problems have arisen post-Portage Place?
- What are the causes of these problems?
- Specifically, and of particular concern in this practicum, which of the post-Portage Place problems can be attributed fully or partially to the Portage Place development?
- And, which of these problems can be attributed to factors other than Portage Place?
- How might Portage Avenue be reinforced as a Great Street, once again?
- What strategies can North Portage Development Corporation undertake to re-establish Portage Avenue as a Great Street, given its mandate, its participation in, and commitment to, the current downtown planning initiative - Centre Plan, and its active membership in the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone?
- Should the mandated area of North Portage Development Corporation be expanded to include the Portage Avenue area east of Hargrave Street?

Objectives

In describing the purposes of streets, Allan B. Jacobs, in his book *Great Streets,* reveals the qualities of a Great Street, and its importance as an integral component of the city, beyond utilitarian concerns.

> Beyond functional purposes of permitting people to get from one place to another and to gain access to property, streets - most assuredly the best streets - can and should help to do other things: bring people together, help build community, cause people to act and interact, to achieve together what they might not alone. As such, streets should encourage socialization and participation of people in the community. They serve as locations of public expression. They should be physically comfortable and safe. The best streets create and leave strong, lasting, positive impressions; they catch the eyes and the imagination. They are joyful places to be, and given a chance one wants to return to them. Streets are places for activity, including relaxation. The best streets continue, are long-lived.[4]

Historically a Great Street, Portage Avenue remains an important part of downtown Winnipeg. It is one of the most well-known streets in the city, frequented by residents and visitors alike. Given the importance of downtown Portage Avenue, its present challenges, most notably that of reinstating it as a Great Street, it is clear that the status quo is unacceptable.

The objectives of this practicum are to determine the problems of the downtown Portage Avenue area, the causes of those problems, and actions that can be taken by North Portage Development Corporation that could lead to re-establishing Portage Avenue as a Great Street. Of particular interest are strategies that can strengthen the street by better integrating Portage Place with its urban environment.

---

4 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 312.

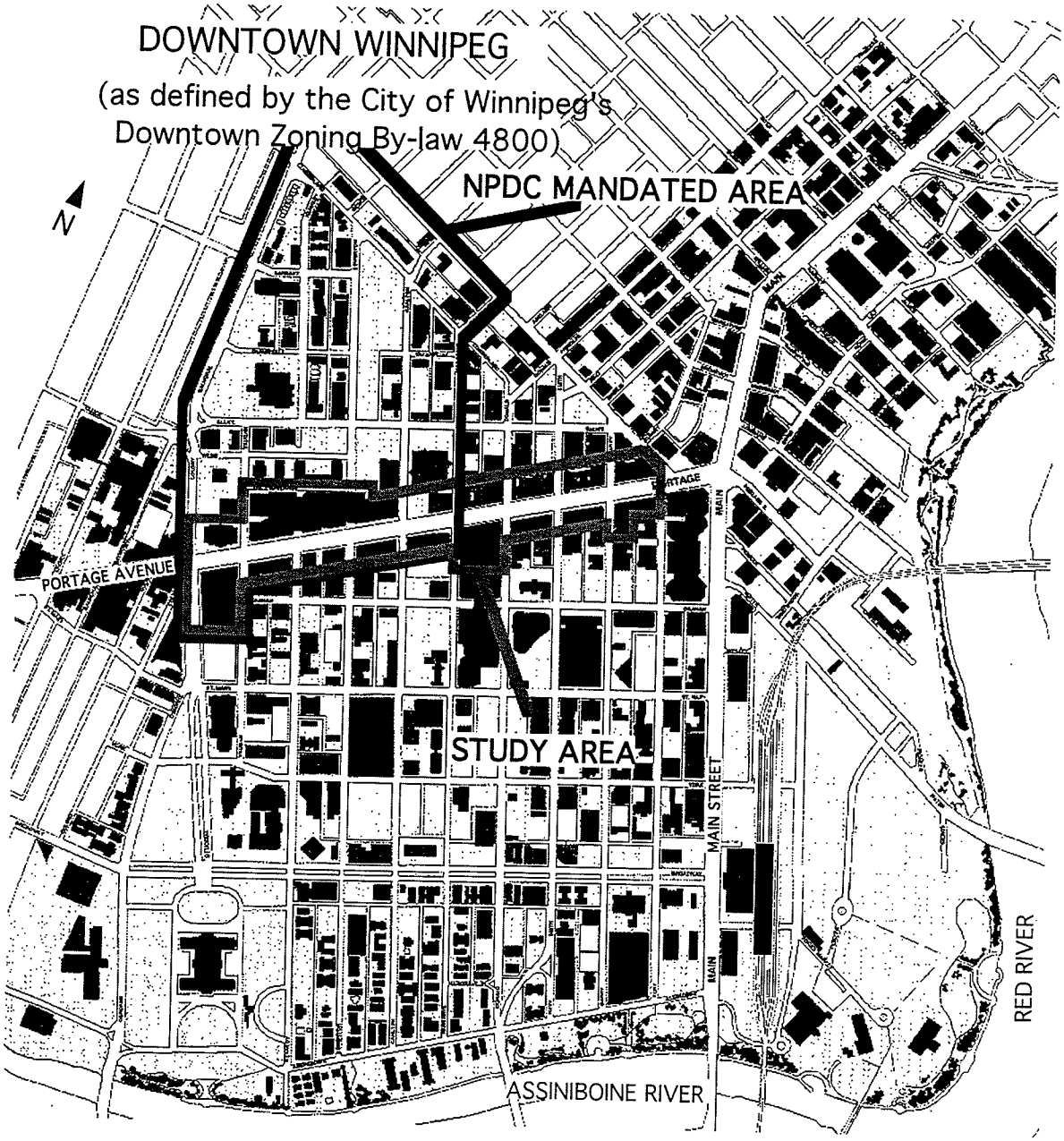

Figure i. Plan of downtown Winnipeg indicating the study area of the practicum and North Portage Development Corporation's (NPDC) mandated area.

Study Limitations

The problems faced in the central areas of cities are varied and complex; crime, poverty, disinvestment, degradation of the pedestrian environment, inconvenience for motorists, and

well-intentioned, but misguided revitalization efforts, are but a few. Their interrelationship and connection with wider issues beyond individual cities, provincial governments, and, for that matter, the country, emphasize that solutions require the long term commitment by all sectors of society.

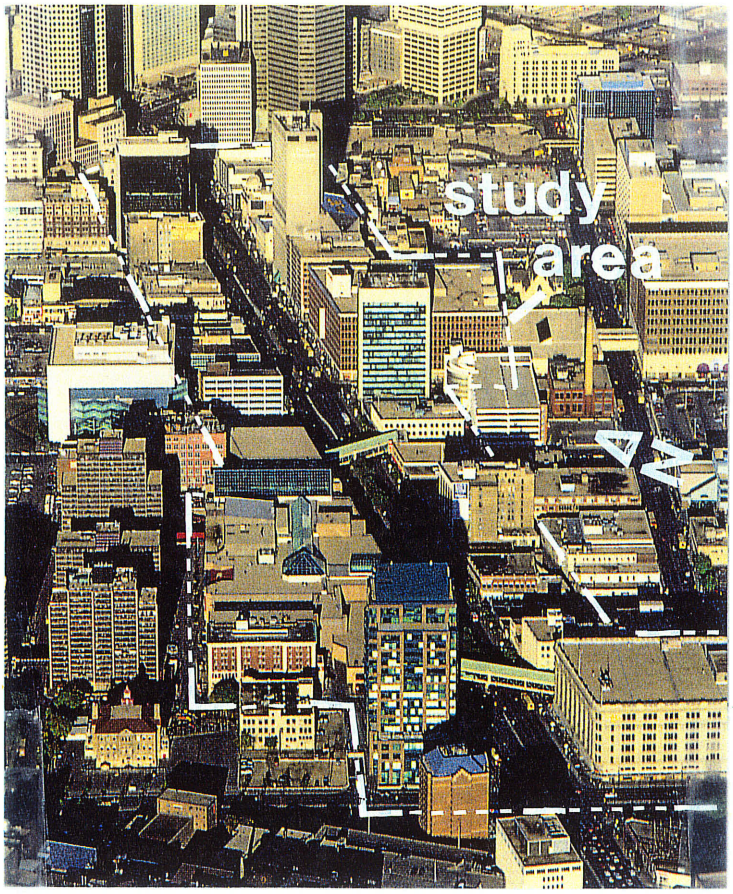

Figure ii. The study area, as seen from above.

Identifying the problems of downtown Portage Avenue, their causes, and the possible actions that North Portage Development Corporation could undertake to address those problems, is an endeavor that, without certain limitations, would be beyond the scope of this practicum. Therefore, certain parameters have been established for this study in order to focus research efforts towards the desired objectives. The type of research most needed, therefore, is selective and adheres to the following limitations:

1. The study area, referred to as the downtown Portage Avenue area, is taken to be the Portage Avenue right-of-way and all adjacent properties east of Colony Street/Memorial Boulevard and west of Fort Street/Notre Dame Avenue. The east and west boundaries were selected to include Portage Place and the area of downtown Portage Avenue similarly characterized as having a significant retail component. The north and south boundaries, encompassing adjacent properties, were selected because this practicum is concerned with the quality of Portage Avenue; and properties fronting on the Avenue have a strong influence on the character and vitality of the street (Figure i).
2. Issues that transcend or originate outside the study area are regarded as beyond the scope of this study. For example, traffic circulation is not addressed in the practicum.
3. Definition of the problems, their causes, and solutions is based upon the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of key informants and merchants, who are knowledgeable about, or operate within, the study area.
4. Evaluation of Portage Place is based upon a combination of the survey of merchants within the study area and key informants, as well as upon an application of urban design theories, in conjunction with an analysis of issues known to arise with the introduction of a major shopping centre and an off-grade pedestrian network in a downtown setting.
5. The urban design theories and the identification of issues are derived from a review of literature with particular emphasis on the North American context. The focus on both Canadian and American cities is due to the similarities in our culture and development history.
6. Portage Avenue in the downtown is evaluated as it presently exists. The study does not examine the history of Portage Avenue.

7. This practicum focuses on a case study of downtown Portage Avenue in general and Portage Place in particular, with the client being North Portage Development Corporation.

Structure and Method of Practicum

The practicum is organized into five Chapters (see Figure iii). The first Chapter is a review of urban design theories. It begins with an examination of the concept of place, with particular emphasis on the street as place, and the concept of a Great Street, as developed by Allan Jacobs. It then explores the linkage and figure-ground theories of Roger Trancik, and the necessity of integrating qualities of place with linkage and figure-ground, in order to develop an effective approach to urban design.

The second Chapter comprises a literature review of downtown retail and mixed-use centres, and off-grade pedestrian networks, in North American cities. By examining the experiences in other cities with similar urban design interventions, insight can be gained into those issues and aspects that must be given special consideration when analyzing Portage Place and its impact on Portage Avenue.

In Chapter Three the focus of the practicum shifts from a general examination of streets as places, of downtown retail centres, and of off-grade pedestrian networks, to a specific case study . This Chapter describes downtown Portage Avenue and Portage Place as they presently exist, and places the study area in context by summarizing recent surveys which identify issues of downtown Winnipeg in general. The rationale and method of conducting the survey of merchants and key informants is described as it relates to the objectives of this practicum. The results of the survey form the basis of the assessment of the study area and are used to generate possible solutions to the problems of the area.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the survey and identifies the effects that Portage Place has had on the area. Both the positive aspects and problems, of downtown

Portage Avenue in general, are identified. As well, the opinions of the merchants and key informants are contrasted and assessed in relation to the urban design theories reviewed in Chapter One. As the predominant redevelopment project on Portage Avenue, Portage Place is then assessed in detail, based on the urban design theories and precedents as presented in Chapters One and Two, as well as the survey findings. Finally, the potential solutions to the problems of Portage Avenue, arising out of the analyses, are reviewed with reference to the qualities of a Great Street, as developed in Chapter One.

Chapter Five places the solutions to the problems of the study area in the context of North Portage Development Corporation's mandate, its participation in and commitment to Centre Plan, and its active membership in the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone. Recommendations are made to North Portage Development Corporation on the role it can play in re-establishing Portage Avenue as a Great Street. In particular, the issue of widening the Corporation's mandated area to include the entire study area, as defined in the practicum, is explored. Bearing in mind the complexity of the problems of the downtown Portage Avenue area and its many stakeholders, the particular focus regarding this issue is on the appropriateness and capacity of North Portage Development Corporation to take on the broader responsibilities associated with expanding its mandated area.

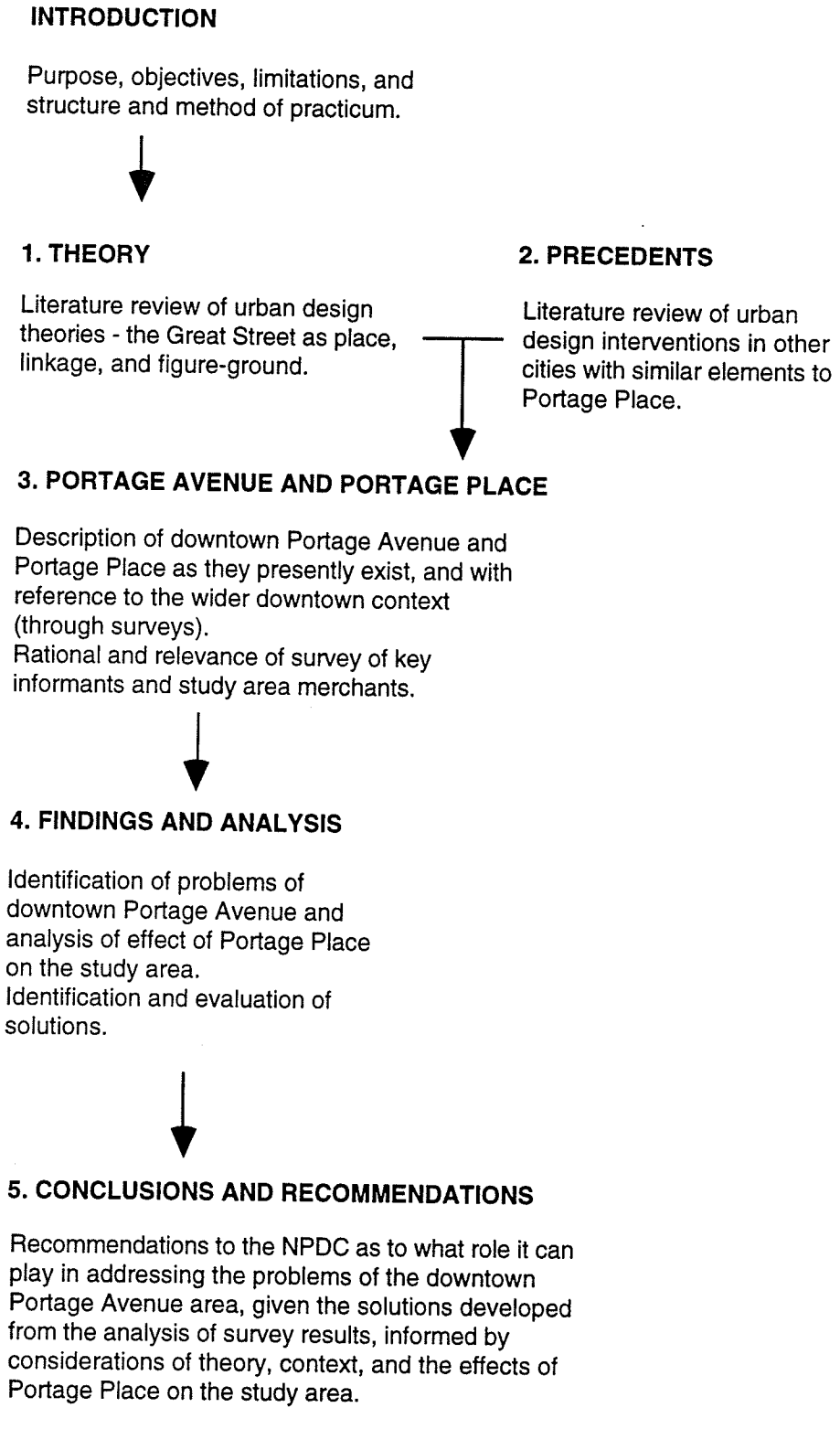

Figure iii. Structure and method of practicum.

Chapter One

Urban Design Theories: The Street as Place

This Chapter examines urban design in relation to the importance of place - meaningful public places - in the city, with particular emphasis on the street as place. It is shown that streets can provide meaningful public places in the city. Given the objectives of this practicum, the focus is on urban, commercial streets. The urban design theory of Roger Trancik is described here as well because it contributes to an understanding of downtown Portage Avenue in terms of its potential to become, once again, a Great Street.

Jan Gehl's *Life Between Buildings* (1987) illustrates the importance of public places in our cities, with an emphasis on the social function of place in urban life. The importance of public places in reinforcing the downtown as a marketplace is also described, based on the Urban Land Institute's 1988 publication *Designing the Successful Downtown.* The focus then shifts to the street as place, identifying several qualities that make up a Great Street. Allan Jacob's *Great Streets* (1993) and, to a lesser extent, *Designing the Successful Downtown,* are drawn upon to explore this area in some detail. The figure-ground and linkage theories of Roger Trancik, described in the 1986 publication *Finding Lost Space,* broadens our understanding of the qualities of urban space. These theories are shown to provide meaningful insights into what constitutes a Great Street. The Chapter closes with a summary of the theories of urban design as they relate to the qualities of a Great Street.

1.1 The Social Function of Public Places

As the primary source for this Section, Jan Gehl (1987) states that the composition of today's society is significantly different from a generation ago. Fewer children, and a growing elderly population in good health and active in their retirement, has led to a larger

adult population with a great deal of free time. In addition, technological advances and efficiency measures have reduced the social and creative content in the workplace. Furthermore, these societal changes have created a demand for quality recreation and social activities[1].

To a certain extent, the numerous means of communication available in modern society have satisfied many of the needs for social interaction. Advances in technology have provided us with the telephone, television, video, and the personal computer. These have also combined recently to add new dimensions of communication in the form of the Internet and Virtual Reality. To some extent, this technology has replaced face to face communication and active participation in many of the activities and events traditionally associated with public places.

recognizing the importance of public places

There is, however, a notable amount of dissatisfaction with our technologically-dependent lifestyle. The high degree of individual mobility and our increasingly abstract means of communication do not seem to satisfy the demand for quality recreational and social opportunities (Gehl, 1987).

That something is missing is evident in the widespread popular protests for a better physical environment for recreational and social community functions. Improved conditions for children, the elderly, and pedestrians and bicycle traffic are typical of the changes people desire for their cities.

Planners and architects are increasingly recognizing the relevance of public places as an integral part of urban life. There has been a revival in the notion of the city as something more than a functional entity. Streets, squares, and parks are again being seen as significant architectural elements, requiring careful planning to accommodate a broad range of social and economic functions.

---

1 Gehl, Jan, *Life Between Buildings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987), page 51.

the need for public places

To have cities which provide a high quality of life, public places should be provided for people:

> to be able to move about easily and confidently, to be able to linger in cities and building complexes, to be able to take pleasure in spaces, buildings, and city life, and to be able to meet and get together with other people - informally or in more organized fashion.[2]

Presently, the physical form of many North American cities is made up of multi-story buildings, underground parking facilities, large volumes of automobile traffic, and often great distances between buildings and functions. Buildings and automobiles are highly visible. Often, pedestrian activity is low. Many outdoor spaces in these cities are large and impersonal, and the large distances between centres of activity dilutes city vitality over time and space. The tendency is for people to remain indoors or utilize private outdoor spaces such as their home or cottage.

However, within many North American cities there are places which have lower, closely spaced buildings that encompass pedestrian oriented streets. These streets encourage people to stop in outdoor areas and patronize the nearby businesses. One experiences people and their enterprises in a more direct manner.

It is possible to influence activity patterns, to create better conditions for outdoor events, and to create lively cities, through careful design practices and planning measures. Just as building new roads and expanding existing ones tends to generate an increase in automobile traffic, a physical framework designed for human activities in cities tends to lead to a growth in the number, duration, and scope of outdoor activities. It is possible to influence, through the design of the physical environment, how many people and events use public places, how long the individual activities last, and which activities can develop (Gehl, 1987).

---

2 Gehl, Jan, *Life Between Buildings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987), page 53.

Although this practicum is concerned with the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, accommodating both pedestrians and vehicles; the conversion of one of Copenhagen's main streets to a pedestrian street illustrates that the value of a quality pedestrian environment often remains unrecognized. When the main shopping street in Copenhagen was converted to a pedestrian street in 1962, many critics predicted that the street would be deserted because pedestrian-based activity was not perceived to be a characteristic of the northern European tradition. However, pedestrian activity has grown in scope and creativity, far beyond expectations. This main street, along with others which were also converted to pedestrian streets, have become indispensable components of urban life providing the physical framework for a range of recreational and social activities. This example suggests that the value of a quality street-oriented pedestrian environment may also be underestimated in Winnipeg. The re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street could also lead to an increase in pedestrian activity.

the social function of public places

Recognizing that the value of pedestrian-oriented streets, as defined in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place*, is often underestimated, suggests that there is the potential to increase the number of social activities in our cities. In streets and city spaces not amenable to the pedestrian, only necessary activity occurs. People go to school or work, wait for the bus, run errands, and hurry home. However, in quality environments the spectrum of human activities is much wider. Weather permitting, people take a walk, sit on benches, window shop, and conduct their necessary activities in a more leisurely fashion. If the place is inviting, these activities occur with greater frequency and duration than if it is lacking in pedestrian amenities. The quality of the urban space is directly related to the length of time that people spend in it[3]. People remaining longer in an outdoor space leads to an increase in optional activities that results in an increase in social activities.

---

3 Gehl, Jan, *Life Between Buildings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987), page 13.

In city streets, social activities generally involve simply seeing and hearing a great number of unknown people. On the surface, this may seem to be a superficial and somewhat trivial experience. However, as opposed to simply observing other people's experiences on television, video, or film, individuals in a good quality public place are modest participants in their community. Experiencing others in this way offers people a variety of situations and stimuli. In addition, the city centre frequented by people is far more interesting to experience than one that offers only buildings and other inanimate objects (Gehl, 1987).

It is generally true that people and human activities attract other people; and new spontaneous activities usually begin in and around events already in progress. Given a choice, most people would prefer to walk on a lively rather than a deserted street. Sidewalk cafes also focus on those areas with the most human activity. Chairs face the sidewalk - the prime attraction.

An analysis of pedestrian behavior, carried out in Copenhagen, illustrates the types of activities and land uses that cause people to stop and look, and show interest. Banks, offices, showrooms, and exhibits showing such items as cash registers, and office furniture, received the least attention. In contrast, a great number of people stopped at newspaper kiosks, photography exhibits, movie posters at cinemas, clothing stores, and toy stores - places which relate directly to people and their social environment. The greatest interest was shown in the various forms of human activities taking place on the street itself. Children at play, newlyweds on their way to and from the photographers, and people simply walking by, as well as the less frequent occurrences such as the street artist, musicians, and other entertainers received considerable attention.

People, and human activity, by simply seeing and hearing others, is more rewarding and are in greater demand than most other attractions in the public places in cities. The spaces and buildings are merely the physical framework to provide opportunities for a range of recreational and social activities in our cities.

1.2 The Downtown as Marketplace

That cities, and particularly their downtowns, should provide opportunities for social interaction is also stated by the Urban Land Institute in their 1988 publication *Designing the Successful Downtown.* This is the principal source for this Section. It is stated that the city centre must meet the needs of first-time users with a clear physical structure yet at the same time the visual character must be sufficiently dynamic and complex to encourage people to revisit the area. Opportunities for choice, surprise, and adventure must exist to ensure long term interest in the downtown.

the pedestrian environment

Easy, convenient, and continuous pedestrian access between and throughout land uses such as commercial, recreational, office, and residential, with a high level of pedestrian amenity, is fundamental for a successful downtown. Designing downtown spaces with a concern for human scale, and physical and psychological comfort provides the physical framework for social interaction. By ensuring that the downtown offers an environment amenable to the pedestrian, leisure activities, and land uses such as housing, retail, and entertainment are encouraged. This strategy takes advantage of opportunities provided by the downtown market, comprised of both employees and residents. Intensive pedestrian use is particularly important for the success of retailing functions, largely dependent on a high volume of pedestrian traffic.

attractiveness of the downtown

Revitalization of the city centre through improving the pedestrian environment is most effective when the existing physical assets and special visual qualities of the downtown are integrated in the overall approach. Given that the "basic principles for

creating a successful place include the concepts of coherence, continuity, and identity,"[4] it is evident that new development must be linked with existing development both visually and functionally. The traditional pattern and scale of development, the architecture, and the history of the existing city centre are meaningful components of the city.

Whereas the success of suburban shopping centres indicates the expectations of consumers in terms of the quality, comfort, and convenience of the indoor, privately owned pedestrian street, the downtown must be recognized for its distinctiveness from the suburban environment. While the consistent use of high quality materials, the employment of focal points, such as fountains or sculptures, and ample seating to create inviting social places, and the high level of maintenance offered in suburban shopping centres, can also be provided in the downtown, it cannot provide the homogeneity of these privately owned streets. The downtown is unlike the suburbs in that it is a heterogeneous place where various social and economic forces come together, where a range of people - both residents and visitors - share the same sidewalks. The city centre is a multi-use place with a variety of businesses and other activities. Instead of competing with the largely single use-suburban retail centres, downtown businesses can offer consumers surprises, the unexpected, and, invariably, some ragged edges. It is a dynamic place, rich in texture, with a broad range of choices.

choosing downtown

One of the strategies to entice people downtown is to provide a physical setting which demonstrates the city centre's potential as both a market and a place. If implemented carefully, investments in downtown infrastructure and public spaces can influence people's perceptions and attitude towards downtown. For example, streetscape improvements, a plaza that serves as a focal point and amenity, improved transit service, and a balanced approach to accommodating automobile access and parking, are all visible expressions of

4 Paumier, Cyril, *Designing the Successful Downtown* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1988), page 50.

economic health and revitalization progress. In addition, public expenditures on the downtown can encourage private investment by demonstrating that there is a commitment to the area and that problems are surmountable.

By providing a physical environment that promotes social interaction, the city centre has the potential to have a vital, expanding, multiple-use market. The downtown can be an attractive place that people will choose to patronize over other locations in the city.

1.3 The Street as Place

Creating a downtown environment amenable for pedestrians satisfies social needs and helps strengthen the downtown's role as marketplace. If our public spaces and the buildings along them are attractive, people will choose to come downtown to be with other people, to shop, and to conduct business.

The most visible public spaces in our cities are streets. Allan Jacobs' book, *Great Streets,* 1993, the primary source for this Section, states that streets are crucial components of the urban landscape. Not only do they serve the functional purposes of facilitating movement of people and goods and providing access to adjacent property, they have the potential to serve as the place where people socialize and participate in the wider community of their city. Jacobs expands on this, stating that a truly Great Street does all this while providing a comfortable, safe, and memorable atmosphere. The best streets are joyful places to be; people return to them; they are long-lived.

The qualities that can, to a certain extent, be built into a street to make it Great include: providing comfortable places for people to walk and sit; well-defined and interesting streets; inviting buildings - complementary yet with diverse functions; and well maintained high quality spaces. Ease of access is also a factor which must be addressed to ensure the success of a Great Street.

places for people to walk and sit

The most important quality that a Great Street must have, Jacobs states, is that it must be a place that people can explore as pedestrians. In this way other people become a part of the surroundings. Public socializing and community enjoyment can only be experienced once we get out of our cars, or off the bus, and onto the sidewalk. As pedestrians we come into close contact with the urban environment; not only with other people, but with stores and other activities along the way.

The sidewalk must be wide enough to permit people to walk at varying paces, without a sense of overcrowding, or of being alone. A street always in use by pedestrians is the most effective way to create a safe and secure environment; as do high levels of street lighting and a well kept environment. Safety from vehicles is also of prime importance. On streets dominated by vehicles, it is necessary to separate the roadway from the sidewalk by a curb. Placing trees, closely spaced, near the curb creates a pedestrian zone separated from the traffic and, therefore, with a sense of safety. Although not a requirement for a Great Street, on-street parking provides an additional separation between vehicle traffic and pedestrians.

For a street to be amenable to the pedestrian, if it is relatively long, it should provide places to pause and look around, such as small plazas, parks, widenings, or open spaces. Some of these places should be large enough to provide venues for special events (Cyril Paumier, 1988). All public spaces must provide places to stop and sit (William Whyte, 1988). Allan Jacobs identifies benches as specific design elements which invite people to stay on the street by facilitating rest, conversation, and passing the time. Benches are important amenities, particularly for commercial streets, for they help build community by facilitating socializing.

physical comfort

Providing for physical comfort by restricting or admitting sunlight, and by reducing precipitation and wind speed along the sidewalk, can have a marked effect on the attractiveness of a given street, particularly in cities with extreme climates. In marked contrast to many urban streets whose buildings actually accelerate the wind, a good urban street provides pedestrians with a sheltered environment. Buildings with set-back upper stories are best suited to reduce down-draft airspeeds at street level. As well, the sidewalk should be in sunlight when it is cool, and shade when it is warm. People respond to variations in the micro-climate. During cooler weather the sitting areas receiving sunlight are used while the shady areas remain vacant (Jan Gehl, 1987). One of the most effective ways of providing a comfortable physical environment is with a closely spaced row of deciduous trees. They permit sunlight to reach the street in winter when it is most needed and provide some shade and a degree of protection from rain in the summer. Building-mounted awnings also contribute to physical comfort by restricting sunlight and precipitation. In cooler climates, it is important to ensure that sunlight is not blocked by buildings, particularly in the winter months.

definition

Another requirement for a Great Street, according to Jacobs, is that it must have definition. Streets are defined vertically - a function of the height of buildings, walls, or trees along the street; and they are defined horizontally in terms of the length and spacing between the defining elements, usually buildings in an urban environment. In addition, the beginnings or endings of Great Streets, or portions of them, are defined both vertically and horizontally.

In terms of vertical definition, both proportion and street width are the key variables. Wider streets require tall elements to define them. However, at some point a street can be so wide that it is not possible to give it clear definition. For example, when

the width of a place exceeds 450 feet, it has been observed that spatial definition is weak, regardless of building height.

Street definition differs from human scale in that the latter is concerned with perceiving other people in their surroundings whereas the former focuses on the broader issue of creating a place. A vertical (building height) to horizontal (street width) ratio of 1:1 gives strong definition; at a ratio of 1:2 there is still good street definition. However, as the ratio gets smaller, to 1:2.5 and lower, there is a lack of street definition. In this situation focal points such as fountains, statues, or obelisks, or cross-streets that provide endings, are required to give the street definition and a sense of place (Figure 1.1).

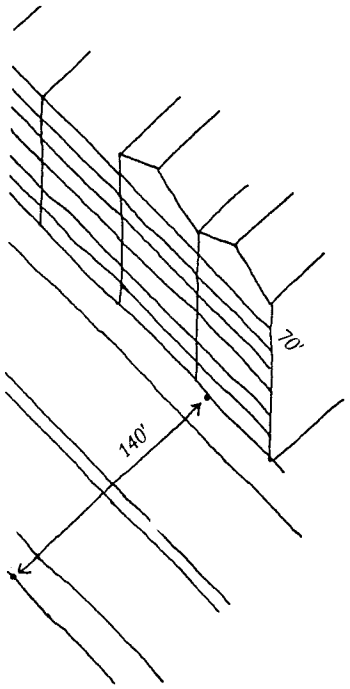

Figure 1.1. A building height to street width ratio of 1:2 provides good street definition.[5]

There may be a point at which the height of the building becomes oppressive. Jacobs states that the best streets are lined with buildings not more than 100 feet in height. This limitation, however, does not appear to be a function of proportion, but of absolute

5 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 279.

height; buildings along the 15 foot wide Via dei Greci in Rome are approximately 45 feet in height, giving a ratio of 1: 0.3. Yet this street is pleasant. It may be that the maximum height of buildings adjacent to the street is more a function of their effect on sunlight, temperature, and wind, at street level, given the local climate, than of abstract notions of spatial proportion and absolute height.

The other consideration regarding buildings as defining elements is their spacing along a street. There is no set rule on the minimum space between buildings; however it is clear that closer spacing of buildings strengthens the street definition (Figure 1.2).

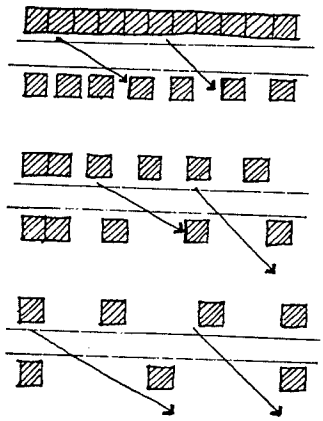

Figure 1.2. Greater horizontal spacing and weaker street definition.[6]

Another important element which defines the street is a row of trees along the curb or set in the roadway, adjacent to a parking lane. Trees are of particular significance for very wide streets where the buildings are unable to provide that sense of enclosure.

Furthermore, Cyril Paumier (1988) states that street tree planting provides a visual matrix which is capable of unifying uninspiring architecture or inconsistency between buildings. Deciduous trees have the added advantages of providing a relatively

6 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 281.

unobstructed zone along the sidewalks which permits pedestrian movement and the visibility of storefronts (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3. A row of trees can provide visual continuity.[7]

To reinforce effectively the linear nature of the street, trees should be planted a uniform distance from the right-of-way edge, and at regular intervals. In addition, the trees must be placed close enough together in order to create a distinct line that defines the street as well as separates the pedestrian from the roadway. The spacing should be such that people on the sidewalk perceive a distinct vertical plane or boundary extending along the length of the street. Generally, the most effective tree spacing is between 15 and 25 feet.

For the trees to provide good street definition, it is also important that there are no discontinuities. Interrupting the line of trees for sightlines preceding intersections, for bus stops, for driveways, or for buildings along the way dilutes the definition that would otherwise be provided by a continuous line of trees. A row of deciduous trees at 25 foot intervals is a permeable plane which drivers can look through and pedestrians can easily negotiate (Figure 1.4). In making a Great Street, the emphasis is on designing the street as a whole, without exceptions for specific land uses along the street.

---

7 Paumier, Cyril,, *Designing the Successful Downtown* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1988), page 61.

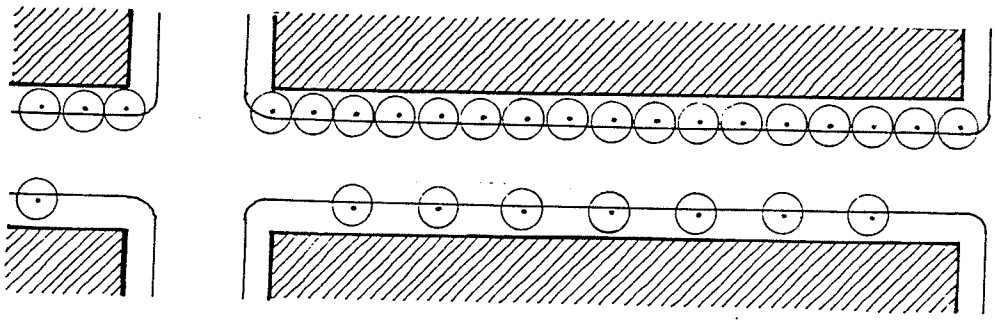

Figure 1.4. 25 foot tree spacing from corner to corner (top) is significantly more effective than 50 foot spacing set back from the corners (bottom).[8]

The beginnings and endings of Great Streets are also important aspects of definition. A change in building height and spacing, open spaces, tree plantings, and monuments, are all means of identifying the beginnings and endings of a Great Street or special areas along an otherwise average street (Figure 1.5).

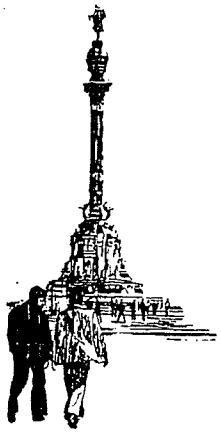

Figure 1.5. Column that starts/ends the Ramblas, Barcelona.[9]

visual interest

Streets that are visually stimulating, yet not disorienting, strike a careful balance between complexity and chaos. A variety of design elements within a uniform visual framework can capture the eye's attention and also orient the user. However, a

8 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 295.
9 Ibid., page 296.

straightforward street plan can be negated if every component is not carefully considered. This is evident in Hong Kong where a cacophony of commercial signs overwhelm the user.

The potential to provide complexity within a holistic context is evident in the variety of elements which makes up a street. People, vehicles, trees, buildings, street lights, and signs; paving patterns, tree grates, benches, fountains, sculptures, and even street and traffic signs, manhole covers, and fire hydrants, are the stuff which we experience along urban streets.

Both Gehl (1987) and Jacobs (1993) state that people and activity are what capture and keep our attention. Particularly on commercial streets, with their relatively large volumes of pedestrian traffic, compared to residential streets, people moving along the sidewalks and stopping in public places contribute to making the streets interesting places to be.

Automobiles, by virtue of their movement, can also provide a sense of activity along streets. However, their movement must be perceived as non-threatening to be a positive contributor to the visual environment. Vehicles must travel at a safe speed relative to the pedestrian; or they must be comfortably separated from the pedestrian environment - by a row of trees, for example.

Trees also stimulate the eyes. The movement of their branches and leaves, the light that filters through this movement, and the shadows cast upon the buildings and sidewalks add a layer of complexity to the street. Even in winter, deciduous trees pattern the street with light passing through their branches (see Figures 1.3 and 1.6).

Buildings also interact with light. Those with texture and pattern are more interesting than simple, two-dimensional facades. Light and shadow play over the surfaces, inviting the eyes (Figure 1.6).

As with a row of trees, streetlights contribute in that they help to unify the street by emphasizing it linearity. The best streetlights are under 20 feet in height - scaled for the

pedestrian, not the automobile. White glass globes are more visible in the daytime than clear globes; the former invites the eyes while the latter disappears.

Commercial signage also adds interest. By using similar styles, business signs contribute to unifying an area, and are unique things to look at - a form of public art (Figure 1.6).

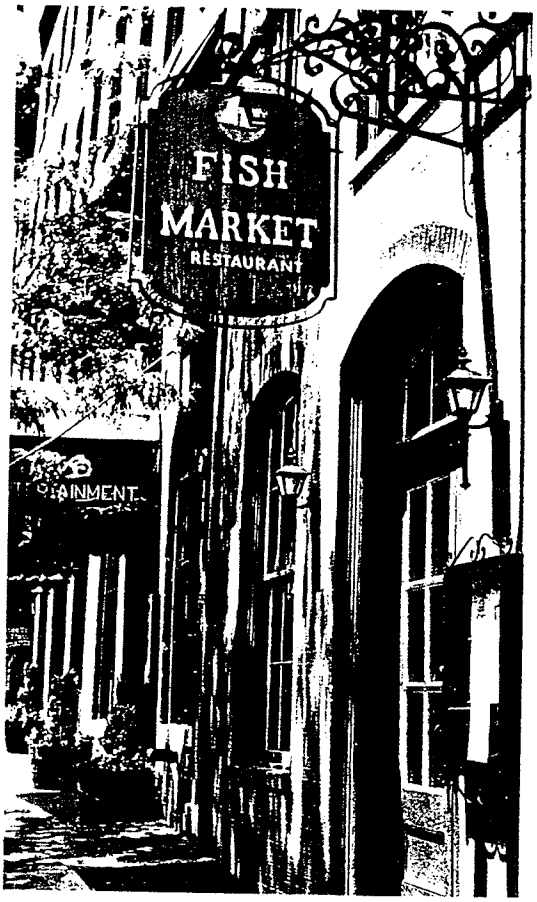

Figure 1.6. Light and shadows play on the surfaces of buildings rich in texture.[10]

Both streetlights and signs, as well as store windows, contribute to the special atmosphere of the street at night. It is a more focused place; upper floors are less visible; the space is more intimate. Depending on the adjacent land use, the street may be nearly

10 Paumier, Cyril,, *Designing the Successful Downtown* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1988), page 62.

deserted, or it may take on a different vitality. Especially at night, there is a sense of safety if many people are on the sidewalks, and if high levels of lighting are provided.

There are many elements that contribute to the street by unifying and enriching the place. Consistent paving patterns add to the visual identity of an area. Fountains provide refuge from the sounds of traffic with the steady rhythm of falling water. They are not unlike pieces of art, which can give a place special meaning, contemplative or festive. Benches, besides serving the essential purpose of creating sitting space, can help unify a street and identify an area. Even utilitarian objects such as street and traffic signs, manhole covers, and fire hydrants provide opportunities to establish a unique area in the city.

To maintain interest in a street, it is necessary that variety occurs along the way. A special focal point such as a statue, a unique building such as a theatre, a change in street cross-section, or a change in emphasis of adjacent land uses provide opportunities or even suggest the appropriate places to foster a varied atmosphere along the street. This variety, however, must not be such that the unity of the street is lost. Extreme changes in building heights, and distinct changes in land uses from, for example, a concentration of office uses to only commercial uses, should be avoided.

transparency

Another quality of Great Streets is transparency. That is, the buildings along the street are open and inviting; one can view inside or know what is behind their walls, Jacobs (1993).

Windows and doors give transparency (Figure 1.7). On commercial streets, windows are particularly inviting, showing the goods or services for sale - enticing the customer to come inside. Doorways invite the passerby simply because they are entryways to the spaces inside the buildings. And the more doorways the better; the best streets have them as little as 12 feet apart. In addition, a zone of receding show windows or space for

outside displays or sidewalk cafes are welcome attention getters which create a transitional area between the public street and the less public shop.

Figure 1.7. Windows and doorways give transparency to the buildings along a street by inviting the passerby to look inside, and enter the building.[11]

complementarity and diversity

Generally, the most successful streets are characterized by buildings which complement one another. Both Allan Jacobs (1993) and Cyril Paumier (1988) state that buildings should be of similar height, massing, facade proportions, set-back, and materials. Variations in height of one or two stories are not significant. However, larger changes in height are appropriate for buildings of cultural significance, such as a church, or for buildings in strategic locations - at a corner, for example. In addition, architectural landmarks are most effective when they contrast with a relatively consistent setting. For example, the office towers at Portage and Main, Winnipeg, contrast with their surroundings because they are much higher than nearby buildings.

---

[11] Paumier, Cyril,, *Designing the Successful Downtown* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1988), page 57.

Complementarity, however, does not mean uniformity. While it is important that buildings relate positively to one another, it is also important that variations occur throughout the street. The more buildings in a given area, the more likely a larger number of architects, with varying styles of design, have contributed to the street. As well, it is also likely that there will be a greater diversity of building owners and possibly also land uses in the area. A number of building owners leads, in time, to each structure developing its own particular character. An interesting patina is created along the street which cannot be duplicated in a single complex. A mix of land uses also adds interest to an area and helps build community by attracting a mix of people from various parts of the city. This diversity of owners and uses, Jacobs observes, may also lead to socio-economic diversity, thus giving the area a healthy resilience during difficult economic periods.

quality and maintenance

A commitment to quality and maintenance is also a commitment to the long-term success of a street. To have streets that maintain their attractiveness, it is important that sidewalks, streetlights, benches, building facades, and other elements that make up a Great Street are made with the appropriate materials, and that care is taken in their construction and installation. This does not mean that a large investment is required. Instead, it is a matter of choosing materials and designs suitable to the required function - durable, not difficult to construct, and easy to maintain. For example, street furniture should be designed to be difficult to vandalize. As well, textures and colours should be selected that do not require frequent cleaning.

Implementing the appropriate designs with suitable materials makes maintenance relatively simple. Keeping elements of a street clean and in good repair also helps to create a positive image. Merchants understand the importance of regular maintenance, recognizing that people tend not to shop in run-down areas. Merchants' associations often

keep the windows of closed stores clean, sometimes filling them with merchandise sold elsewhere or other items of interest, such as the work of local artists.

Trees are one element that are particularly dependent on good maintenance and are also a major contributor to the street. Trees require special care, given the demands placed on them - salt from the roads, automobile exhaust, limited sunlight, and often a constrained growing space.

accessibility

Good accessibility within and to a street contributes to its vitality as a place. It was shown, at the beginning of this discussion of qualities that make up a Great Street, that streets serve the obvious functional purposes of facilitating movement of people and goods, and providing access to adjacent property. What distinguishes a Great Street is that it can accommodate pedestrians, drivers, or transit users , in a setting that is attractive to the eye - inviting the passerby to stop or revisit the street and partake in what it offers. Especially if rapid vehicular traffic is permitted, there should be a protected environment for those on foot. And the best streets accommodate the less mobile pedestrian traffic. Ramps, curb cuts, and places to stop and rest make it a comfortable place for a wide range of pedestrians to use.

Accessibility also means that Great Streets are easy to find and get to within the entire city or in a more local context. They must be convenient for pedestrians, motorists, and transit users to access. Accessibility, to a large extent, is a function of the frequency of cross-streets or other public ways along the street. Allan Jacobs states that blocks which are 300 feet in length provide many opportunities to access a given street.

For a retail or entertainment area to be attractive to motorists, short-term parking should be provided that is nearby, easy to locate, and affordable. Cyril Paumier (1988) states that clear and consistent signage is required to identify parking locations, and validation programs should be implemented to reduce costs. These policies can be effective

strategies to encourage people to choose downtown for shopping and entertainment instead of suburban shopping centres. And long-term employee parking must also be available; though such facilities can be located further from the users' destinations than the short-term parking facilities.

Jacobs (1993), however, cautions that, although merchants want ample parking adjacent to their businesses, too much parking in a certain area can have a negative impact on the pedestrian environment. Parking facilities located behind stores tends to shift activity to that area, at the expense of the street. And parking lots directly adjacent to streets create discontinuities in street definition and activity. Providing on-street parking, to a certain degree, is a positive way to meet the demands of the merchants. Not only does on-street parking create a buffer between the traffic and pedestrians, it also provides drivers with a chance to park very close to their intended destinations. That there is a possibility of parking on the destined street seems to attract drivers; and if there are no available spaces they find a nearby lot. Even though the number of on-street spaces is far below demand, it appears that it has a marked effect on peoples' perception of the accessibility of a street to vehicles. We will see in Section 4.1A *Issues Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - availability of parking*, that the perception that short-term parking is readily available is an important consideration for re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

Great Streets are also places that one can conveniently reach by public transit, either along the street or on cross-street routes. Cyril Paumier (1988) suggests that a transit loop could be provided to link major activity nodes in the downtown and facilitate ease of access between the core and adjacent districts. Frequent service, low fares (or free service in the downtown), and a policy to discourage internal downtown trips by motor-vehicle could make transit the preferred mode of transportation. This would have the particular benefit of reducing parking demands and traffic volume along urban streets.

Another aspect of accessibility is density. Having a large number of people living and working in a specific area provides the potential for these groups to have convenient access to a particular street. Both Allan Jacobs (1993) and Jane Jacobs (1961) state that higher density areas tend to have "24-hour" streets, that is, populated all the time. Allan Jacobs claims that this safer community atmosphere can be created with as little as 15 dwelling units per acre. A density of 50 units per acre can be developed without exceeding four storeys in height or requiring streets with high traffic capacity. Alternatively, a mix of residential and other land uses can generate a high degree of pedestrian activity with building heights less than four storeys. This is due to the area's ability to attract people from other areas by way of offering opportunities for employment, entertainment, and shopping.

contrast with other streets

The North American city is characterized by the grid system of streets with uniform block sizes and consistent right-of-way widths. Yet many cities have at least a handful of streets within their urban areas that stand out from the overall pattern, either in width, length, or regularity of form. This in itself makes these streets special places and could provide opportunities to build upon. It is shown in Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - transportation and parking*, that Portage Avenue is unique from the downtown street grid in terms of alignment and right-of-way width.

Nevertheless, the qualities of providing places for people to walk and sit, responsiveness to climate, definition, visual interest, inviting buildings, complementarity and diversity, well maintained high quality spaces, and accessibility, are the things which, taken together, make a street Great, and, therefore, unique from other streets.

1.4 Urban Design Approaches

Roger Trancik, in his book *Finding Lost Space* (1986), identifies three theories of urban design which are of particular relevance to the making of a Great Street. The theories developed are figure-ground, linkage, and place. Together they provide a comprehensive approach to urban design which facilitates an understanding of the factors that influence the qualities of urban spaces.

figure-ground theory

Figure-ground theory is the study of the land coverage of buildings (figure) in relation to the surrounding open space (ground). A figure-ground study is a two-dimensional drawing in plan view which illustrates the building - open space relationships; buildings are indicated as solid black objects and the open spaces are white forms in-between and around the objects. A figure-ground study is also important because it identifies the public realm of open spaces and streets, and the private realm of buildings.

Figure-ground drawings reveal the nature of urban space in terms of the disposition of buildings at its edges, scale of the buildings, and the horizontal dimensions of the space. A study of figure-ground relationships also reveals that the pattern of solids and voids forms a grid in most North American downtowns.

A clearly defined system of solids and voids gives shape and definition to the public spaces. With a high percentage of building-occupied land, compared to exterior space, there is also the potential to achieve spatial continuity throughout the urban spaces. Outdoor areas can be well-defined and integrated with the surrounding solids. And the pattern of solids and voids - the urban fabric - can be punctuated by landmark buildings, monuments, or major open spaces to create focal points within the city. The outdoor space in central Boston in 1929, shown in Figure 1.8, appears as a continuous element which links the various interior and exterior spaces and activities to one another. These tight

urban spaces provide a sense of enclosure and tend to be well-used by pedestrians much of the time.

Figure 1.8. In 1929 Central Boston had well-defined, interconnected outdoor spaces.[12]

In most contemporary cities, however, modern concepts of space have transformed the urban fabric into a collection of buildings as freestanding objects within uncontained open space. The high-rise buildings, common to the modern landscape, cannot give continuous spatial definition to the environment because of inadequate ground coverage. Urban form which is predominantly vertical instead of horizontal tends to read as individual buildings; the block pattern is weak and urban spaces are largely undefined voids. These spaces tend to be too large for human comfort and are generally deserted. We see that by 1980 Central Boston's open-spaces have lost much of their visual coherence; the area reads as a collection of isolated buildings surrounded by unformed space (Figure 1.9).

---

12 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 264.

Figure 1.9. By 1980 Central Boston's open-spaces have lost much of their definition and coherency, and buildings are isolated objects.[13]

Figure-ground studies are useful exercises, for they reveal weaknesses in the urban fabric and suggest opportunities to clarify the structure of urban spaces. By establishing a hierarchy of different sized spaces, individually evolved, but spatially related to one another, the urban fabric can be repaired and quality public places can be created.

linkage theory

Linkage theory, unlike figure-ground theory, is concerned with the streets, pedestrian ways, linear open spaces, or other elements which connect the parts of the city. Emphasis is on movement systems and efficiency of infrastructure rather than patterns of defined outdoor space.

---

13 Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), page 265.

Trancik cites Fumihiko Maki's treatise *Investigations into Collective Form* which identified compositional, mega-, and group form as the three types of spatial linkage (Figure 1.10).

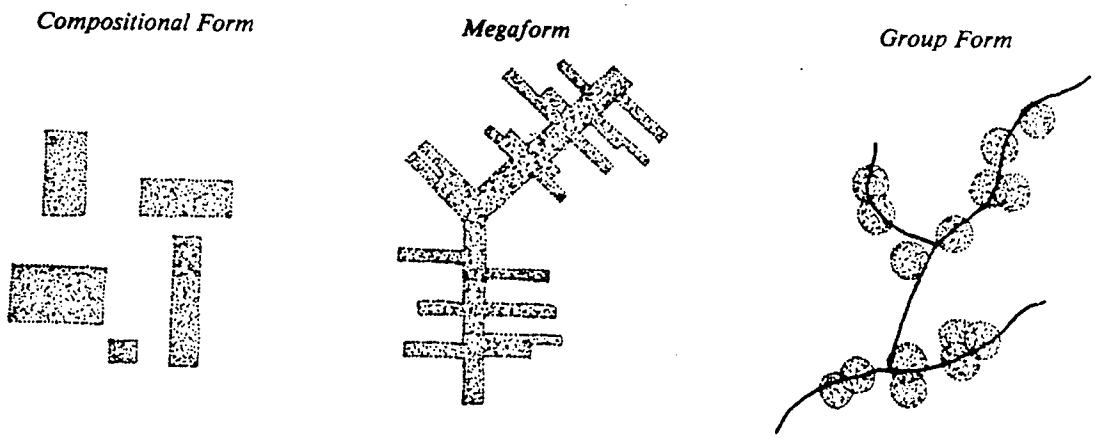

Figure 1.10. Three types of spatial linkage.[14]

Compositional form is described as comprised of individually tailored buildings composed abstractly in plan. Linkage is implied through the relative positioning of buildings. In compositional form the perimeter edges of open space have less importance than the buildings which define them. As with modern concepts of figure-ground relationships exemplified in many contemporary North American cities, the object building is dominant.

The megaform, or megastructure, is characterized by individual components - buildings or portions thereof - interconnected by a large, hierarchical, open-ended framework. Linkage is physically imposed as part of the structure. The structure has a formally defined perimeter with an internal space, which is often enclosed. The megastructure, typically, does not acknowledge its surroundings but creates its own interior milieu. The suburban shopping centre, with its interior malls lined with small

14 Trancik, Roger, *Finding Lost Space* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), page 107.

shops, central public space, and large anchor stores, is a modern manifestation of this type of form.

Group form, by contrast, is created by the incremental accumulation of elements along an armature of open space. Linkage evolves naturally, as part of an organic, generative structure. This form of linkage is typical of many historic towns, such as the settlements built by the early settlers along the Red River, Manitoba. Particularly in this context, group form is characterized by a consistency of materials, responsiveness to the natural topography, respect for human scale, and by the sequential spaces as defined by buildings, gateways, and spires. Clearly, this type of linkage is one of the major ordering devices of Great Streets.

an integrated approach

The third theory of urban design, place theory, is concerned with the potential of urban spaces to have personal significance to those using them. Section 1.3 The Street as Place demonstrates that several qualities derived from the local culture and regional context, such as responding to climate and encouraging a diversity of local businesses, are needed to make a street a place.

However, Roger Trancik observes that implementing only place theory (best described in terms of streets by Allan Jacobs in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place)* may result in the loss of important connections to adjacent areas. For example, it may be difficult to access the area by car. As well, certain spatial opportunities, such as the creation of a well-defined open space, may go unrecognized.

In order to create an urban space that provides meaningful places for people, that is integrated with the rest of the city, and that has continuity and definition, an approach consisting of a layering of figure-ground, linkage, and place theory must be utilized.

This Chapter has brought forward several theories on, and approaches to, the making of quality urban places. Taken as a whole, these various perspectives facilitated a broad understanding of the relevance of public space for human interaction and economic vitality. The theories give insight into the importance of streets as urban spaces and the special qualities that make them work. The urban design theories provide alternative ways of looking at the street, revealing certain weaknesses and strengths which can be built upon to make quality public places.

Chapter Two

Urban Design Interventions:

Qualities of Retail/Mixed Use Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks

In the last Chapter, the social and economic importance of place was described. As well, the qualities that make up a Great Street were identified. Roger Trancik's figure-ground and linkage theories broadened our understanding of urban space. The linkage theory is particularly applicable to urban streets. The group form type of linkage, characterized by the incremental accumulation of elements along an armature of open space, is manifested in the traditional street. By contrast, the contemporary suburban shopping centre, with its enclosed internal mall and formally defined perimeter, exemplifies the megaform linkage type.

This Chapter examines the qualities of downtown retail or mixed-use centres and off-grade pedestrian networks, urban interventions which are also the megaform type of linkage. The downtown retail centre, a hybrid of the suburban shopping centre has been modified, with varying degrees of success, to fit into its urban setting. However, it is similar to suburban shopping centres in that it is typically comprised of an interior mall linked with small shops and a central public space, between large "anchor" stores. The off-grade pedestrian network is characterized as a megaform type of linkage because it is often made up of individual buildings with several retail and service establishments, interconnected by internal, often climate-controlled bridges, tunnels, and corridors, in an open-ended framework.

Understanding the qualities of these types of urban interventions is directly relevant, as Portage Place, North Portage Development Corporation's major redevelopment project, is a retail and mixed-use facility that is an integral part of Winnipeg's off-grade pedestrian network.

2.1 Rationale for Internalizing Pedestrian Space

Internal pedestrian networks and downtown retail centres have been constructed all over North America, especially in the cold weather cities of Canada and the Upper Midwest of the United States. Kent Robertson (1988) states that Toronto's off-grade pedestrian network dates back to the 1890's, and for some time the cities of Syracuse, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Duluth, and Montreal have had some form of pedestrian network.

At present, there are over 17 North American cities with grade-separated systems that connect at least 20 blocks in their central business districts (Maitland, 1992). Thirty-four cities have networks linking at least 10 blocks. And of the 85 North American cities with some form of skywalk or tunnel linkages, 30 are significantly developed. Winnipeg's downtown walkway system connects 18 blocks with climate-controlled skywalks and tunnels (Eady, 1990). The prevalence of retail centres is even greater. Many small cities, and most medium and large cities, have one or more retail or mixed-use centres in their downtowns.

rationale for internalizing pedestrian space

Perhaps surprisingly, the widespread internalization of pedestrian space suggests that climate or other local factors are not the prime reasons for their existence.

Barry Maitland (1992) verifies this conclusion, citing a 1991 survey of North American cities' rationales for developing an interior pedestrian network. Whereas only 11 percent cited climate, 41 percent of cities surveyed stated that their prime reason for developing a network was economic, and in particular the commercial advantages provided to adjacent property owners. Ease of pedestrian movement was cited by one-third of the respondents. Only eight percent of the cities developed their networks in order to revitalize their downtowns. The remainder cited other reasons. And uses which had the greatest influence on the growth of a pedestrian network were the availability of parking garages,

cited by 32 percent of respondents, office towers by 29 percent, department stores by 11 percent, both retail and underground rail stations by eight percent, and 11 percent of cities cited other uses such as hotels, conference centres, and public buildings.

The fact that 41 percent of those cities surveyed identified economics as the major factor to internalize pedestrian space suggests that the more than 30 years of competition between the city centre and suburban shopping centres has been the specific impetus to developing downtown retail centres and off-grade pedestrian networks. With the arrival of enclosed climate-controlled shopping centres, the downtowns of cities were pressured into responding to this alternative and highly successful type of retailing, in order to retain retail activity. The response of many cities, Maitland (1992) states, was to provide a comparable amenity for pedestrians in the form of an off-grade pedestrian network, or a downtown retail centre, or both.

suitability of internalizing pedestrian space downtown

However, the unique context of downtown, as compared with the suburbs, suggests that competing directly with suburban shopping centres by providing comparable amenities, is not necessarily a suitable strategy to retain pedestrian and economic activity downtown. Whereas almost all of those entering a suburban centre do so to shop, only 25 to 30 percent enter downtown to shop (The Downtown Research and Development Centre, 1986). This indicates that the downtown market differs from the suburban market in terms of people, merchandise, and shopping habits. Whereas the mode of transport to suburban shopping centres is primarily the automobile, there is a modal split between private and public transport to the downtown. It is critical to assess accurately the modal split for transport to downtown in order to determine parking requirements. In addition, pedestrian travel is significantly greater in city centres as compared to the suburbs.

As well, downtown differs from suburbia by market segment. In downtowns there are often large numbers of school and college age people, industrial and commercial

workers, tourists, conventioneers, and people working in or visiting at hospitals in the city centre. Even in terms of daily, weekly, and seasonal use patterns, downtowns are unique.

However, although introducing retail or mixed-use centres and off-grade pedestrian networks downtown has had some success in re-establishing the economic health of the city centre, many of these strategies have also had a marked negative impact on several aspects of urban life. In many instances, the harmful effects of these urban interventions (see Section 2.3 *Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks)* are recognized through improved designs, evident in recent facilities, and through a re-evaluation of the strategy to emulate the suburban shopping centre with a comparable downtown amenity (see Section 2.4 *Changing Attitudes Towards Internalizing Pedestrian Space).*

2.2 Positive Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks

In order to gain a balanced understanding of downtown retail or mixed-use centres and off-grade pedestrian networks, it is necessary to examine, both negative qualities and positive qualities of these urban interventions. It is evident that these facilities have the potential to encourage the viability of downtown as a destination, foster a relatively high level of density in urban areas, and provide a comfortable environment for pedestrians by means of climate-control, separation from vehicles, and relative security from crime.

encourage downtown viability

Barry Maitland (1992) states that the internalization of pedestrian space increases the viability of the city centre by providing a climate-controlled, traffic free, pedestrian space, with private security - not unlike the suburban shopping centre. Retail and office tenants, connected with an off-grade pedestrian network, view the system as an asset

which keeps them from relocating to the suburbs. The second level of circulation and the downtown retail centre contribute to the ability of the retail core of the city to remain competitive with the suburbs, and to counter the potential loss of economic activity in the downtown. In addition, the overall popularity of pedestrian networks leads to the economic prosperity of network-connected establishments. David Milder (1987) notes that pedestrian networks act as feeders, bringing people to the downtown, enabling multiple destination/purpose trips.

The second level of activity contributes to the economic viability of downtown by increasing the density of, and therefore the amount of activity in, the area. This new level of commercial activity, Milder states, increases real estate value, particularly commercial and retail space connected to the pedestrian network.

physical comfort and safety

Obvious benefits of off-grade pedestrian networks, and to a lesser degree, downtown retail centres, are that they provide downtown users with a weather-protected circulation system that is separated from vehicular traffic (David Milder, 1987). The safety of the walkways, in terms of conflicts with vehicles and the climate-controlled atmosphere, has resulted in these systems receiving wide acceptance by the public. In addition, these characteristics facilitate the ease of mobility of the disabled and elderly, provided that level changes are avoided and doors are easy to open. This is particularly apparent during inclement weather - the walkway remains clean, dry, and at a comfortable temperature, regardless of the conditions outside.

In terms of crime, Milder states, people generally feel safer in pedestrian networks than on sidewalks. This is probably due to the presence of many people and shops along the systems that occurs on well-used sections, and the visibility of security personnel in the pedestrian networks. However, on outer and less frequented walkway segments, people often feel vulnerable, having limited escape routes from possible assailants.

The provision of a safe and comfortable environment in which people can patronize various downtown destinations, although a benefit in itself, is directly related to improving the viability of the city centre. The rationale is that a downtown with amenities similar to those found in suburban shopping centres will be as economically successful as the suburban centres.

2.3 Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks

The internalization of pedestrian space, in order to improve the economic health of the downtown, is not an approach recommended by the Urban Land Institute in their 1988 publication *Designing the Successful Downtown.* Chapter One identified the Institute's strategy, described by Cyril Paumier, as one of strengthening the outdoor pedestrian spaces and building upon the unique assets of the city centre, instead of competing directly with suburban centres by offering similar internalized amenities.

The negative effects of internalizing pedestrian spaces suggests that the alternative approach described in Chapter One is, in many ways, more suitable to establishing a healthy city centre. As is described below, the negative qualities of internalized facilities are that they replace public places with privately owned or quasi-public space, harm the street and sidewalk environment - particularly for pedestrians, radically alter the pattern of streets and buildings, and have a negative impact on the visual quality of urban streets. In addition, internalizing pedestrian space often results in poor quality places for people, patronized only because of the decline in the quality of the street environment and adjacent land uses.

the internalized pedestrian environment

Internalized pedestrian environments, particularly the off-grade pedestrian networks, are, in many instances, created with less than desirable results (Maitland, 1992). Retail areas are usually characterized by congested walkways, and office areas range from opulence to banality.

The various segments of privately owned and operated pedestrian networks usually have non-uniform hours of operation - a significant inconvenience to users. However, public systems, although offering uniform hours of operation, are often characterized as being monotonous, repetitive elements in the urban landscape (Maitland, 1992).

With the completion of several pedestrian networks in various cities it is apparent that there is a need for consistent and clear signage within the systems to orient users. This is indicative of the confusing nature of off-grade pedestrian networks. The disorientation is caused by the internalized environment, with little or no reference to the street. Entries are usually inside private buildings, linked with their vertical circulation systems. However, providing direct access to the sidewalk creates an important link between the street and the network, orienting users through visual exposure to the outdoors. Another method used to orient users, is the formation of a clear spatial structure, composed of a hierarchy of routes with unique, recognizable places throughout.

privatization of space

The shift of retailing and other activities from the street to the retail or mixed-use centre and the off-grade pedestrian network represents a privatization of space. Shopping centres are privately owned and as such take steps to restrict the activities which can take place on their property. William H. Whyte (1988) states that malls do not tolerate "controversy, soapboxing, passing of leaflets, impromptu entertaining, happenings, or

eccentric behavior, harmless or no."[15] This is in direct contradiction to the rich and varied occurrences on the public street, square, or park.

Furthermore, profitable activities, and thus only specific types of people, are often the exclusive focus of internal pedestrian space and the establishments connected with it (Maitland, 1992). The result is an impoverished public realm. Many cities deal with this situation by requiring private building owners to provide public amenities, such as fountains and seating areas, to the pedestrian networks. Unfortunately, amenities are often later replaced by profitable fast food courts and lottery kiosks. Because off-grade pedestrian networks cross into building interiors, bringing the public into contact with banking floors, restaurants, hotel lobbies, and office space, there is a changed perception of public and private space. Public sidewalks are being replaced, in many instances, by private or semi-private off-grade pedestrian networks as the primary means of pedestrian circulation. This necessitates a new understanding of public and private interests and priorities in order to maintain a diverse downtown.

Presently, however, the typical user of skywalk systems is noted to be a white, middle-class office worker (Maitland, 1992). This can be attributed to the type of buildings which are linked to the networks. The majority are office buildings, upscale stores, luxury hotels, and expensive condominiums. The tendency is for the networks to cater to people of higher income - the primary users of the facilities. This leads to the formation of a dual level society based on economic stratification.

There is ample evidence indicating this economic segregation. For example, the over-street mall in Charlotte, North Carolina, is patronized by affluent office workers who can afford the items at the expensive shops lining the skywalks (David Milder, 1987), whereas low-income city residents support lower-end street level establishments. The same is found in Houston's below-grade system which is primarily used by white collar workers.

---

15 Whyte, William, *City: Rediscovering the Centre* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), page 208.

As with off-grade pedestrian networks, the building of shopping centres downtown, with interior oriented shops, also leads to social stratification (William Whyte, 1988). Similar to suburban malls, the developers of downtown shopping centres select a specific tenant mix catering largely to middle- and upper-income shoppers. Bargain and convenience stores are relegated to the street, often in areas marginalized by the centre's ability to draw activity to it.

detriment to public places

The extent of pedestrian networks in some cities, and the widespread construction of downtown retail centres, has led to a process of inversion of socio-economic activity, with roots dating back to the 19th century arcade. Commercial value, pedestrian activity, and architectural significance have turned inwards from the perimeters of city blocks. Peak real-estate values have shifted from the corners of blocks to their centres. The influence of internalizing pedestrian space on the city is profound. And it is now clearly apparent that this change is not a temporary aberration (Maitland, 1992).

The result is that downtowns are becoming increasingly indoor-oriented and therefore less dependent on the street for vitality. Economically, the pedestrian networks and downtown retail centres cause major shifts in peoples' shopping, entertainment, and business habits. This greatly affects land-use and investment patterns. This internalization of pedestrian space has reached such a level of development that the "interior city" is on the verge of being realized in several North American cities - people are able to park in a downtown garage and go to work, shop, conduct business, or partake in any number of activities without ever having to be outside, on the public streets (Maitland, 1992).

Roger Trancik (1986) cites Detroit's Renaissance Centre as an example of a large enclosed mall, isolated from the downtown. Visually it is quite dramatic, however, the internalized complex is separated from the existing city by walls housing the mechanical

systems, therefore limiting pedestrian access. In addition, the project has not realized the expected result of economically revitalizing the area in which it is located.

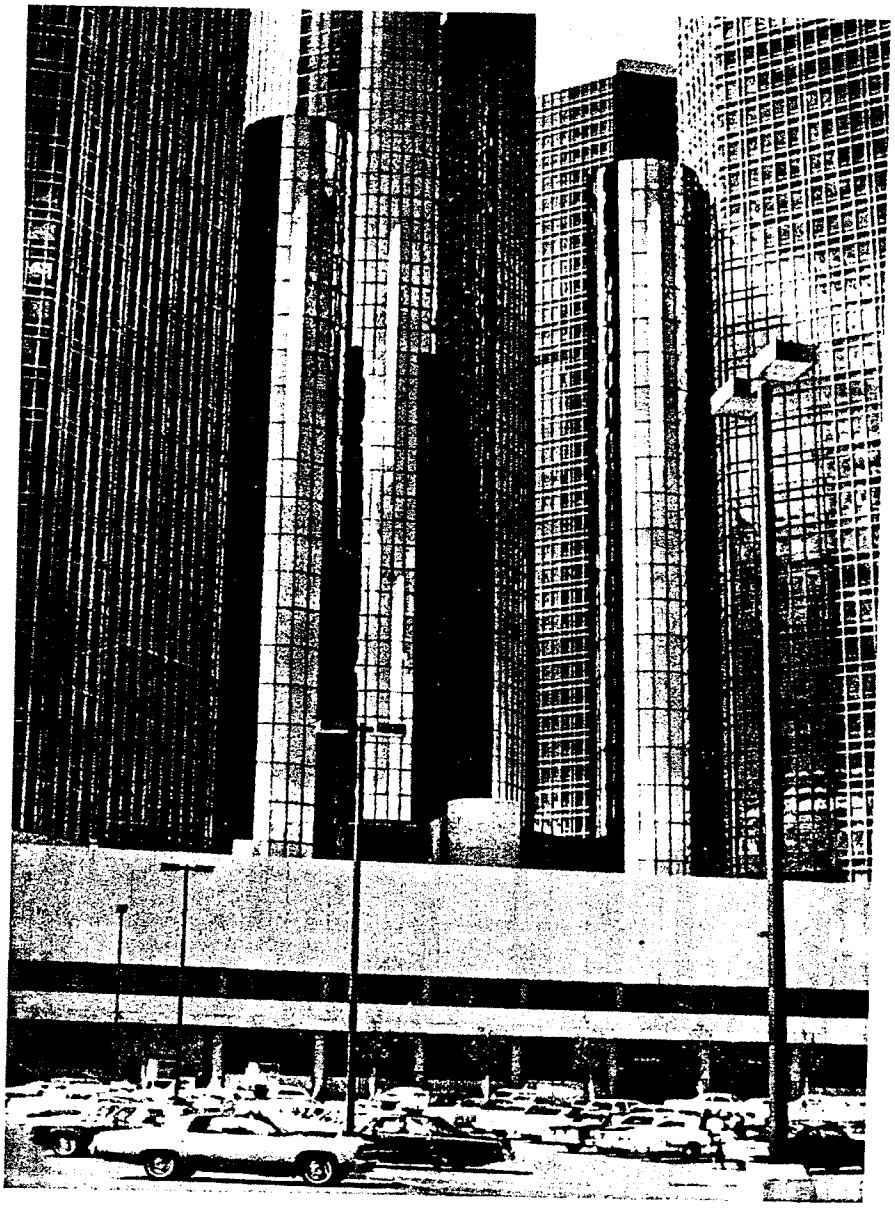

Figure 2.1. Detroit's Renaissance Centre, an urban complex isolated from its surroundings.[16]

16 Trancik, Roger, *Finding Lost Space* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), page 49.

Renaissance Centre reveals that an internalized facility does not itself benefit the existing downtown. The Downtown Research and Development Centre (1986) emphasizes the necessity of improving the existing downtown through streetscaping and refurbishment of retail functions, and the importance of integrating the new centre with its context by orienting stores to the street, for example. Otherwise existing businesses cannot compete and are forced to relocate to the new centre, or out of the downtown. Not responding to the existing downtown often leads to a shift in retail activity from the street to the internalized mall. This shift in retailing results in empty storefronts, and diminished pedestrian activity on the street. What is presented to the pedestrian and motorist alike is a bleak image of the city centre (Figure 2.1).

Off-grade pedestrian networks have a particular impact on street level. Because pedestrian networks facilitate easy access to many parts of downtown, people tend to use them year-round. This has resulted in changing land use patterns where the pedestrian network level is dominant ; the ground level becomes under-used, giving way to lower-end establishments only (David Milder, 1987). The result, as with downtown retail or mixed-use centres, is an undermining of the viability of street level in terms of pedestrian use and active frontage.

A study of the impact of off-street retailing networks in Charlotte, NC, revealed that 40 percent of on-street merchants felt that the networks hurt their businesses (Terry Lassar, 1988). It has also been said that off-street networks, that remove pedestrians from the streets, represent a non-traditional type of downtown. Many critics, including William Whyte (1988), have suggested that the booming business on the pedestrian network level is actually a redistribution of commercial activity at the expense of street-level retail businesses.

A 1986 study revealed that three quarters of Saint Paul's downtown retail business was located on the second level. The problem with skywalks, remarked William H.

Whyte, "is not that they fail to function, but that they function too well"[17]. While business flourishes on the second level, street level sales often plummet (Figure 2.2).

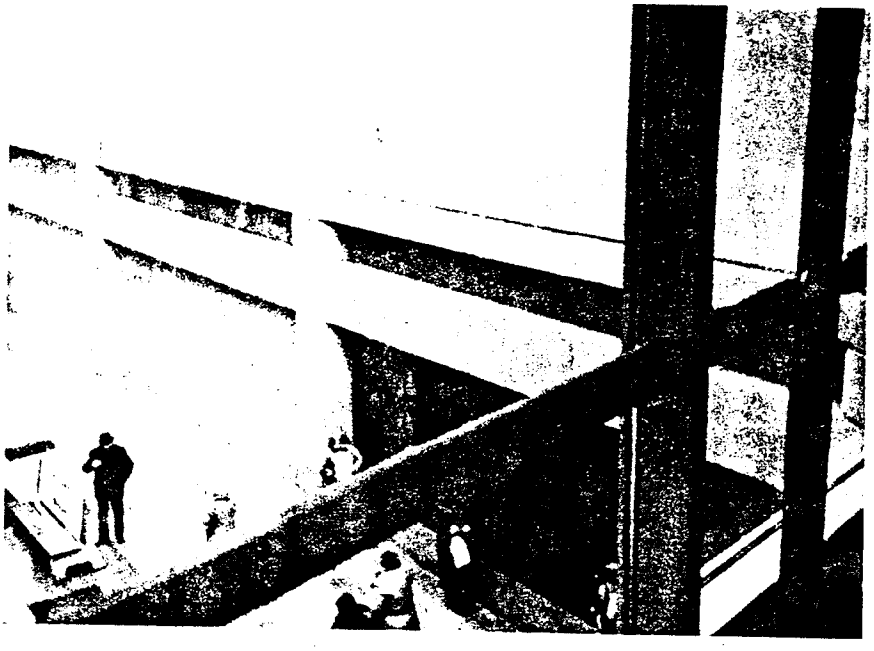

Figure 2.2. A concentration of activity on the second level compromises the viability of the street as a meaningful place.[18]

Clearly, the negative socio-economic impact of downtown retail centres and off-grade pedestrian networks on the vitality of on-street pedestrian activity and businesses raises serious doubts as to the suitability of these urban interventions for revitalizing the downtown as a marketplace.

a transformed urban fabric

Another consideration, specific to downtown retail centres, is that they require large parcels of land which often necessitates the closure of public streets. Not only does this transform public space into private or quasi-public space, but it dramatically alters the

17 Whyte, William, *City: Rediscovering the Centre* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), page 199.
18 Ibid., page 195.

existing urban fabric (The Downtown Research and Development Centre, 1986). The existing pattern of open space (streets) to solids (buildings) is often transformed. A large intervention of this type causes a sudden change in the urban fabric. The figure-ground theory, developed by Roger Trancik and described in Chapter One, emphasizes that the urban fabric, which is the pattern of solids and voids created by buildings and open space, gives shape and definition to the public spaces in cities. In the downtowns of North American cities this pattern is typically a grid, formed by the street and block pattern. Disrupting this pattern weakens the grid as a major ordering device, as well as its potential to create continuous open space capable of linking the various interior and exterior spaces and activities to one another (Trancik, 1986).

the visual impact

Off-grade pedestrian networks, specifically those segments consisting of bridges, referred to as skywalks or as the "plus 15" in Calgary, for instance, have a significant visual impact on urban streets (Terry Lassar, 1988). In some instances, skywalks contribute to an area by providing a sense of enclosure or by serving as gateways. However, in most settings these structures detract from the urban experience by blocking valued vistas and, where they cross streets, by preventing sunlight from reaching the sidewalk.

In addition, it is difficult to connect skywalks with existing structures, particularly historic buildings, such that they do not detract from building facades. However, it is often possible to provide connections at back-lanes or facades which face side streets, thereby avoiding disrupting the principal building facades.

The negative qualities of internalizing pedestrian space in the downtowns of cities - an indoor pedestrian environment which is often disorienting to the user, privatization of space and social stratification, degradation of the urban street as a place, a disrupted urban fabric, and a compromised visual aesthetic - have led decision-makers to reevaluate the role

of the downtown retail centre and the off-grade pedestrian network in our cities. Regulations restricting where skywalks can be erected, and street-oriented designs, are marking a shift in emphasis from internalizing space to addressing the problems associated with outdoor public urban space.

2.4 Changing Attitudes Towards Internalized Pedestrian Space

The shift in emphasis from internalizing the pedestrian environment, to preserving or improving the public open spaces, particularly the urban streetscape, is taking place in several cities throughout Canada and the United States. Planners, architects, and politicians, along with their constituents, are recognizing that streets are crucial components of the urban landscape. Beyond facilitating the movement of people and goods and providing access to adjacent property, streets have the potential to act as meaningful public places in which people can socialize and participate in the wider community of their city.

changing attitudes

Terry Lassar (1988) highlights the changing attitude towards the internalization of urban space, by the growth of regulations, specifically those that pertain to skywalk design and location, in several North American cities. There is a growing concern over the visual and environmental impacts of this alternative pedestrian environment on the character of the city. Regulations establishing and protecting view corridors have been enacted in some cities to prevent skywalks from blocking valued vistas. In Portland, Oregon, the City's regulations are designed to encourage street life, promote pedestrian activity, protect views, and to protect the integrity of the city's short blocks. Their goal is to maintain the sidewalk as the primary means of pedestrian circulation. Atlanta, Georgia, like most cities, is concerned over skywalk expansions. The city's long range plan recommended not allowing pedestrian bridges in areas where retail and other street or special district activities

are important functions, and also in historic districts and along view corridors. Both Montreal and Toronto discount below-grade commercial areas for floor-area-ratio (FAR) densities in order to discourage expansion of their below-grade pedestrian networks.

The size of the skywalk bridges is another significant issue. In the retail core of cities, developers prefer to place shops on the skywalks to create a continuous retail frontage. Whereas Minneapolis, Minnesota, has refused these proposals, Saint Paul has allowed a 30 metre wide skywalk to be constructed. Calgary approved three-story bridges ranging from 34 to 43 metres in width. However, this was done against the planners' recommendations who saw the proposals as air-rights developments rather than as bridges.

positive examples

Modifications in the way off-grade pedestrian networks and downtown retail centres are designed to improve the way these urban design interventions interact with the existing system of public streets.

Calgary's planners have recognized the value of the street (Glenn Lyons, Don Sinclair, and Sophia Lum, 1988) with a shift in emphasis of the bonuses for developers from the plus 15 to grade level, and by requiring that skywalk bridges be equipped with stairs at both ends, linked to the sidewalk. The former change encourages developers to orient building entrances and commercial space towards the street, rather than the plus 15 system. The latter stairs requirement allows for pedestrians on the skywalk to locate street access points easier, facilitates greater public surveillance from street level, and discourages vandalism and other crime. In addition, a place to sit and buy a paper, for example, is provided at the foot of the stairs. New office buildings linking up to the network only provide elevator access between office floors and grade-level, not stopping at the plus 15 level. A shuttle elevator provides the vertical link between the plus 15 and the lobby. This elevator configuration encourages office workers to choose grade-level over the plus 15.

Roger Trancik (1986) cites Eaton Centre, Toronto, as a downtown centre that is fairly successful in integrating with the existing downtown streets. While the centre is primarily ordered around a central mall, it also has some small shops located along the outside edge, facing Yonge street. This externally-oriented configuration retains the physical continuity of the city grid and contributes to the pedestrian environment along the

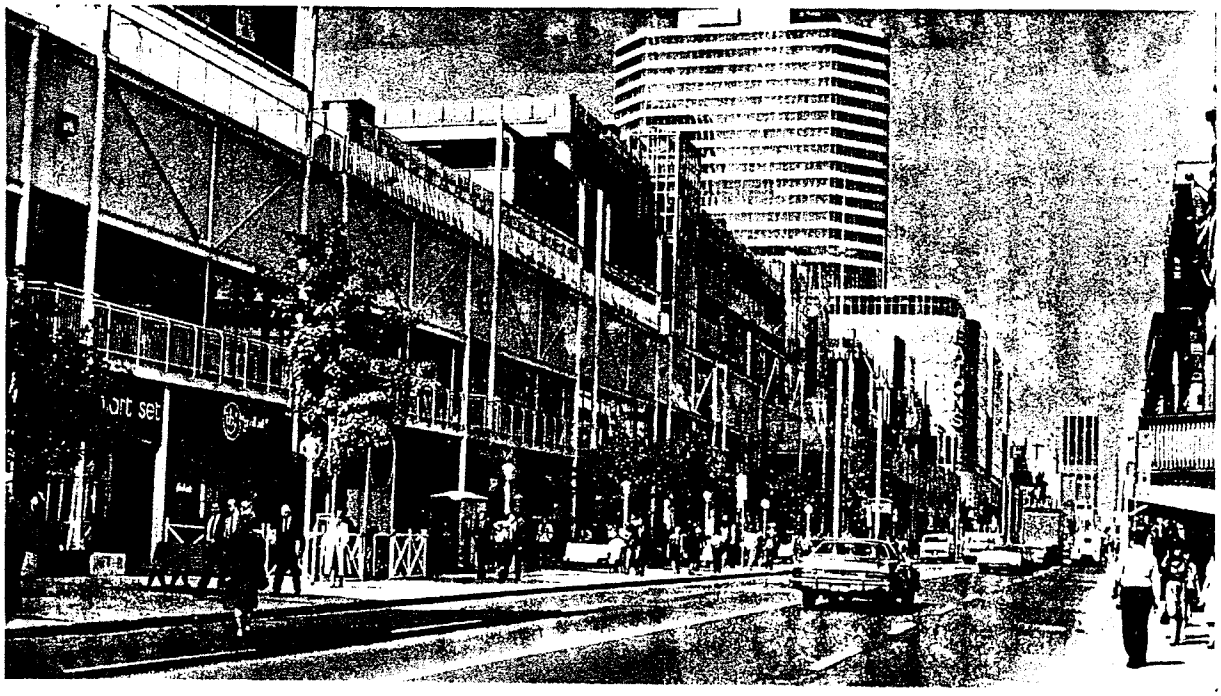

Figure 2.3. Eaton Centre retains the continuity of, and activity along, Yonge Street .[19]

19 Trancik, Roger, *Finding Lost Space* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), page 50.

The changing attitudes towards downtown retail or mixed-use centres and off-grade pedestrian networks are in response to the negative qualities of these urban interventions, particularly their detrimental effect on the street. This Chapter has described how these interventions encourage the economic viability of the city centre. While they may satisfy the primarily economic motive for building such structures by benefitting businesses connected with the internalized space, downtown retail centres and off-grade pedestrian networks are generally unable to satisfy the broader socio-economic demands, identified in Chapter One, for quality urban places and commercially viable on-street businesses.

Chapter Three

Downtown Winnipeg's Portage Avenue and Portage Place: The Study Area and Its Context

Chapters One and Two, through a literature review, have provided a broad understanding of the importance and characteristics of quality urban spaces, as well as the effects of internalizing pedestrian space on the urban environment. Combining the theories on urban design, with the experiences of other cities with urban interventions similar to Portage Place, enables an informed analysis of the downtown Portage Avenue area to be conducted.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five, concentrate on the case study, that is, the potential re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, and the role that North Portage Development Corporation can play in achieving this objective.

This present Chapter is concerned with identifying and describing the characteristics of, and issues relevant to, Winnipeg's downtown and, specifically, the study area, as defined in the practicum. This information provides the basis for a survey to be developed. The survey is intended to facilitate a focused understanding of the dynamics of the downtown Portage Avenue area and its potential to be, once again, a Great Street.

The City of Winnipeg Planning Department's *Downtown Profile* (1991), the Centre Plan Committee's *Centre Plan Working Draft* (1994) and *Centre Plan* (1995), the Winnipeg Police Department's *1993 Statistical Report,* a survey of residents of 10 Canadian cities, and five surveys focusing on downtown Winnipeg provide the basis for an appreciation of Winnipeg's downtown and help to describe, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the context of the study area. The study area is then depicted by means of a general land use map and a survey identifying storefront vacancies on Portage Avenue between Colony/Memorial and Fort/Notre Dame. Portage Place, North Portage Development Corporation's major urban intervention, extending four blocks along Portage Avenue, and

identified in the Introduction, is further described by means of site and building plans, North Portage Development Corporation's *Final Concept and Financial Plan for North Portage Redevelopment* (1984), and the Corporation's 1990 and 1991 *Annual Reports.* Given this understanding of the study area and its context, the Chapter closes with a description of the rationale for, and method of conducting, the survey of merchants and key informants.

3.1 Downtown Winnipeg

As one of the most well-known streets in Winnipeg, Portage Avenue plays a major role in shaping our perceptions of the downtown. This is particularly true because downtown Portage Avenue is used by many people in the city. Transit users, motorists, and pedestrians use the street to access various locations in the downtown, and as a means to get from one area of the city to another. The subsection below, that is, *importance of downtown*, identifies how Winnipeggers rate their downtown, how often they use it for shopping and entertainment, its importance to the city, and the importance they place on developing a plan for downtown. These findings reveal that Winnipeggers regard their downtown poorly, yet they consider it an important aspect of the city that is in need of improvement. Knowing that a Great Street plays a significant role in an urban environment, the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue would be a positive change for downtown Winnipeg, and, if traffic concerns are addressed (see Section 4.1A *Issues Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - general traffic),* it is likely to receive widespread support from Winnipeggers. Furthermore, the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street has the potential to act as a symbol of a good downtown that can change peoples' perception of their city.

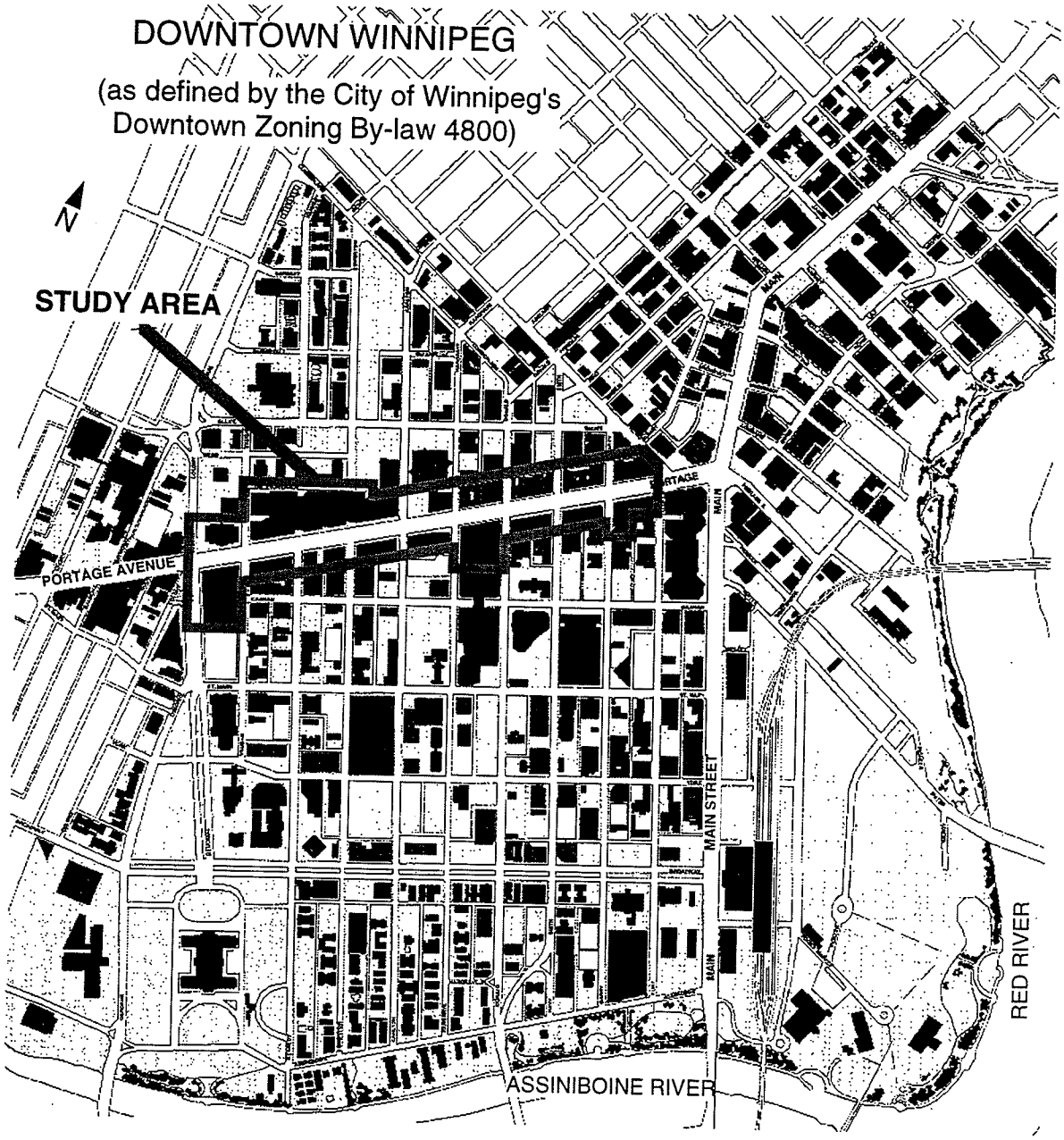

Figure 3.1. Plan of downtown Winnipeg indicating the study area.

In addition to this over-all assessment of the importance of the downtown to city-wide residents, this Section is concerned with downtown demographics, crime and safety, transportation and parking, land use, and the physical environment. These aspects of the downtown are explored in detail in order to gain a better understanding of the context of the downtown Portage Avenue area - the study area of the practicum. Figure 3.1, which

depicts downtown Winnipeg as defined by the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law, illustrates the boundaries of the study area.

Many of the Tables referred to in this Section are presented in the Appendix.

the importance of downtown

The Institute of Urban Studies Report by Catherine Charette, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (1994), provides illuminating insights into how Winnipeggers perceive their city as compared to the perceptions of residents of Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax, towards their respective cities.

Table 3.1 reveals that Winnipeggers are the least satisfied with their downtown, compared to the perceptions of the residents of the nine other Canadian cities included in the survey. This low ranking is emphasized by the fact that the city ranks eighth in the "Attachment to City" category. As well, the "Overall Quality of Life Ranking", determined from the findings for the 11 categories in the study - the Economy, Physical Environment, Social Harmony, Crime and Safety, Cultural/Recreational Amenities, Downtown, Housing, Transportation, Services and Infrastructure, Lack of Stress, and Attachment to City - puts Winnipeg in eighth place. Clearly, Winnipeggers perceive the downtown as contributing little to the overall quality of life of their city.

This finding is further illustrated by the low percentage of respondents affirming that the downtown is one of the best things about Winnipeg. The percentage of residents of the downtown, inner city, older suburbs, and newer suburbs who rated this dimension highly is 21, 9, 12, and 10, respectively[20]. This poor perception of the downtown is greater for those living outside the downtown area. One can speculate that this is due to the differences in the urban and suburban lifestyles.

---

20 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 35.

While the survey suggests that there are short-comings in the downtown's contribution to the quality of life in the city, it is also apparent that Winnipeg's downtown faces by similar challenges to those faced by the downtowns of other Canadian cities. Table A.1, in Appendix A, illustrates that residents of all 10 surveyed cities use their downtowns less often for shopping and entertainment than they did in the recent past.

TABLE 3.1. RANKING OF HOW RESIDENTS OF 10 CANADIAN CITIES RATED THEIR DOWNTOWN AND ATTACHMENT TO CITY, AND THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE RANKING OF THE CITIES.[21]

	CANADIAN PRAIRIE CITIES					CDN NON-PRAIRIE CITIES				
DIMENSION	WPG	REG	SAS	CAL	EDM	VAN	TOR	OTT	MTL	HAL
The Downtown	10	9	1	5	8	6	2	3	7	4
Attachment to City	8	6	2	1	4	7	9	5	10	3
Overall Quality of Life Ranking	8	6	1	2	5	7	9	4	10	3

Yet there remains a reasonable amount of optimism that the city centre of Winnipeg will improve. Forty-six percent of respondents residing in the downtown of Winnipeg believe the area will improve. But in the inner city, older suburbs, and newer suburbs, the percentage of residents that believe downtown will improve are 34, 24, and 28, respectively[22]. While the perception of the downtown is not as positive for those not living there, city-wide residents have indicated that the downtown is an extremely important component of their city (Figure 3.2).

---

21 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 15.

22 Ibid., page 35.

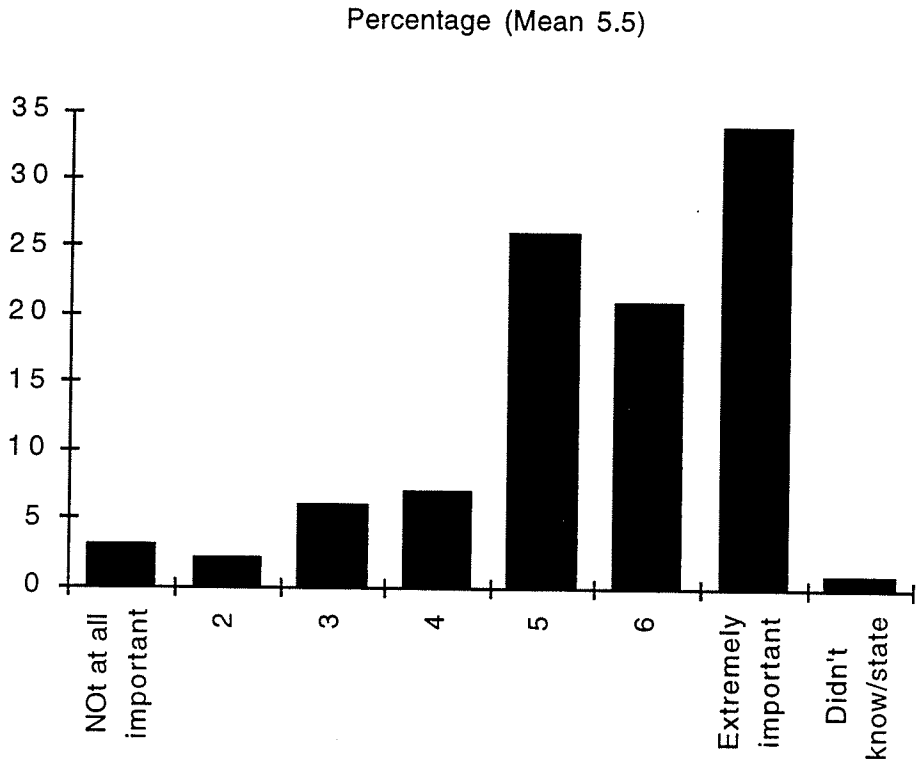

Figure 3.2. Overall Importance of Downtown to the City.[23]

Not surprisingly, there is strong support from Winnipeggers for the development of a plan for the downtown (Figure 3.3).

Table A.2 illustrates that respondents overwhelmingly place the responsibility to improve downtown Winnipeg on the City, in co-operation with business, other levels of government, and residents.

---

23 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 7.

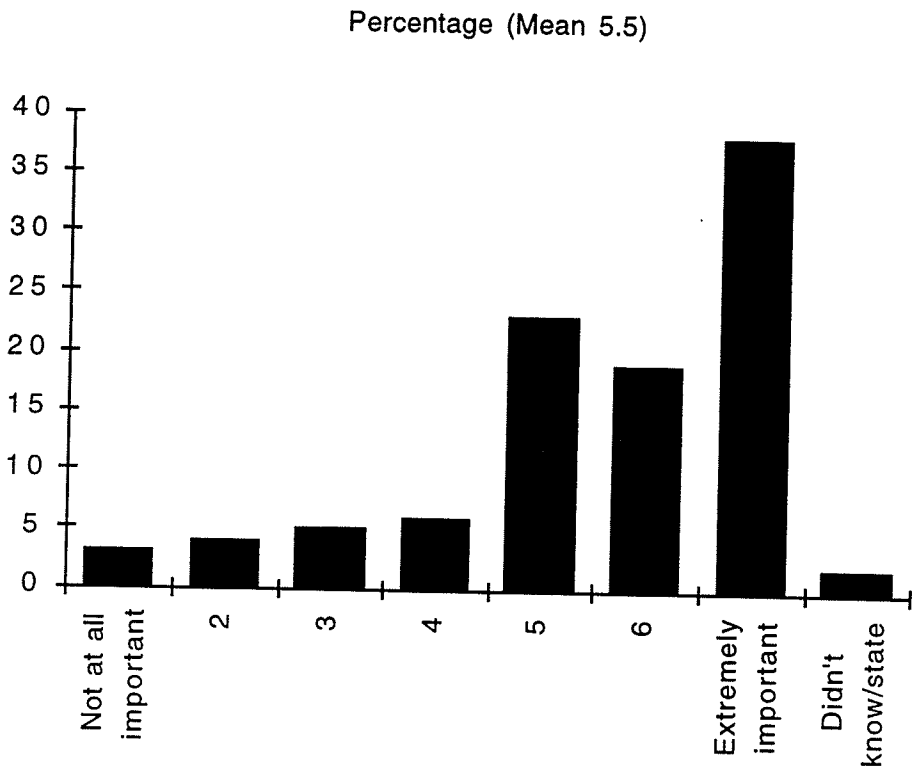

Figure 3.3. Overall Importance of Developing a Plan for Downtown.[24]

demographics

Downtown Winnipeg (as defined by the Downtown Zoning Bylaw) has a residential population of 14,000, located primarily in the residential enclaves south of Broadway Avenue and in the vicinity of Central Park in the north-west. Given the total area of the downtown as 1.2 sq. mi., or 780 acres, the density of residents is 18 people per acre. In the next ten years the population is expected to increase by 3,000 (Centre Plan Committee, 1994). Currently over two percent of the city's residents live in the downtown.

---

[24] Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 8.

In terms of employment, for more than 15 years the downtown has accounted for more than 25 percent of the city's total employment. More than 68,000 people work in the city centre. This large percentage indicates the economic importance of the downtown to the health of the city, and the number of people who use the area on a daily basis.

crime and safety

The Winnipeg Police Department's *1993 Statistical Report* provides crime statistics which indicate that 41 percent of the crimes against persons committed in 1993 in Winnipeg took place in District One, an area encompassing the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. It is also indicated that District One has only 13 percent of the city's population. This finding is relevant because the downtown is located within this district. It must be cautioned, however, that this does not suggest that the incidence of crimes against persons is higher in the downtown. The downtown makes up less than one-sixth of the population of this district. Instead, this data describes the context in which the downtown is located in terms of crimes against persons. It is this larger area, namely District One, with its disproportionately high percentage of crimes against persons, that may contribute to the widespread belief that the downtown is unsafe, a perception indicated by various downtown studies.

Other probable causes of the perception that the downtown is unsafe are indicated in Table 3.2, which identifies the attitudes and perceptions of Downtown Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) members regarding this issue.

Tables A.3, A.4, and A.5, indicate the severity of the problem. Panhandlers downtown is one of the most disliked features of the area. The downtown is also not perceived as a safe place to be. Furthermore, Table A.3 shows that only three percent of respondents of the *Public Attitude Study* believe that one of the best features of the area is that it is safe in the daytime.

TABLE 3.2. ATTITUDES OF BIZ MEMBERS ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE LISTED DIMENSIONS AFFECT THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF SAFETY IN THE DOWNTOWN.[25]

DIMENSION	RATING, ON A SCALE OF 1 - 10, NO IMPACT TO LARGE IMPACT, RESPECTIVELY
Panhandlers/street people	8.3
Prostitution	7.0
Street kids/youth	8.0
Media reporting which focuses on downtown crime	7.7
Lack of visible policing	8.1
Poor lighting	7.7

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.4 reveal that personal safety is an important issue which must be addressed to ensure a successful downtown.

TABLE 3.3. DOWNTOWN BIZ MEMBERS' ATTITUDES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE DOWNTOWN.[26]

IMPORTANCE	% (n=207)
Very important	87
Somewhat important	11
Not very important	1
Not at all important	1
Not stated	1

We have seen in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - places for people to sit and walk,* that a street always in use by pedestrians is the most effective way to create a safe environment. This is due to "self-policing" and the sense of safety one experiences on a

25 Dennis McKnight 2051 Inc., *Quantitative Results of BIZ Members' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards the Promotion of the Downtown and Various BIZ Programs* (The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, 1992), page 14.

26 Ibid., page 13.

street with many pedestrians. Table A.5 indicates that there is support for making downtown more pedestrian-friendly and increasing the number of things to do in the area. Other strategies that are recommended by Winnipeggers, to mitigate this problem, include improving safety/police patrols and addressing panhandling.

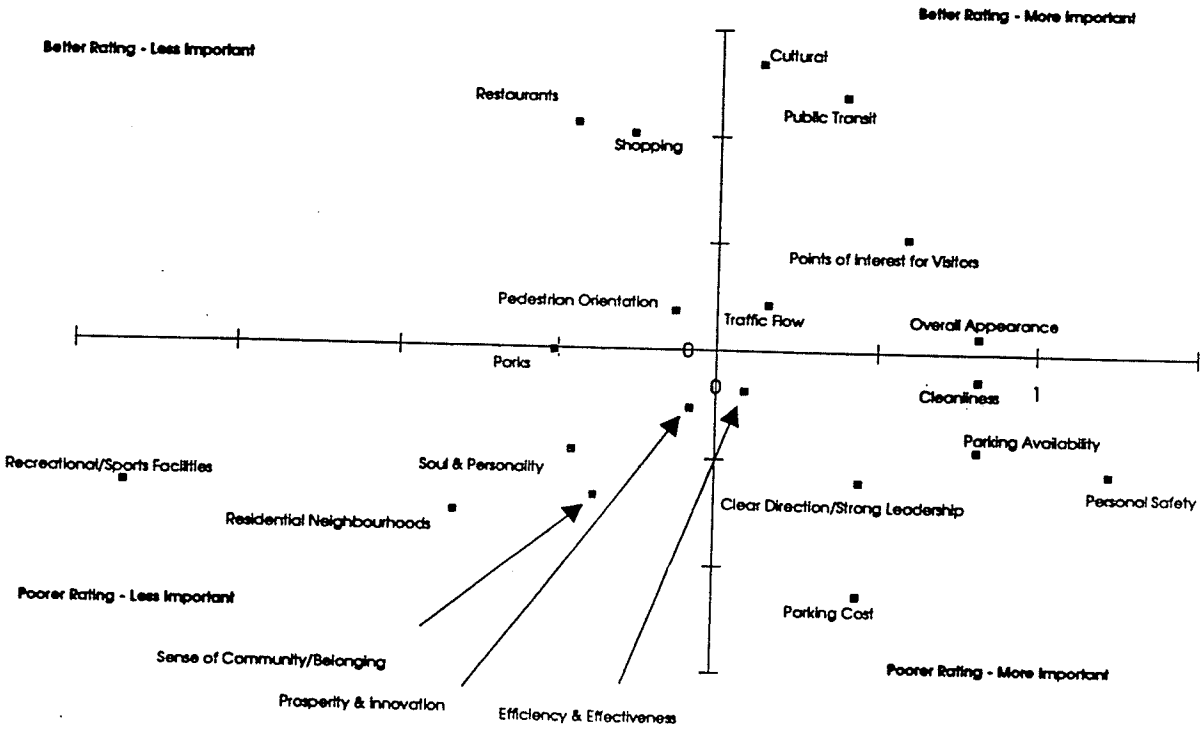

Figure 3.4. Downtown Winnipeg Attributes - rating and importance by city-wide residents.[27]

transportation and parking

Downtown Winnipeg is unique in comparison with many other cities in that it has several major traffic arteries passing through it which are of considerable width. Main Street, running north-south is typically eight lanes wide, with an additional lane for left turns, and a right-of-way over 130 feet wide. Broadway and Portage Avenues, the

27 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994).

principle east-west streets, are also over 130 feet wide, the former with six lanes of traffic, and the latter with the same roadway configuration as Main Street.

The Centre Plan Committee's document *Centre Plan, Working Draft* (1994) indicates that there are over 25,000 vehicles entering the downtown during the morning peak hours. As well, the downtown streets are used by many drivers to travel from one area of the city to another. Over 40 percent of vehicles entering the city centre are destined for other locations. For those drivers stopping downtown, there is a large supply of parking spaces in the area. Since 1971 the supply has increased by 35 percent to the present level of 37,000 spaces; the opening of Portage Place in 1987 added 1100 parking spaces to the supply. Winnipeg Transit provides a high level of service on four streets which criss-cross the downtown. Main and Osborne Streets carry the principal north-south bus routes, while Portage and Graham Avenues provide the east-west service in the city centre.

Figure 3.5 indicates the transportation mode used by those who work downtown. It is noted that 34 percent of these people use public transit. In comparison to the private vehicle, which is used by 52 percent of downtown workers, this may seem a low figure. However, this proportion is only four percentage points below the average for the sample mentioned earlier[28]. More relevant is the fact that Winnipeg has the highest proportion of downtown workers using public transit compared to the other Canadian prairie cities (Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton).

In terms of people coming downtown to shop, Dennis McKnight (1991) identified through focus group discussions that a variety of transportation modes are used. A "high-end" retailer, for example, stated that her clientele arrived by car, or on foot, from a nearby hotel. Another retailer noted that, while some walk, most seniors rely heavily on transit. Younger patrons walk to and from work, or drive.

---

28 The sample includes Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax.

Clearly, public transit plays a significant role in the accessibility of downtown. Furthermore, the high proportion of transit users and the fact that people will often walk to stores suggests that the pedestrian environment is a significant component of this accessibility to downtown locations.

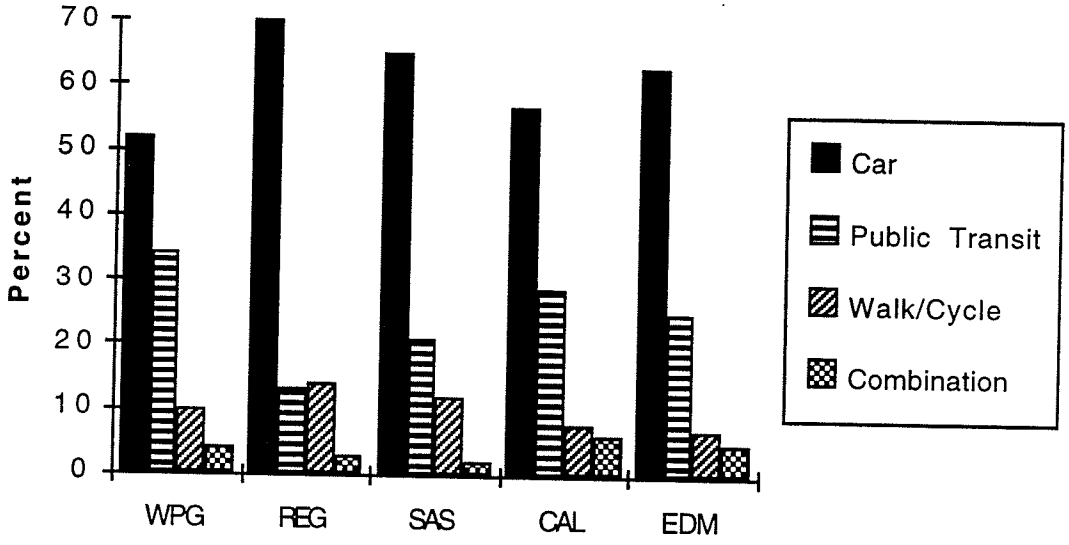

Figure 3.5. Transportation Mode(s) Used by Those Who Work Downtown.[29]

Tables A.3 to A.6, and Figure 3.4, indicate that parking downtown is an important issue to Winnipeggers whereas there is less of a consensus whether vehicle congestion or transit service are problems. All of these Tables, and Figure 3.4, reveal that parking availability and cost are considered the most important issues. Table A.7 - *Recommended Changes for Downtown's Success*, identifies "improved parking/weekend free parking" as the dimension receiving the largest response - 32 percent of those surveyed.

Table A.6 and Figure 3.4 separate the issues of parking cost and parking availability. Both Table and Figure identify the cost of parking as the worst attribute of downtown Winnipeg. Figure 3.4, which combines attribute rating with its relative

---

29 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 52.

importance, reveals that parking availability is seen as more important than cost; however, availability is not rated as poorly as the cost of parking.

Table 3.4, below, indicates, not surprisingly, that people would come downtown more often if parking were free. Respondents were fairly ambivalent over the current parking token program operated by the Downtown BIZ. Under the program, known as "Easy Streets", merchants provide customers whose purchases are over $20 with a token. The token, or "blue loonie" can be substituted for the $1 coin at parking meters and parking lots[30].

TABLE 3.4. ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOWNTOWN PARKING ISSUES.[31]

DIMENSION	MEAN RATING	DISAGREE, %	NEUTRAL, %	AGREE, %
Would go downtown more often if parking was free.	5.0	19	21	48
Would come downtown more often if received parking tokens.	4.3	24	32	34
Can afford to park downtown but object to paying.	4.3	24	29	34
Downtown offers more than suburban malls.	4.3	25	36	33
Availability of parking is a greater problem than cost of parking.	4.0	26	38	25

Dimemsions were rated on a seven point scale; Disagree - 1 &2, Neutral - 3 - 5, and Agree - 6 & 7.

The recent reinstatement of free metered parking on Saturdays will do much to reduce the cost of parking downtown for shoppers. Given the high cost of downtown land, it is unlikely that parking charges in lots would be reduced. The current downtown planning initiative, Centre Plan, suggests that standardizing parking rates throughout the city centre will enable motorists to predict their parking costs in the area. With over

30 Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone, *1992/93 Annual Report* (Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone, 1993), page 8.

31 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 40.

37,000 parking places in the downtown it seems unlikely that there is a problem of availability. However, the numerous lots scattered throughout the downtown are often difficult to find and many are unknown to drivers. Again, Centre Plan recognizes this problem and recommends that standardized signage clearly identifying parking locations is erected.

land use

The downtown is made up of a wide variety of land uses. Table 3.5 indicates that public land is the predominant use downtown, followed by commercial uses (generally retail and restaurant functions), office, then institutional land uses. In contrast, the total floor areas occupied by these uses are dominated by office space, followed by residential, commercial, then institutional uses. The total floor area ratio of the downtown is 1.1, indicating that there is more building floor space than the total geographical area of the city centre. The highest density use is hotel/motel. This is followed by office, then residential uses. These uses are made up of a range of low- and high-rise buildings. Public uses are of such a low density (0.4) because the open space - the streets and parks - are a large part of this category.

Table A.8 indicates the frequency that residents use downtown by purpose, over a one year period. The commercial uses of shopping and dining dominate. It is these uses that are particularly relevant to this practicum, since they form the dominant land use in the study area.

We see from Tables A.3 to A.5, and Figure 3.4 that the shopping opportunities provided by downtown contribute significantly to a positive perception of the area. The variety of shops, the department stores, and Portage Place are perceived by many Winnipeggers to be positive attributes of the downtown. Furthermore, retail and restaurant uses are particularly important for a Great Street because they tend to generate pedestrian

activity. Other positive aspects of the city centre include The Forks and the riverwalks, cultural facilities, and the restaurants and nightclubs.

Figure 3.4 indicates that cultural facilities and points of interest for visitors are seen as positive and important attributes. The restaurants and shopping opportunities are identified as being less important contributors to the downtown as a whole. In contrast, the residential neighborhoods and recreational or sports facilities in the downtown are rated poorly, but are also seen as less important to the area by Winnipeggers.

TABLE 3.5. DOWNTOWN LAND USE.[32]

TYPE	SITE SIZE SF	% OF TOTAL	FLOOR AREA SF	% OF TOTAL	FLOOR AREA SITE SIZE
Public	10,699,147	25.4	4,205,958	9.4	0.4
Commercial	8,220,030	19.5	7,186,075	16.1	0.9
Office	4,685,293	11.1	16,972,492	38.0	3.6
Institutional	4,617,438	11.0	1,970,300	4.4	0.4
Industrial	3,078,880	7.3	2,892,700	6.5	0.9
Residential	2,809,804	6.7	8,276,360	18.5	2.9
Hotel/Motel	720,845	1.7	3,043,895	6.8	4.2
Miscellaneous	7,269,888	17.3	137,261	0.3	0
Total	44,685,041	100.0	42,101,325	100.0	1.1

Table A.7 cites land use related changes that should be implemented to encourage the success of the downtown. Lower rents and taxes to help business, more events or things to do, and the building of an arena downtown, are the most popular ideas, in descending order.

A land use issue that relates directly to sidewalk pedestrian activity is whether food-cart vending should be permitted in the downtown. Table A.9 indicates that most Downtown BIZ members are in support of allowing licensed street vendors. Even

32 City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Profile* (City of Winnipeg, 1991).

restaurants, that are competing with this type of business, give tentative support to their continued operation.

Finally, it must be noted that Table A.3 identifies "everything close together" as one of the most liked features of the downtown. It is this higher density, not found in the suburbs, that makes the city centre a unique and interesting place to be.

the physical environment

The physical environment includes such factors as climate, air quality, and the visual environment. The emphasis is on the manner in which pedestrians experience their surroundings.

Tables A.3, A.6, and A.5, and Figure 3.4 indicate that certain aspects of the physical environment are seen as assets, while many others detract from the downtown experience.

Both the over-all appearance and the cleanliness of the area are rated ambiguously by residents of Winnipeg. These features tend to be seen somewhat neutrally, neither strong contributors to, nor detractors from, the downtown. However, Figure 3.4 does indicate that, while these features are generally rated neutrally, they are important considerations for the city centre. Pedestrian-orientation of the downtown is also rated neutrally, except that it is not seen as important as appearance or cleanliness. However, Table A.3 indicates stronger opinions regarding the downtown's off-grade pedestrian network, its historic buildings, and the empty and derelict buildings. The climate-controlled pedestrian network is seen as a significant positive attribute of the downtown. To a lesser degree, the historic buildings in the downtown are also seen this way. In contrast, the empty and derelict buildings are noted to be one of the most disliked features of the area.

Table A.10 shows how Winnipeggers rated their climate, by area of residence. A minority of residents surveyed believe that climate is not a drawback, indicating that it is a

concern for most of those surveyed. This finding may explain why the climate-controlled walkways are seen as such positive features of the city centre

The physical environment of the downtown plays a significant role in shaping our perceptions of the area. Land use characteristics, accessibility, and a sense of safety are also important considerations. While there are several features of the city centre which are poorly rated, the positive attributes are equally noteworthy. Citizens of Winnipeg indicate that they are committed to their downtown and it is believed that it is important to develop a plan for the area. That the downtown makes up less than one percent of the land area of the city, yet is home to over two percent of Winnipeggers, has more than 25 percent of the working population, provides the City with 23 percent of the net business tax, and comprises seven percent of the total realty assessment, clearly demonstrates that the area is a crucial component of the city (Centre Plan Committee, 1995).

3.2 The Study Area

The study area, as defined in this document, consists of nine contiguous city blocks along downtown Portage Avenue, including the right-of-way and adjacent properties (Figure 3.6). This area is the primary commercial area of downtown Winnipeg, with retailing as the predominant land use, particularly on the ground floor.

From west to east, the major retail centres along Portage Avenue are The Bay, in the first block, Portage Place, in the second, third, and fourth blocks on the north side of the street, and on the second floor of the fifth block on the south side, and Eaton's, in the sixth block of the study area. Outside the study area, immediately south of Eaton's is Eaton Place, comprised of a variety of stores, a food court, and offices.

The Portage Avenue right-of-way, the adjacent land uses, and Portage Place are discussed individually in this Section. Table A.11, pertaining to these three aspects of Portage Avenue, is placed in the Appendix.

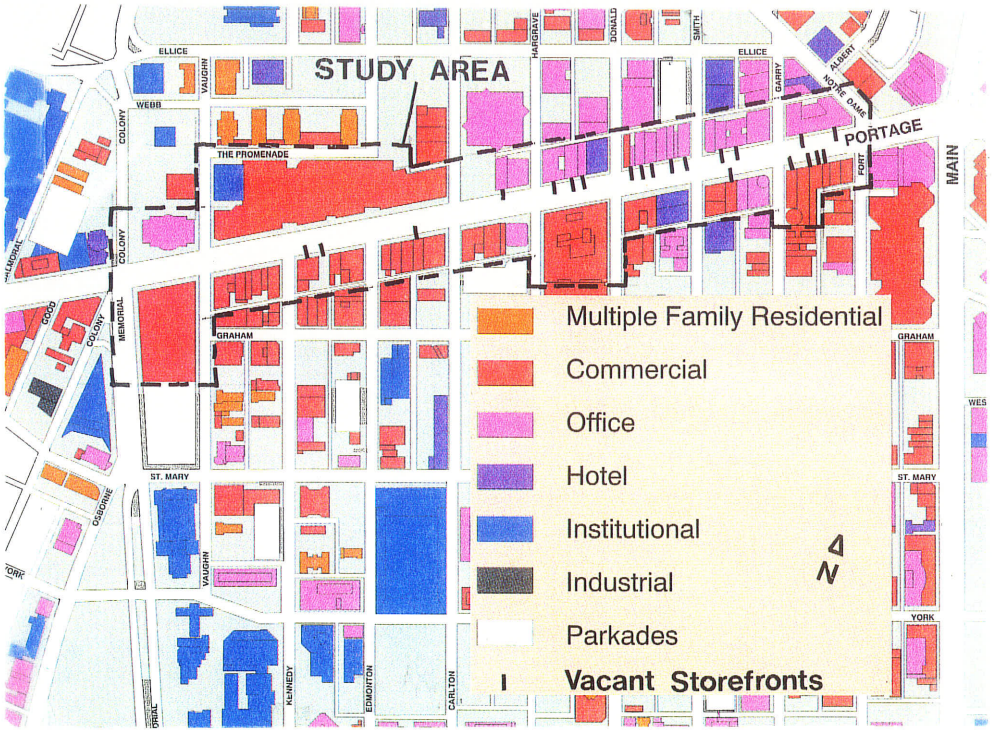

Figure 3.6. Land use and storefront vacancies in the study area.[33]

Portage Avenue right-of-way

Portage Avenue consists of a 131-foot right of way, presently with an eight lane divided roadway with left turn storage lanes at certain intersections, and public sidewalks that are over 17 feet wide. On-street parking is prohibited between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays. No stopping is allowed during morning and evening rush hours - 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., respectively. A number of loading zones are provided at various locations on both sides of the street. Bus stops are located at the south-west corners of Portage Avenue and Vaughan, Edmonton, Donald, and Fort Streets for east-bound transit service (Figure 3.7). Bus stops for west-bound traffic are located at the north-east corners of Portage Avenue and Garry, Donald, Carlton, Edmonton, and Colony Streets. Small unheated shelters are located at the east-bound stops

33 City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Profile* (City of Winnipeg, 1991).

at Edmonton and Fort Streets, and at the west-bound stops at Garry and Donald Streets. The west-bound stops at Edmonton and Colony Streets have large heated shelters. Vaughan, Edmonton, Hargrave, Smith, and Fort Streets are one-way, north-bound. Kennedy, Carlton, Donald, and Garry Streets are one-way south-bound. All intersections are signalized.

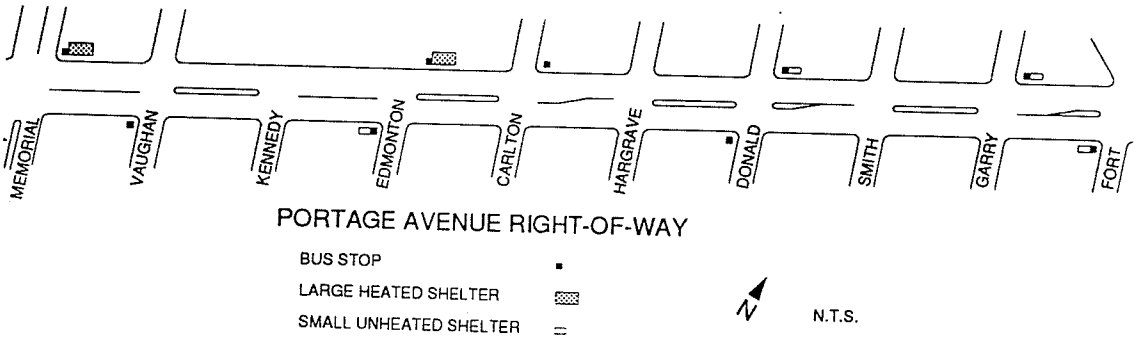

Figure 3.7. Schematic representation of Portage Avenue.

Table 3.6, below, shows the volume of automobiles and transit buses moving on Portage Avenue during the day, as well as their respective person-movement volumes. This Table reveals that automobiles account for the vast majority of the vehicular traffic - 93 to 95 percent of the volume, whereas transit buses make up the remaining five to seven percent. However, transit buses account for 45 percent of off-peak person-movements and between 59 and 60 percent of peak period person-movements. Clearly, in this portion of Portage Avenue, transit buses play a significant role in urban transportation, facilitating the movement of large numbers of people without generating a great deal of congestion. Casual observation reveals that during peak periods the buses dominate the curb lanes. They occupy 25 percent of the through lanes, at these times, yet carry the majority of the passenger volume.

TABLE 3.6. TRAFFIC TRANSIT, AND PERSON-MOVEMENT VOLUMES.[34]

	VEHICLES PER HOUR PER DIRECTION		PASSENGERS PER HOUR PER DIRECTION	
TIME PERIOD	AUTOS	TRANSIT	AUTOS	TRANSIT
AM peak (07:00-0900)				
Vehicle or pgr volume	1700	128	2210	3200
% of total	93	7	41	59
Midday (09:00-15:30)				
Vehicle or pgr volume	900 - 1300	54	1320	1080
% of total	95	5	55	45
PM peak (15:30-17:30)				
Vehicle or pgr volume	1700 - 1800	137	2275	3425
% of total	93	7	40	60

A 1984 survey of shoppers in an area of south side Portage Avenue, bounded by The Bay on the west and by Eaton's and Eaton Place on the east, and a 1988 study of shoppers, which includes, in addition to the area defined in the 1984 survey, the north side of Portage Avenue encompassed by Portage Place and its skywalks, reveal that 45 percent of 1984 and 1988 respondents use the bus as their mode of transportation, and over 30 percent use the automobile. This high percentage of shoppers taking the bus is also reflective of the importance of transit, particularly for shoppers and merchants in the study area (Table 3.7). In addition, it is of note that a fairly high percentage of shoppers walk to their destination(s). This suggests that the pedestrian environment is of particular importance in this area.

34 City of Winnipeg Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, *Traffic, Transit, and Pedestrian Facilities on Portage Avenue Between Colony and Main* (Winnipeg: The Commissioner of Works and Operations, 1994), page 4.

TABLE 3.7. MODE OF TRANSPORTATION FOR SHOPPERS INTERVIEWED BETWEEN THE BAY AND EATON'S AND EATON PLACE, SOUTH-SIDE PORTAGE AVENUE - 1984 AND 1988 - AND PORTAGE PLACE, INCLUDING SKYWALKS - 1988.[35]

	% OF RESPONDENTS	
MODE OF TRANSPORTATION	1988	1984
Bus	45	45
Car	33	31
Walked	17	22

The high percentage of shoppers who walk to the stores from their place of residence or work correlates with the findings presented in Table A.11. In 1988, 18 percent of shoppers indicated the closeness of shops to place of residence and 12 percent indicated the closeness of shops to work or school, as the best features of shopping downtown. In 1984, 25 and 17 percent of shoppers, respectively, rated these features as the best aspects of shopping downtown.

In terms of accommodating automobiles, or general traffic, The Department of Streets and Transportation (1994) consider the level of service quite adequate for this downtown street. During any of the a.m. peak, midday, and p.m. peak time periods drivers can traverse the section of Portage Avenue between Colony and Main Streets in approximately four minutes. Nevertheless, the 1988 and 1984 findings indicate that 10 and 13 percent of respondents, respectively, cite traffic congestion and construction as the worst features of shopping downtown. Some dissatisfaction with the roadway's ability to accommodate general traffic does, therefore, exist. However, City of Winnipeg traffic engineers estimate that 45 percent of downtown Portage Avenue traffic is using the

35 Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1988).
Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1984).

roadway as a means to get from one area of the city to another, passing through the downtown.[36] While Portage Avenue does offer a direct route for drivers, particularly for those travelling between the west and north-east areas of Winnipeg, their preference for this street indicates that the level of service is satisfactory.

Generally, the roadway also works well for Transit buses. Travel times in the section between Colony and Main are in the order of six to eight minutes, at all times of the day. However, buses are often delayed by vehicles turning right, off Portage Avenue, and by vehicles stopped in the curb lanes. Obstructions in the curb lanes require buses to wait for a break in traffic in order to weave into the next lane, then return back to the curb lane. This results in a deterioration in the reliability of service and passenger comfort.

The pedestrian environment, by comparison with the roadway, is noted to be of poor quality (Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, 1994). As was stated earlier, only two heated bus shelters are provided, in the study area, along Portage Avenue. One of these shelters is built into Portage Place, on the north side of Portage Avenue. The other is located at the north-east corner of Colony and Portage, the only place with space for such an amenity. The stop in front of Eaton's, one of the busiest bus stops in the city, has no facilities at all; and the stop in front of The Bay, also quite busy, only has a canopy over the sidewalk. This is because of the large volume of pedestrian traffic and the lack of sidewalk space to accommodate that traffic and to provide heated bus shelters. The relatively narrow sidewalks are also a problem for pedestrians travelling along Portage Avenue. There is often a conflict between people waiting for the bus and those walking by.

The wide roadway is also a problem for pedestrians. Crossing eight through-lanes and one lane for left turns is particularly difficult for elderly and disabled people. Some

---

36 Redekop, Bill, *BusLanes, parking proposal for Portage* (Winnipeg Free Press, June 9, 1994), page B3.

find it necessary to take refuge in the centre median and wait for a second "walk" signal. This often results in transit patrons missing their buses.[37]

Finally, the streetscape is considered to be of poor quality. Both Gehl (1987) and Paumier (1988) emphasize the importance of the pedestrian environment for its social and marketplace functions. However, the wide roadway, narrow sidewalks, and high noise levels due to the large traffic volumes, make it difficult to attract activity to Portage Avenue. The lack of pedestrian activity along Portage Avenue compromises the viability of street-front retail businesses and the personal safety of those who do walk in the area.[38] The importance of pedestrian activity as an integral component of a Great Street is emphasized by Allan Jacobs, cited in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - places for people to sit and walk, and - visual interest.*

parking

The worst features of shopping downtown, as identified in the 1988 study and the 1984 survey (by Criterion Research Corporation), are the cost and availability of parking. Table A.11 indicates that, in 1988, 22 percent of respondents cited cost and 20 percent cited availability. In 1984, 29 percent and 34 percent of respondents cited cost and availability of parking, respectively. This reversal can be attributed to the construction of Portage Place, which provides 1100 underground parking stalls adjacent to Portage Avenue. Table 3.8 supports this conclusion, indicating that the largest percentage of respondents to the 1988 study used the Portage Place parkade. On-street parking was used by the next largest group of respondents. Since parking is only permitted on Portage Avenue in evenings and on Sundays, the cross-streets are the primary sources of this type of parking.

---

37 City of Winnipeg Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, *Traffic, Transit, and Pedestrian Facilities on Portage Avenue Between Colony and Main* (Winnipeg: The Commissioner of Works and Operations, 1994), page 6.

38 Ibid., page 6.

Regarding on-street parking, it is noted by The Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit (1994) that the lack of parking on Portage Avenue is not supportive of street-front retail businesses. It is perceived by several members of the downtown business community that the provision of on-street parking during the business day is important to facilitate convenient access for prospective customers. Again, Allan Jacobs identifies on-street parking as a viable way to improve the accessibility of a Great Street to motorists (Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - accessibility).*

TABLE 3.8. PARKING LOCATION FOR SHOPPERS INTERVIEWED BETWEEN THE BAY AND EATON'S AND EATON PLACE, SOUTH-SIDE PORTAGE AVENUE AND PORTAGE PLACE, INCLUDING SKYWALKS - 1988.[39]

PARKING LOCATION	% OF RESPONDENTS
Portage Place parkade	26
Street	24
Bay parkade	15
Eaton Place parkade	14
Other	9

land use

As was previously stated, the boundaries of the study area are selected to encompass the land uses along downtown Portage Avenue that are predominantly commercial, with particular emphasis on ground floor retail space. Figure 3.5 reveals that the buildings which are mainly made up of commercial space are found on the south side of Portage Avenue The exception is Portage Place, the bulk of which is on the north side of Portage Avenue, at the western end of the study area. Many of the buildings that are

39 Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1988).

indicated as office land use have their ground floors dedicated to retail or, sometimes, restaurant space. Thus the ground floor of Portage Avenue buildings can be characterized as being dominated by retail functions. Restaurants, financial services, travel agencies and other office space make up the remainder of the space.

Figure 3.6 is also important because it indicates where vacant storefronts existed in the study area, as of January 1995. A vacant storefront, in this case, is defined as any empty ground floor space within a building, with an entrance onto Portage Avenue. If access to the space is through a lobby, the ground floor area of that building is considered to be one storefront. This information was collected by visual inspection of the ground floor of Portage Avenue properties. The findings reveal that there are few vacancies between Colony and Hargrave Streets. None of these storefront vacancies are found in Portage Place. However, there are a large number of vacancies in the blocks west of Hargrave Street. The highest number of vacancies occurs on the north side of Portage, in the block bounded by Donald and Smith Streets. This is followed by the south side of Portage, between Garry and Fort. There are five, and four, storefront vacancies in these blocks, respectively. There is a total of 21 storefront vacancies in the study area. This includes the vacant lot on the south side, between Kennedy and Edmonton Streets, which is presently a temporary park (Merchants' Park).

The vacancies obviously detract from the area. They present an image which suggests that downtown Portage Avenue is in decline (Figure 3.8). They also detract from the pedestrian environment by creating discontinuities in the active and interesting land uses of the area, and, in many instances, by degenerating into eyesores[40]. Not only do these vacancies present an image of decline, but the dilapidated state of some of the buildings tends to contribute to perceptions that the area is unsafe. The importance of well-maintained buildings with active storefront businesses as part of a Great Street is identified by Jacobs in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place*.

---

40 Many of the buildings have broken or boarded-up windows and are unkempt.

However, these vacancies also represent potential opportunities to redevelop the area and re-establish a human presence along the street. Several buildings are of historic value, and, if rehabilitated, can contribute greatly to the visual interest of the area, as Allan Jacobs (1993) suggests.

Figure 3.8. Vacancies along Portage Avenue, while detracting from the area, represent potential opportunities for redevelopment.

Table A.11 indicates that shoppers in the area are attracted by the specific retail uses found there. Both the 1988 study and the 1984 survey, by Criterion Research Corporation, identify the variety of stores and merchandise as the best feature of shopping downtown - 51 and 65 percent, respectively. Other positive aspects of the retail uses in the area are the distinctive specialty stores, the size and "depth" of merchandise of the major department stores, and the close proximity of the stores. The latter quality, in the context of the other positive qualities, suggests that the higher density of downtown, which

facilitates the close proximity of various establishments, is one of the strengths of this part of the city. The only negative feature related to land uses is the high prices of goods and services, cited by eight percent of respondents of the 1988 study.

Of the three major retailers in the study area - Portage Place, Eaton's, and The Bay - Portage Place was identified as the most visited location. Before Portage Place was built, Eaton's was patronized the most, as shown in the 1984 survey. Eaton Place, immediately south of Eaton's and outside of the study area, was patronized the least, compared with the other facilities (Table A.12). However this may change, given that the shopping centre is currently undergoing renovations. Taken together, these four retail centres, known as the "Big Four," make up the largest interconnected shopping area in the city.[41]

Portage Place

In December 1983, North Portage Development Corporation was established by the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and the Government of Canada to facilitate redevelopment of the area of downtown Winnipeg bounded by Colony and Balmoral Streets, Hargrave Street, Notre Dame Avenue, and the lane south of and parallel to Portage Avenue.

Together with the private sector, institutions, and government agencies the Corporation has redeveloped large portions of the mandated area. Development completed to date includes: $10 million in roadway and service improvements on adjacent city streets; 252 units of seniors housing in Kiwanis Chateau and Fred Douglas Place; Place Promenade with 376 units of market rental housing and 20,000 sq. ft. of street level retail space on two new pedestrian-oriented streets; Information Systems Management Corporation's 100,000 sq. ft. business and computing centre; and One Canada Centre with 280,000 sq. ft. of office space.[42] The most significant component of the redevelopment is

41 Survey of study area merchants and key informants, September, 1994.

42 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1991).
North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).

Portage Place, a facility consisting of 200,000 sq. ft. of retail space, 36,000 sq. ft. of commercial office space, an IMAX theatre, the Prairie Theatre Exchange, Famous Players cinemas, the downtown YM-YWCA, skywalk connections to The Bay and Eaton's, Edmonton Court - an indoor public amenity space, and 1100 underground parking stalls[43] (Figures 3.9 and 3.10).

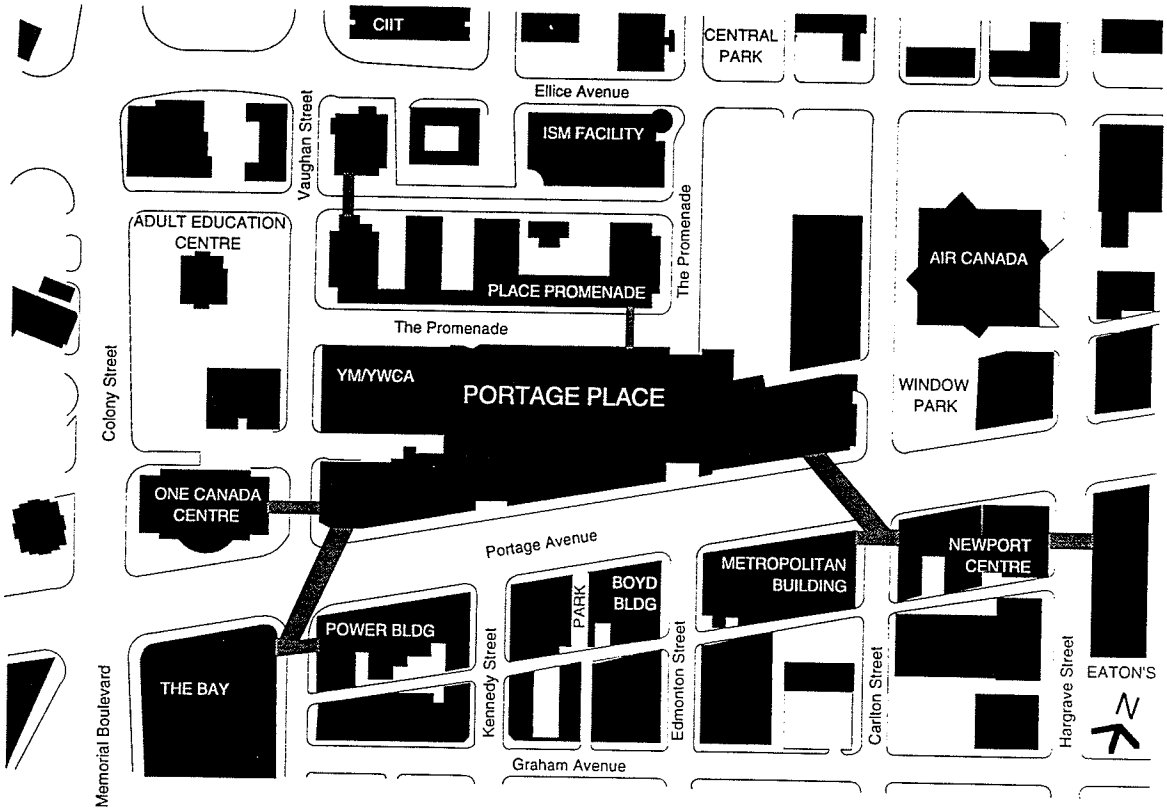

Figure 3.9. Portage Place and other NPDC Developments.

The land that Portage Place occupies north of Portage Avenue is owned by North Portage Development Corporation, and is part of the over-all land assembly undertaken to develop the Corporation's mandated area. The Corporation was also responsible for advancing funds to construct the underground parking structure, the skywalks and connections, support structures for future development, and the public amenities that form part of the retail complex. Cadillac-Fairview Corporation Limited entered into a

43 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1991).
North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).

development agreement with North Portage Development Corporation to develop the retail shopping mall components of the project. Cadillac-Fairview leases the land, the underground parking structures, the skywalks and connections, the public amenities, and the retail complex from North Portage Development Corporation (The Corporation). The underground parking structure is then leased back to the Corporation which operates the facility. On the south side of Portage Avenue Cadillac-Fairview leases the second floor of the buildings that the skywalk passes through from their respective owners. The exception is the building at the south-east corner of Portage and Carlton, which is owned by Cadillac-Fairview.

The IMAX Theatre, the Prairie Theatre Exchange, the Famous Players cinemas, the downtown YM-YWCA, and that portion of Place Promenade within Portage Place are excluded from the lease agreement and are not part of Cadillac-Fairview's holdings due to specific air rights designated in the development agreement.[44]

One of the most distinguishing features of Portage Place is the extent of the enclosed pedestrian space (Figure 3.10[45]). On the ground floor an interior pedestrian mall extends from Vaughan to Carlton Streets on the north side of Portage Avenue. This mall also connects with Portage Avenue at Kennedy Street, and at Edmonton Street and Place Promenade with Edmonton Court. Edmonton Court functions as the primary open space of the facility and provides a north-south axis, intersecting the east-west Central Mall. The second floor pedestrian space is much longer, linking together The Bay and Eaton's. From west to east, this space is comprised of a skywalk extending diagonally across Portage Avenue from the south side of Portage at Vaughan, the interior mall of Portage Place which intersects Edmonton court, a skywalk spanning Portage Avenue from near the north-west corner of Portage and Carlton to the south side of Portage at Carlton, an interior mall passing through the second floor of buildings on the south side of Portage between Carlton and Hargrave, and a skywalk across Hargrave to Eaton's.

---

44 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1990).
45 North Portage Development Corporation, *Portage Place Plans* (Winnipeg, 1992).

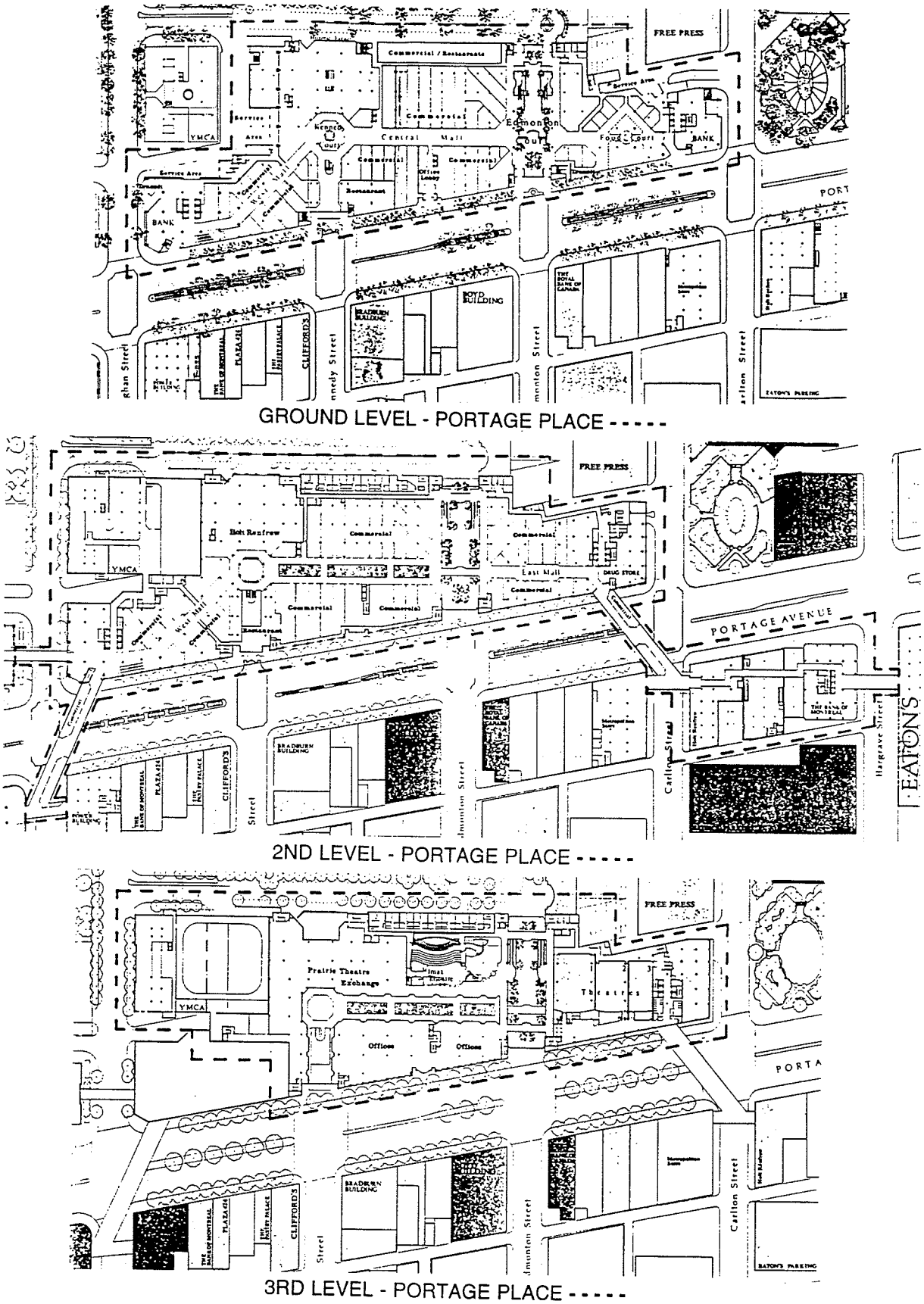

Figure 3.10. Portage Place, plan views, excluding fourth floor office space.

Table A.11 indicates that shoppers in the area of Portage Place cited the climate-controlled walkway and enclosed shopping area as one of the best features of shopping downtown. Conversely, before the facility was built, the lack of climate-controlled connections was noted by respondents as one of the worst features of shopping downtown. Table 3.9 illustrates the effectiveness and popularity of the interior pedestrian links provided by Portage Place. The total number of pedestrians passing the places identified in the Table increased by 45 percent between 1984 and 1988 - before and after the completion of Portage Place. This suggests that there has been a rise in pedestrian traffic, indicative of the ability of the interior pedestrian mall and retail centre to attract people to the area. Furthermore, excluding the skywalk pedestrian counts from the 1988 findings, the total number of pedestrians on the sidewalks, in the time periods of the study was 1256. This 32 percent drop in pedestrian activity at street level verifies the results of Table A.11, that the climate-controlled walkways are one of the best features of shopping downtown. There is a preference for using these amenities over the public sidewalks.

TABLE 3.9. PEDESTRIAN COUNTS BETWEEN THE BAY AND EATON'S, 1988 AND 1984.[46]

	PEDESTRIAN COUNTS, 8 FIVE MINUTE INTERVALS	
LOCATION	OCTOBER 1988	OCTOBER 1984
Bay entrance, Portage & Vaughan	338	362
Skywalk to The Bay	n/a	543
Portage & Edmonton, SW corner	1057	544
Eaton's entrance, Portage & Hargrave	455	350
Skywalk to Eaton's	n/a	881
Total	1850	2680

46 Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1988).
Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1984).
Also see Appendix B.

These findings present serious implications regarding the effect of the interior walkway on the vitality of the street. This issue will be explored in some detail in the following Chapter, as part of the definition of problems associated with the study area.

3.3 The Survey of Key Informants and Study Area Merchants

Sections 3.1 and 3.2 provide a great deal of information directly or indirectly related to the downtown Portage Avenue area, the study area of this practicum. Section 3.2 *The Study Area* describes the characteristics of the Portage Avenue right-of way, parking issues of the area, the various land-uses along downtown Portage Avenue and their strengths and shortcomings, and qualities of Portage Place. Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg* describes demographic traits of the city centre and issues related to crime and safety, transportation and parking, land use, and the physical environment. The Section also identifies the attitudes and perceptions of members of the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone regarding a number of issues. Directly relevant to the study area are the opinions of city-wide residents on downtown issues, also presented in this Section. These findings identify the downtown issues that are most important to Winnipeggers and provide a valuable perspective on the problems of, and possible solutions for, downtown Portage Avenue. In addition, the downtown is identified as an important part of the city by its residents - there is strong support for a plan of action addressing downtown problems. As was stated earlier, these findings suggest that there is support for the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, and as a symbol of a good downtown.

goal of survey

Clearly, there is a substantial amount of information on downtown Winnipeg and, to a lesser degree, on the study area. Many issues and features of the downtown have been identified that are relevant to the study area. The primary objectives of conducting the

survey were to identify those issues and features that pertain to downtown Portage Avenue and to expand on the information that is presented in Section 3.2 *The Study Area.* However, in order to understand the dynamics of the area it was also necessary to determine the interrelationships of the issues. Another goal of conducting the survey was to identify possible strategies to address the issues of downtown Portage Avenue, in order to bring people back to the sidewalks and businesses of the area. Being aware of the interrelationships of the issues enables an informed assessment of the possible solutions and their probable effects.

The survey of key informants and study area merchants has not been sufficient in itself, however, to provide workable strategies. Therefore the findings of the survey are compared and contrasted in Chapter Four with the information presented in Sections 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg* and 3.2 *The Study Area.* This places the findings in the wider context of the downtown and establishes their validity against other surveys and data. In addition, referring to the literature reviews of Chapters One and Two creates a balanced approach drawing on the body of knowledge on urban space, the effects of urban interventions similar to Portage Place, and the attitudes and perceptions of users of the area and key informants.

method of the survey

John Zeisel's *Inquiry by Design* (1988) identifies two basic survey types - the standardized questionnaire and the focused interview.

The standardized questionnaire is useful when dealing with a well-defined problem. Knowing what main concepts and attributes are important, and developing hypotheses about how they relate to one another are necessary requirements for utilizing this survey format. Standardized questionnaires enable researchers to test their hypotheses and understand more fully how the concepts are interrelated. These questionnaires ask the same set of questions to a large number of people, in order to determine patterns within the

various groups of respondents. This survey type is implemented in person, over the telephone, or is delivered to people to answer on their own.

The focused interview, on the other hand, is not a suitable method for gathering large amounts of easily comparable and quantifiable data. It is, instead, a useful way to "find out in depth how people define a concrete situation, what they consider important about it, what effects they intended their actions to have in the situation, and how they feel about it"[47]. Before undertaking the focused interview, the researcher must use theory and observation to analyze the structure of the situation, in order to develop an interview guide for conducting the survey. The interview guide provides a loose conceptual map of the topics to be covered. The guide provides the basis for discussing the situation in detail with the respondent. The respondents' attitudes and perceptions of the subject allow researchers to test, refine, and modify their analysis. The principal tool of the interviewer is the probing question. Through specific questions in response to statements made by interviewees, or simply by attentive listening, the researcher can gain an understanding of the importance of various topics to those being surveyed, their personal context, and the details of a situation. This flexible survey method allows respondents to provide the structure for information relating to complex environmental-behavior situations, thereby becoming active participants in the research.

Therefore, the focused interview survey is best suited to the concerns of this practicum. While large amounts of information are available to help identify the major issues of downtown Winnipeg, there is a lack of material particular to downtown Portage Avenue. Without knowing which issues are relevant to the study area, or how they relate to one another, the flexible, probing approach of the focused interview provides the best means to uncover the dynamics of the situation.

---

47 Zeisel, John, *Inquiry by Design* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), page 137.

The interview guide that was developed for the survey was derived from the findings presented in the various surveys of Winnipeggers and downtown shoppers and merchants, and from the issues raised in the literature reviews of Chapters One and Two.

The guide provides basic questions to ask merchants along Portage Avenue in the study area, as well as the key informants. These questions open up a discussion of the general area and, because of their open-ended nature, lead to specific topics being revealed.

A list of topics to be explored ensures that the interview has sufficient breadth, and provides a means of keeping the interview going. Interviews typically lasted 20 minutes with merchants and 40 minutes with key informants. The merchants consisted of store managers, assistant managers, or owner-operators. The key informants included a broad range of professionals in various disciplines, and with interests relevant to the study area.

The interview guide that was used for the survey, conducted in September of 1994, is located in Appendix C.

the survey participants

The survey of study area merchants and key informants included 22 merchants and 11 key informants.

Of the 22 merchants, two were with major department stores within the study area. Fourteen merchants were associated with storefront businesses along downtown Portage Avenue, and six of the merchants were Portage Place tenants with entrance doorways on Portage Avenue as well as on the internal mall of Portage Place. Of the 14 storefront businesses, 10 were located between Vaughan and Hargrave Streets, and four are located between Donald and Fort. This is reflective of the distribution of retailers and restaurateurs in the study area.

Appendix C provides a list of the key informants, their positions, and the organizations they are associated with.

This Chapter has described downtown Portage Avenue and Portage Place as they presently exist, and placed the study area in context by summarizing existing surveys that identify issues of downtown Winnipeg in general. As well, the Chapter explained the survey method, and identified the previous Chapters as instrumental in shaping the interview guide needed to conduct the research. This survey provided the information needed to undertake an informed assessment of the situation. The survey findings are presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Downtown Portage Avenue and Portage Place: Issues and Solutions Associated with the Study Area

This Chapter reports the findings of the survey of study area merchants and key informants as well as the proposed solutions to problems associated with the study area. The issues and problems of the study area, as identified in the survey, are assessed in relation to the data that describes the study area, and its context, presented in Chapter Three. As well, the effects that Portage Place has had on the area is assessed based on the survey findings, and the theories and issues brought forward in Chapters One and Two. Strategies to address the problems of the study area are derived from the survey findings, and from other sources, including the recommendations made by Centre Plan, and the Winnipeg Transit proposals. These strategies are assessed with reference to the literature reviews of Chapters One and Two.

Chapter Four is divided into six parts. The first two Sections deal with the problems and solutions associated with the Portage Avenue right-of-way.[48] The next two Sections deal with land uses adjacent to downtown Portage Avenue, excluding Portage Place. The last two Sections explore that facility in detail. Clearly, these three areas are interrelated. Problems occurring along the Portage Avenue right-of-way, may be addressed by taking action on the adjacent land uses. The reverse may also apply. These three geographical divisions, however, were delineated to demarcate, not only the physical, but also the jurisdictional boundaries and hence the areas of responsibility. The right-of-way is clearly public property and has certain functions and characteristics. The adjacent land uses are comprised of a number of properties that are mainly privately-owned buildings. Portage Place, spanning four blocks along Portage Avenue, is part of North

---

48 Since most buildings are built to the property line, the right-of-way is generally bounded by the buildings along Portage Avenue.

Portage Development Corporation's redevelopment strategy, and ownership is presently held by one company - Cadillac-Fairview.

In addition, examining the right-of-way, the land uses, and Portage Place, separately, facilitates an examination of how solutions or strategies designed to address the problems of the study area can be implemented. This is particularly relevant in Chapter Five, which examines the role that North Portage Development Corporation can play in addressing the problems.

4.1A Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way

This Section deals with the physical and social problems associated with the Portage Avenue right-of-way. The problems are either caused by the right-of-way, given its present physical configuration, or they are evident along the sidewalks or roadway. The problems, or issues, are identified from results of the survey of key informants and study area merchants. Reference is made to Section 3.2 *The Study Area*, and the downtown in general, as described in Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg*. General traffic, on-street parking, public transit, the pedestrian environment, and safety, are considered in this Section, as they relate to the Portage Avenue right-of-way.

general traffic

Eight study area merchants raised the question during the focused interviews as to whether accommodating general traffic, defined as all vehicles except transit buses, is an important function of downtown Portage Avenue. Four of these respondents felt that it was important that the street functions well for traffic, whereas another four believed that this was not a necessary requirement of the street. Within the former group it was noted

that the large volume of general traffic gives businesses high visibility. The latter group believed that the street was too vehicle-oriented.

The key informants noted that, while the roadway carries a high volume of traffic, it has excess capacity. It was stated that 45 percent of traffic entering the downtown is destined for other areas. A significant portion of that traffic uses Portage Avenue, which is, therefore, an important arterial street to the city.

Commentary:

Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way*, revealed that automobiles (general traffic) make up the vast majority of the vehicular traffic - 93 to 95 percent of the volume. The general through traffic during the day is not using the curb lane because it is used for loading during the midday period, and is dominated by transit buses in the morning and evening rush hours. Therefore, the general traffic is concentrated on three lanes in each direction. This sub-section verifies the key informants' statements that the level of service was quite adequate for general traffic. Furthermore, it is estimated that 45 percent of the traffic on downtown Portage Avenue is using the roadway as a means to get from one area of the city to another.

It is apparent that there is a conflict between the perceptions of some study area merchants and the normative traffic engineering standards indicating that the street performs satisfactorily for general traffic. This discrepancy is also suggested by other surveys, summarized in Table A.11 of Section 3.2 *The Study Area*, and Table A.7 of Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg*. These Tables indicate that traffic congestion is a problem that must be addressed. However, other surveys contradict these findings. From Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg*, Table A.3 shows a lack of consensus among Winnipeggers as to whether traffic is a problem. Table A.6 and Figure 3.4 also suggest that traffic flow is not a problem.

While these surveys do not specifically consider Portage Avenue, the street is a major component of the downtown traffic grid. It can be concluded that these surveys

support the key informants' and half the study area merchants' statements, as does Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way,* namely, that the roadway has excess capacity.

availability of parking

A significant number of study area merchants commented on the issue of parking availability near their businesses. While nine merchants believed that there is no lack of parking in the area, seven of the merchants interviewed stated that there is a shortage of parking. It was noted that customers complain about the availability of parking. Many of those merchants who believed that there is ample parking indicated that people perceive the area as having an inadequate parking supply.

There was significant consensus among the key informants regarding the availability of parking. It was stated that there is no shortage of parking in the Portage Avenue vicinity. One informant even suggested that the city would benefit from filling the existing parking lots with buildings. As with certain merchants, it was noted that people perceived a parking shortage in downtown. This problem was contrasted with the ease of access to parking in suburban shopping centres, whereas the downtown provides users with numerous lots that are sometimes hard to find.

Commentary:

Given that there are over 37,000 parking spaces downtown, an increase of 35 percent since 1971, and that Portage Place added 1100 spaces to the supply when it opened in 1987, it can be concluded that the parking availability issue is a perceived problem, rather than a factual problem. This perception, however, is quite extensive among Winnipeggers. Tables A.3 to A.5 and Figure 3.4 of Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - transportation and parking*, and Table A.11 of Section 3.2 *The Study Area - parking*, indicate that there is a widespread belief that parking availability is a significant downtown

issues. Table A.11, which summarizes survey findings of shoppers within the study area, correlates with the surveys pertaining to the downtown at large.

public transit

There is strong consensus among the merchant group that took part in the study area survey regarding the importance of public transit to their businesses. While one merchant stated that transit is not important for business, the majority stated that it is the means of transportation for a large portion of their customers. Percentage of transit use by customers was estimated by certain respondents at between 20 and 50 percent. The close proximity of bus stops is seen as a major benefit for businesses. The presence of people at bus stops and the advertising opportunities of bus shelters were mentioned as some of the benefits of transit on Portage Avenue.

The key informants also recognize public transit as an important service in the area. The high density land-uses adjacent to the Portage Avenue right-of-way have resulted in a great demand for public transit. It was stated that Winnipeg Transit recognizes this demand and operates a large number of routes on Portage Avenue. During the day, there are 100 buses per hour on Portage Avenue in the off-peak hours and 130 buses per hour during peak hours. The street functions well for the operation of this large volume of bus traffic. Parking restrictions facilitate good service during day-time off-peak hours; and in the rush-hour periods the large number of buses operating in the area dominate the curb lanes. In addition, the one-way system of cross-streets has facilitated the placement of bus stops at intersections where the cross traffic is travelling from right to left (from the perspective of motorists on Portage Avenue), eliminating a conflict between right turning vehicles and buses at these corners.

Commentary:

Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way,* also indicates that there is a great deal of transit traffic on Portage Avenue. Table 3.6 shows that there are between

128 and 137 buses per hour per direction along downtown Portage Avenue during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods, respectively. Fifty-four buses per hour in each direction use the street during the midday period. As was stated in this Section, travel times are in the order of six to eight minutes between Colony and Main. However, this high level of service is sometimes compromised by vehicles blocking the curb lanes. Traffic turning right, off Portage Avenue, and automobiles stopped in the curb lane require buses to wait for a break in traffic in order to weave into the next lane, then return back to the right lane. Generally, though, the present right-of-way works well for Transit buses.

Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - transportation and parking*, emphasizes the importance of Portage Avenue as a transit route. Portage and Graham Avenues provide the east-west bus routes for Transit. Since Portage Avenue is a continuous street from the downtown to the Trans-Canada Highway at the city's western boundary, it carries 60 percent of the east-west transit traffic (key informants). Furthermore, the importance of Transit to the area is indicated by Figure 3.5 of Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - transportation and parking*, and Table 3.7 of Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way*. Figure 3.5 illustrates that a higher percentage of people in Winnipeg use public transit to get to work downtown, relative to Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, or Edmonton. Table 3.7 shows that 45 percent of shoppers within the study area who were surveyed used public transit to come downtown.

All of these findings confirm that high quality transit service is a valued characteristic of the area.

the pedestrian environment

Much was said concerning the pedestrian environment by the study area merchants. Six respondents commented that the pedestrian volumes along the street are adequate. Three of the merchants are not satisfied with present pedestrian activity, stating that Portage Avenue used to be the busiest street in the city, and this is no longer the case. Some

merchants also remarked that downtown Winnipeg is "not happening" and that there are not many people in the area. It was added that people go inside during the winter, patronizing the shopping centres. Merchants also commented on the degree to which their businesses depend on pedestrian traffic. Some merchants stated that the pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks is not a large portion of business. Others stated that the walk-in traffic is their main source of customers.

The quality of the pedestrian environment was also an area of concern for merchants. The large vehicular traffic volume was cited as a problem for pedestrians. The traffic was seen to create noise and air pollution, and to make it difficult to cross the street.

Seven merchants stated that additional landscaping is required along Portage Avenue. It was noted that there is a lack of pedestrian amenities along the street, such as trees and benches.

The key informants also stated that while Portage Avenue successfully accommodates the movement of general traffic and transit buses, it is lacking in providing a quality pedestrian environment. One problem, it was noted, is that the sidewalks are not wide enough to permit bus shelters of adequate capacity. The significance of this problem is emphasized when considering the fact that several stops on Portage are among the busiest transit stops in the city. There is a large number of people waiting for Portage Avenue buses, many without adequate shelter. This has led to sidewalk overcrowding in the vicinity of bus stops, an inconvenience for pedestrians passing by.

As with the merchants, the key informants stated that the wide roadway and significant traffic volume is a problem for pedestrians. It was stated that it is difficult to link activities on one side of the street to the other. It was also stated that bus noise and fumes detracts from the pedestrian environment. However it was also recognized that buses are a fact of life in an urban environment.

Another consideration for the pedestrian environment, cited by the key informants, is the low levels of lighting on Portage Avenue. This problem was described as both an issue of aesthetics and safety.

When discussing the pedestrian environment, certain informants cited Osborne Village and Corydon Avenue as examples of positive pedestrian spaces. Both streets are characterized by street-front boutiques and restaurants and pedestrian level lighting. Corydon has the added benefit of on-street parallel parking, a feature that improves accessibility and provides a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Commentary:

Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way,* supports the concerns of the key informants and study area merchants, citing the Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit (1994). The lack of heated bus shelters, conflict between people waiting for their bus and those walking by, the wide roadway with its considerable traffic volumes, and the poor quality streetscape are the problems brought forward in this Section. The importance of the pedestrian environment is suggested in Table 3.18 which indicates that a fairly high proportion (17 percent) of those shoppers interviewed in a 1988 study and a 1984 survey walked to their destinations.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the quality of the pedestrian environment is an important issue that must be addressed, in order to strengthen the viability of the street.

safety

Regarding personal safety along downtown Portage Avenue, it was noted by the study area merchants that the large vehicular traffic volumes are seen more as an inconvenience rather than as a danger to pedestrians. However, the presence of panhandlers and youth gangs in the area was considered to have a marked effect on safety, or perceptions of safety.

Merchants' rating of the safety of the area ranged from moderately safe to not very safe. One person knew of someone who had been assaulted in a backlane and another who was attacked on Portage Avenue. Another merchant stated that a co-worker was slashed while waiting at a bus stop. However, most respondents had a greater concern over the presence of panhandlers as a nuisance rather than a threat to safety.

Regarding a sense of safety and time of day, three merchants stated that it is safer on Portage Avenue during the day. One person noted that Portage Avenue feels dangerous at night. Another merchant stated that his business used to be open in the evenings but it is now only open during the day, because of reduced safety at night.

Seven merchants, nearly one-third of those surveyed, believed that the problem in the area is the perception that it is unsafe. It was stated that the media sensationalizes violence and other crime in the downtown. The perception problem was also attributed to the presence of undesirables (panhandlers) in the area; it was stated that the problem is exacerbated after 8:00 p.m. because there are few pedestrians other than the "drunk" panhandlers. It was emphasized that the perception that the downtown is dangerous must be dispelled in order to attract more people to the area.

As was stated above, the merchants stated that panhandlers are a major factor in contributing to the perception that downtown Portage Avenue is unsafe. While many view the problem as severe, some merchants have little concern. It was stated that there are not many panhandlers in the area; also, they are seen to be a part of life in the downtown. However most respondents feel that the panhandlers are disruptive and annoying. Some people went so far as to say that panhandlers who are drunk, abusive and belligerent harass people, particularly at the bus stop on Portage Avenue at Portage Place. Panhandlers were even seen to be a problem in Portage Place itself. One merchant suggested that the liquor store at Ellice and Hargrave contributes to the problem. Vagrancy was said to be the number one problem by one respondent because it drives people away from the area.

Youth Gangs were mentioned, in some instances, as being a problem for the area. It was said that gangs or people hanging-out were troublesome and disruptive, but not dangerous. They, too, were seen to contribute to the perception that the area is not safe.

It is noteworthy that none of the key informants stated that the downtown is a dangerous place. One respondent emphasized that there is nothing to be concerned about in terms of crimes against persons. Similar to the merchants, the key informants attribute the perception that downtown is unsafe to the presence of panhandlers on Portage Avenue. It was noted that panhandlers have been aggressive, especially while intoxicated. In addition, it was stated that people feel threatened by gangs in the area. However, it was also stated that the perception that the downtown is dangerous is due to the "suburban mindset of western Canadians"! People in the west (of Canada) see urban areas as "bad". It was also mentioned by one respondent that the Winnipeg Free Press articles on gangs in the city centre, and media reporting in general, has fueled peoples' negative perception of downtown.

Commentary:

That safety is a problem of people perceiving the area to be dangerous is also supported in the findings of Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - crime and safety*. It was stated that the higher incidence of crimes against persons in the central area of the city - an area including the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods - in relation to the city as a whole, may contribute to the belief that the downtown is unsafe. Table 3.2 shows that Downtown BIZ members perceive that panhandlers, youth gangs, and media reporting negatively affects the public's perception of safety in the downtown, verifying the findings of the survey of key informants and study area merchants. Table A.3 also verifies that panhandlers are problematic. Thirty-three percent of Winnipeggers surveyed cited panhandlers as one of the most disliked features of downtown.

There is , therefore, ample evidence to suggest that safety is perceived as a critical issue for the area and the downtown in general (Tables 3.3, A.3, A.4, and A.5, and Figure 3.4).

In conclusion, the safety issue in the study area is a problem of people perceiving the area to be dangerous. In terms of the Portage Avenue right-of-way, the panhandlers and youth gangs along the street are the causes of this perception. Casual observation reveals that the presence of panhandlers is most acute in the eastern portion of the study area. This may be linked to the higher number of beverage rooms in and near this portion of the study area.

4.1B Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way

In the previous Section, general traffic, availability of parking, public transit, the pedestrian environment, and safety were identified as the areas of concern regarding the right-of-way for study area merchants and key informants. A summary of the previous Section identifies the issues that must be taken into account by the solutions associated with the right-of-way.

It was shown that while some merchants believe that accommodating general vehicle traffic is important, the roadway presently has capacity to carry even greater traffic volumes. While this attribute of the street is positive in some respects, it has a deleterious effect on the pedestrian environment.

Regarding the availability of parking, it is evident that there is ample parking in and near the study area. The problem is that Winnipeggers perceive there to be a lack of parking.

Public transit was shown to be one of the most important functions of the area, in terms of the Portage Avenue right-of-way. This point is emphasized by the fact that many

of the bus stops along downtown Portage Avenue are among the busiest in the city. While Transit buses must negotiate vehicles stopped in the right curb lanes during off-peak hours, the roadway is generally seen to work well for these users.

The pedestrian environment, however, was identified as an area of concern for study area merchants, key informants, the Department of Streets and Transportation, and Winnipeg Transit. The lack of pedestrian amenities, in particular heated bus shelters, the conflict between pedestrians walking along the Avenue and those queuing for their bus, and difficulty in crossing the wide roadway with it considerable traffic volumes, are the problems that were identified. That a number of merchants identified walk-by traffic as important to the viability of their businesses underlines the relevance of this issue. Improving the pedestrian environment would contribute to increased pedestrian traffic volumes and prolonged stays in the area (see Gehl, 1987).

The issue of personal safety was also identified as an area of concern. With respect to the right-of-way, the presence of panhandlers, particularly in the eastern portion of the study area, and to a lesser degree, youth gangs, contribute to the perception that the area is unsafe.

In summary, the problems of the Portage Avenue right-of-way are: 1) that there exists a poor quality pedestrian environment, 2) a perception that the area is unsafe, and 3) a perceived lack of parking. Considerations that must be taken into account in any solution are the degree that the roadway should accommodate general traffic, and the maintenance or improvement of the operation of Transit buses.

allowing on-street parallel parking

One of the solutions endorsed by merchants, to address the perception that there is a lack of parking in and near the study area, is the proposal to accommodate 45 metered parallel parking spaces along downtown Portage Avenue. The solution allows for one hour parking between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on weekdays and between 9:00 a.m. and

5:30 p.m. on Saturdays. There would be no stopping permitted during the morning and evening peak periods. After 5:30 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays, and all day on Sundays and holidays the metered spaces would be free. The number of spaces is limited by the need to accommodate Transit buses, loading zones, taxi stands, and traffic turning right (Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, 1994).

Sixteen study area merchants supported establishing parking on Portage, while only five were against. With 21 merchants commenting on this idea, it is the most discussed issue of the survey. Those merchants who were in favour of on-street parking remarked that it would give the perception of ease of shopping by suggesting that there is ample parking and easy access to buildings. Another perceived benefit was that it would improve the pedestrian environment in that the parked cars would act as a buffer from vehicular traffic. In contrast, those who were against the idea said that there was too much traffic on Portage to allow parking and that it is important to keep it flowing smoothly.

The issue of allowing day-time parking on Portage Avenue, except during peak traffic hours, received a wide range of responses from the key informants. It must be clarified that angle-parking was dismissed as a viable form of on-street parking due to traffic safety considerations and the amount of space required. Parallel parking space for 45 vehicles, the amount limited by transit, traffic, and loading zone requirements, is the configuration that was discussed by the respondents.

Several positive statements were made by key informants regarding reintroducing on-street parallel parking on Portage Avenue. It was stated that if the City permitted short-term metered parking there would be a civic commitment to the health of the downtown. As with the merchants, the key informants said that allowing parking would help create a friendly environment for pedestrians by creating a buffer between the sidewalk and the vehicular traffic. Correspondingly, it was anticipated that pedestrian life would increase and panhandling would become less of a problem. Parked vehicles, it was suggested, would further a sense of vitality, reduce theft by acting as a barrier to fleeing shoplifters,

and slow down vehicular traffic. As well, allowing parking on Portage could lead to more shops in Portage Place utilizing their on-street entrances (see Section 4.3A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place).* The most positive statement made was that on-street parking would help the commercial viability of the area.

In contrast, key informants also stated that on-street parking would have little or no effect on the area's pedestrian environment and commercial viability. It was stated that 45 parking stalls will do little to alleviate parking concerns of Portage Avenue merchants. A few key informants remarked that while pedestrian level lighting could be installed on the current right-of-way configuration, the limited sidewalk width restricts opportunities for introducing pedestrian amenities such as heated shelters and seating areas.

Some key informants had concerns with respect to the impact that on-street parking would have on Winnipeg Transit operations. It was outlined that parking in the curb lane would necessitate buses servicing Portage Avenue bus stops to make two or more lane changes. Transit buses would have to move over one lane into through traffic, and two lanes, if vehicles double-parked. This situation would decrease rider comfort as the buses stop and go, and weave in and out of the curb lane. In addition, the delays to buses caused by having to change lanes in and out of through traffic would compromise the level of service. If Transit added buses to maintain current service levels, the costs would be considerable. Assuming that each transit bus is delayed five minutes travelling between Memorial and Main and back, additional expenditures to Transit in the form of extra buses would amount to $300,000 per year. This figure alone suggests the significance of deciding whether or not to permit parallel parking.

Commentary:

The Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit generally support the statements made by the study area merchants and key informants with regard to the right-of-way. They also recognize that parking spaces would contribute to the viability of street-fronting retail businesses by providing convenient access for potential customers.

Furthermore, in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - accessibility,* Allan Jacobs (1993) also states that on-street parking can, to a certain degree, meet the demand of merchants for ample parking. While on-street parking rarely provides enough spaces, it does give drivers a chance to park close to their destinations. That there is a possibility of parking on the destined street appears to have a marked positive effect on peoples' perception of the availability of parking in an area. In addition, Section 3.2 *The Study Area - parking*, reveals that the street is, in fact, an important source of parking for shoppers in the area. Table 3.8 indicates that the streets in the area are second to the Portage Place parkade as a major parking location. Twenty-four percent of respondents who drove downtown parked on the street.

Installing parking meters would generate additional revenue for the City. The Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit estimate that annual revenue would be approximately $75,000. However, with the recent reinstatement of free two-hour parking at downtown meters on Saturdays, this estimate must be reduced.

Streets and Transportation and Transit also state that there would be serious disadvantages with on-street parking. It is stated that delays for general traffic would result from vehicles entering and exiting the parking spaces. As well, it is expected that the incidence of double parking for loading and unloading would increase, further contributing to traffic delays.

The most serious difficulties associated with this proposal are in the operation of Transit buses. Since the present configuration permits stopping in the curb lane during off-peak hours, in this proposal parked cars would have a minimal impact on Transit service. However, the vehicles negotiating in and out of those parking spaces, and the expected increased incidence of double parking would seriously impede Transit efficiency and passenger comfort. As was stated by the key informants, during off-peak hours, buses would be required to stop for vehicles entering and exiting the curb lane, or move over to the third lane from the curb to pass these vehicles. This would require two lane changes to

service passengers at bus stops. Double-parked vehicles would also necessitate buses change two lanes to the left and back to the right curb lane. The stop-and-go movement of buses as they change lanes, and the curvilinear pathway would decrease rider comfort. Winnipeg Transit indicates that passenger surveys show that Transit patrons value rider comfort, particularly in the downtown, where high passenger volumes require many people to stand in buses.

Another problem associated with buses having to make additional lane changes is that it would lengthen the running time of buses on downtown Portage Avenue. Again, the key informants' statements are substantiated by this report. In order to maintain the existing level of service, it would be necessary to operate additional buses. Transit estimates that this would cost $250,000 per year. Since the key informants' estimate is $300,000, the lower figure is used for the purpose of assessing this proposal.

Given that over 2100 Transit passengers per hour travel in both directions along Portage Avenue during a typical midday period (Table 3.6), and that there are additional costs associated with operating buses on Portage Avenue if there is on-street parking, it is evident that there are serious difficulties associated with allowing on-street parking on Portage Avenue. It is unlikely that the benefits of this proposal, such as the added revenue generated from parking meters and the contributions of on-street parking to the quality of the pedestrian environment, outweigh its drawbacks.

At this point it is appropriate to explore another solution, which is the reconfiguration of the Portage Avenue right-of-way. Contrasting these two proposals will provide insight whether on-street parking is an appropriate action to address problems associated with the Portage Avenue right-of-way.

reconfiguration of the right-of-way

Given the lack of publicity at the time the survey of study area merchants and key informants was conducted, it is not surprising that the merchants did not comment on

Winnipeg Transit's proposal (Figure 4.1) to improve the efficiency of transit buses, comfort of transit passengers, pedestrian environment, and availability of on-street parking on downtown Portage Avenue. This proposal plans to narrow Portage Avenue to three through-lanes in each direction at blocks where bus stops occur, and to permit metered on-street parallel parking, loading zones, and taxi stands at blocks where there are no bus stops. In the blocks which have bus-stops the sidewalks would be widened to the current second-from-the-curb lane and heated shelters would be provided. An option to this proposal is the designation of what would become the right through-lane as a bus lane. However, given the large volume of buses currently using Portage, it would effectively become a transit lane if not designated as such[49].

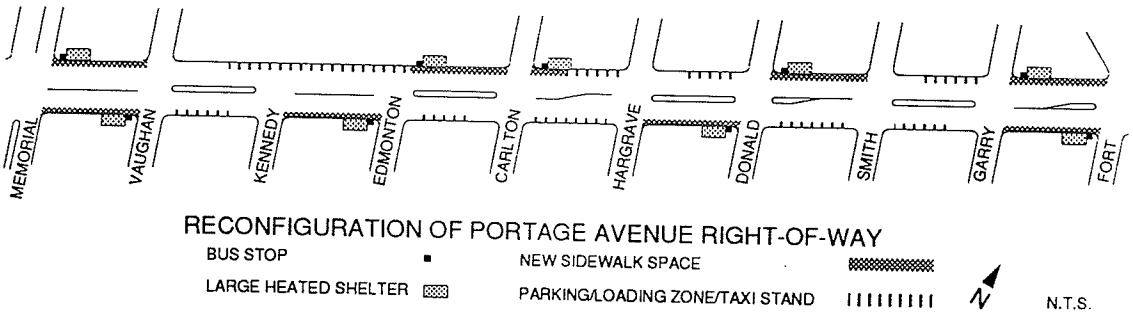

Figure 4.1. Proposal to reconfigure the Portage Avenue right-of-way between Memorial Boulevard and Fort Street.

Referring to the previous sub-section, *allowing on-street parallel parking*, we see that the majority of study area merchants interviewed are in favour of this proposal. However, regarding the importance of keeping traffic flowing smoothly on Portage Avenue, four respondents believe this is necessary, while another four do not see this as important. Among the latter group, it was stated that Portage Avenue is too vehicle-oriented and not pedestrian-friendly. By coincidence, some merchants suggested that

---

49 City of Winnipeg Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, *Traffic, Transit, and Pedestrian Facilities on Portage Avenue Between Colony an Main* (Winnipeg: The Commissioner of Works and Operations, 1994).

Portage Avenue could be transformed into something similar to Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis or Graham Avenue Mall (Winnipeg). As part of these ideas it was stated that extensive landscaping could be undertaken and vehicular traffic could be reduced. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is general support for this proposal, but with some concern over the congestion that would result by reducing the number of through-lanes by two.

By contrast, the key informants discussed this proposal in depth, as well as the pertinent background information. It was stated that both Centre Plan and the Downtown BIZ endorse the scheme. Regarding Winnipeg Transit, it was stated that the Department takes a fairly broad approach to its responsibility to provide public transportation. It has been actively improving the level of service in the downtown by extending routes along Portage and Graham Avenues which previously only partially serviced the city centre. This action has increased the number of buses travelling in the downtown. However, the distribution of buses along Portage and Graham Avenues has remained fairly constant at 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively. In addition, Transit has been developing four major routes to concentrate transit service: Portage and Graham running east-west, and Osborne and Main running north-south. One of the key benefits of concentrating routes on certain streets has been the clustering of pedestrian activity and the resultant sense of safety while waiting for a bus with other people present. As well, transit users have more alternatives if several routes service an area.

It is of note that Winnipeg Transit considers quality of service from a passenger's origin to destination, not from bus stop to bus stop. That is, the environment in the vicinity of bus stops is taken into account as part of the journey for transit users. This is evident in the Department's concern for the quality of service of buses and the quality of the pedestrian environment in the area near bus stops.

Certain key informants noted the similarity of the proposal to Graham Mall (Figure 4.2). As with Graham Mall, there would be an improvement in the efficiency of transit

services and the comfort of transit passengers by eliminating the need for buses to lane change and therefore the associated turning and stop-go motion.

The pedestrian environment would be improved by the widening of sidewalks. This would enable the provision of bus shelters and other forms of pedestrian amenities and landscaping on Portage Avenue sidewalks. Widened sidewalks would yield the additional benefit of creating space for cafes, sidewalk sales, and buskers. As well, narrowing the Portage Avenue roadway would make the street easier for pedestrians to cross by slowing traffic down and reducing the curb to curb distance. This would lead to stronger linkages between the north and south sides of Portage Avenue.

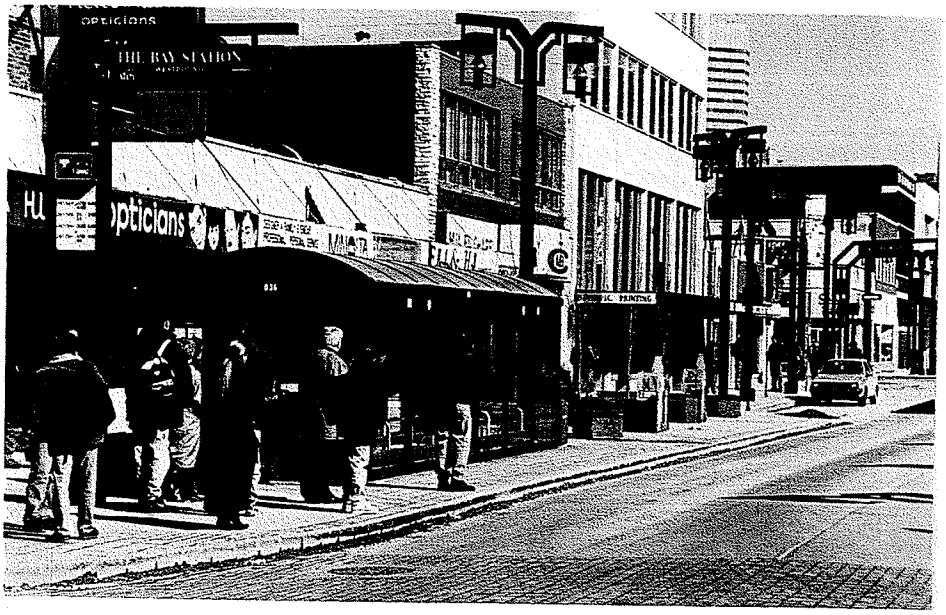

Figure 4.2. The reconfiguration of Portage Avenue would provide the opportunity to install similar amenities as those found along the Graham Mall.

The key informants stated that the provision of on-street parking in this scheme would yield several benefits similar to the original proposal of simply allowing parking on the existing roadway. It was remarked that it would help create a buffer between the

sidewalk and vehicular traffic, and that it could further a sense of vitality, and could lead to more shops in Portage Place utilizing their on-street entrances. Generally speaking, on-street parking could give the perception of available parking, provide easier access to Portage Avenue shops, and improve the commercial viability of the area. However, it must be reiterated that the effectiveness of providing parking to improve the pedestrian environment and commercial health of business on Portage has been questioned by several key informants (Section 4.1B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - allowing on-street parking*). In addition, concern was expressed that it may be difficult for vehicles to cross the transit lane (or transit-dominated lane) to access and exit the parking lane.

The obvious disadvantage of narrowing the roadway is the resultant traffic congestion in and near downtown. This was seen to be either a positive or a negative attribute of the proposal by various key informants.

Traffic congestion, and the slowing down of vehicles on Portage Avenue was perceived to be a positive effect of this initiative, for two reasons. Reduced traffic speed and volume would also enable pedestrians to cross Portage Avenue easier than in the current street configuration and generally improve the pedestrian environment; and slowing down traffic would encourage motorists to take-in their surroundings, resulting in higher visibility for Portage Avenue merchants. It was also emphasized that it is important that the street creates benefits for the buildings and businesses on it, as well as the pedestrian and transit users. The viability of the street as a destination was seen to be more important than the mobility of traffic.

By contrast, it was pointed out that reducing vehicle accessibility to downtown may reduce its use by non-residents. People driving from one area of the city to another may avoid downtown entirely. This could have the dual effect of reducing the visibility of downtown and increasing a perception that it is not a vehicle-friendly place. This

perception could lead to suburban residents using only suburban shopping and entertainment facilities, thereby avoiding downtown entirely.

Another consideration was that increased congestion could lead to employers and employees relocating to the suburbs[50].

It was stated by certain key informants that, while the carrying capacity of Portage Avenue would be reduced under this scheme, and traffic congestion is inevitable, drivers would gradually adjust (not without a difficult transition period) to the altered traffic flow by finding alternate routes. The problem is that there are a limited number of alternate routes which are continuous, direct, and have excess capacity to carry the additional traffic. This problem is especially acute for vehicles travelling from the south and west of the city to the north-east (or vice-versa). Traffic detouring around downtown Portage Avenue could create traffic problems on other city streets and may even necessitate their upgrading. While the expected congestion is considered to result in serious consequences, it was also stated that Winnipeg drivers may accept a reduced level of service downtown.

Commentary:

The Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit (1994) verify the statements made by the key informants. In addition, they state that if 25 to 35 percent of existing peak period traffic diverted to alternate routes, the level of service for general traffic would be comparable to its present level. Recalling Section 4.1A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - general traffic*, the street currently has the capacity to carry additional vehicles. In addition, it was stated in Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Avenue right-of-way*, that City of Winnipeg traffic engineers estimate that 45 percent of downtown traffic is using the roadway as a means to get from one area of the city to another, that is, passing through downtown. Therefore, given that the street would provide the same level of service for general traffic with only 56 percent of the present traffic passing through the downtown via Portage Avenue diverting

---

50 This speculation appears to be rather alarmist. It is unlikely that this would occur.

around it, it is evident that the resultant traffic congestion would not be unmanageable. Reiterating the key informants' comments, it is likely that initial congestion levels would decrease, following implementation of this proposal, as drivers establish alternative routes.

Streets and Transportation and Transit also noted that it would cost in the order of $1 million to reconfigure the Portage Avenue right-of-way.

In terms of the public's perception of this proposal, 94 out of 115 Winnipeg Free Press readers, responding to a simple survey sponsored by the Paper, are against the proposal to reconfigure the right-of-way[51]. It is suggested that respondents to this survey believed that the street already has too much congestion. However, these results are somewhat dubious due to the way the first survey question was worded[52]. It asked readers whether vehicle traffic should be reduced from four to two lanes on either side of the Avenue. Given that the curb lane is presently dominated by buses in the peak hours and is used as a loading zone in the midday, and given that establishing the second from the curb lane only for transit and bicycles in the proposal is optional, suggests that the question should have asked whether vehicle traffic should be reduced from four to three lanes. Instead, the question presents the proposal inaccurately and suggests a greater impact on general traffic flow than expected.

Those readers who were in favour of the proposal stated that it would be easier to cross the street, find parking, and possibly lead to empty stores being leased.

As was stated earlier, Centre Plan, the downtown planning initiative facilitated by the Planning Department, also endorses the scheme. It recommends that "funds be established in the 1995 capital budget to implement the Portage Avenue proposal"[53].

In contrast with the proposal simply to install parking meters along Portage Avenue, the reconfiguration of the right-of-way has the potential to significantly improve the pedestrian environment. As was stated earlier, shortening the distance pedestrians have

---

51 Wild, Stevens, FP readers pan plans for Portage Avenue (Winnipeg Free Press, January 16, 1995), page B2.

52 Wild, Stevens, Portage study gets the green light (Winnipeg Free Press, January 11, 1995).

53 Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Ideas* (City of Winnipeg, 1995), page 6.

to traverse from one side of the Avenue to the other, and providing better waiting areas for transit patrons that do not conflict with pedestrian through traffic would greatly enhance the street for those users. Section 1.3 *The Street As Place - places for people to walk and sit,* cites Allan Jacobs (1993) who states that a Great Street must be a place that people would explore as pedestrians. He notes that only as pedestrians do people come into close contact with the urban environment. The sidewalk, it is added, must be wide enough to permit people to walk at varying paces, including a leisurely walk, without a sense of overcrowding, or being alone. Jacobs also states that what distinguishes a Great Street is that it can accommodate transit users, drivers, and pedestrians, and provide an interesting setting.

While the proposal to install parking meters would impede the operation of Transit buses, the reconfiguration of Portage Avenue would improve the efficiency of Transit and the comfort of passengers. As was shown earlier, Transit plays a significant role in the study area. Transit contributes to the viability of the area and is responsible for as high as 60 percent of the person-movements along the roadway during the peak hours.

In contrast, automobiles, or general traffic, are responsible for as much as 41 percent of the person-movements during the peak hours (Table 3.6) yet they make up 93 percent of the traffic in these periods. And, as much as 45 percent of that traffic is using downtown Portage Avenue as means of getting from one area of the city to another.

Comparing the proposal to allow on-street parking with the reconfiguration of the right-of-way we see that the proposal to allow on-street parking, while addressing the problem of people perceiving there is a lack of parking in the area, offers limited opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment, and has a detrimental effect on Transit operations. The reconfiguration of the right-of-way addresses the perception problem regarding parking availability, offers a range of opportunities to provide pedestrian amenities, contributes to the efficiency and quality of service of Winnipeg Transit, and decreases the carrying capacity of downtown Portage Avenue. With regard to the

decreased carrying capacity, it must be reiterated that much of the through traffic on Portage Avenue could find alternate routes, thereby maintaining the present level of service. As well, having the downtown accommodate large traffic volumes, which supposedly ensures its viability through high visibility, results in the status quo for downtown Portage Avenue. Given the poor quality pedestrian environment of Portage Avenue in the downtown, there is little incentive for the motorists to stop and utilize the area.

Clearly, the proposal to widen the sidewalks at bus stops, narrow the number of through lanes by two, and provide on-street, metered, parallel parking would be the most effective way to increase the pedestrian orientation of Portage Avenue and its potential to be a Great Street. This action would directly address two of the problems defined in Section 4.1A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way.* It would address the perception that there is a lack of parking; and it would address the poor quality pedestrian environment. As well, it indirectly mitigates the problem of safety, particularly the presence of panhandlers. By making the area more amenable to pedestrians, it is likely that the number of people along the sidewalks would increase, thereby reducing the visibility of the panhandlers. Among the key informants, a common response to the perception that the area is unsafe is that there must be more people on the streets of downtown Winnipeg. The self-policing and sense of safety inherent in large numbers of people downtown is seen as a powerful tool against this urban problem. Further to this, Allan Jacobs (1993) cited in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - places for people to walk and sit*, and Jane Jacobs (1961) state that a street that is constantly used by pedestrians is the most effective way to create a safe and secure environment.

The following sub-section discusses another strategy to increase the attractiveness of the pedestrian environment and, therefore, decrease peoples' perceptions that the area is unsafe.

landscaping

The study area merchants have several suggestions regarding landscaping improvements that could be important for the Portage Avenue right-of-way. There was concern that Portage Avenue is not well lit for pedestrians. If lighting is increased, not only would the area improve visually, but there would be an added sense of security, and to make the sidewalks more attractive there could also be more trees. One merchant described the current landscaping as "just OK"; another said that recent improvements, such as trees and sidewalk paving, have been good.

In Section 4.1A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - the pedestrian environment,* it was noted that key informants are also concerned with low lighting levels along Portage Avenue. Installing pedestrian-scaled lighting, similar to that found in Osborne Village and Corydon Avenue was a suggestion made by this group of survey respondents.

Commentary:

As part of the scheme to reconfigure the right-of-way, Winnipeg Transit proposes to install not only heated bus shelters at bus stops, but an integrated set of amenities, including transit signage, benches, newspaper box holders, planters, notice boards, and public telephones. These amenities have been provided at many Transit stops throughout the city as a means of improving the waiting areas for Transit patrons[54]. As with the merchants and informants, the Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit (1994) state that other streetscape elements could be added (whether or not the right-of way is reconfigured), such as sidewalk paving patterns, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and trees.

Allan Jacobs (1993) and Cyril Paumier (1988) identify several landscaping elements that can contribute to the pedestrian environment of the street. Elements that help

---

54 The style, or aesthetic of the design of this integrated set of amenities may not be appropriate for Portage Avenue. It may be more suitable to adopt an aesthetic which refers to the historical significance of Portage Avenue.

make a street an interesting and comfortable place for pedestrians, Jacobs and Paumier confirm, include pedestrian level lighting, trees, benches, and to a lesser degree, paving patterns, tree grates, manhole covers, fire hydrants, and street and traffic signs.

As was discussed in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place*, high levels of lighting help create a safe environment for people walking along the sidewalks, and they add to the visual interest of the area by emphasizing the linearity of the street. The best streetlights, Jacobs states, are white glass globes, visible in the daytime (Figure 4.2). To be scaled to the pedestrian, Jacobs adds, they must be no more than 20 feet in height. These lights are in addition to the "cobra" lights required for traffic safety.

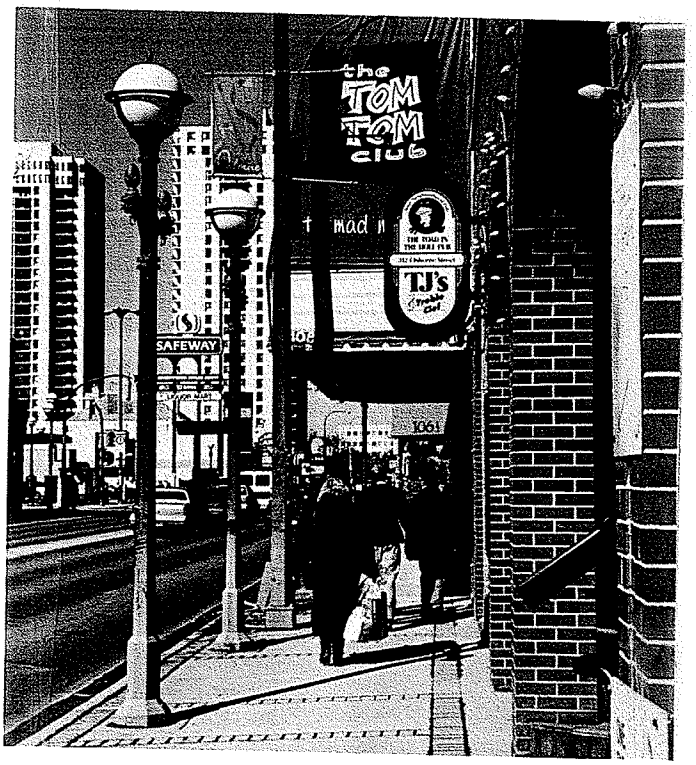

Figure 4.3. Pedestrian scaled opaque globes increase lighting levels and are highly visible during the day, Osborne Village.

Deciduous trees are one of the most effective elements to enhance the quality of a street for pedestrians. Jacobs states that for a single row of trees to be effective, they must

be at no more than 25 foot intervals. For two or more rows of trees, the spacing could be greater without losing their effectiveness. Furthermore, there should be no discontinuities; tree plantings are most effective when they extend from corner to corner, not stopping for specific land uses along the street. While trees may reduce the visibility of commercial signs, the benefits they provide to the pedestrian environment are of greater importance. A dense row of trees provides an effective separation between the roadway and the sidewalk. In addition, a continuous canopy of leaves provides shade and some shelter from rain. In the winter, sunlight warms the sidewalks (psychologically, at least). A row of trees also helps to define and unify a street, particularly when the buildings vary in size and architectural styles. Furthermore, the leaf and shadow patterns on the sidewalk and building faces contribute to the visual interest of the street.

While landscaping improvements to the present right-of-way can be implemented, this action would be most effective when combined with the functional improvements such as increasing the efficiency of transit buses and separating the transit waiting areas from the pedestrian through-traffic, that would be realized by the reconfiguration of the right-of-way.

parking signage

Besides permitting parking on Portage Avenue, either on the present right-of-way, or on a reconfigured street, the key informants presented another action to mitigate the perception that there is a lack of parking in the area.

Figure 3.6, which identifies land uses in and near the study area, indicates that there are a number of parkades in the vicinity of downtown Portage Avenue. In addition there are a number of surface lots which contribute to the inventory of parking spaces near downtown Portage Avenue. Lots are located north of the Investors Building and north of the TD Centre. Along Ellice Avenue, north of the study area, lots are located between Edmonton and Carlton, at Donald, and between Garry Street and Notre Dame Avenue.

Along Graham Avenue, south of the study area, lots are located at Kennedy, at Carlton, between Carlton and Hargrave, between Smith and Garry, and between Garry and Fort Streets.

Given the numerous parking lots, the key informants suggest that standardized, easily recognizable signage be placed along Portage Avenue to direct people to the lots and garages. Furthermore, it is suggested that pamphlets, identifying the location of parking, be distributed to downtown users, and to would-be-patrons.

Commentary:

Centre Plan supports the improved signage for parking. It recommends that "a consistent, identifiable parking logo and standardized signage"[55] be established to direct drivers to garages and lots.

increased police presence

In addressing the perception that the area is unsafe, it is believed that the most effective strategy is to make the area more attractive for pedestrians. Reiterating, it is assumed that an improved pedestrian environment will draw more people to the area; an increased presence of people walking along the sidewalks is inherently safer than an area with few people.

Nevertheless, some merchants would like to see an increased police presence on Portage Avenue. One merchant said that permanent security is required at the Portage Place bus shelter on Portage Avenue. The storefront police station on Portage Avenue is seen as a positive step in increasing safety.

The key informants also commented on the safety issue. While the storefront police station on Portage Avenue was established to give a sense of security, it was stated that too large a police presence downtown would create the undesirable effect of a "police-state" atmosphere.

---

55 Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Ideas* (City of Winnipeg, 1995), page 6.

Commentary:

The City of Winnipeg recently passed a bylaw to restrict when and where panhandling can take place. However, civil rights lawyers predict that the bylaw will not withstand a Charter of Rights and Freedoms challenge[56].

Clearly, increasing the police presence and restricting panhandling are complex social issues. Resolving them is beyond the scope of the practicum.

4.2A Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses

The strengths and weaknesses of the land uses in the study area are explored in this Section. The issues related to the land uses along downtown Portage Avenue are identified from the results of the survey of key informants and study area merchants. Reference is made to Section 3.2 *The Study Area*, and to Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg*. In this Section the cost of parking, the buildings along downtown Portage Avenue, retailing and other activities within the study area, and Window Park are considered. As was apparent in the previous Sections in this Chapter, issues pertaining to the right-of-way have an effect on the adjacent land uses. It is shown in this Section that problems manifested in the study area land uses affect the Portage Avenue right-of-way.

cost of parking

The cost of parking was cited as a significant parking issue in the Portage Avenue area by nine study area merchants. In contrast, five merchants stated that the cost of parking is not a relevant issue. Many of these merchants mentioned that the "Easy Streets" parking token program has helped address this problem. Of note is the fact that not all the merchants interviewed participate in the program. It was mentioned that customers

56 Martin, Nick, *Begging bylaw needs some help, police chief says* (Winnipeg Free Press, January 10,1995).

complain about the cost of parking; one respondent remarked that people go to suburban shopping centres in the evening, thereby making use of free parking. Paying for parking was seen as resulting in a reduced number of customers "just browsing"; those going downtown to shop are serious about making a purchase.

The key informants also stated that the problem of the cost of parking is that the downtown cannot compete with the free parking provided by the suburban shopping centres. It was specifically mentioned that the cost of short-term parking is too high. However, one informant stated that the cost of parking is not too high as it merely reflects the expense of providing such a facility.

Commentary:

As with the availability of parking, the cost of downtown parking is seen as a significant disadvantage by many Winnipeggers. Tables A.3 to A.5 and Figure 3.4 of Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg- transportation and parking*, and Table A.11 of Section 3.2 *The Study area - parking*, indicate that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the cost of downtown parking. Table A.11, which summarizes survey findings of shoppers within the study area, correlates with the surveys pertaining to the downtown at large. Therefore, these various sources of data are relevant to the study area and emphasize the widespread nature of this issue. It must be noted, however, that the City has reinstated free metered parking on Saturdays, with a two hour limit to prevent downtown employees from occupying those spaces. It is anticipated that this action will do much to reduce the cost for downtown patrons and mitigate this parking problem.

buildings along downtown Portage Avenue

Study area merchants commented on the visual interest of the buildings along Portage Avenue.

Regarding the architecture of downtown Portage Avenue, some merchants noted that the diversity of buildings is good and that the area's architecture is interesting.

However, a few merchants stated that buildings along Portage Avenue are "dull". In terms of maintaining building exteriors it was stated that the buildings across from Portage Place, between Vaughan and Carlton Streets, need repairs, as they have deteriorated. The other problem area identified is east of Portage Place, most noticeably the north side of Portage. The Portage Village Inn (at the north-west corner of Portage and Donald) is considered by merchants to be another building which detracts from the area (Figure 4.4). It was stated that the problem with the derelict buildings is that they reduce peoples' willingness to come downtown. By contrast, it was also stated that buildings in the area are maintained "half-decently", at least; while there are better stores along Portage and up-keep is improved, it was cautioned that the area is "not healthy". Some merchants explicitly mentioned that the vacant buildings are a problem for the area.

Figure 4.4. The Portage Village Inn, at the corner of Portage and Donald.

In addition, many study area merchants noted that their lease rates are reasonable and that they have a fair amount of space in which to operate their businesses (Portage Place excluded).

The key informants also stated that the greatest concentration of vacant and run-down buildings is between Portage Place and Main Street. This has been attributed to the development of commercial office space, retail space, and the off-grade pedestrian network in the Portage Place and Portage and Main vicinities, and the recent "world-wide" decline in real-estate demand, following the growth period of the early 1980's. The result of this activity has been the concentration of activity at these two nodes, at the expense of the remainder of the street.

As with the merchants, the key informants stated that several empty store-fronts and derelict buildings characterize this area, including the old Capital Theatre entrance on Portage Avenue. In addition, certain informants also stated that the Portage Village Inn is troublesome to several people in the area due to its clientele. The run-down appearance of Portage Avenue, particularly in this area, is seen as one of the contributing factors to the perception of downtown being unsafe. It must also be noted that the buildings across from Portage Place could also benefit from improvements.

On the positive side, it was noted that both the Paris Building and the Curry Building are noteworthy historic structures which add to the character of the area. As well, attractive lease rates of commercial space on Portage Avenue has led to a decrease in vacancies.

Commentary:

Section 3.2 *The Study Area - land use*, verifies the perceptions of the merchants and key informants. As was stated, Figure 3.6 indicates where storefront vacancies exist. This information was collected by a visual inspection of the ground floor of Portage Avenue properties, conducted in January, 1995. These findings confirm that the greatest concentration of vacancies within the study area is east of Portage Place. The blocks between Donald and Smith Streets, and between Garry and Fort - the eastern boundary of the study area, have the highest number of storefront vacancies.

retailing and other activities

There were many comments made by the study area merchants regarding retailing and other activities along downtown Portage Avenue. The merchants commented on the location of their businesses in relation to the rest of the city, the variety of stores and merchandise, their clientele, and the area's use at night.

Five study area merchants cited the central location of the area in relation to the city as a whole, as a positive quality. Another positive quality of the area, noted by four merchants, is the diversity of the area. The diversity adds interest to Portage Avenue and the variety of shopping in the area attracts people to the area. It was said that the broad selection of consumer goods could off-set the cost of parking downtown. In addition, the concentration of similar businesses in one area was also noted to be positive for the area because of the selection of similar goods and competitive pricing that attracts customers. Nevertheless, it was stated by a few merchants that the Portage Avenue area is lacking the critical mass of retailers needed to make it a destination attraction.

Regarding the clientele , 11 study area merchants revealed that one of the strengths of Portage Avenue for businesses located there is the large number of people who work downtown and shop during, or after, work. It is perceived that many customers are downtown workers, described as office workers, business people and executives. Five study area merchants stated that people from outside Winnipeg are often destined for Portage Avenue and Portage Place. Merchants described this group as comprising tourists, conventioneers (often coming to the area from the Winnipeg Convention Centre), and people in Winnipeg for football games and concerts. It was speculated that 25 percent of customers were from outside the city. Two merchants noted that students of the University of Winnipeg, located two blocks west of the study area, patronized several retail establishments along Portage Avenue. Two merchants, as well, indicated that their businesses are specialty, or niche, stores having both a wide reputation and clientele. It was also stated that downtown residents are another type of customer characteristic of

downtown Portage Avenue. It is of note that a large percentage of people who patronize the area are from outside of the city. Given that they are not familiar with the location of the various parking lots and garages, this underlines the importance of identifying parking locations, as specified in Section 4.1B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - parking signage.* As well, it shows that the area is well known, not only by Winnipeggers, but also by visitors to the city.

However, certain respondents noted that more independent retailers are required along Portage Avenue. It was stated that other downtowns have a critical mass of retailers, unique from retailers found in suburban shopping centres. What is needed in the area is something different from the suburbs such as unique stores and independent (local) merchants - an eclectic assortment of businesses. Granville Island in Vancouver was cited as an example. It was cautioned that without these qualities people have few reasons to come downtown.

It was also suggested that more activity is needed in the city centre. Activities such as those held at The Forks and the Corydon Avenue Festival of Wine and Roses could be brought to the area to make it alive and entertaining. It was suggested that organizers should experiment by creating a market atmosphere or a farmer's market.

This is related to the sentiment that was expressed that the downtown is underused at night. It was noted that few people are present downtown in the evenings. Some merchants identified the lack of night life as a weakness of downtown Portage Avenue.

The need for activities and attractions to bring people to the area is indicative of the importance of the study area land uses in making a Great Street. As Gehl (1987) stated, businesses that have a wide appeal tend to be the most interesting. Jacobs (1993) noted that a Great Street has an appeal to a variety of people. This is an important factor when considering the area at night. As was stated earlier, a street well-used by pedestrians is far safer than one that is deserted.

As with the study area merchants, the key informants stated that the downtown is easily accessible from all areas of the city. This is because the city of Winnipeg is not too decentralized, which ensures relatively short travel times to the city centre. Related to this is the central location of Portage Avenue; it was elaborated that the success of Portage Avenue is central to the success of downtown Winnipeg. Portage Avenue has long been the most important retail street in the city, emphasized by its reputation in Canada. Clearly, Portage Avenue is the showcase street for the City of Winnipeg, offering high exposure to those land-uses on the Avenue.

However, it was noted by the key informants that Winnipeg is not unlike other North American cities in that the downtown must compete with suburban shopping centres and large single-function suburban retailers, such as Office Depot. Therefore, the task at hand is to keep the existing retailing in downtown healthy. Furthermore, certain key informants stated that the future of downtown is other than retail. Areas of opportunity include arts and culture, education, and urban tourism[57]. Already, several educational institutions, including the University of Winnipeg, have established a presence on Portage Avenue.

Increasing the diversity of Portage Avenue was seen by many respondents as an important strategy to bring more people to the area. While it was noted that the people in the Portage Avenue vicinity are diverse, including buskers, students, office workers, and residents, the types of land-uses along the street could be expanded. Portage Avenue, described as the main downtown shopping district, was seen to lack restaurants, boutiques, and independent retailers with street-fronting shops. Only one key informant believed that there is an opportunity for residential development along the street. Another suggested that buildings must be provided to attract people downtown; people must be convinced to come downtown; and they must be well-serviced while they are using the area.

---

57 Surprisingly, housing was not noted to be an area of opportunity for the downtown. This is a relevant omission because of the potential benefits of a large downtown population, such as a local clientele for downtown businesses and a significant presence of pedestrians. However, the large traffic volumes on Portage Avenue detract from the area's potential to provide a pleasant residential environment.

Commentary:

Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg - land use*, supports the positive statements made by study area merchants and key informants. As is shown in Table A.8, the most frequent purpose for Winnipeg residents to use downtown is for shopping. In addition, Tables A.3 to A.5, and Figure 3.4, indicate that shopping opportunities provided downtown significantly contribute to a positive perception of the area. In addition, Section 3.2 *The Study Area - land use*, indicates that shoppers in the study area are attracted by the specific retail uses found there. Table A.11, summarizing findings from a 1988 study and a 1984 survey, indicates that the variety of stores and merchandise is the best feature of shopping downtown. Other positive aspects of the retail uses in the area, also identified in Table A.11, are the distinctive specialty stores, the size and depth of the major department stores, and the close proximity of the stores.

There is little evidence in the findings presented in Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg* or Section 3.2 *The Study Area* to support or refute the statements made by the key informants and merchants that the area is lacking in diversity, independent retailers, or night life. However, given the unique nature of the downtown, as described in Section 2.1 *Rationale for Internalizing Pedestrian Space - suitability downtown*, it is suggested that the study area merchants and key informants recognize that the downtown Portage Avenue area cannot offer consumers similar amenities as those found in suburban shopping centres - free parking and with all stores connected in a climate-controlled environment. Therefore, the downtown can complete with the suburban shopping centres only by building upon it uniqueness from the suburban centres, that is, its diversity and it collection of local businesses. This point is emphasized by the Urban Land Institute, in their 1988 publication *Designing the Successful Downtown*, cited in Section 1.2 *The Downtown as Marketplace - attractiveness of the downtown.* With regard to the lack of night life, casual observation of the study area verifies that downtown Portage Avenue is not active after hours. There are not many restaurants in the area; and the downtown theatres and night

clubs are generally located in the north-eastern portion of the downtown, within the Exchange area.

Window Park

Located on the north side of Portage Avenue, immediately east of Portage Place, Window Park (sometimes referred to as Air Canada Park) is the only permanent park within the study area. A temporary park, consisting of plantings and pre-cast elements on a gravel base, occupies a vacant lot between Kennedy and Edmonton Streets, on the south side of Portage Avenue.

Seven study area merchants generally perceived Window Park to be a positive contribution to the area; it was described as being pleasant, clean, as well as "a bit sterile". However it was cautioned that it is sometimes a panhandler's hangout and therefore must be maintained and kept free of transients. There was also the neutral response that the park is not seen as an issue for marketability for business. One Portage Avenue restaurant noted that the hot dog carts at Window Park reduce its summertime business.

The key informants stated that Window Park is important in that it has created a unique atmosphere on Portage Avenue. While concern was noted that it has created a gap in the urban fabric (continuity of buildings), it has provided a venue for activities and events, bringing people downtown, or at least, out-doors. While it provides a place for concerts, for example, it has other positive characteristics as well. The park is permeable, allowing people to make short-cuts through it; and Window Park provides a physical escape from the street, and an auditory escape from traffic noise by means of a fountain. However, concern was expressed over how to use the space in the winter. It was also stated that a larger open space would be beneficial because it would facilitate bigger events on Portage Avenue.

There was a divergence of opinion as to whether more open spaces were needed on Portage Avenue. One key informant suggested that there should be parks at every

intersection on Portage. However, the general consensus was that additional park space would be a detriment to Portage Avenue. Intense land-uses were preferred because of their pedestrian activity-generating potential and because they maintain an urban continuity. Furthermore, more green space could dilute the vitality and uniqueness of Window Park.

Commentary:

As is shown in the survey results, the park is a positive contribution to the area. Observation reveals that Window Park is well-used, particularly at lunch-hour in the summer. This can be partly attributed to the ample seating provided. William Whyte (1988) verifies this through his research on urban spaces. He discovered that there is a relationship between the number of people using a space and the amount of seating provided.

The problem of panhandlers is not as acute as on the right-of-way, as discussed in Section 4.1A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way - safety*. This may be due to the significant number of people using the park. In terms of the size of the park, it would be an expensive proposition to expand, given that the most practical adjacent property is occupied by a six storey building.

4.2B Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses

In the previous Section, the cost of parking, the buildings along downtown Portage Avenue, retailing and other activities, and Window Park were all identified as areas of concern with respect to the study area land uses. A summary of these issues identifies the concerns that must be addressed in the solutions associated with the study area land uses.

Regarding the cost of parking, it is evident that this is perceived as a significant drawback to Winnipeggers considering using the downtown, and the study area in particular. It is expected, however, that the recent reinstatement (March 1995) of free

metered parking on Saturdays will do much to alleviate this problem, particularly in the study area where 24 percent of respondents to a 1988 shopper study cited the street as their parking location (see Table 3.8).

The most significant problems with the buildings along downtown Portage Avenue are the large number of vacancies and dilapidated exteriors. Concern was also expressed over the restriction of sunlight on the north sidewalk of Portage Avenue caused by tall buildings along the south side of the Avenue.

In terms of retailing and other activities, it was noted that while the area offers a diversity of stores to area patrons, there is a lack of independent retailers to make the area a destination which can effectively compete with the suburban shopping centres. In addition, it was noted that the limited opportunities to use the area in the evening have led to the sidewalks being nearly deserted at night.

Window Park was seen as a positive contribution to the area. It was stated though, that a larger public open space would facilitate the staging of bigger events.

As with the Portage Avenue right-of-way, a number of solutions to address these issues are determined, based on the survey of key informants and study area merchants, and the downtown initiative, Centre Plan. Reference is made to the urban design theories in Chapter One in order to direct the solutions towards the goal of re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street. It must be noted that certain solutions, such as the lowering of the allowable building height, to be implemented along the land uses adjacent to Portage Avenue, address problems associated with the right-of-way. This emphasizes the interconnectedness of the right-of-way with the uses along it.

standardized parking rates and "Easy Streets"

As was stated in Section 4.2A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses - cost of parking*, many study area merchants support the "Easy Streets" parking token program instituted by the Downtown Winnipeg Business

Improvement Zone in October of 1991[58]. The program is designed to make parking less expensive in the area. When customers make a purchase of $20 or more at participating downtown businesses, they receive a blue "Easy Streets" token upon request. As well, participating downtown professionals distribute the tokens at their own discretion. The tokens can be used at over 80 downtown parking facilities and more than 2200 parking meters at $1 value. In addition, Winnipeg Transit accepts the tokens at full fare and certain taxi services accept them at their $1 value. The program is funded by all the participants. Businesses purchase the tokens for $1 each at participating financial institutions; and those that accept the tokens redeem them for 90 cents each. Of the 10 ten cent difference, four cents go to the financial institution as a handling charge and six cents is reinvested into the program for marketing initiatives.

In terms of the key informants, one solution that was put forward to address the cost of parking issues for downtown patrons is the standardization of parking rates for the various downtown lots and garages. Although this may result in only certain locations lowering their fees, it would make it easier for the user to know in advance how much it will cost. It was also suggested by certain key informants that a comprehensive parking validation program should be implemented. The program would require the participation of merchants and owners of parking facilities. When customers make purchases, the merchant stamps their parking stubs and pays for part or all of their parking cost.

Commentary:

Centre Plan also addresses the parking cost issue in the downtown, and in particular, the cost of short-term parking. Centre Plan recommends that merchandising packages should be developed which offer discounts on parking to customers. As well, it is also recommended that suburban parking fees be introduced to narrow the gap between the cost of driving to a suburban location and the downtown[59].

---

58 Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone, *1992/93 Annual Report* (Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone, 1993), page 8.

59 It is unlikely that Winnipeg residents and, therefore, their city councillors would support such a proposal.

Given that the "Easy Streets" program is already in place, it is unnecessary to develop an additional program to alleviate the cost of parking. Instead, the effectiveness of the program could be improved by encouraging more businesses to participate, lowering the minimum purchase amount to, say, $10, and by increasing peoples' awareness of the program.

The other actions, that is, the standardization of parking rates and introducing suburban parking fees would also alleviate this problem. The latter action, it can be speculated, would have a marked effect on peoples' perception of the cost of parking in the downtown, including the study area.

Allan Jacobs (1993) states that a necessary quality of a Great Street is that it is convenient to access for not only pedestrians and transit users, but also for motorists. In addition, Cyril Paumier (1988) specifically notes that, for an entertainment or retail area to be attractive to motorists, short-term parking should be provided that is within or near the area, easy to locate, and affordable. Paumier verifies the conclusions made above, stating that a validation program should be implemented to reduce costs (see Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - accessibility).*

Expanding the "Easy Streets" program, standardizing parking rates, and introducing suburban parking fees, effective strategies to reduce the real or perceived high cost of parking in or near the study area, would contribute to improving the accessibility of downtown Portage Avenue. Improving the accessibility would help generate the potential for downtown Portage Avenue to become a Great Street.

creative use of commercial signage

One of the specific suggestions to improve retailing on Portage Avenue made by certain study area merchants and key informants is that commercial signage regulations be relaxed. This would, it was stated, enable merchants to put up a variety of signs which would add to the visual interest in the area.

Commentary:

Centre Plan verifies the respondents' conclusions by recommending that the quality and effectiveness of signage be improved in the downtown in general[60]. Cited in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - visual interest,* Allan Jacobs (1993) states that a carefully implemented policy on signage could enable businesses' signs to unify an area and add to the visual richness of the place.

While regulations do not appear to be excessively restrictive, it would be add to the visual interest of the area if merchants invested in the creative use of signage.

allowable building height

One key informant pointed out that it is important to have set-back/height restrictions for buildings on the south side of the street to ensure that sunlight reaches the pedestrian (and retailing) environment on the north side.

Commentary:

Regarding allowable building height, the bulk range along downtown Portage Avenue is designated as Bulk Range Four. While this zoning establishes a maximum Floor Area Ratio (Total Floor Area÷Lot Area) of six, it permits a maximum building height of 15 storeys[61]. Figure 4.5 illustrates that a 15 story building on the south side of Portage Avenue would prevent sunlight from reaching pedestrians on the north side of Portage Avenue, at midday, from early autumn to late spring. This conclusion is determined by assuming a floor to floor height of 12 feet, a right-of-way width of 131 feet, no set-back, and a pedestrian height of six feet. Given these dimensions, and knowing that the angle between a perpendicular line across the right-of-way and due north is 30°, it is calculated that when the noon sun is no higher than 49° above the horizon, the pedestrian environment on the north side of Portage Avenue is in shade. Since at equinox the noon sun is 40°

---

60 Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Ideas* (City of Winnipeg, 1995), page 6.

61 City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law* (City of Winnipeg, 1988).

above the horizon[62], it can be concluded that the regulations do not ensure that sunlight reaches the pedestrian environment.

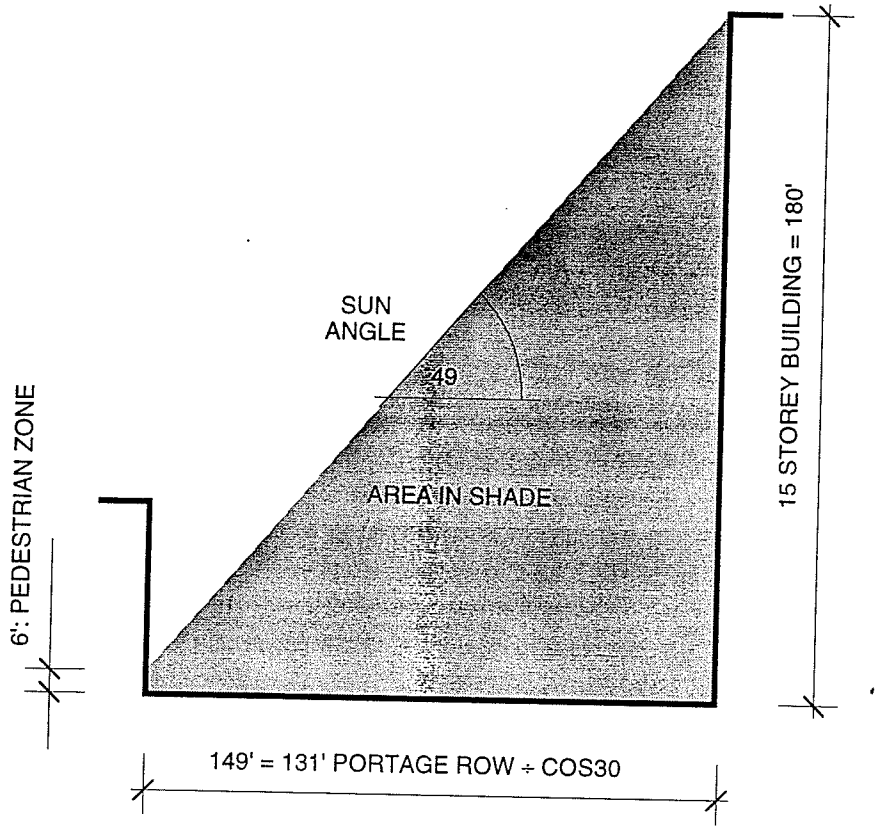

Figure 4.5. Allowing a building height of 15 storeys does not ensure that sunlight will reach the north sidewalk of Portage Avenue during the winter months.

The importance of admitting sunlight to the pedestrian environment is emphasized by both Jan Gehl (1987) and Allan Jacobs (1993). Referred to in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place - responsiveness to climate,* Jacobs states that it is important to ensure that sunlight is not blocked by buildings, particularly in cooler climates during the winter months.

Therefore, any new buildings along the south side of Portage Avenue should be regulated so as not prevent sunlight in the winter from reaching the north sidewalk of Portage Avenue.

---

62 Thater, Hans, Manitoba Planetarium, a personal communication, February 1995.

building renovations

There was a lack of suggestions by study area merchants for strategies to address the land use problems of vacant and derelict buildings, and the need for increased diversity and independent retailers. As well, only certain key informants responded to the problem of run-down buildings by suggesting that it is the responsibility of the landlords to repair their properties in the study area.

Nevertheless, these problems must be addressed. By renovating the buildings, particularly those that are presently vacant, several qualities of a Great Street can be re-established along downtown Portage Avenue. As was stated in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place*, the provision of canopies or awnings provides pedestrians with a sheltered environment; the restoration of historic facades contributes to the visual interest of the street, and the conversion of vacant buildings to active storefronts increases the transparency and diversity of land uses along the street. The means of facilitating these renovations is presented in Section 5.2 *North Portage Development Corporation's Role in Implementing the Solutions - create.*

4.3A Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place

As with parking issues, much was said by both the study area merchants and the key informants regarding Portage Place's effect on the study area and the role that it can play in making downtown Portage Avenue a Great Street.

Regarding the study area merchants, four respondents stated that the facility has had no effect on their businesses, and nine respondents stated that Portage Place is positive for business in the area. The mixed use and central location of Portage Place were cited as strengths of the project; and three of the merchants cited the indoor parking as a benefit. However, it was stated by one of the merchants that Portage Place shifted the blight that was originally on the north side of Portage Avenue across the street to the south side of the

street. The project was described as a "disaster", a very "cold-looking" structure, and as having visually destroyed Portage Avenue and ruined the "ambiance" of the street.

The most widespread positive comments, made by half the study area merchants, centred around the off-grade pedestrian network and the internal mall in Portage Place. It was said that the facility eliminates peoples' reluctance to shop, draws customers from various places in the downtown - including apartment complexes, connects people working downtown with an all-season walkway, and is a positive addition to the area because it links The Bay and Eaton's. The facility was described as convenient, warm, and free of conflicts with vehicles. Those merchants with businesses on the pedestrian network, or in the internal mall of Portage Place, often noted that there is a large volume of pedestrian traffic using the facility and therefore passing by their establishments; and certain businesses have display windows on the network to increase their exposure. It was also stated that the variety of stores in Portage Place contributes to shopping opportunities in the area. The most noteworthy positive statement was that the facility has increased the number of people in the downtown. However, some merchants believe that this is not the case, as is discussed below.

It is of note that, of the merchants who commented on their willingness to relocate their businesses from their on-street locations to Portage Place, and vice versa, none considered this a wise move. One of the reasons for merchants not to relocate their businesses is that customers are familiar with their locations. Merchants in Portage Place would not move to a Portage Avenue storefront shop because Portage Place advertising is important, or because the pedestrian traffic in the mall is high. However, one tenant of Portage Place noted that rent is twice that on the street. If it increased too much in Portage Place relocating onto Portage Avenue would be considered. Merchants with Portage Avenue storefronts oppose moving into Portage Place because the restrictions in the shopping centre impede their independence, and lease rates are too high, especially for businesses requiring a large space. One restaurateur on Portage Avenue cited the food

court as the reason it would not move to Portage Place. This is because of the no-smoking policy and the competition of other restaurateurs in the Portage Place food court. These findings indicate that there is a high degree of commitment among study area merchants to their present locations - either on Portage Avenue, or in Portage Place.

The key informants' comments regarding Portage Place were quite consistent, and tend to verify the perceptions of the study area merchants. The importance of Portage Place to the city as a retail centre is made clear when considering the fact that The Bay, Portage Place, Eaton's, and Eaton Place are connected via the off-grade pedestrian network. Taken as a whole, the "Big Four", as they are referred to, make up the largest shopping centre in Winnipeg. And the central location of Portage Place makes it the anchor of retailing in the downtown.

It was stated by certain informants that Portage Place replaced several run-down buildings along Portage Avenue. The facility has brought more texture, people, and commerce into the area than previously. This is evident in Edmonton Court which provides the city with a "reasonably nice" plaza. It was stated that elements such as this enrich the "civic presence" of the city.

The other primary benefit of Portage Place has been the skywalk linkages with The Bay and Eaton's. This connection has amounted to an enormous expansion of the off-grade pedestrian network developing in the city's downtown. The system facilitates pedestrian movement to several areas of the city centre in a climate-controlled environment. Retail, office, entertainment, and residential uses are connected by this system. The ease of pedestrian access to various downtown facilities was noted by several key informants to be a major factor in bringing more people to the downtown. The skywalks provide the downtown with a competitive advantage over the rest of the city. As an example, it was stated that seniors living in buildings linked with the system are not house-bound in the winter. It was also stated that the Lion's Club seniors residence, to be built north of the Post Office, will be connected with the southern portion of the pedestrian network, and, in

turn, with Portage Place. However, one informant stated that while it is important to complete the off-grade pedestrian network as planned, expansion of the system beyond that would be undesirable due to the negative effects associated with the skywalks (see below). It was also stated that the skywalk network should be kept open longer each day to increase its convenience.

The economic benefits of the walkway system were illustrated with the Newport Centre, an office building which was connected with the Portage Place walkway system. One key informant stated that the property was valued at $7 million and had a 50 percent vacancy rate in 1986. In 1990, three years after the opening of Portage Place, the value increased to $16 million and the vacancy rate decreased to five percent. Clearly, network-connected establishments derive significant economic benefits from the climate-controlled walkway. It was stated that had the walkway been located in the lane to the south of the building as was originally considered, instead of through it, the benefits would not have been as great. Given these economic benefits, a few key informants stated that more buildings should be integrated with the pedestrian system. This statement was acknowledging the harsh winters experienced in Winnipeg.

Commentary:

The above summary, of the largely positive perceptions of Portage Place, suggests that the benefits of the facility, with its internal pedestrian components, are realized by businesses located within Portage Place, or connected to it via the off-grade pedestrian network, and by users of these internal pedestrian spaces.

It will be shown below that the problems of the facility, as it relates to the study area, are manifested along the Portage Avenue right-of-way which, in turn, affects the adjacent land uses. Since the re-establishment of Portage Avenue as a Great Street is the focus of this practicum, Section 4.3A defines existing problems, in order to develop strategies to mitigate or reverse the detrimental effects of this facility on downtown Portage Avenue, and take advantage of its positive features.

street connections

Three study area merchants commented that the connections between the off-grade pedestrian route within Portage Place, and the sidewalk on Portage Avenue, are good for business. Three other merchants, however, expressed concern over the facility. It was remarked that additional street connections are required, and that the existing connections are not appealing to users. The latter problem, it was suggested, causes people to remain within Portage Place and the pedestrian network it connects with, instead of going down to street level.

The key informants also noted that the existing linkages between the second-level walkway and the sidewalk are beneficial to those businesses not connected with the pedestrian network. However, they too recognize the need to improve the existing linkages in order to encourage people to use the sidewalks.

Commentary:

The importance of providing clearly visible, accessible linkages between the second level and the sidewalk is emphasized by the changing attitude among Calgary's planners, as explained in Section 2.4 *Changing Attitudes About Internalized Pedestrian Space - positive examples*. Glenn Lyons, Don Sinclair, and Sophia Lum (1988) note that the City requires that skywalk bridges be equipped with stairs at both ends, adjacent to the sidewalk. As was stated, this allows for pedestrians on the skywalk to locate street access points easier, facilitates greater public surveillance of the pedestrian network linkages to the street, and, therefore, helps to discourage vandalism and crime.

alternative pedestrian routes

Among the study area merchants, six remarked that the internal walkway system has removed pedestrians from Portage Avenue sidewalks. Some merchants, however, were not greatly concerned with this problem. It was said that the system has not totally affected business because specialty stores have a reputation and distinct clientele, that

shoppers at Portage Place know where they are located, and that, in general, the facility has not greatly disrupted business. The predominant statement was that Portage Place is the primary pedestrian route, diverting traffic off Portage Avenue sidewalks.

The key informants also stated that the internal walkway system of Portage Place has a detrimental effect on Portage Avenue. The attractiveness of the climate-controlled walkway system and the internalized pedestrian mall in Portage Place has caused a significant shift in pedestrian traffic patterns on Portage Avenue. The result, it was stated, has been a decrease in pedestrian activity at-grade, on Portage Avenue, with a concentration of pedestrian traffic within the skywalks and Portage Place. It was stated that this has not helped those establishments not connected with the pedestrian network and outside of Portage Place. Furthermore, it was stated that Portage Place has contributed to the perception of the downtown being unsafe by reducing the number of people using the sidewalks.

Commentary:

Table 3.10 of Section 3.2 *The Study Area - Portage Place*, verifies the conclusions of the study area merchants and key informants. As was stated in this sub-section, street-level pedestrian counts were 32 percent less in the 1988 study as compared to the 1984 survey. Furthermore, David Milder (1987) states that, in general, off-grade pedestrian networks have a significant impact on street level. As was stated in Section 2.3 *Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks - detriment to public places*, pedestrian networks facilitate easy access to many parts of downtown, causing people to use them year round. The result is that sidewalks become under-used, giving way to marginal land uses and, therefore, an undermining of the viability of the street in terms of pedestrian use and active frontage.

Figure 4.6, below, indicates the extent of the second level pedestrian route created by Portage Place, between The Bay and Eaton's. The ground level route is also quite extensive, located directly below the off-grade route, within the three-block internal

complex. Thus, Portage Place presents pedestrians with two alternatives to the exterior street. The linkage form of the internal mall and the off-grade pedestrian network within Portage Place, competes with Portage Avenue (see Section 1.4 *Urban Design Approaches - linkage theory).*

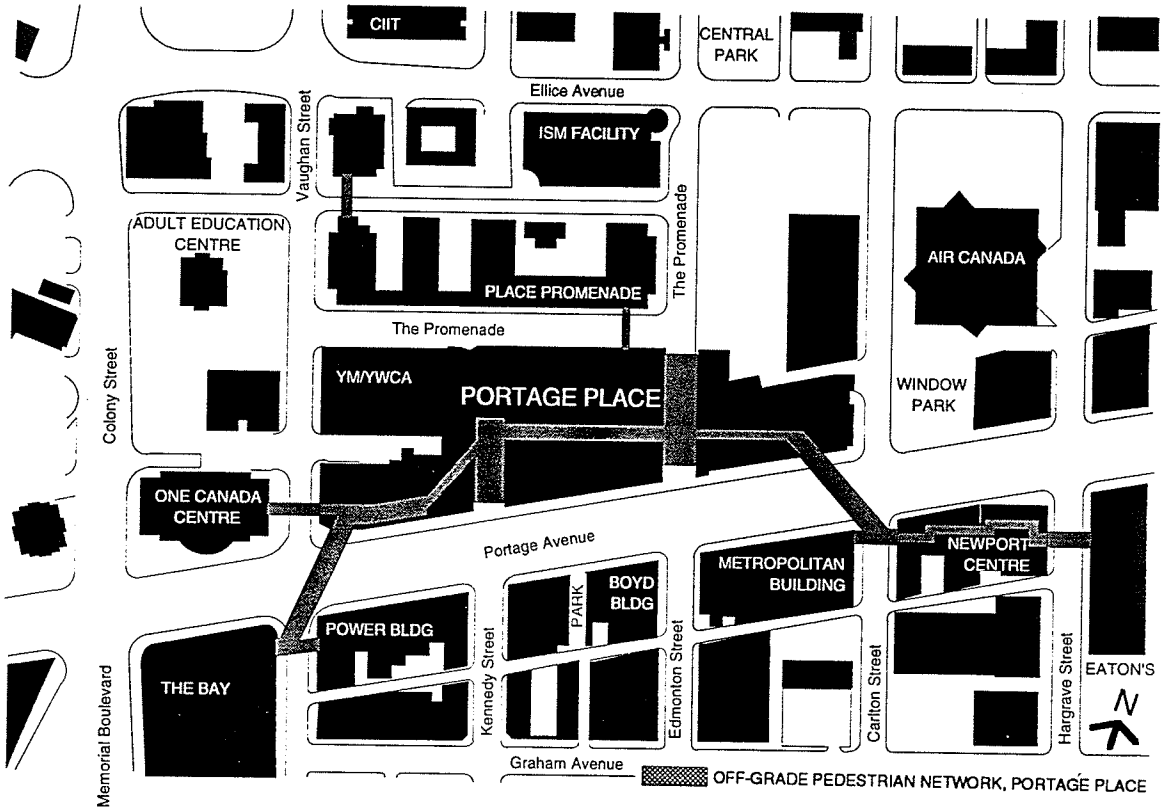

Figure 4.6. Linkage plan of Portage Place, second level.

stores on Portage Avenue

Another issue related to Portage Place is that many of its ground level stores with entrances on the internal mall and the street, do not use their Portage Avenue entrances (Figure A.8 and Figure 4.7).

Half the study area merchants surveyed, including those within Portage Place and those with on-street locations, responded to this issue. Seven stated that they prefer that

retailers within Portage Place use their on-street entrances. Four merchants were against using street entrances. These merchants have retail establishments in Portage Place with on-street entrances (which are locked).

It is of note that the restaurants in Portage Place with on-street access utilize these entrances. However, a vestibule is seen as an important component to keep out winter drafts. Positive aspects of this street orientation, it was remarked, are that there is natural light from outside and some patrons are attracted from the street. In Portage Place, establishments other than restaurants had various reservations regarding using their on-street entrances. It was said that there are more people in the mall than on the street, and that security would be a serious problem. It was also stated that, given the traffic distribution, it is best to remain open to the mall and have a stockroom (where required) at the Portage Avenue end. However, the street is seen to have some importance for these stores because they believe that their Portage Avenue window displays attract customers. If on-street parking is permitted on Portage during regular business hours, some merchants stated that they would consider opening their on-street entrances.

Merchants not in Portage Place commented that the "back-end" of Portage Place faces the street or that the shops face inwards and present a wall to Portage Avenue. Several Portage Avenue merchants stated that they would like to see the facility less self-contained and more street-oriented. Suggestions included placing street-oriented cafes on Portage Avenue similar to Place Promenade, opening up Portage Place based on the atmosphere of Granville Island, Corydon Avenue, or Saint Catherine's Street, providing more "night life" in Portage Place which is oriented to the street, and returning pedestrian and retail activity to street level. This last suggestion was accompanied with the claim that it would result in improved business for Portage Avenue merchants.

The key informants said that the inward orientation of shops within Portage Place contributes to the negative image of Portage Place. Several informants stated that the Portage Avenue facade is a "blank wall", uninviting to people.

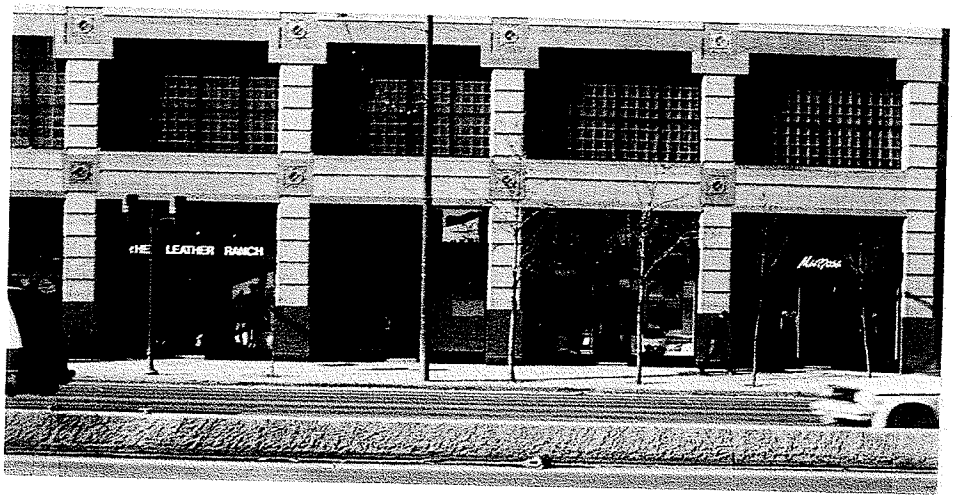

Figure 4.7. Interior oriented shops leave the well-articulated facade devoid of life.

It was noted that establishments with direct access to Portage Avenue which chose not to use those entrances did so because of security problems. One informant, however, pointed out that there are over-the-counter food outlets in Portage Place that utilize both the mall and street entrances. While this key informant noted the opportunities with this type of business, he questioned the appeal of encouraging fast food outlets on Portage Avenue. He suggested that independent restaurants would contribute better to the re-establishment of Portage Avenue as a unique place. An idea that was shown to be impractical is the dividing of retail space on the Portage Avenue side of Portage Place, such that shops open to either the mall or to Portage Avenue. However, because of the higher lease rates associated with mall-connected establishments, it was stated that it would not be cost-effective to transform retail space in Portage Place to an external orientation. As with the merchants, it was stated that allowing parking on Portage Avenue, in front of the shopping centre, would encourage businesses to open their street entrances.

Commentary:

Clearly, this issue is linked to the problems associated with the alternative pedestrian route within Portage Place. The inward orientation of shops is a manifestation of the lack of dependence of retailers on the street for vitality, as Barry Maitland (1992)

suggests (see Section 2.4 *Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks - detriment to public places).*

In order to re-establish vitality along downtown Portage Avenue, particularly in the immediate vicinity of Portage Place, a strategy must be developed to re-orient these commercial spaces towards the street.

skywalks

While the study area merchants did not comment on the visual qualities of the skywalks, the key informants did have some observations. It was noted that the principal drawback of the skywalks is their disruption of sight-lines, particularly along Portage Avenue. It was stated that the skywalks visually detract from the area in terms of the perspective of people at-grade. The large size of the skywalks over Portage Avenue, while providing retail opportunities which benefit system users, has contributed to the adverse visual impact. It was also stated that the diagonal crossing over Portage is not as appealing as a perpendicular crossing would have been.

Commentary:

Terry Lassar (1988) cited in Section 2.3 *Negative Qualities of Downtown Retail Centres and Off-Grade Pedestrian Networks - the visual impact,* verifies the key informants' statements in stating that skywalks detract from the urban experience by blocking valued vistas and, where they cross streets, by also preventing sunlight from reaching the sidewalk. Furthermore, it was noted that it is problematic to integrate skywalks with existing structures, particularly historic buildings.

Figure 4.8, below, illustrates that the Portage Place skywalks have affected Portage Avenue in the ways described by Terry Lassar. These bridges have obstructed the vista along the historic Avenue; as well, sunlight has been restricted at the sidewalks, under the walkways.

Figure 4.8. View along Portage Avenue obstructed by skywalk.

Figure 4.9 shows that the skywalks do not greatly disrupt the facades of buildings they are connected to. Both The Bay and Eaton's, which are downtown landmarks, have skywalk connections. It is noteworthy that the skywalks do not disrupt the Portage Avenue facades, thereby minimizing the impact.

Figure 4.9. Skywalks do not disrupt the Portage Avenue facades.

While the skywalks have disrupted sightlines along Portage Avenue, and restricted sunlight to the sidewalks, their integration with existing structures has been fairly well implemented. Given that nothing short of demolition would alleviate the visual problems associated with the skywalks, these issues are not considered as critical to the success of re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

transit waiting areas

As with skywalks, only the key informants described some of the problems associated with the Transit waiting areas provided by Portage Place, located on Portage at Edmonton and on Vaughan near Portage. While these facilities provide users with a weather-protected environment with good sight-lines to see approaching buses, one key informant stated that both shelters need improved access from Portage Place. It was stated that vandalism of the waiting areas and harassment of transit patrons has occurred at both waiting areas. These problems have been significant at the Vaughan street shelter, which has no access to Portage Place at the present time. In addition, vandalism of the Vaughan street bus shelter necessitated its closure for a period of time.

Commentary:

While this issue was not examined in the literature reviews of Chapters One and Two, it must be taken into account in order to improve the accessibility of the area for transit patrons.

a transformed urban fabric

While the survey of study area merchants and key informants did not suggest that a transformed urban fabric is an issue, an application of the figure-ground theory of Roger Trancik (1986) as described in Section 1.4 *Urban Design Approaches - figure-ground theory*, reveals that the component of Portage Place on the north side of the Avenue has brought about a significant change in the urban landscape (Figure 4.10).

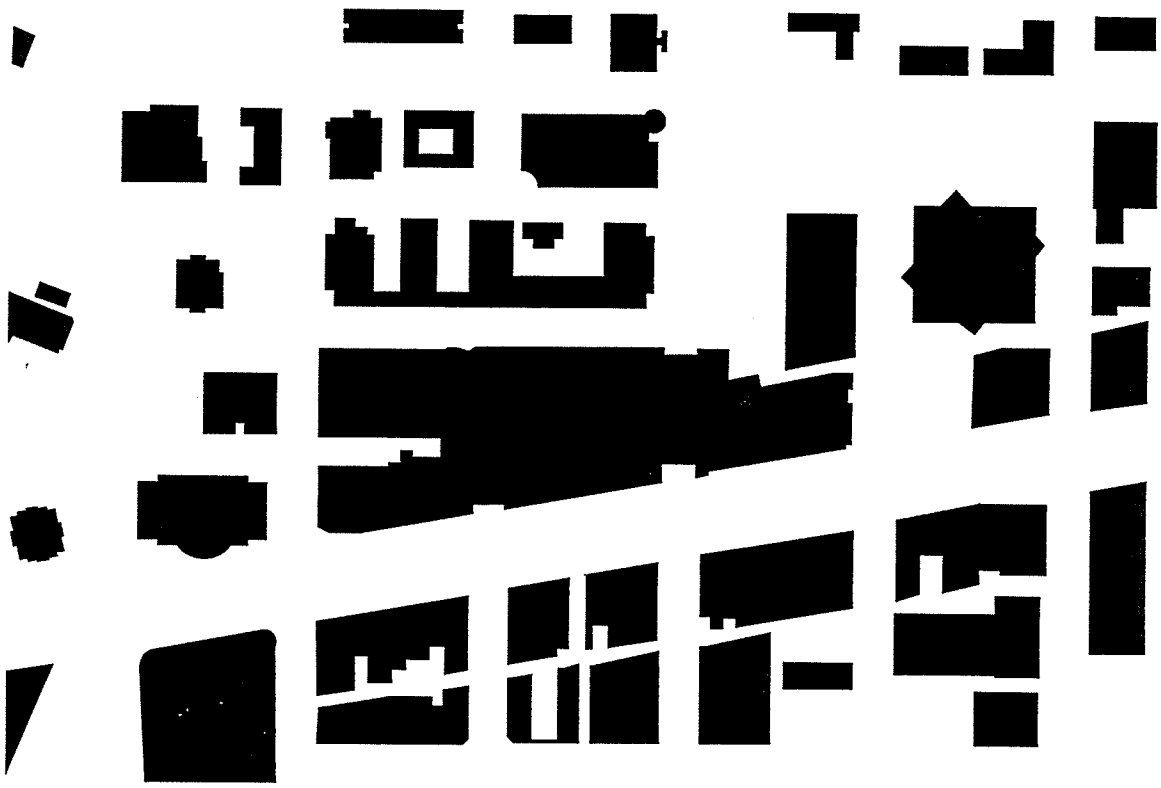

Figure 4.10. Figure-ground plan of Portage Place and vicinity.

One of the positive effects of the facility is that it reinforces Portage Avenue. Portage Place does this because it is built adjacent to the right-of-way along its entire Portage Avenue elevation. This corresponds with the buildings on the south side of the street that are also built to the right-of-way. It has resulted in Portage Avenue having a strong sense of enclosure in this area. The open space of Portage Avenue, in contrast with the large ground coverage of the adjacent buildings, has led to a richer urban environment.

However, the large ground coverage of Portage Place on the north side of the Avenue, has had some detrimental effects as well. This three-block long facility was introduced into a downtown characterized by buildings on lots taking up, at most, one block; and many of the city blocks contain seven or eight buildings. The numerous buildings on each block has given downtown diversity and complexity. The city block has been the ordering device that has provided a unifying structure to the city centre. This

development pattern is apparent in the figure-ground pattern on the south side of Portage Avenue.

In marked contrast, Portage Place has a larger footprint than any other building in the downtown. Being three blocks long on the north side of the street, it necessitated the closure of two public streets - Kennedy and Edmonton at Portage and Ellice Avenues. Since Portage Place was part of North Portage Development Corporation's over-all plan to redevelop a portion of downtown, a large parcel of land was assembled for the entire project. This land assembly has provided a great deal of flexibility in building size and siting. Not only does Portage Place extend three blocks on the north side of Portage Avenue, but the residential and commercial development, Place Promenade, north of the centre, has been built over what was previously Kennedy Street.

However, by not conforming to the existing urban grid scale, the facility does not integrate into the existing downtown. What was previously public space is now occupied by buildings[63]. Instead, Portage Place dominates its surroundings due to its large building footprint (Figures 4.10 and 4.11).

Figure 4.11. Portage Place as seen from the south-east corner of Portage and Vaughan.

This analysis emphasizes the significant impact that Portage Place has had on its surroundings. Since the facility occupies a great deal of frontage along Portage Avenue, it

63 Edmonton Court in Portage Place, while open to the public when Portage Place is open, is owned by Cadillac-Fairview through a long-term lease with the North Portage Development Corporation.

is imperative that solutions be found to better integrate Portage Place with the street, and contribute to making downtown Portage Avenue a Great Street.

4.3B Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place

In the previous Section, street connections, alternative pedestrian routes, stores on Portage skywalks, transit waiting areas, and a transformed urban fabric, were identified as areas of concern with respect to the relationship of Portage Place to downtown Portage Avenue. Summarizing these findings identifies the considerations that must be taken into account by the solutions associated with Portage Place.

Regarding street connections, it was remarked that the existing connections do not attract people from Portage Place to the sidewalks along Portage Avenue. It was suggested that people remain within Portage Place, rarely patronizing the street fronting businesses along the Avenue. This problem is attributed to the alternative pedestrian routes provided by Portage Place, in the form of an interior mall, and an off-grade pedestrian system.

Another issue related to the internal orientation of Portage Place, is the inward orientation of ground floor shops in the Centre. The concern is that most establishments in Portage Place which have both mall and street entrances do not use their on-street doors. The entry points are reserved for merchandise displays, which presents a lifeless exterior to pedestrians on the sidewalks.

In terms of the skywalks, it was noted that they visually detract from the area by blocking sight-lines along Portage Avenue, and that they restrict sunlight from reaching the sidewalks where they cross. However, only by removing the structures can these problems be addressed. Therefore, the visual problems associated with the skywalks are not considered critical.

The vandalism of transit waiting areas and the harassment of those waiting for buses, is a concern of this practicum. In order to ensure accessibility to and from the area, these places must be comfortable and safe.

While Section 4.3A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place - a transformed urban fabric* does not suggest a particular problem to be addressed, it does emphasize the significance of Portage Place to downtown in general, and the study area in particular. The problems described above must be addressed in order to instill qualities in Portage Place that will make it contribute positively to Portage Avenue.

The solutions identified below are derived from the survey of key informants and study area merchants as well as from the findings presented in Chapter Two. In order to direct the solutions towards re-establishing Portage Avenue as a Great Street, reference is made to the urban design theories presented in Chapter One, particularly, the conclusions of Allan Jacobs and the Urban Land Institute. As will be evident, the solutions presented would have a direct effect on the right-of-way, which, therefore, will affect other study area land uses. As was stated in the previous Sections, the study area elements - the right-of way, the adjacent land uses, and Portage Place - are interconnected.

additional skywalks

Certain study area merchants remarked that more street connections are required, particularly in the form of another skywalk between the two Portage crossings, linking Portage Avenue south-side with Portage Place. It was even suggested that the Portage Avenue south-side area should have a skywalk parallel to Portage Avenue.

In contrast, none of the key informants suggested that additional skywalks are required.

Commentary:

Recognizing the negative effects of the skywalks on Portage Avenue, as specified in Section 4.3A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place -*

skywalks, the building of additional skywalks would be of questionable benefit to the area. Therefore it is not considered to be a solution to problems associated with Portage Place.

improved street connections

Study area merchants expressed concern over the quality of existing connections between the skywalk and the sidewalk. Specific mention was made that the street-skywalks connection at the Salisbury House on Portage should be more open and appealing to encourage pedestrians onto the sidewalk from the pedestrian network.

Within the key informant group, it was stated that better information at street level could be provided to access the walkway and that the linkages could be improved generally. One can speculate that improved linkages and clear information for skywalk users to access the street would increase pedestrian traffic at-grade.

Commentary:

It must be noted that before existing street connections had been constructed, there was extensive discussion regarding the feasibility of various connection options[64]. North Portage Development Corporation, the City of Winnipeg, property owners, and merchants on the south side of Portage Avenue between Eaton's and The Bay, attempted to arrive at a consensus for a viable plan of action. Due to the concerns and demands of certain stakeholders regarding this issue, an option to install an elevator in the Power Building and an escalator at the site of the Metropolitan Building (see Figure 3.9) was not feasible.

Nevertheless, since it is generally perceived that the existing connections are unsuitable, it is evident that this problem must be revisited. Recall that the City of Calgary requires bridges to have stairs adjacent to the sidewalks with clear visibility between the stairway and the street, with a place to sit or buy a paper, for example, at the foot of the stairs. The treatment of skywalk-street connections in Calgary provides a model on which to base improvements to the existing connections. In order to provide a sense of safety

64 Smith, Kent, North Portage Development Corporation, a personal communication, October 1994.

within the stairways, and a positive visual connection with the street, it is necessary to redesign the connections such that they are adjacent to the street, that the exterior walls are fully glazed, and that they are well lit and amenable to usage.

An alternative to redeveloping the existing connections is to provide new connections from the skywalks directly to the sidewalks on the south side of Portage Avenue. However, given the limited width available with the present right-of-way configuration, this option would only be feasible if the Portage Avenue right-of-way is reconfigured. Furthermore, the proposed reconfiguration (see Figure 4.1) would have to be modified to provide sidewalk space for the connections. However, this latter proposal would have certain advantages over redeveloping the existing connections. Its high visibility and direct linkage between the skywalks and the street would be easily recognized by area patrons, and provide them with a safe and amenable linkage between the off-grade pedestrian network and the public sidewalk. In addition, the existing connections could be converted back to leasible space.

In any event, it would be beneficial to improve the signage that directs skywalk users to the street. Therefore, it is recommended that signage be improved for skywalk users, and that further study of the physical linkage options be undertaken.

encourage uses which use on-street entrances

As was stated in Section 4.3A *Issues Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place - stores on Portage Avenue,* the only businesses in Portage Place that use their entrances on Portage Avenue are restaurants. While interviewing restaurateurs with Portage Avenue entrances, it was evident that they do not have the security concerns of retailers. The latter are unwilling to close their mall entrances to the large volume of pedestrian traffic. In order to use their entrances, retailers would have to hire additional staff and possibly install another cash register near the street entrance to control losses due to theft. Some of these retailers, however, did concede that they would use their on-street

entrances if business could be improved sufficiently to off-set security concerns. On-street parking was specifically mentioned as a means to use these entrances.

Commentary:

Given the interdependence of pedestrian volumes and the security concerns of retailers, it is recommended that these retail tenants be replaced with restaurants, as space becomes available. The retailers could even be relocated to other locations within Portage Place, when vacancies occur. It must be ensured, however, through lease agreements, that future tenants would use their on-street entrances.

Jan Gehl (1987) states that people and human activities are more rewarding and in demand than most other attractions in the public places of our cities. A restaurant, possibly extending onto the sidewalk as a cafe, would be a valued addition to Portage Avenue. As well, it would do much to reduce the negative perceptions of Portage Place.

canopies and banners on Portage Place

It was suggested by the key informant group that installing banners and awnings on the south elevation of Portage Place would enrich this facade.

Commentary:

As was stated in Section 4.2B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Study area Land Uses - building renovations*, Jacobs (1993) notes that these elements can add to the visual interest of a street. In addition, awnings can provide pedestrians with shelter from precipitation and unwanted sunlight.

improved bus waiting areas

As with canopies and banners on Portage Place, only the key informants suggested ways to improved the bus waiting areas provided by Portage Place. For the Portage Avenue waiting area, opening the waiting area to the food court of Portage Place, was identified as a possible solution.

Commentary:

This solution must be contrasted with the opportunity of building a sidewalk shelter, provided by reconfiguring the right-of-way. A new shelter would be highly visible and, therefore would have a positive effect on the incidence of vandalism and harassment of transit patrons. Opening the existing shelter to the food court would also mitigate these problems. In addition, it would be convenient for Transit patrons to take advantage of the food court services while waiting for their buses.

Given the constraints of Vaughan Street, it is necessary to improve this waiting area in order to address the vandalism and harassment problems.

It is recommended that further study be undertaken, linked with the reconfiguration of the right-of-way, to determine which option is most suitable for the Portage Avenue waiting area.

In this Chapter, issues related to the downtown Portage Avenue right-of way, the study area land uses, and Portage Place have been determined as they relate to downtown Portage Avenue and the potential to re-establish it as a Great Street. Throughout the definition of problems associated with the study area, it became evident that many problems are interconnected. Therefore, it was not unexpected to discover that the solutions associated with either the right-of-way, adjacent land uses, or Portage Place have an effect on the study area as a whole. This Chapter has identified a large number of solutions and actions which would lead to downtown Portage Avenue, once again, being a Great urban Street. The implementation of these solutions is explored in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Re-establishing Downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street: The Role of North Portage Development Corporation

This final Chapter of the practicum revisits the qualities of a Great Street, as identified by Allan Jacobs (1993). Given that the goal of this practicum is to develop strategies that will re-establish downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, each quality of a Great Street is shown to be associated with one or more of the solutions presented in Chapter Four. After demonstrating the relevance of the solutions, there is a detailed exploration of the role that North Portage Development Corporation can play in realizing the goal of re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street. The Chapter closes with an affirmation of the importance of downtown public places, and, specifically, streets, in terms of their contribution to the quality of life in the city.

5.1 Making the Street a Place

This Section focuses on the qualities of a Great Street, as described in Section 1.3 *The Street as Place*. As with Section 1.3, this Section examines the qualities of:

- providing places for people to walk and sit,
- responsiveness to climate,
- definition,
- visual interest,
- transparency,
- complementarity and diversity,
- quality and maintenance,
- accessibility, and
- contrast with other streets.

However the concern here is to demonstrate that the solutions proposed in Chapter Four directly contribute to the making of a Great Street by strengthening or creating the qualities cited above. Table 5.1 presents in summary form the qualities of a Great Street, and the solutions associated with those qualities. It should be noted that allowing on-street parking, increased police presence, and additional skywalks are all solutions that were determined to be inappropriate. As was stated in Chapter Four, allowing on-street parking is precluded by the more suitable solution of reconfiguring the Portage Avenue right-of-way (which includes some on-street parking as a component). The other solutions were determined to be inappropriate because they have drawbacks which are considered to off-set their projected positive effects.

places for people to walk and sit

The most important quality of a Great Street is that it must be a place that is comfortable for people to explore as pedestrians. This suggests that sidewalks must be wide enough to prevent overcrowding while not appearing to be underused. Pedestrians must not feel threatened by vehicles. The sidewalks should also provide amenities, such as benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, and trees.

The reconfiguration of the right-of-way and landscaping, from Section 4.1B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue right-of-way*, would significantly strengthen the pedestrian orientation of the street. The former proposal would reduce the speed and volume of vehicles along Portage Avenue, provide a buffer between through traffic and the pedestrian by facilitating some on-street parking, reduce the roadway width that pedestrians must cross, and provide wider sidewalks on certain blocks. Wider sidewalks would eliminate the overcrowding presently occurring at bus stops and provide opportunities to install benches for people to pause. Landscaping the street would include the provision of places for people to sit, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and continuous tree planting along both sides of the street. The trees and, to a lesser degree, the

pedestrian-scaled lighting, would create a visual barrier between the roadway and the sidewalks. As well, they would strengthen the pedestrian orientation of the street.

responsiveness to climate

It is particularly important in Winnipeg to provide a street atmosphere that responds to the city's climatic extremes of heat and cold, combined with strong winds and the occasional heavy rain.

Landscaping the street can greatly strengthen its ability to respond to climate. Deciduous trees can restrict summer sun, provide some shelter from precipitation, and admit winter sun to the sidewalk. It can also somewhat reduce wind speed at ground level.

The proposed reconfiguration of the right-of-way, which includes the provision of heated bus shelters, would provide pedestrians with temporary shelter during the coldest days.

The modification of building height regulations and the renovation of buildings, from Section 4.2B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses*, would also contribute to the climatic responsiveness of the street. The former action would ensure that new developments along the south side of Portage Avenue do not prevent the winter sun from reaching the north sidewalk of the street. The latter action would include the provision of canopies or awnings. Thus, pedestrians would be provided with additional shelter from sunlight and rain. The installation of building-mounted awnings or canopies is also a solution of Section 4.3B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place.*

definition

Not only do trees improve a street's responsiveness to climate, but they also have the potential to strengthen its definition. This is particularly evident on streets which are

lined with buildings of various heights and set-backs. A row of closely spaced trees can provide the visual coherence needed to define a street.

Therefore, the solution to landscape the right-of-way, which includes the provision of boulevard trees, would do much to define and unify the street. This is particularly relevant for downtown Portage Avenue which is characterized by buildings of various heights and disparate architectural styles.

visual interest

There are many design elements which can make a street stimulating to the eyes and unify an area. Buildings, commercial signage, trees, tree-grates, street lights, paving patterns, benches, and fountains; and utilitarian objects, such as manhole covers, fire hydrants, and traffic signs, provide designers with numerous opportunities to enrich and define a street as a unique place.

Landscaping of the right-of-way would directly add to the visual interest of Portage Avenue. If the sidewalks are widened at blocks with bus stops, as is proposed with the solution to reconfigure the right-of-way, a wide range of opportunities would be provided to create interesting places along the street. Sidewalk cafes or street vendors, for example, could utilize the space.

The proposed renovation of buildings (see Section 4.2B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses*) would also contribute to the visual interest of the street. Renovations that included the installation of canopies or awnings, restoration of buildings facades, and the provision of creative commercial signage by ground floor tenants, would enrich the visual environment.

Encouraging uses which use on-street entrances and installing canopies and banners on Portage Place are two solutions associated with Portage Place which would contribute to the visual interest of the street. The former solution would involve replacing tenants of Portage Place that do not use their on-street entrances with ones that would. This would

transform static display windows into inviting entrances to the uses within. In addition, if the right-of-way is reconfigured and landscaped, restaurants locating in these spaces may be inclined to provide outdoor cafe space. This would also contribute to the visual interest of the area. The solution to install canopies and banners on the Portage Avenue facade of Portage Place would add texture to the building and thus enrich the pedestrian environment.

transparency

Transparency - the openness of the private realm of buildings, to the street on which they front, is another important quality of a Great Street that is encouraged by certain solutions. Windows, doors, and sidewalk displays and cafes invite the passerby to take interest in the land uses along the street.

Both the renovation of buildings along Portage Avenue, and the solution to encourage Portage Place businesses to use their on-street entrances would foster this quality within the study area. By encouraging building owners to renovate and lease their on-street commercial space, vacant space along Portage Avenue would be replaced with active store-fronts. Obviously, a building with its ground floor occupied by commercial uses (retail or restaurant) has a greater degree of transparency than one that is vacant. This same point can be made with regard to the solution to encourage Portage Place businesses to use their on-street entrances. A view inside and an open door is more inviting than a window display behind a locked door.

complementarity and diversity

One of the qualities of a Great Street is that the buildings along it complement one another. That is, they should be of similar height, massing, facade proportions, set-back, and materials. It is also important that a certain degree of variation and diversity exists along a street. Buildings of cultural significance or at strategic locations may be several storeys higher or lower than their counterparts. As well, a diversity of building styles adds

to the variety along a street. Other forms of diversity can be realized by there being a number of building owners and land uses along a given street. These variations among buildings along a street cannot be duplicated by a single building complex, which, by contrast, is often owned by a single corporation.

The renovation of buildings along Portage Avenue would contribute to the diversity of the area. It is likely that independent retailers and restaurateurs would locate in the study area. Independents are more inclined to choose on-street commercial space whereas franchises tend to locate within retail centres (Cyril Paumier, 1988).

quality and maintenance

In order to have a Great Street that maintains its attractiveness over a long period of time, it is important that appropriate materials be selected to make up the elements that comprise the street. For example, benches, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and building facades must be designed to be durable and attractive. Furthermore, materials must be selected which do not require frequent maintenance. Materials that require paint, or colours that show dirt readily, should be avoided.

With regard to trees, maintenance costs can be mitigated by choosing the appropriate species and by careful planting. Nevertheless, given the restricted growing space, air pollution from the motor-vehicles, and extensive winter salting of the roadway and sidewalks, a rigorous maintenance program is required to nurture this investment.

While none of the solutions identified in Chapter Four explicitly address this quality, it must be considered as a relevant aspect of re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

accessibility

In order for a street to be a successful place, it must be easily accessible to a number of people. It must be convenient for pedestrians, transit users, and motorists to access.

Several of the proposed solutions would strengthen the accessibility of the downtown Portage Avenue area for these three user groups. The proposed solutions are the reconfiguration of the right-of-way and installing parking signage, from Section 4.1B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Portage Avenue Right-of-Way,* the standardization of parking rates and the expansion of the "Easy Streets" program, from Section 4.2B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses*, and improving street connections and bus waiting areas, from Section 4.3B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place.*

By providing on-street parking along Portage Avenue, the reconfiguration of the right-of-way would improve the perceived accessibility of the area to motorists. While only a limited number of parking spaces can be provided, their high visibility and convenience would do much to give the perception that the area accommodates those arriving by private vehicle. The installation of clearly visible signage, that identifies off-street parking facilities, would also facilitate better accessibility for motorists. In addition, standardized parking rates would make parking costs predictable to motorists, and expanding the "Easy Streets" program would reduce the cost of parking.

Accessibility for transit users would be improved by the reconfiguration of the right-of-way, which includes the provision of heated bus shelters, and by improving the bus waiting areas in Portage Place. The former solution would improve the quality and reliability of transit service along downtown Portage Avenue. In addition, by providing heated bus shelters along the Avenue, the solution would make it more amenable for people to take a bus to (and from) the area. Likewise, improving the bus waiting areas at Portage Place would improve accessibility to and from the area by transit users.

Improving the connections between the Portage Place skywalks and the sidewalk along the south side of Portage Avenue would contribute to the accessibility of the street for pedestrians. Since the Portage Place skywalks are part of the off-grade pedestrian network in the downtown, and since a great deal of the pedestrian traffic is concentrated in Portage

Place, this solution would likely increase the pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks of Portage Avenue, in the downtown.

TABLE 5.1. QUALITIES OF A GREAT STREET AND THE ASSOCIATED SOLUTIONS

QUALITY	ASSOCIATED SOLUTION	SOLUTION LOCATION
places to walk and sit	reconfiguration of the right-of-way	right-of-way
	landscaping	right-of-way
responsiveness to climate	landscaping	right-of-way
	allowable building height	adjacent land uses
	building renovations	adjacent land uses
	canopies and banners on Portage Place	Portage Place
definition	landscaping	right-of-way
visual interest	landscaping	right-of-way
	creative use of commercial signage	adjacent land uses
	building renovations	adjacent land uses
	encourage uses which use on-street entrances	Portage Place
	canopies and banners on Portage Place	Portage Place
transparency	building renovations	adjacent land uses
	encourage uses which use on-street entrances	Portage Place
complementarity and diversity	building renovations	adjacent land uses
accessibility	reconfiguration of the right-of-way	right-of-way
	parking signage	right-of-way
	standardized parking rates & "Easy Streets"	adjacent land uses
	improved street connections	Portage Place
	improved bus waiting areas	Portage Place

contrast with other streets

As with quality and maintenance, none of the solutions directly contribute to the quality of contrast. That a Great Street stands out from other streets in the area is self-

evident. Portage Avenue, with its large right-of-way width, skewed from the grid, is in itself unique. The predominantly retail nature of the land uses along the street further contributes to its uniqueness.

By implementing the solutions that are proposed, the study area would be instilled with many qualities of a Great Street. Downtown Portage Avenue would become a special place, and would, therefore, contrast with surrounding streets, and even with the portion of the street west of the study area.

5.2 North Portage Development Corporation's Role in Implementing the Solutions

In Chapter Four, it became evident that a wide range of groups would be required to implement the solutions associated with re-establishing Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

In terms of the reconfiguration of the right-of-way, the recent plan put forward by Winnipeg Transit is endorsed by the Centre Plan Committee. Presently, Centre Plan recommends that City Council instruct the administration to undertake a study of traffic impacts, costs, specific design considerations, and opinions on the proposal. Included in this plan is the proposed solution to landscape the right-of-way.[65]

In terms of the standardization of parking rates and the installation of signage indicating parking locations, the Centre Plan Committee is pursuing these proposals. The former requires the cooperation of the owners of the private lots. With regard to the latter proposal, the Centre Plan Committee is in the process of securing funding in order to engage a consultant to undertake implementation. Funding may be through the Winnipeg Development Agreement - a tri-level government-supported program. Those responsible for the implementation of the signage program would include the Centre Plan Committee,

---

65 Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Action Plan 1995 - 1996* (City of Winnipeg, 1995), page 31.

City Council, the Downtown and Exchange District Business Improvement Zones, Tourism Winnipeg, and Take Pride Winnipeg.[66]

Expansion of the "Easy Streets" parking token program would require the leadership of the Downtown BIZ and the support of its members.

Revision of the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law to restrict building heights along the south side of Portage Avenue would require the Planning Department to undertake a study of this issue and make the necessary revisions. City Council would have to approve the changes.

Implementation of the building renovations would require the cooperation of North Portage Development Corporation, the City of Winnipeg, the Downtown BIZ, and downtown Portage Avenue property owners and merchants. Furthermore, since the area of concern extends outside North Portage Development Corporation's mandated area, the Corporation's shareholders would have to consider enlarging its mandated area. This would enable the Corporation to take an active role in the renovation of buildings throughout the study area. The role of North Portage Development Corporation in implementing this solution is explored in further detail below.

The solutions associated with Portage Place - improved street connections, encourage uses which use on-street entrances, installation of canopies and banners on Portage Place, and improved bus waiting areas would require a commitment by Cadillac-Fairview, the lease-holder of the facility. Improved street connections would require the additional cooperation of the City of Winnipeg. The Downtown BIZ could help facilitate the solution to encourage uses which use on-street entrances, with the cooperation of those merchants affected. The solution to improve the bus waiting areas would require the participation of Winnipeg Transit.

Since North Portage Development Corporation has a mandate to revitalize (a portion of) downtown Winnipeg, it is in a position to take a prominent role in the re-establishment

---

66 Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Action Plan 1995 - 1996* (City of Winnipeg, 1995), page 38.

of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street. The Corporation has committed financial and staff resources to the Centre Plan process. In addition, one of the Corporation's board members sits on the Centre Plan Committee. The Corporation is also an active member in the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone. Given it mandate, and active participation in the downtown community, the Corporation can do much to facilitate the implementation of the solutions for the study area. As is shown below, North Portage Development Corporation can endorse, propose, create, negotiate, and coordinate solutions which would lead to the re-establishment of Portage Avenue as a Great Street.

endorse

Through North Portage Development Corporation's participation in Centre Plan, it can endorse solutions identified in the Plan. It is recommended that North Portage Development Corporation endorse the proposal to study the issues pertaining to the reconfiguration and landscaping of downtown Portage Avenue. The Corporation should also endorse the Centre Plan proposal to provide standardized signage identifying off-street parking facilities and the proposal to standardize short-term parking rates in these facilities.

With regard to the latter proposal, the Corporation can take a leading role by standardizing the rates at its own parking facilities. This, however, would require the cooperation of Imperial Parking, which manages the facilities.

Given that North Portage Development Corporation is merging operations with the Forks Renewal Corporation[67], its role in the downtown will be considerably broadened. The Corporation is in a position to encourage the Winnipeg Development Agreement to support the Centre Plan proposals. The Winnipeg Development Agreement, funded by the three levels of government, is committed to improving Winnipeg's economic potential through redevelopment initiatives. Alternatively, North Portage Development Corporation

---

67 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1994), page 1.

could commit a certain amount of funds to facilitate the implementation of the Centre Plan solutions.

propose

As an active member of the Downtown BIZ, North Portage Development Corporation should propose to the Downtown BIZ that the solution of expanding the "Easy Streets" program be explored. The Corporation could assist the Downtown BIZ in consulting the businesses participating in "Easy Streets" about the merits of reducing the minimum purchase to receive a parking token, to $10. As well, the Corporation could encourage and assist the Downtown BIZ with expanding its promotion of the parking token program. For example, pamphlets identifying participating merchants and lots which accept the tokens could be printed and distributed to the public.

The solution of reducing the maximum allowable building height along the south side of Portage Avenue could be brought to the attention of the City via Centre Plan. As a major participant in this planning initiative, the Corporation should recommend to the Centre Plan Committee that it endorse this proposal. The Planning Department would have to make amendments to the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law, to ensure that new buildings along downtown Portage Avenue do not block winter sunlight from reaching the north sidewalk

.

create

The South Side Improvement Program, designed to address concerns relative to the area along the south side of Portage Avenue between The Bay and Eaton's, provides a useful model on which to base a strategy to increase retail activity along downtown Portage Avenue. Established by North Portage Development Corporation in 1990, the program provides building owners incentives of up to one-third the total cost, to a predetermined maximum, to improve their retail units in order to remain competitive in the rental market.

Together with the cooperative efforts of the south side property owners and merchants, the City of Winnipeg, and the Downtown BIZ, the program has facilitated improvements to both the interior and exterior of retail space in the area. Not only has the program benefited existing retail operations, but it has attracted new tenants. By 1993, the subsidy to building owners, which totaled nearly $500,000, levered over $1.2 million in private investment, from building owners and tenants, for building improvements. After only three years the number of vacancies on the street decreased from 15 to two[68]. Evidence of the success of the program is shown in Figure 3.5 which indicates that, as of January 1995, there are only three storefront vacancies in the south-side area, including Merchants' Park.

Therefore, it is recommended that a program of this nature be implemented throughout the study area. And as with the South Side Improvement Program, it is recommended that a market study on the future of retail along downtown Portage Avenue be undertaken to suggest to property owners effective improvements that can be done to their buildings. As well, it is recommended that in order to qualify for funding, building owners must agree to make improvements to their buildings which would contribute to the pedestrian environment along downtown Portage Avenue. As was stated in Section 4.2B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with the Study Area Land Uses - building renovations*, building-mounted awnings or canopies, restored historic facades, creative commercial signage, and display windows are components of retail (and restaurant) space, cited by Jacobs (1993), that contribute to the making of a Great Street.

Since the Corporation is exploring the possibility of expanding its mandated area with its shareholders[69], and since North Portage Development Corporation is merging with the Forks Renewal Corporation, it is recommended that the merged Corporations pursue this issue. The mandated area should be expanded to enable the Corporation to implement this program throughout the study area.

---

68 North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).
69 Ibid., page 1.

negotiate

Since Cadillac-Fairview is the present owner of Portage Place, through a long-term lease agreement, it is necessary that North Portage Development Corporation negotiate with Cadillac-Fairview to realize the solutions associated with Portage Place.

The improvement of the connections between the skywalks and the sidewalk on the south side of Portage Avenue requires the cooperation of Cadillac-Fairview and building tenants and owners affected by the improvements. If the solution is to take the form of new connections linking the skywalks to a reconfigured right-of-way, the Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit would have to support the solution. The Corporation should take a leadership role in exploring this proposed solution. Consideration should be made for dedicating funds towards its realization.

The improvement of the bus waiting areas is also linked with the reconfiguration of the right-of-way. Whether a new bus shelter is constructed on Portage Avenue along with the improvement of the Vaughan Street waiting area, or both waiting areas are improved, cooperation between Cadillac-Fairview and Winnipeg Transit is required. The Corporation should encourage both parties to pursue this issue in order to arrive at a solution.

The replacement of tenants that do not use their Portage Avenue entrances with ones that would use such entrances would, obviously, require the cooperation of the tenants affected. It is recommended that the Corporation negotiate with Cadillac-Fairview and the retailers in question to implement this solution. In order to encourage tenants to relocate, and replace them with businesses which would use the on-street entrances, it would be necessary to fund the cost of relocation. A less expensive, and simpler alternative, is to enter into an agreement with Cadillac-Fairview which would ensure that when businesses vacate the space in question, they are replaced with ones that are committed to using their on-street entrances.

North Portage Development Corporation can also negotiate with Cadillac-Fairview to facilitate the erection of canopies and banners along the Portage Avenue facade of Portage Place. Possibly, funds can be made available to implement this solution.

coordinate

As is evident with the above recommendations, the proposed solutions require the cooperation and commitment of a number of stakeholders in the area. It is also evident that North Portage Development Corporation can play a significant role in promoting the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street. The Corporation can endorse Centre Plan recommendations, propose further action that the Downtown BIZ could take, create a revitalization program, and negotiate with the owners of Portage Place to bring about improvements to that facility which would benefit the street. Given the number of stakeholders required to bring about significant change to Portage Avenue, and the potential of the Corporation to take on a leadership role in this change, it is recommended that North Portage Development Corporation consider extending its responsibilities to include acting as coordinator of the implementation of solutions.

The coordination of solutions would yield several benefits. For example, if the reconfiguration of the right-of-way is to be implemented, building improvements could be made during reconstruction of the right-of-way; and the reconfiguration of the right-of-way could be done in such a way as to take into account specific land uses along the way by providing space for cafes, for example. As well, the reconfiguration of the right-of-way could be designed to provide opportunities to replace the Portage Place bus shelter (on Portage Avenue), and the existing skywalk-sidewalk connections, with new structures (see Section 4.3B *Solutions Arising from the Survey, Associated with Portage Place).*

Whether the Corporation or, possibly, the Centre Plan Committee, takes on this role, it is imperative that the various solutions be integrated into an over-all plan which is administered by one authority. This will ensure that the solutions are coordinated to yield

the best possible outcome. Figures 5.1 through 5.4, below, indicate a possible organizational structure that would facilitate the implementation of solutions and, therefore, the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street. These Figures illustrate the complexity of the undertaking, and the need for a cooperative effort to make a significant change.

prioritize

The solutions that can be implemented on the right-of-way, the adjacent land uses, and Portage Place, would affect the study area in various ways. Given that the blocks east of Donald Street, within the study area, have a high concentration of storefront vacancies (Figure 3.6, Section 3.2 *The Study Area)*, and that there are a number of run-down buildings in this area, solutions that address these problems must be given high priority. As well, solutions that will have an immediate positive effect on the study area, upon their completion, should also be considered most important.

The implementation of a building renovation program would address the vacancy problem in the study area. Of lesser importance is the creative use of commercial signage by businesses along Portage Avenue. However, a building renovation program could be designed to incorporate an incentive program for building owners and tenants to improve their commercial signage.

The reconfiguration and landscaping of the Portage Avenue right-of-way would provide the immediate positive effect required to initiate a transformation of the area. These solutions are also important because they directly address the poor quality pedestrian environment and the lack of on-street parking. The erection of signage identifying parking locations can be incorporated into the landscaping of downtown Portage Avenue.

It is expected that the solutions associated with Portage Place would primarily benefit the area immediately adjacent to it. Since vacancies are relatively low in this area, (Figure 3.6), these solutions are of secondary importance. Furthermore, the solution of

improving the skywalk-sidewalk connections in order to encourage people to patronize, not only Portage Place businesses, but also businesses on Portage Avenue, would be most effective if the buildings along Portage Avenue are renovated to attract people. However, as was stated in Section 5.2 *North Portage Development Corporation's Role in Implementing Solutions - coordinate,* the best possible outcome would be realized if these solutions are implemented at the same time as the reconfiguration of the right-of-way.

The solution of standardizing parking rates and expanding "Easy Streets", and the solution of revising building height regulations, are of lower priority than the solutions associated with Portage Place. Since the solutions addressing the cost of parking would only mitigate that cost, it is unlikely that they would significantly improve the attractiveness of coming to the area. This conclusion is supported by Table 3.4, which indicates that Winnipeggers, in general, would come downtown more often only if parking were free. The revising of building height regulations is a lower priority because it would have no effect on the area in the near future. As well, there usually is a lack of development in downtown Winnipeg.

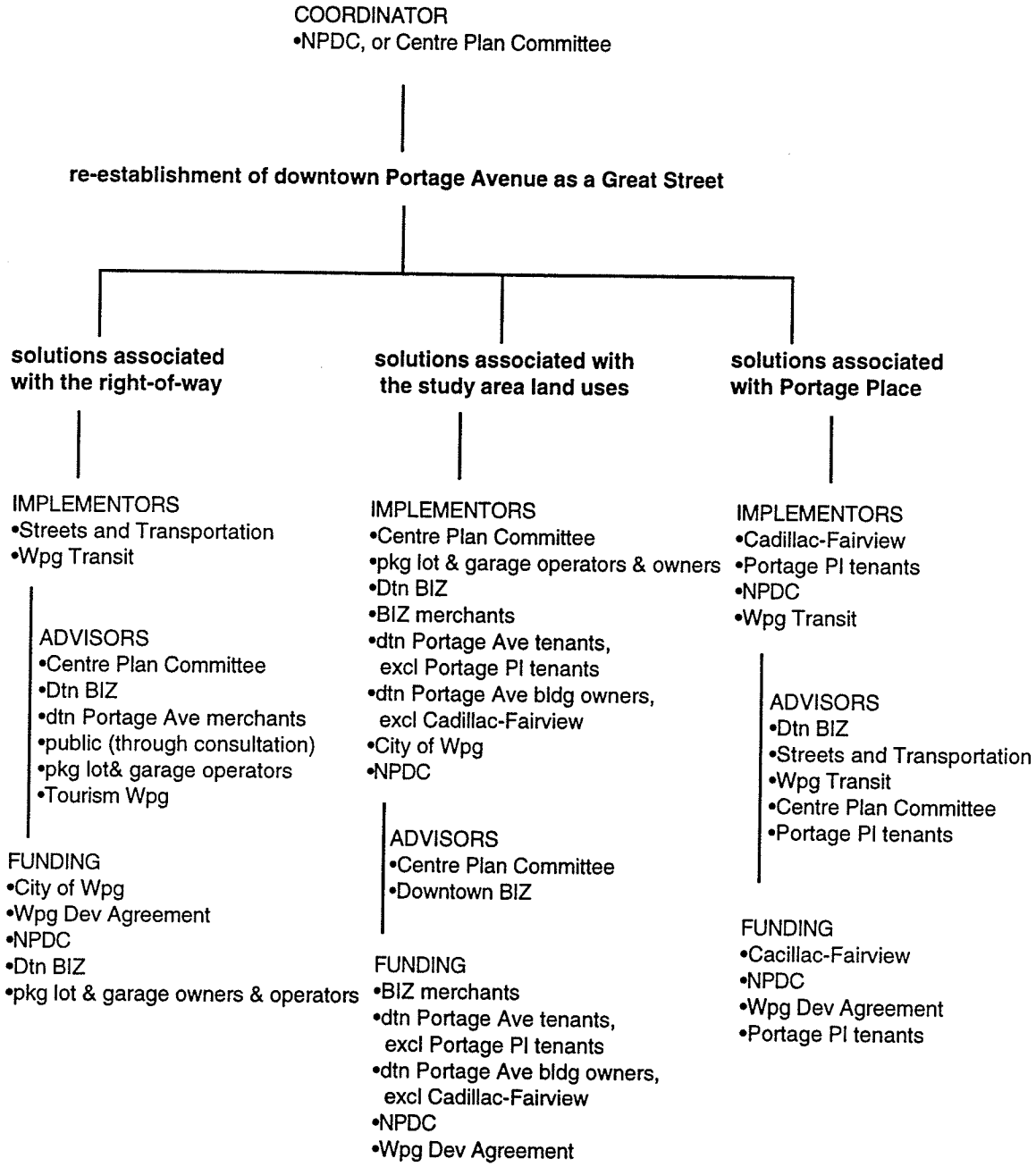

Figure 5.1. Organizational structure to facilitate the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street

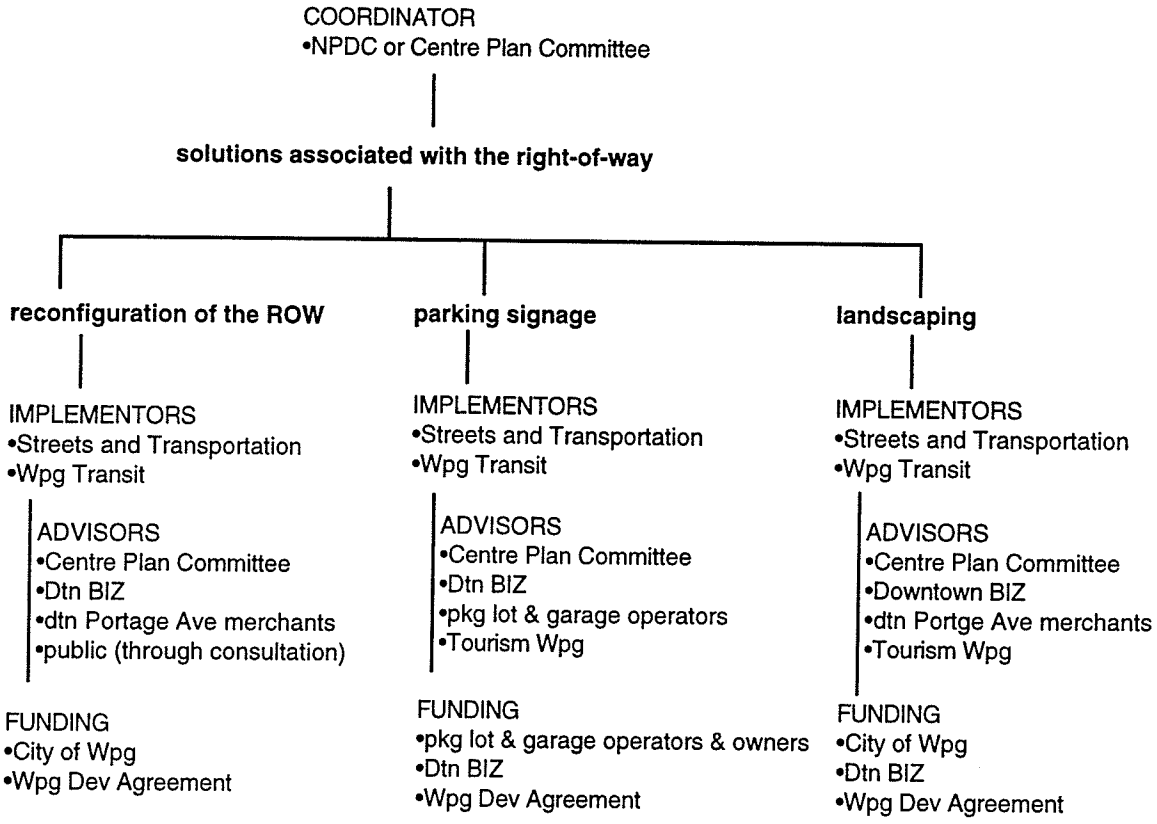

Figure 5.2. Organizational structure to facilitate implementation of solutions associated with the Portage Avenue right-of-way.

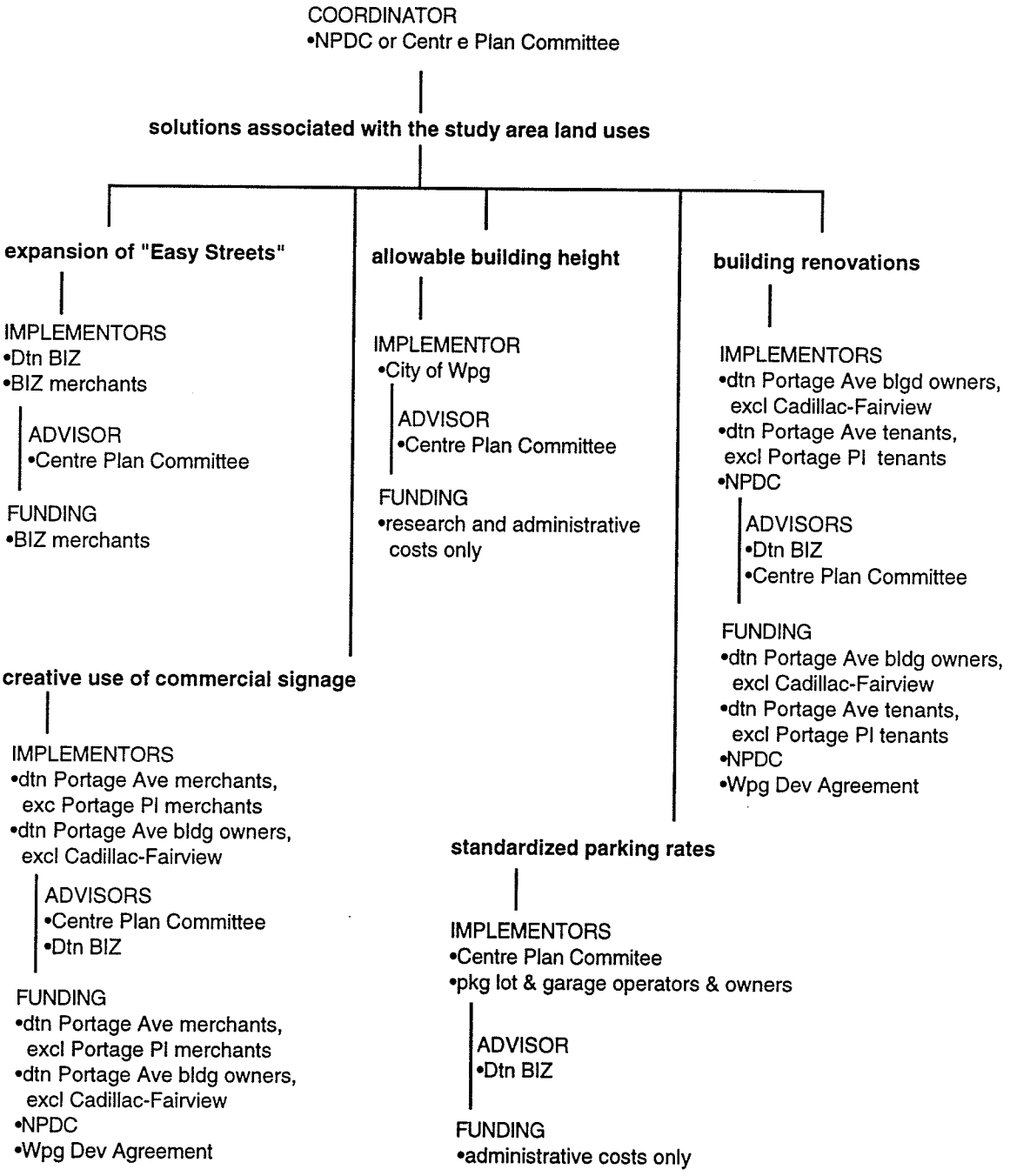

Figure 5.3. Organizational structure to facilitate implementation of solutions associated with the study area land uses.

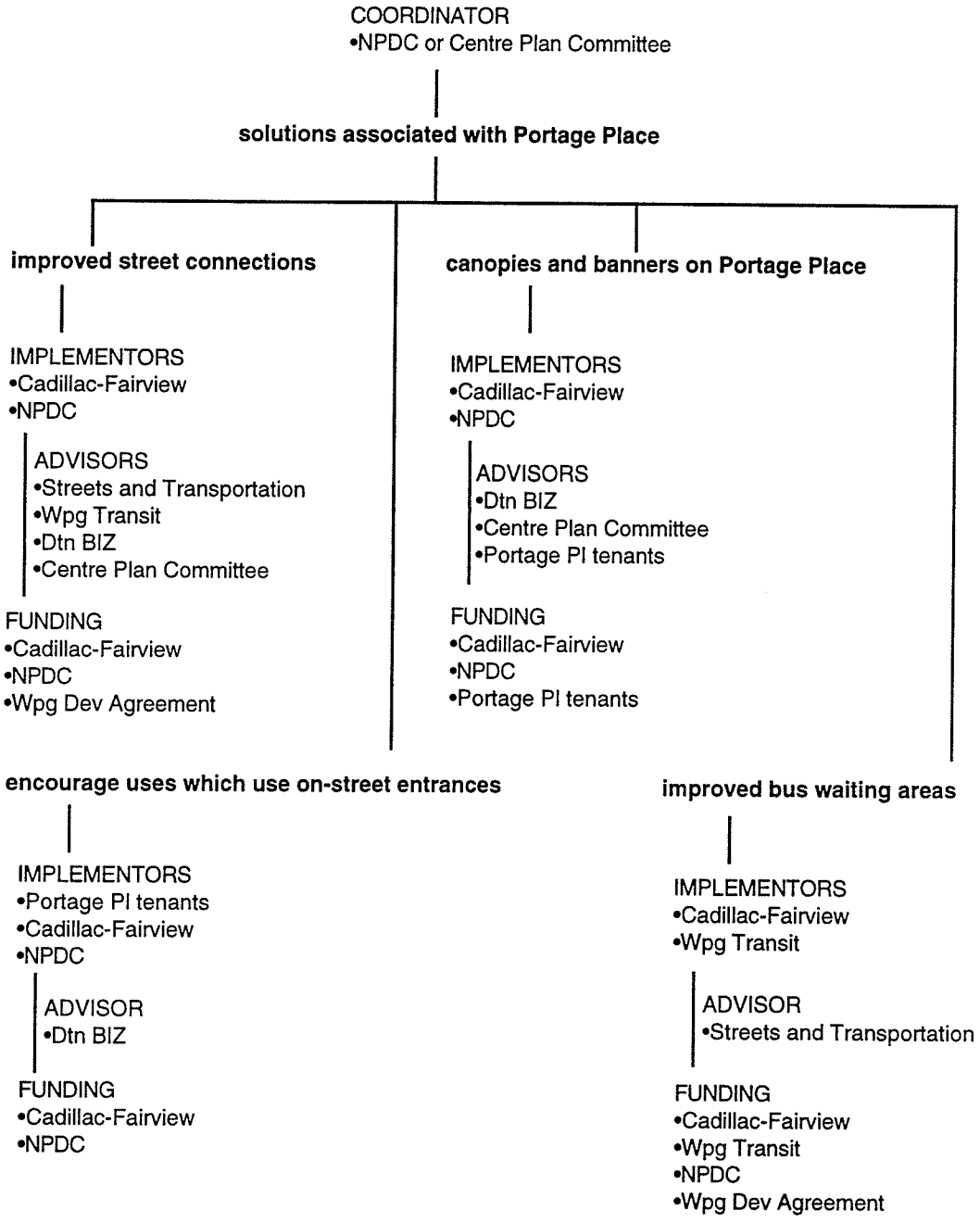

Figure 5.4. Organizational structure to facilitate implementation of solutions associated with Portage Place.

5.3 The Great Street

Considering the problems that are associated with downtown Portage Avenue, it is difficult to imagine that it can become, once again, a Great Street. However, as Jan Gehl (1987) states, redesigning the physical framework of cities to accommodate better human activities leads to a growth in the number, duration, and scope of outdoor activities. By implementing the proposed solutions, it is possible to transform the area into a vibrant, people-oriented place. The idea is not to provide an area that will compete directly with suburban shopping centres, or other focal points in the city, such as The Forks. Instead, the re-establishment of downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street is intended to broaden the scope of human activities in the city. By implementing the solutions, the urban vitality that once characterized downtown Portage Avenue can be given the opportunity to re-emerge. The case for re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street is not, however, based in sentimentality. It would be unrealistic to expect the area to become the retailing centre of former times, given the existing development of suburban shopping centres. Rather, it can be expected to become a unique place in the city. The area can offer people with a stimulating urban experience - a street to walk along, a place to shop or dine, a place to take in the variety of people and events that occur in a downtown setting. This is something that cannot be provided in the suburban shopping centres, or at The Forks. The degree to which Winnipeggers and visitors to the city would respond to this atmosphere is difficult to predict. However, it is clear that there is a lack of places like this in the city. By providing a positive, pedestrian-oriented urban environment, it is likely that an unrecognized need will be met.

Table 3.1, and Figures 3.2 and 3.3, from Section 3.1 *Downtown Winnipeg*, suggest that there is a need to address problems associated with the downtown in general. Table 3.1 indicates that Winnipeggers perceive their downtown in a negative light. Considering this finding with Figure 3.2, which shows that residents consider the

downtown as a highly important component of the city, suggests that there is potential to make positive changes to the city centre that would be supported by Winnipeggers. This point is emphasized in Figure 3.3 which indicates that there is strong support by residents to develop a plan for the downtown.

In urban areas, the streets form the predominant open space. They are the principal public places in city centres, followed by parks, plazas, and squares. We experience our downtowns largely from the street, either in a vehicle, or as a pedestrian. Streets facilitate movement from one area of the city to another, and access to adjacent land uses. They are also the place where we come into contact with the wider community of the city. Especially in winter cities, streets come alive in the summer. Sidewalk sales, hot dog vendors, and outdoor cafes appear where space and regulations permit. Not surprisingly, these are busy places. In an informal way, people participate in the life of their city. Some walk quickly, but many stroll casually, and many more sit and watch the everyday spectacle that is urban life.

Portage Avenue has some of these qualities. In milder weather people gather at Window Park and TD Plaza (at Portage and Notre Dame Avenues) to enjoy the weather and take in city life. Enterprising merchants sell crafts or food, buskers entertain, downtown workers relax. The street, though, has a wider importance as a symbol of the city. It is frequented by Winnipeggers and by visitors to the city. It is a place where major gatherings take place - parades and other celebrations. When the Winnipeg Blue Bombers won the Grey Cup, people congregated along downtown Portage Avenue to share in their victory. When the Pan-Am Games come to Winnipeg in 1999, it can be expected that downtown Portage Avenue will play a major role in showcasing the city. This is not to say that Portage Avenue should be transformed to impress visitors to the city. Rather, the implementation of solutions should be done for the benefit of citizens of Winnipeg. By re-establishing downtown Portage Avenue as a Great Street, it will become a symbol of the city that Winnipeggers can take pride in.

Appendix A

Tables

TABLE A.1. RESIDENTS' USE OF DOWNTOWN FOR SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT "NOW" AS COMPARED WITH "A FEW YEARS AGO".[70]

(Numbers indicated as percentages.)

	MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	SAME AS BEFORE	LESS OFTEN÷MORE OFTEN
Winnipeg	16	53	30	3.3
Regina	15	47	36	3.1
Saskatoon	14	42	38	3.0
Calgary	18	43	37	2.4
Edmonton	17	52	27	3.1
Vancouver	14	54	29	3.9
Toronto	17	49	33	2.9
Ottawa	16	48	33	3.0
Montreal	19	47	33	2.5
Halifax	17	44	36	2.6

TABLE A.2. RESPONSIBILITY TO INITIATE CHANGE.[71]

RESPONSIBILITY, %	TOTAL n=420	OWN n=301	RENT n=116
The City's, in cooperation with business, other levels of government, and residents.	71	68	79
The City's, in cooperation with business.	17	20	9
The City's, in cooperation with other levels of Government.	6	5	8
The City's.	5	6	3
The business community.	1	1	1

70 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 48.

71 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 32.

TABLE A.3. WINNIPEGGERS' MOST LIKED AND MOST DISLIKED FEATURES OF THEIR DOWNTOWN.[72]

MOST DISLIKED FEATURE, %	n=502	MOST LIKED FEATURE, %	n=502
Parking	43	The Forks/Riverwalks	40
Derelicts/people who hang around/panhandlers	33	The shopping/department stores	27
Empty/derelict buildings	25	Everything connected/ tunnels & overpasses	14
Lack of cleanliness	17	Portage Place	12
Safety	15	Everything close together	11
Traffic	14	Cultural/art opportunities	10
Appearance/not enough green areas	11	Old/historic buildings	10
One way streets	6	Lots to see and do/ variety of places to go	9
Portage Place/ugly malls	5	Clean	8
Not pedestrian-friendly/ walking is difficult	4	Central/accessible/location	8
Crime/drugs/violence/vandalism	4	Legislative grounds/legislature	7
Inadequate night life/ entertainment/things to do	4	Dining/entertainment/night spots	7
Cost of parking/transit/shops	4	Various other areas of downtown	6
Far from home/location	3	Various buildings/ businesses/services	6
Short shopping hours	3	The Exchange District	6
Crowded	2	Parks	5
Inadequate bus routes/ service/shelters	2	Bus service/transit	5
		Appearance/lights/scenery/signs	4
		Safe (daytime)/familiar/ relaxed atmosphere	3
		Wide/one way streets/traffic flow	3

72 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 12.

TABLE A.4. REASONS CITY-WIDE RESIDENTS SHOPPED, OR DID NOT SHOP DOWNTOWN.[73]

REASONS FOR SHOPPING DOWNTOWN	% n=442	REASONS FOR NOT SHOPPING DOWNTOWN	% n=442
More variety of shops/specialty shopping	21	More parking in suburbs	27
Specific store/item/favorite store	14	Location/far from home	17
For a change/something different	11	Parking is too expensive	16
Was in the area	9	Hassle/inconvenient/prefer malls	14
Convenience/easy access/take a bus	9	Don' t shop	12
Department stores	8	Too dangerous	7
Live downtown/close to downtown	5	Too expensive	4
Work downtown	4		
Sales/advertising	4		
Go to The Forks	3		

73 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 29.

TABLE A.5. PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO GAVE HIGH RATING TO DOWNTOWN FEATURES[74]

	AREA OF RESIDENCE			
FEATURE	Downtown	Inner City	Older Suburbs	Newer Suburbs
Good shopping/entertainment	57	48	49	43
Good availability/cost of parking	11	17	10	9
Good parks and public places	46	44	41	34
Downtown is safe	21	14	14	6
Good appearance/clean	21	17	19	16
Go downtown more often for shopping/entertainment	43	20	10	19

TABLE A.6. RATING OF ATTRIBUTES OF DOWNTOWN WINNIPEG.[75]

(on a scale of 1 - 7, very poor to excellent, respectively)

ATTRIBUTE	RATING
Cultural facilities	5.7
Shopping	5.5
Public Transit	5.5
Restaurants and nightclubs	5.3
Oriented to pedestrians	4.8
Overall appearance	4.6
Cleanliness	4.5
Personal safety	4.3
Traffic flow	4.0
Parks	4.0
Recreational and sports facilities	3.9
Availability of parking	3.6
Cost of parking	2.7

74 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 35.

75 Ibid., page 37.

TABLE A.7. RECOMMENDED CHANGES FOR DOWNTOWN'S SUCCESS.[76]

RECOMMENDED CHANGES	%, n=502
Improved parking/weekend free parking	32
Clean it up	17
Improved appearance/green areas	16
Improved safety/police patrols	14
Rent/fix up old and empty buildings	14
Encourage business/lower rents/lower taxes	13
Address poverty/less panhandling	10
Improve traffic flow/better access	7
More events/things to do/night life/restaurants	7
Improve transit	7
Build arena downtown	7
The attitudes and behavior of Winnipeggers	6
More recreational opportunities	5
More pedestrian-friendly	5
More upscale housing	3
More restaurants/outdoor cafes	3
Build bicycle paths	3

76 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 13.

TABLE A.8. FREQUENCY OF DOWNTOWN USE IN ONE YEAR, BY PURPOSE (Mean Values)[77]

		LOCATION		WORK DOWNTOWN	
	TOTAL n=502	INNER CITY n=150	SUBURBS n=352	YES n=114	NO n=388
Shopping	35	53	28	67	26
Dining	30	41	25	69	18
Recreation or leisure	20	33	15	34	16
Professional & government services	19	21	19	34	15
Culture or entertainment	18	24	16	29	15
Educational purposes	15	18	13	20	13

TABLE A.9. DOWNTOWN BIZ MEMBERS' ATTITUDE WHETHER FOOD CART STREET VENDING SHOULD BE PERMITTED IN THE DOWNTOWN.[78]

FOOD CART VENDING PERMITTED?		TYPE OF BUSINESS					
	TOTAL n=207	RETAIL n=48	REST n=18	SERVICE n=78	PROF n=43	OTHER	NOT STATED
Yes, %	89	92	50	95	91	100	83
No, %	9	8	50	3	7	0	0
Don't know, %	2	0	0	3	2	0	8
Not stated, %	1	0	0	0	0	0	8

77 Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994), page 28.

78 Dennis McKnight 2051 Inc., *Quantitative Results of BIZ Members' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards the Promotion of the Downtown and Various BIZ Programs* (The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, 1992), page 27.

TABLE A.10. RATING OF CLIMATE, BY AREA OF RESIDENCE.[79]

AREA OF RESIDENCE	CLIMATE NOT A DRAWBACK, %
Downtown	21
Inner City	25
Older Suburbs	32
Newer Suburbs	28

TABLE A.11. ATTITUDES OF SHOPPERS INTERVIEWED BETWEEN THE BAY AND EATON'S AND EATON PLACE, SOUTH-SIDE PORTAGE AVENUE - 1984 AND 1988 - AND PORTAGE PLACE, INCLUDING SKYWALKS - 1988.[80]

SHOPPER ATTITUDES		
BEST FEATURES OF SHOPPING DOWNTOWN	1988, %	1984, %
Variety of stores and merchandise	51	65
Closeness of shops to place of residence	18	25
Climate-controlled/enclosed shopping area	12	n/a
Closeness to work/school	10	17
Stores close together	9	n/a
Size and merchandise depth of major department stores	9	34
Distinctive specialty stores	n/a	15
WORST FEATURES OF SHOPPING DOWNTOWN	1988, %	1984, %
Cost of parking	22	29
Availability of parking	20	34
Traffic congestion and construction	10	13
High prices	8	n/a
Lack of climate-controlled connections	n/a	11
No bad features	11	n/a
Did not know or state	21	n/a

79 Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994), page 55.

80 Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1988).
Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1984).

TABLE A.12. LARGE DOWNTOWN RETAIL CENTRES VISITED BY SHOPPERS INTERVIEWED BETWEEN THE BAY AND EATON'S AND EATON PLACE, SOUTH-SIDE PORTAGE AVENUE - 1984 AND 1988 - AND PORTAGE PLACE, INCLUDING SKYWALKS - 1988.[81]

	% OF RESPONDENTS	
LARGE DOWNTOWN RETAIL CENTRES VISITED	1988	1984
Portage Place	66	n/a
Eaton's	60	69
The Bay	51	52
Eaton Place	41	53

81 Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1988).
Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* (Winnipeg: North Portage Development Corporation, 1984).

Appendix B

Data for Table 3.9

The pedestrian counts shown in Table 3.9 are derived from the data provided in the 1984 *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* and the 1988 *Shopper Intercept Study* by Criterion Research Corporation. Since the 1988 data includes a greater number of five minute pedestrian counts than the 1984 data, only pedestrian counts which were conducted at the same times and days as in 1984 are used to provide the pedestrian counts shown in Table 3.9. This provides the validity required to compare the 1988 pedestrian counts with those of 1984.

1984 survey data

PORTAGE & HARGRAVE

Thurs., Oct 11	Fri., Oct 12	Sat., Oct 13
10 a.m. - 31	12 p.m. - 59	11 a.m. - 48
2 p.m. - 63	4 p.m. - 87	3 p.m. - 93
6 p.m. - 48	8 p.m. - 26	

EDMONTON & PORTAGE

Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
11 a.m. - 78	10 a.m. - 74	12 p.m. - 109
2 p.m. - 124	1 p.m. - 116	3 p.m. - 179
5 p.m. - 116	4 p.m. - 164	
8 p.m. - 31	7 p.m. - 66	

PORTAGE & VAUGHAN

Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
11 a.m. - 24	1 p.m. - 79	12 p.m. - 44
3 p.m. - 41	5 p.m. - 44	4 p.m. -40
7 p.m. - 59	9 p.m. - 7	

1988 study data

SKYWALK TO EATON'S

	5 Minute Count		
	Thursday Sept. 29, 1988	Friday Sept. 30, 1988	Saturday Oct. 1, 1988
10:00 - 10:05 a.m.	30	31	43
11:00 - 11:05 a.m.	80	98	87
12:00 - 12:05 a.m.	181	168	109
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	147	161	159
2:00 - 2:05 p.m.	92	123	229
3:00 - 3:05 p.m.	115	149	186
4:00 - 4:05 p.m.	149	131	148
5:00 - 5:05 p.m.	71	81	128
6:00 - 6:05 p.m.	90	94	--
7:00 - 7:05 p.m.	96	86	--
8:00 - 8:05 p.m.	92	97	--
9:00 - 9:05 p.m.	52	91	--
TOTALS:	1195	1310	1089

PORTAGE AVENUE AT HARGRAVE STREET

5 Minute Count

	Thursday Sept. 29, 1988	Friday Sept. 30, 1988	Saturday Oct. 1, 1988
10:00 - 10:05 a.m.	24	24	12
11:00 - 11:05 a.m.	64	34	17
12:00 - 12:05 a.m.	150	60	34
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	35	156	46
2:00 - 2:05 p.m.	92	116	63
3:00 - 3:05 p.m.	48	35	63
4:00 - 4:05 p.m.	41	57	32
5:00 - 5:05 p.m.	74	28	14
6:00 - 6:05 p.m.	30	12	--
7:00 - 7:05 p.m.	11	3	--
8:00 - 8:05 p.m.	18	7	--
9:00 - 9:05 p.m.	22	8	--
TOTALS:	609	540	281

SOUTH SIDE PORTAGE AVENUE AT BOYD BUILDING

5 Minute Count

	Thursday Sept. 29, 1988	Friday Sept. 30, 1988	Saturday Oct. 1, 1988
10:00 - 10:05 a.m.	83	50	24
11:00 - 11:05 a.m.	53	67	32
12:00 - 12:05 a.m.	74	79	41
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	78	132	57
2:00 - 2:05 p.m.	69	79	62
3:00 - 3:05 p.m.	73	69	10
4:00 - 4:05 p.m.	71	74	23
5:00 - 5:05 p.m.	95	54	37
6:00 - 6:05 p.m.	42	32	--
7:00 - 7:05 p.m.	20	10	--
8:00 - 8:05 p.m.	10	17	--
9:00 - 9:05 p.m.	24	4	--
TOTALS:	692	667	286

PORTAGE AVENUE AT VAUGHAN STREET

5 Minute Count

	Thursday Sept. 29, 1988	Friday Sept. 30, 1988	Saturday Oct. 1, 1988
10:00 - 10:05 a.m.	34	37	24
11:00 - 11:05 a.m.	47	59	28
12:00 - 12:05 a.m.	96	82	40
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	83	94	38
2:00 - 2:05 p.m.	76	71	48
3:00 - 3:05 p.m.	59	24	41
4:00 - 4:05 p.m.	69	31	47
5:00 - 5:05 p.m.	52	43	25
6:00 - 6:05 p.m.	19	22	--
7:00 - 7:05 p.m.	20	19	--
8:00 - 8:05 p.m.	37	26	--
9:00 - 9:05 p.m.	3	12	--
TOTALS:	595	520	291

SKYWALK TO THE BAY

	5 Minute Count		
	Thursday Sept. 29, 1988	**Friday Sept. 30, 1988**	**Saturday Oct. 1, 1988**
10:00 - 10:05 a.m.	28	17	34
11:00 - 11:05 a.m.	29	28	68
12:00 - 12:05 a.m.	55	60	82
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	106	111	97
2:00 - 2:05 p.m.	71	82	116
3:00 - 3:05 p.m.	69	90	125
4:00 - 4:05 p.m.	57	60	125
5:00 - 5:05 p.m.	54	64	87
6:00 - 6:05 p.m.	29	25	--
7:00 - 7:05 p.m.	41	46	--
8:00 - 8:05 p.m.	69	64	--
9:00 - 9:05 p.m.	27	22	--
TOTALS:	635	669	734

Appendix C

Survey of Key Informants and Study Area Merchants

The following is a list of the key informants and a sample of the interview guide used in conducting the survey of September, 1994.

key informants

Ed Bates, Commercial Leasing Agent, Arnovitch and Leipsic.

Cynthia Cohlmeyer, Principle, Cynthia Cohlmeyer Landscape Architects.

Steve Cohlmeyer, Principle, Cohlmeyer Associates - Architects and Urban Designers.

Gerry Couture, Project Manager - Centre Plan, Centre Plan Committee.

Steve Demmings, Rail West Equities, Real Estate Investment Consultants.

Harry Finnigan, Executive Director, Downtown Winnipeg Business Association.

Mel Hurt, Traffic Operations Engineer, City of Winnipeg, Department of Streets and Transportation.

Eamon Kelly, Manager of Portage Place, Cadillac-Fairview.

Chris Knoll, District Planner - Downtown, City of Winnipeg Planning Department.

Bill Menzies, Superintendent of Transit Planning, Winnipeg Transit.

Ken Rosin, Manager - Transportation Planning and Development, City of Winnipeg, Department of Streets and Transportation.

interview guide

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Date and Time

Organization Name and Address

Name and Title of Person Interviewed

Length of Time Person in Position

MERCHANTS

1. What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of operating this business on downtown Portage Avenue?
2. What types of improvements to downtown Portage Avenue would you like to see take place that would improve your business?

KEY INFORMANTS

1. What are some of the positive and negative qualities of downtown Portage Avenue?
2. What types of changes to downtown Portage Avenue would you like to see take place?

TOPICS

- •parking, on-street parking
- •parks and public places
- •safety
- •appearance - buildings and the Portage Avenue right-of-way
- •traffic and transit
- •move business to/from Portage Place
- •entrance configuration for Portage Place shops
- •effect of skywalks
- •Portage Place, qualities of, effects of, desirable changes
- •south-side Portage Avenue

Bibliography

The following bibliography is divided into five parts: books, theses and reports, periodicals, newspaper articles, and interviews (other than those conducted as part of the survey of key informants and study area merchants).

books

Applebaum, William, and S.O. Kaylin, *Case Studies in Shopping Centre Development and Operations* (New York: International Council of Shopping Centres, 1974).

Alexander, Lawrence (editor), *Downtown Retail Revitalization* (New York: Downtown Research and Development Centre, 1986).

Artibise, Alan, *Winnipeg An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1977).

Black, Thomas, *Downtown Retail Development* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1983).

Bachtle, Edward and Associates, *Pedestrian Malls and Plazas* (Washington: Edward R. Bachtle and Associates, 1978).

Brambilla, Roberta, *Banning the Car Downtown* (New York: Institute for Environmental Action, 1977).

Brambilla, Roberta, *The Rediscovery of the Pedestrian* (Washington: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1977).

Brambilla, Roberta, *A Handbook for Pedestrian Action* (Washington: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1977).

Dawson, John, *Shopping Centre Development* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1983).

Delobez, Annie, *Geography of Marketing* (London: Group Limited, 1977).

Downtown Research and Development Centre, *Building Downtown Malls* (New York: The Centre, 1973).

Downtown Research and Development Centre, *Public Attitudes Toward Downtown Malls* (New York: Downtown Research and Development Centre, 1975).

Gehl, Jan, *Life Between Buildings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987).

Greater London Council, *Pedestrianized Streets* (London: Greater London Council, 1973).

Jacobs, Allan, *Great Streets* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993).

Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

Kowinski, William, *The Malling of America* (New York: W. Morrow, 1985).

Kuhnemann, Jorg, *Traffic-Free Zones in German Cities* (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Environmental Directorate, 1972).

Maitland, Barry, *The New Architecture of the Retail Mall* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990).

Maitland, Barry, *Shopping Malls - Planning and Design* (New York: Nichols, 1985).

Maki, Fumihiko, *Investigations in Collective Form* (Saint Louis: Washington University School of Architecture, 1964).

McNair, Malcolm and Eleanor May, *The Evolution of Retail Institutions in the United States* (Cambridge: Marketing Science Institute, 1976).

Muller, Thomas, *Economic Impact of Land Development* (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1976).

Muller, Thomas, *Fiscal Impacts of Land Development* (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1975).

Norwich Planning Department, *Norwich, The Creation of a Foot Street* (Norwich: Norwich City Planning Department, 1969).

Paumier, Cyril, *Designing the Successful Downtown* (Washington: Urban Land Institute, 1988).

Perkin, George, *Streets for Pedestrians* (Slough: Cement and Concrete Association, 1976).

Pressman, Norman, *Reshaping Winter Cities* (Waterloo: Livable Winter City Association, 1985).

Rathburn, Robert, *Shopping Centres and Malls* (New York: Retail Reporting Corporation, 1986).

Rubenstein, Harvey, *Central City Malls* (New York: Wiley, 1978).

Schaenman, Philip, *Using an Impact Measurement System to Evaluate Land Development* (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1976).

Schretter, Howard, *Downtown Revitalization* (Athens: Institute of Community and Area Development, University of Georgia, 1967).

Trancik, Roger, *Finding Lost Space* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986).

Ulig, Klaus, *Pedestrian Areas* (London: Academy Editions, 1979).

Whyte, William, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington: Conservation Foundation, 1980).

Whyte, William, *City: Rediscovering the Centre* (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

Zeisel, John, *Inquiry by Design* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

theses and reports

Ad Hoc Committee on the South Side of Portage Avenue, *South Side Story* (Winnipeg, September 1989).

Business Improvement Zone Task Force, *Business Improvement Zone* (Winnipeg, July 1987).

Charette, Catherine, *Public Opinion in Canadian Prairie Inner Cities* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1994).

City of Winnipeg Department of Streets and Transportation and Winnipeg Transit, *Traffic, Transit, and Pedestrian Facilities on Portage Avenue Between Colony and Main* (Winnipeg: The Commissioner of Works and Operations, 1994).

Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan* (City of Winnipeg, 1995).

Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Action Plan 1995 - 1996* (City of Winnipeg, 1995).

Centre Plan Committee, *Centre Plan, Ideas*(City of Winnipeg, 1995).

City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Profile* (City of Winnipeg, 1991).

City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Revitalization* (City of Winnipeg, 1977).

City of Winnipeg Planning Department, *Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-Law* (City of Winnipeg, 1988).

Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Survey* (Winnipeg, October 1984)

Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shoppers Survey: Detailed Tables* Winnipeg, October 1984).

Criterion Research Corporation, *Portage Avenue Shopper Intercept Study* (Winnipeg, October 1988).

Criterion Research Corporation, *Public Attitude Study Final Report* (Winnipeg: The City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1994).

Dennis McKnight 2051 Inc., *Quantitative Results of BIZ Members' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards the Promotion of the Downtown and Various BIZ Programs* (The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, 1992).

Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone, *1992/1993 Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).

Eady, Robert, *The Downtown Pedestrian Environment* (Winnipeg: M.C.P. Practicum, University of Manitoba, 1990).

Hettich, Walter, and Cary Swoveland, *Benefit-Cost Analysis for Air Transportation Projects* (1983).

Honigman, Arch, *Downtown vs Suburban Shopping Centres* (Winnipeg: M.C.P. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1985).

Ircha, M.C., *Shopping Centres and Downtown Revitalization in Canada* (Winnipeg, 1982).

Lyon, Deborah, and Robert Fenton, *Development of Downtown Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1984).

Muller, Thomas, *The Fiscal Impact of Regional Malls on Central Business Districts in Small Cities* (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1978).

North of Portage Administrative Task Force, *North of Portage: A Development Proposal* (Winnipeg, 1984).

North of Portage Administrative Task Force, *Technical Report* (Winnipeg, July 1983).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1990).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1991).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1992).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1993).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1994).

North Portage Development Corporation, *Final Concept and Financial Plan for North Portage Redevelopment* (Winnipeg, March 1984).

Shaw, John, *Safeguarding a Sense of Place* (Winnipeg: M.C.P. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1986).

Statistics Canada, *Shopping Centres in Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970).

Stewart, J.R., *User Response to Pedestrianized Shopping Streets* (Birmingham: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, 1979).

Surie, Raman, *Revitalization of Downtown Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: M.C.P. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1981).

Talbot, Lloyd, *A Study of the Development of Winnipeg's Planned Shopping Centres and An Analysis of Selected Planned Shopping Centre Characteristics* (Winnipeg: M.C.P. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974).

periodicals

Dillon, David, "Conference Looks at the Benefits and Problems of Skyways", *Architecture*, June 1985.

Garbrecht, Dietrich, "Walkability: A Prerequisite for Livable Cities", *Making Cities Livable Newsletter*, May 1987.

Gottlieb, Martin, "A Conversation with Fred Kent", *Urban Land,* June 1993.

Harold , Hanen, "A City for All Seasons", *Livable Winter City Association Newsletter*, April 1985.

Kay, Jane, "Main Street: America's Spine", *Landscape Architecture*, February 1990.

Keister, Kim, "Main Street Makes Good", *Historic Preservation*, September-October 1983.

Kiernan, Michael, "Intergovernmental Innovation: Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative", *Plan Canada*, March 1987.

Krohe, Jr., James, "Chicago Goes Underground", *Metropolis*, November 1991.

Lassar, Terry, " The Pros and Cons of Downtown Skywalks", *Urban Land*, December 1988.

Lehreman, Jonas, "The Skyway Assessed", *Making Cities Livable Newsletter*, December 1988.

Lyons, Glenn, Don Sinclair, and Sophia Lum, "Calgary's Plus 15: Twenty Years of Development", *Plan Canada*, January 1988.

Maitland, Barry, "Hidden Cities", *Cities,* August 1992.

Mashburn, Rick, "Reviving the CBD", *Landscape Architecture*, February 1990.

Milder, David, "Crime and Downtown Revitalization", *Urban Land*, September 1987.

Monheim, Rolf, "Successful Pedestrian Areas", *Making Cities Livable Newsletter,* February 1987.

Oc,Taner, "Planning Natural Surveillance Back Into City Centres", *Town and Country Planning*, September 1991.

Parsons, Lee, "Downtown Redevelopment in Medium Sized Cities", *Plan Canada*, May 1986.

Pressman, Norman, "International Experiences in Creating Livable Cities", *Contact*, volume 13, 1981.

Robertson, Kent, "Pedestrian Streets in Sweden's City Centres", *Cities,* November 1991.

Robertson, Kent, "Pedestrian Skywalk Systems: downtown's great hope or pathways to ruin?", *Transportation Quarterly,* July 1988.

Schyler, George, Michael Ircha, "Market Square", *Plan Canada,* March 1987.

Stokvis, Jack, James Cloar, "CRM: Applying Shopping Centre Techniques to Downtown Retailing", *Urban Land*, April 1991.

"How Now Downtown? A Review of the Plans of Four Cities", *Plan Canada*, December 1982.

"Plus 15 - The Pedestrian Network", *Winter City News*, October 1988.

newspaper articles

Martin, Nick, *Begging bylaw needs some help, police chief says* (Winnipeg Free Press, January 10,1995).

Redekop, Bill, *BusLanes, parking proposal for Portage* (Winnipeg Free Press, June 9, 1994).

Wild, Stevens, *FP readers pan plans for Portage Avenue* (Winnipeg Free Press, January 16, 1995).

Wild, Stevens, *Portage study gets the green light* (Winnipeg Free Press, January 11, 1995).

interviews (other than those conducted for the survey)

Finnigan, Harry, *Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone* (Winnipeg, February 1994)

Hicks, David, *DS-Lea Consultants Limited* (Winnipeg, November 1993).

Lane, John, *Canadian Paraplegic Association* (Winnipeg, February 1994).

Shilling, Ralph, *Ralph W. Shilling Architect* (Winnipeg, January 1994).

Smith, Kent, *North Portage Development Corporation* (Winnipeg, January 1994).

Thater, Hans, Manitoba Planetarium, (Winnipeg, February, 1995)