

Facilitating the Integration  
of Planning and Development  
for Downtown Revitalization:

CentreVenture's Involvement in the  
Redevelopment of Downtown Winnipeg

by

Elisabeth Saftiuk

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  
Department of City Planning  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg

Copyright © 2014 Elisabeth Saftiuk

## Abstract

Downtowns contribute significantly to the economy of cities and as a result, decision makers are increasingly recognizing the fundamental value and importance of maintaining viable downtown cores. Following the post-war era of urban decay and suburban expansion, there have been widespread attempts nationwide to reverse trends and to revitalize downtowns. In the Winnipeg context, urban renewal was practiced throughout the 1960s and 1970s; tripartite agreements were utilized during the 1980s; and development corporations were introduced throughout the 1980s and 1990s as a way to encourage private sector investment with targeted public sector investments.

This practicum investigates the relationship between planning and development in the downtown revitalization context. In particular, this research aims to discover the extent to which a downtown development agency may have facilitated the better integration of planning and development in a city's downtown, where revitalization has been very much on the public agenda. Winnipeg's CentreVenture Development Corporation was used as a case study to explore this relationship. It was established in 1999 and continues to operate today. This paper attempts to determine the extent of its involvement, and the manner by which this arms-length government agency has aided and influenced tangible development in Winnipeg's downtown.

Furthermore, the case study was used to understand the nature, scope and form of related downtown revitalization, and to distill any learning about the general topic that might be applicable in other comparable settings. The practicum concludes by providing potentially transferable best practices to cities with similar characteristics and with recommendations for both CentreVenture Development Corporation and its shareholder, the City of Winnipeg.

**Keywords:** CentreVenture Development Corporation, downtown revitalization, development corporation, urban renewal, tri-level agreements, Core Area Initiative, planning, development

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all those who agreed to be interviewed as part of this research. It was a privilege to sit down with you and to discuss a topic that is of great interest to us both. Thank you for affording me this opportunity and for sharing with me your insight and expertise. Without your participation, this project would not have been possible.

I am so thankful to have been surrounded by a remarkable group of classmates as we worked collaboratively to complete the coursework portion of this graduate degree. I am especially thankful to those classmates who have become close friends. Brock, Lacey and Lauren, please know how much I appreciate your friendship.

Thank you to my parents for your love and support, especially as this process was nearing its end. Please know how much I value your advice and have appreciated your guidance. I would not be where I am today had it not been for your profound influence.

David, thank you for being the best teammate I could ever hope for. As with every journey, I am so thankful that you were alongside me for this one. Thank you for supporting my professional ambitions and thank you for your unconditional love.

Thank you to my Red River Planning District colleagues, Jennifer Ferguson and Derek Eno, for your unwavering support, professional guidance and for your mentorship. Please know how much I appreciate all you've done for me as I worked towards achieving this goal.

Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to my Examining Committee. Thank you to Dr. Ian Wight for getting me started on this journey. Thank you to Linda McFadyen and Veronica Hicks for your patience; for providing constructive feedback; and most importantly, for treating me like a colleague throughout this entire process. To my advisor, Gerry Couture, thank you for providing me with direction; thank you for the depth to which you forced me to think; and thank you for believing in me. I have tremendous respect for you and I am so fortunate to have had this opportunity to learn from you; it has been a true privilege.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Problem and Questions	3
1.3 Purpose and Objectives	4
1.4 Importance of Study	5
1.5 Research Methods	7
1.6 Assumptions and Limitations	11
1.7 Outline of Document	11
<b>2.0 Targeted Literature Review</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Downtowns: Functions and Form	13
2.2 Downtown Revitalization	16
2.3 Urban Development	19
<b>3.0 Case Study: Winnipeg and CentreVenture Development Corporation</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3.1 Historical Context</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1.1 The Turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	22
3.1.2 The Post-War Era: Urban Decay and Suburban Expansion	23
3.1.3 The Era of Urban Renewal: The 1960s and 1970s	25
3.1.4 The Era of Tri-Level Programs: The 1980s	28
3.1.5 The Major Planning Phase: The 1990s	40
<b>3.2 The Emergence of Development Corporations</b>	<b>42</b>
3.2.1 North Portage Development Corporation	42
3.2.2 The Forks Renewal Corporation	45
<b>3.3 CentreVenture Development Corporation</b>	<b>49</b>
3.3.1 Emergence of CentreVenture (Pre 1999)	49
3.3.2 Evolution of CentreVenture (1999-2006)	54
3.3.3 Evolution of CentreVenture (2007-2013)	56
3.3.4 Trajectory of CentreVenture (2014 –)	60
<b>4.0 Results: Findings from Key Informant Interviews</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>5.0 Analysis and Synthesis</b>	<b>80</b>
5.1 Planning	80
5.2 Development and Revitalization	82
5.3 Facilitation and Integration	88
<b>6.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>89</b>
6.1 Response to Research Questions	89
6.2 Recommendations	96

6.3 Biases and Limitations that Arose During Fieldwork	98
6.4 Directions for Future Research	100
REFERENCES	102
APPENDICES	107

### **List of Tables**

Table 1: Core Area Initiative Agreement Programs and Funding Allocation	30
Table 2: Renewed Core Area Initiative Agreement Programs	33
Table 3: Program 2 Investment (The Exchange District Redevelopment)	34

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: CentrePlan Components	42
---------------------------------	----

“Why does this matter? Because they have been so long without a real downtown, the citizens of Winnipeg, particularly those under fifty years of age, have lost touch with an important truth – the heart of a city matters a great deal.”

(CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 13)

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

It would be difficult to find another eight year period (2005-2013) in the history of downtown Winnipeg that has seen as much development as is currently occurring. We believe that one would have to look back almost a century to Winnipeg's boom period that ended in the 1920's to find a comparable level of development (Distasio & McCullough 2013, p. 10).

This story begins over 100 years ago. It was the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the City of Winnipeg was at the height of its prosperity, its downtown most vital. Winnipeg's significant population growth and economic success in the late 1800s and early 1900s made the city one of the most desirable places to live in Canada. The real estate market was booming; there was no shortage of development, especially in its then Central Business District (CBD). Winnipeg had boasted such substantial development at the time that the city even caught the attention of its neighbours to the south. The 1911 Chicago Tribune article read:

All roads lead to Winnipeg... It is destined to become one of the greatest distributing and commercial centres of the continent as well as a manufacturing centre of some importance (Blanchard, 2005, p. 5).

Winnipeg's pronounced early 20<sup>th</sup> Century growth and abundant success would come to an end with the occurrence of a number of events, including the discovery of oil in the west, the opening of a new major transportation route to the south (the Panama Canal) and, of course, a World War. From that point on, the City of Winnipeg would grow at a sluggish rate, falling behind other major Canadian centres. Following the Second World War, Winnipeg's urban core would see an exodus of residents, who once called the surrounds of the CBD home, as they settled first the inner suburbs, and then the outer suburbs. Commerce would soon follow as lively retail shops that once lined the CBD's

vibrant streets followed people to the suburbs. Heritage structures and storefronts would be abandoned and decay would start to set in. It would be decades before a deteriorating and declining CBD would be touched again. At some point a rebranding from ‘CBD’ to ‘downtown’ emerged, as part of redevelopment efforts, to counter the negative market trend, to try to foster some revitalization. According to Filion and Gad in *Canadian Cities in Transition*, (2006, p. 171), the CBD traditionally served two primary functions: one, to offer commercial/business space; and two, to provide opportunities for retail. In Winnipeg’s case, especially in the context of metropolitan influences, the sense of ‘a core area’ emerged, differentiating the CBD and downtown neighbourhoods, from the burgeoning outer suburbs and exurbs. Filion and Gad (2006) suggest that this ‘core area’ included more than what had become commonly understood to be the CBD. Specifically, the core area encompassed “...not only the classic CBD land uses, but also public offices, cultural, educational, and health-care institutions, high-density industrial areas, and some residential pockets” (2006, p. 171). The downtown emerged as the strategically critical piece of core area redevelopment. Following the Second World War, numerous efforts to revitalize a decaying city core were explored and implemented. In the 1960s and 1970s, urban renewal was practiced as a way to address the blighted conditions that had been created over the years of the Great Depression and Second World War. Slum clearance was considered a remedy for neighbourhoods that had become decayed. In the 1980s, tri-level agreements, which involved equal contributions from the municipal, provincial and federal governments, were intended to address more than just the physical deterioration in Winnipeg’s core area. In addition, the government funding provided under these agreements was also intended to address issues of social and economic decline. It was



also anticipated that the public sector funding of programs and projects in the core area would leverage private sector investment.

In the early 1990s, a major downtown plan (i.e. CentrePlan) was created. One of the recommendations of that plan was the creation of a new type of agency – never before seen in Winnipeg: an arms-length agency of the City of Winnipeg, mandated to attract development to the downtown. This downtown development corporation is what we know today as CentreVenture. As with the public sector interventions that came before it, CentreVenture was a particular response by the municipal government to a specific development challenge at a specific time in a specific place; and it is this genre of intervention that is explored in this research project.

## **1.2 Research Problem and Questions**

This research investigates the relationship between planning and development in the downtown revitalization context. In particular, this research aims to uncover the extent to which a downtown development agency may have facilitated the better integration of planning and development in a city's downtown, where revitalization has been very much on the public agenda. Winnipeg's CentreVenture Development Corporation (CVDC) was used as a case study to determine the extent of involvement, and manner by which an agency has aided and influenced tangible development in Winnipeg's downtown. Furthermore, the case study was also used to understand the extent of related downtown revitalization, and to distil any learning about the general topic that might be applicable in other comparable settings.

### 1.2.1 Research Questions

The major questions driving this research are:

- a. To what extent has a downtown development agency facilitated the better integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg?
- b. What are the significant aspects of the emergence, evolution and trajectory of CentreVenture Development Corporation (in terms of its contribution to the integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg)?
- c. What potentially transferable best practices can be learned from CentreVenture Development Corporation that might be applicable in other comparable downtown revitalization contexts?

### 1.3 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research was to: explore the relationship between planning and development in the context of downtown Winnipeg and how CentreVenture Development Corporation has facilitated the integration of planning and development in this context; and, to determine the extent to which CentreVenture has influenced revitalization in downtown Winnipeg. A variety of downtown organizations co-exist in this context, including downtown business organizations (e.g. Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone), economic development organizations (e.g. Economic Development Winnipeg) and development corporations (e.g. The Forks North Portage Partnership). However, the focus of this study is the downtown development corporation of CentreVenture.

The objective of this research was to systematically document the emergence, evolution and trajectory of CentreVenture in terms of its contribution to the integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg. The research took the form of a practicum exploring future prospects for the consideration of the agency's shareholder, the City of Winnipeg, which provides CentreVenture with its annual operational funding. The research also aimed to highlight potentially transferable best practices for application in other comparable downtown revitalization contexts.

To this end, a targeted literature review was conducted, which explored the importance of downtowns as economic drivers of cities; the decline of downtowns across North America following World War II; and former revitalization strategies (including tri-level agreements and development corporations). Informed by the literature review, the research included eleven independent interviews with key informants to identify first-hand knowledge about CentreVenture, either during its emergence or evolution. In addition, the research collected thoughts and viewpoints from these key informants related to the possible trajectory that CentreVenture might, and perhaps should, take beyond the year 2014.

#### **1.4 Importance of Study**

There was a growing understanding that a strong downtown was not just beneficial to those with vested interests, but was a stimulator for economic growth and potentially a key revenue generator for local government (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p.10).

As the Canadian Urban Institute (2012) explains in its evaluation of the downtowns of ten Canadian cities, "...downtown nodes are all major economic, social and cultural hubs and are highly visible and valued by the population at large" (2012, p.

11). This research project is significant because it builds on the existing city planning literature that focuses on the interface of planning and development in a downtown revitalization context.

Winnipeg is a slow-growth intermediate-size city. According to Fischler and Wolfe (2006):

Outside the major growth areas of Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton-Calgary and Montreal-Ottawa, growth may be fairly modest, as it is in Winnipeg and Halifax and many other mid-size places, or even negative, as it is in many small towns and some larger places across Canada (2006, p. 348).

Conference Board of Canada (2014) data provides further evidence of Winnipeg's slow-growth characteristic. Annual population growth for the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) has hovered around 1.5% over the last several years (2014, p. 46). In 2011, 2012 and 2013, the Winnipeg CMA experienced growth rates of 1.7%, 1.6% and 1.4% respectively (Conference Board of Canada 2014, p. 46). As a consequence, Winnipeg cannot and should not be directly compared to either larger or faster growing Canadian cities. This slow growth phenomenon is of critical significance for Winnipeg, especially when it is considered that Leo, Brown and Dick (1998, p. 1) assert that growth is "the essence of city life." However, Layne (2000) noted, "...while experiences cannot be unconditionally transferred across jurisdictions, few cities are so unique that no lessons can be shared by them" (2000, p. 251). This research project is also significant because the results, recommendations and lessons learned of this project may be applicable to other similar slow-growth cities that are undertaking their own downtown revitalization efforts.

It is intended that the research will have some practical benefit for both the current CVDC shareholder in the Winnipeg context, and for other cities interested in more integrated approaches in relation to their own downtown revitalization schemes.

In particular:

1. It is important to document the case of CentreVenture for the benefit of other cities with similar characteristics.
2. The fact that CentreVenture has continued to operate and has managed to receive public funding for more than a decade, makes it a particularly interesting case, worth documenting for city planning practitioners, downtown development advocates and community leaders.
3. The study enabled the researcher to identify key lessons that may have application into the future, both in Winnipeg and in other slow-growth mid-size cities that are seeking to grow and to develop.

### **1.5 Research Methods**

Qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of social context for understanding the social world. They hold that the meaning of a social action or statement depends, in an important way, on the context in which it appears (Neuman 1997, p. 331).

Neuman is suggesting that an investigator who is conducting qualitative research will not collect data without paying attention to the context to which that data applies. Issues (and related interpretations) may change depending on a variety of factors, including but not limited to time, location and economic climate. All this is to say that identical questions asked of the same research participant but in a different context may very well generate unique responses. Most importantly however, a qualitative researcher will consider the broader scope when collecting and analyzing the data. Neuman (1997) summarizes the argument above concisely in *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*:

Attention to social context means that a qualitative researcher notes what came before or what surrounds the focus of the study... Qualitative researchers place parts of social life into a larger whole (1997, p. 331).

Thus, the research did not focus on the activities of development corporations and of CentreVenture Development Corporation exclusively. Rather, a broader investigation was conducted to learn of the many revitalization efforts that took place in the post-war era and to learn how these past efforts may have differed from and influenced (if at all) CentreVenture's approach. In addition, the economic climate was considered in this study in order to place the results within a broader context and to better understand the outcomes of the revitalization initiatives.

#### 1.5.1 Literature Review

A review of the literature is an important component of any research project. In order for a researcher to decide upon the appropriate research questions, it is important to first learn what has already been investigated and documented. Acquiring knowledge is crucial for capacity building in general and for educating oneself about the research topic in particular. Neuman (1997) captures the essence of this message when he states:

A literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from and build on what others have done (1997, p. 89).

A researcher should not approach literature review too broadly. Rather, a review should be focused, through its orienting questions, to ensure that the process is not an endless one. To do this, a researcher should place boundaries or limitations on the scope of the search by revisiting the study's research questions often. Although it is important for readers to learn the background of the study topic, a literature review alone is often

not sufficient. A researcher must add something new to the body of existing knowledge, and to do this it is imperative that primary research be conducted.

The body of literature exploring downtowns is vast. In order to focus the research and manage the literature review, it was first important to learn about the importance of downtowns and their relevance within cities. This research then underpinned an investigation into post-war downtown decline and associated efforts to reverse this trend through renewal and revitalization efforts. Upon learning of general trends, it was subsequently critical to focus the research on the Winnipeg context in order to discover how overall trends impacted the city in particular. In addition, it was important to understand the attempts made to address Winnipeg's declining downtown prior to CentreVenture's emergence in 1999.

### 1.5.2 Key-Informant Interviews

This study afforded the researcher the opportunity to speak with some of those persons who served in key roles within Winnipeg's planning and development community at the time of CentreVenture's emergence and during its now more than decade-long evolution. Eleven interviews, with eleven separate key informants, were conducted over the course of the study. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) argue that:

...face-to-face interaction compels more small talk, politeness routines, joking, non-verbal communication, and asides in which people can more fully express their humanity. And naturalness leads to open expression and comfort (p.179).

Holstein and Gubrium (2003) review the advantages of in-person interviews in their book, *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. Face-to-face interviewing can create an opportunity for the researcher to read a participant's body language, based

on visual cues from the participant. An immediate look of confusion would allow the interviewer to elaborate or better explain the question, which would likely allow the subject to provide a methodical response (Holstein and Gubrium 2003, p.181). At the same time, the researcher could use body language instead of verbal cues in an effort to extend discussion. For example, the use of non-verbal facial movements could encourage the participant to delve deeper into a response. In an effort to maximize the benefits of face-to-face interaction, eight of the eleven interviews were conducted in this manner. This method was not possible in all instances, due to geographic and logistical reasons. Therefore, the researcher conducted telephone interviews on those three occasions.

The interview questions employed in this research project were intended to be open-ended in nature. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) suggest:

Open-ended questions influence answers the least, because they give respondents considerable leeway to take their answers wherever they want (p.179).

Open-ended questions can pose some difficulties, such as varying degrees of detail among different participants. Since this research project involved a great deal of exploration and discovery, the researcher believed that the technique's advantages would outweigh any of its disadvantages. Neuman (1997) explains that open-ended questions "...permit an unlimited number of possible answers" and allow the discovery of unexpected answers and conclusions (1997, p. 241).

Through the use of key-informant interviews, the research expected to gain deeper insight into the economic, political and social conditions in and around the time of CentreVenture's emergence in Winnipeg, and during its recent evolution. Furthermore, by speaking with key informants directly, the researcher expected to identify constructively critical perspectives and patterns among the research participants.



## **1.6 Assumptions and Limitations**

The research endeavored to select a wide range of research participants from a variety of backgrounds and professions in order to limit the potential for skewed research results. However, it should be noted that potentially important research participants and critical perspectives may have been excluded from the study as a result of time and project scope constraints. It is assumed that the complement of research participants selected for this study, and their viewpoints, are representative of the larger whole.

## **1.7 Outline of Document**

### Chapter 2: Literature Review

A targeted literature review was completed as a part of this research project. The researcher explores the historical function of downtowns in a North American context and investigates how Central Business Districts evolved into the city centres Canadians have come to recognize in the present day. As a part of that evolution, the concept of downtown revitalization is examined. Finally, the researcher explores the integration of planning and development in a downtown revitalization framework.

### Chapter 3: Case Study

In Chapter Three, the research considers the history of the City of Winnipeg beginning in the late 1800s with a particular focus on its downtown. The ensuing decline of Winnipeg's downtown is then explored alongside revitalization strategies utilized in the city in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition, this chapter also explores CentreVenture Development Corporation as a downtown development agency and

investigates its emergence, evolution and trajectory, based on a series of business and annual reports, as well as relevant background from key informant interviews and public documents.

#### Chapter 4: Results

The fourth chapter of this research highlights the main results derived from applying the three main methods (the targeted literature review, the case study and primary interview research) to lay the ground for an integrated analysis and synthesis effort, in relation to the main research questions.

#### Chapter 5: Analysis and Synthesis

Chapter Five features discussion and interpretation of the research results, based on a combination of initial analysis and subsequent synthesis.

#### Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter features an overview summary of the research and offers the main conclusions, along with appropriate recommendations developed over the course of the study.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the pertinent literature and seeks to lay the necessary groundwork with which to better understand a particular kind of government intervention, a downtown development agency. Specifically, the literature review provides the basis with which to discover whether such an agency, in this case CentreVenture Development Corporation, may have facilitated the better integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg, where downtown revitalization has very much been on the public agenda and has taken on many different forms in recent decades.

### **2.1 Downtowns: Functions and Form**

Given that the particular kind of intervention explored within this practicum, a downtown development agency, focuses on and functions within the downtown, it is prudent to first explore what purpose downtowns serve in North American cities and how they have evolved over time. It is perhaps fitting to begin this section with a quote from Larry R. Ford from his 2003 publication – *America's New Downtowns*:

Downtown is where everything comes together. It is an attic where we store our past; it is a landscape which illustrates our cultural aspirations and technological possibilities; it is a street where we meet and learn to interact with a wide variety of people; and it is a challenge that hones our skills and keeps us on our toes. Life without downtown might be comfortable in some ways, but something would be missing (Ford 2003, p. 43).

Ford goes on to suggest that in order to truly learn about a city, its history, its population, its economy, all one must really do is explore its downtown (2003, p. 3-4). Presumably, the author is referencing the fact that downtowns are among the oldest self-contained

neighbourhoods in cities and as such contain many, if not most, of a city's historic monuments and structures.

Downtowns certainly do have stories to tell. Filion and Gad (2006) discuss the inception and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century evolution of Canadian downtowns in *Canadian Cities in Transition*. According to Filion and Gad (2006), Canadian downtowns began to "...shed their residential components..." during the second half of the nineteenth century (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 172). In the decades that followed, downtowns from coast to coast increasingly took on the demeanor of a CBD and commerce became a dominant land use. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, retail markets also took advantage of the CBD's central location within cities. Filion and Gad suggest, "...the advent of department stores most transformed retailing over this period" (2006, p. 172). Entertainment venues, such as theatres, and increasing numbers of office buildings became prominent features in CBDs. Generally speaking, Filion and Gad point to three types of development patterns characteristic of CBDs:

Downtown development from the late 1880s to the early 1930s resulted in the formation of three specialized sectors. First was the office district, often referred to as the financial district because of the prominence of banks... Second, retailing congregated on one or two streets where department stores served as anchors. Third, a band of public institutions, comprising universities, hospitals, museums, and, occasionally, legislatures and public-sector offices, edged many downtowns (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 172-173).

The Canadian Urban Institute (2012, p. 20) discusses the central role that downtowns continue to play as central nodes of activity within cities today:

Downtowns often take up as little as 1% of citywide land area, but attract ten or twenty times that in terms of contributing to the City's assessment base and generating property tax revenues (2012, p. 20).

Downtowns have also re-emerged as residential neighbourhoods. According to Filion & Gad, "...what differentiates the 1990s onward is the increasing mixture of new housing with traditional CBD features" (2006, p. 176). Further evidence of this trend is provided by the Canadian Urban Institute (2012) in their study of 10 Canadian downtowns. This research suggests that downtowns nationwide have experienced increasing population growth. For the five-year period between 1996 and 2001, the population in downtown Edmonton grew by 20%, in Toronto it grew by 7% and downtown London saw 12% growth (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p. 21). Between 2001 and 2006, however, residential as a component of downtown gained some ground. Within this five-year period, Edmonton experienced a 51% increase in its downtown population, downtown Toronto grew by 9% and London welcomed a 23% increase in its downtown residential population (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p. 21). Downtown Winnipeg, however, has experienced a much less significant rate of population growth. Between 1996 and 2001, Winnipeg actually experienced negative population growth in its downtown and lost 3% of its residents (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p. 21). Winnipeg gained some ground between 2001 and 2006 when the city's downtown population increased by 5% (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p. 21). The net increase for the ten year period between 1996 and 2006, however, has only been a 2%.

As major economic drivers of cities, decision makers are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic value and importance of maintaining viable downtown cores. As such, there have been widespread attempts nationwide of reversing trends and revitalizing downtowns. Section 2.2 explores some of these efforts.

## 2.2 Downtown Revitalization

Filion and Gad (2006) suggest that small, intermediate, and large cities alike took comparable evolutionary paths from the time of their emergence to the mid-point of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (2006, p. 176-178). In the post-war era, many North American cities experienced the trend in favour of suburban development and the increasing desire for the single detached residential home. The outward expansion of cities, in many cases, led to the exodus of existing downtown residents to the suburbs. Associated commerce and retail activity soon followed similar development and settlement patterns. In intermediate sized cities, however, the consequences were substantially more detrimental to the health and prosperity of the urban core. In particular, Filion and Gad (2006) offer that,

First chain stores left, followed by department stores, and most recently cinemas. And the more they were depleted of activities and people, the fewer were the reasons to visit these downtowns; the shoddy appearance and absence of stimulation associated with boarded-up premises and empty sidewalks deterred visitors (2006, p. 178).

Decay began to set in across downtowns nationwide during this era. The negative impact of suburban expansion led to downtown deterioration, which in turn necessitated revitalization strategies. In response to the deteriorating state of downtowns, Grant (2006) explains that the federal government became increasingly involved in addressing the decline of municipal downtowns in the 1950s and 1960s (2006, p. 327). Specifically,

The federal government provided funds for redevelopment studies through the 1950s, seeing slum clearance as part of a strategy of national development of urban infrastructure (Grant 2006, p. 327).

According to Grant (2006), grassroots efforts aimed at saving older neighbourhoods from the wrecking ball became more commonplace towards the end of the 1960s (2006, p. 327)

& 328). In fact, increasing public outrage over the leveling of entire city blocks led to a shift in attitudes regarding urban revitalization.

‘Slum clearance’ and ‘urban renewal’, which at first seemed such hopeful concepts, had become dirty words by 1970 (Grant 2006, p. 327).

Simultaneously, institutional development in downtowns emerged as an approach to address blighted urban cores. According to Filion and Gad (2006), “another popular strategy has been the erection of downtown indoor malls” (2006, p. 179). In addition,

The most recent efforts consist in locating cultural and public-sector institutions in downtown and encouraging housing development so as to provide a market for existing and potential downtown stores and services (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 179).

Meanwhile, the suburbs continued to grow and municipalities responded by expanding transportation infrastructure. Given the increased propensity towards the automobile in the post-war era, many cities invested public dollars into improving road infrastructure in the downtown to facilitate an increase in vehicular traffic volumes. According to Grant (2006, p. 334), “...cities built highways to bring commuters downtown...” Filion and Gad (2006) assert that this included “...the widening of roads, one-way streets, and the creation of surface, underground, and structure parking spaces” (2006, p. 179). Many cities, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, developed their commuter rail transit systems between the 1960s and 1980s. Cities in Alberta established their public transportation networks nearing the close of this period. Ottawa opened the first leg of its bus rapid transit system in 1983 and lastly, “the Vancouver SkyTrain opened in 1986” (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 173). Filion and Gad (2006) argue that the establishment of public transportation networks was significant for downtowns. In particular, these authors suggest,

...these public transit systems have made it possible for downtowns to grasp a substantial share of prosperity-induced office, retail, and hospitality service expansion (Bunting & Filion 2006, p. 173).

According to the Canadian Urban Institute (2012), downtown revitalization schemes in the 1980s differed from earlier attempts to reverse urban decline and downtown decay and were more sensitive to historic preservation (2012, p. 10). In particular,

These revitalization approaches focused on enhancing the unique, physical and heritage features comprising the downtown cores (Canadian Urban Institute 2012, p. 10).

For example, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Ottawa, the Lower Town West neighbourhood was “the historic heart” of the city (Ley & Frost 2006, p. 201). In the post-war period, however, it suffered from neglect and decline just as historic structures in central cities across the country had. However, this neighbourhood underwent an extensive revitalization effort, with a particular focus on heritage restoration, and “...by the late 1990s, the Byward Market was the hub of the city’s nightlife, shopping, and leisure activity...” (Ley & Frost 2006, p. 201). Similar trends were experienced in Old Montreal, in Toronto’s Yorkville neighbourhood and Vancouver’s Gastown (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 174).

Revitalization began to occur in Winnipeg’s historic warehouse district in the 1980s. When other Canadian cities began “locating cultural and public-sector institutions in downtown” (Filion & Gad 2006, p. 179) in the 1960s and 1970s, Winnipeg was following this trend. Examples of such projects include the development of the Civic Centre Campus (including City Hall, Public Safety Building and Civic Parkade) in 1965 and the creation of the Centennial Centre (including Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall,



Manitoba Museum and planetarium) in 1968. Winnipeg, however, did not follow all of the same infrastructure growth and revitalization patterns that other Canadian cities had. For example, Winnipeg did not invest in its public transportation network to the degree that other major Canadian cities did during the 1970s and 1980s. Leo, Brown and Dick (1998) are critical of decisions made at the local government level in Winnipeg with respect to similar interventions. Rather than invest in rapid transit, which would have been significantly less expensive at the time, decision-makers chose instead to invest public dollars into road infrastructure projects that prioritized the automobile. This decision, Leo, Brown & Dick (1998) argue, led Winnipeg down the path of outward expansion, as City Council continuously gave in to developers (1998, p. 6-8). To draw on a theory from Adams and Tiesdell (2013), it would appear as though the City's municipal government chose not to intervene, but rather allowed market forces alone to drive development. Leo, Brown and Dick (1998) argue, however, that Winnipeg's growth has been "...flagrantly mismanaged thanks to the unthinking pursuit of fast-growth policies" (1998, p. 2). In particular,

The visible inner city is deteriorating less spectacularly, but possibly even faster. Despite heroic efforts on the part of all three levels of government and the local business community, once-bustling Portage Avenue is now a problem area, and Selkirk Avenue, the former commercial heart of the North End, is moribund. Unoccupied retail premises are a common sight on Portage and are virtually ubiquitous on Selkirk" (Leo, Brown & Dick 1998, p. 2).

### **2.3 Urban Development**

Despite the intrinsic value of successful places both to the immediate occupiers and to the broader community, real estate markets and development processes alone cannot be relied upon to produce them, at least not frequently enough (Adams & Tiesdell 2013, p. 104).

This could not be truer in a city's downtown, which can be a neighbourhood in and of itself but can also serve as a destination for an entire city where its residents may come to work, play or even both. In *Shaping Places: Urban Planning, Design and Development*, Adams and Tiesdell (2013) suggest that the ability of governments to create or to facilitate the creation of great places is very much dependent upon both leadership and the availability of tools that a government has at its disposal (2013, p. 297). In particular, the authors indicate that,

...while governments have an essential role to play in shaping the built environment, whether they do this well or badly depends upon their chosen intent, their capacity and determination to act, and the approach they adopt in pursuit of their objectives (Adams & Tiesdell 2013, p. 123).

Adams and Tiesdell (2013) introduce the term, "Governance Capacity," as the ability of governments or organizations, through appropriate leadership and available tools, to "...shape and stimulate markets, rather than simply to regulate them" (2013, p. 121).

Adams and Tiesdell argue that,

Capable leadership matters in place-making because it drives forward action, breeds confidence, reduces risk and widens participation. Only rarely does the private sector provide overall place leadership, even though it might take the lead on particular development projects (Adams & Tiesdell 2013, p. 123).

The Urban Land Institute's Urban Investment Network published a study in 2010, which examines how public lands in seven different European cities have been utilized to foster private urban investment. The study (2010) suggests that, "...cities often have high concentrations of public land due to their historic roles as centres of government, utilities, and infrastructure and due to their administrative functions" (2010, p. 3). Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors that are not necessarily unique amongst the cities (e.g. scarce public resources, a volatile global economy and associated private sector disinvestment),

some public holdings can fall victim to neglect and decay over time. As did Adams & Tiesdell (2013), the Urban Land Institute (2010, p. 15) also emphasizes the importance of competent leadership in ensuring appropriate use of public lands for urban development initiatives. For example, one of the report's (2010) ten principles refers to strong civic leadership and process transparency as key factors to encourage private sector participation in urban land development:

The private sector will invest most confidently within cities where there is a clear and achievable vision for the public land; decisive, credible mechanisms for delivery, and a visible leadership that is open to discussion and partnership with the private sector. To be attractive to the private sector, the investment project must be part of a broader vision, which will support it (Urban Land Institute 2010, p. 15).

Although the method with which each study city chose to utilize its public land holdings was unique, a similarity across the urban centres was that their public lands were used as a tool to encourage private sector participation.

In Winnipeg's case, the City assigned control of its non-performing surplus properties to CentreVenture Development Corporation, an arms-length agency of the City of Winnipeg. City-owned surplus properties were generating little in the way of tax revenue and in many cases, as a consequence of having to pay for upkeep, they were generating negative returns for the City. By acquiring responsibility for these properties, CentreVenture anticipated that it could work with the private sector to redevelop them and get them back on the City's tax rolls.

Chapter 3 explores a different kind of government intervention, one that relies heavily on strong leadership and governance capacity. A downtown development agency is explored, through a case study of CentreVenture Development Corporation, established in 1999 by City of Winnipeg Council.

### **3.0 Case Study: Winnipeg and CentreVenture Development Corporation**

#### **3.1 Historical Context**

To appropriately document the emergence, evolution and trajectory of CentreVenture Development Corporation, it is critically important to first understand Winnipeg's intriguing past. This research introduces the prosperity experienced by, and in, Winnipeg for the decades from the late 1800s leading up to the Great Depression. The very fact that Winnipeg did not grow to become the size of other major Canadian cities, such as Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, may be commonly acknowledged. However, the factors and events that led to Winnipeg's current state may not be well understood. Therefore, this research provides insights, through an exploration of the literature, so that Winnipeg's relative post-war decline can be understood and the numerous attempts to address this decline can be appreciated.

##### **3.1.1 The Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Winnipeg's growth and economic success in the late 1800s and early 1900s made the city one of the most desirable places to live in Canada at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is when the structure of the present downtown was laid out. Geographically positioned in the centre of North America, it was well on its way to becoming one of the country's largest and most vibrant urban centers. Nerbas (2004) explains that the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s put Winnipeg on the map as a centre for the international trade of goods (2004, p. 57). At this time population was increasing steadily and Winnipeg's economy was booming. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (1972, p. 4), between 1880 and 1881:

...the population of Winnipeg had increased from 6000 to 12,000. In the spring of 1881 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company began active operations and within a few months the population numbered 20,000 (1972, p. 4).

Strong sustained population growth largely defined the ensuing decades, fundamentally due to "...aggressive immigration policy" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 5). Specifically, "...in the ten year period from 1904 to 1914, the population tripled from 67,000 to 203,000" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 5). However, the strong population and economic growth would not last. Although the beginning of World War I triggered a pause in development and public works across the globe, Levin (1984, p. 4) suggests that there were two decisive events that led Winnipeg down the path of decreasing growth and urban decline:

One was the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, which marked the beginning of the end of Winnipeg's role and importance as the transportation, bulk-breaking, warehousing, wholesaling, and distribution centre of Canada. The other is the discovery of the Leduc oilfield, on Edmonton's southerly doorstep, in 1947, which ensured the shift of development energy and investment capital to Calgary and Edmonton (Levin 1984, p. 4).

What eventually followed was a collapse of Winnipeg's real estate market and a significant decline in population growth (Nerbas 2004, p. 57).

### **3.1.2 The Post-War Era: Urban Decay and Suburban Expansion**

Although the turn of the century was largely defined by a thriving construction industry and extensive municipal infrastructure development, Winnipeg's historic downtown buildings and residential dwellings were left virtually untouched for the years during the Great Depression and Second World War. According to Lyon and Fenton (IUS 1984, p. 17), in the wake of such neglect, the bricks and mortar of the City of Winnipeg entered a state of decline. According to the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater

Winnipeg in their interim report on the Metropolitan Urban Renewal Study (1963),

There is no doubt that Winnipeg's problem started at the beginning of the Century when between 1901 and 1911 the population rose from 42,340 to 136,035. It was further aggravated by the depression in the early thirties when most people found it difficult to keep body and soul together, reluctantly leaving their houses to deteriorate until their finances were in better shape (Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg 1963, p. 13).

Simultaneously, Winnipeg's extensive post-war population growth paired with an inadequate stock of affordable housing led to residential overcrowding in many parts of the city. In order to lower housing costs, the practice of two or more families sharing a single dwelling unit became commonplace (Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg 1963, p. 13-14). Residential overcrowding coupled with "residential deterioration," as discussed by Lyon and Fenton (1984, p. 23), led to substandard living conditions. Lyon and Fenton further contend that associated urban decay "...accelerated suburban sprawl by creating a demand for housing in areas distant from the problems of downtown" (Institute of Urban Studies 1984, p. 23).

In the immediate post-war period, the combined forces of pent-up consumer demand, the release of war savings and an increase in the pace of population growth were expressed in substantial suburban expansion rather than in renewal of the older, deteriorated City of Winnipeg. The post-war expansion chose a path of least resistance and filled the vacuum in the suburbs (IUS 1984, p. 17-18).

In the ensuing post-war years, Winnipeggers (and North Americans alike) increasingly favoured the trend of suburban development with a desire to physically separate their residential dwelling from their place of employment. The population growth of adjacent municipalities, such as St. Vital and St. James, accelerated commercial development in these areas.

### **3.1.3 The Era of Urban Renewal: The 1960s and 1970s**

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (1972, p. 10-11), as well as Lyon and Fenton (1984, p. 69), the Council of the City of Winnipeg established a new board in 1958 with a mandate to immediately address the residential decay that had inflicted a significant degree of devastation on the city following the Second World War. The Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation Board, as it was called, studied the existing condition of the city's housing and researched "...potential areas for urban renewal" (CAI 1984, p. 69). The City of Winnipeg's Department of Housing and Urban Renewal defined 'urban renewal' as:

...the total of all public and private action which must be taken to provide for the sound maintenance of built-up areas for their redevelopment, whichever produces the most desired results physically, economically and visually. Renewal has two main objectives – social and economic improvement (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 16).

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (1972, p. 16-17), urban renewal could be achieved through conservation, rehabilitation or redevelopment. In particular, conservation was an approach utilized to ensure that structures (or entire areas) that remained in good condition would not be negatively affected by the surrounding blight. This method could be enforced through "...implementation of land-use controls, enforcement of by-laws concerning buildings, health standards and minimum occupancy" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 16). Alternatively, rehabilitation was used in circumstances where buildings were already in decline but had not yet reached "slum conditions" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 17). Specifically, dwellings in this state could still be repaired and upgraded to once again make them habitable. Redevelopment on the other hand, was the method used when

structures had decayed to such an extent that they could not be saved. This method was often characterized by:

...the removal of blight by the acquisition and clearance of slum areas and the rebuilding of these by private or public agencies (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 17).

Shortly after being appointed, the Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation Board selected "...seven areas ripe for redevelopment and thirteen areas where rehabilitation measures were required" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 11) in the City of Winnipeg. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (1972, p. 12, 29 & 30), three of these areas were:

Urban Renewal Area No. 1: "Area bounded by Main Street, Salter Street, Sutherland Avenue and Selkirk Avenue (1972, p. 11-12). Area No. 1 was later known as the Lord Selkirk Park Project.

Urban Renewal Area No. 2: "Area bounded by the C.P. Railroad to the north, Notre Dame Avenue to the south, Sherbrook Street to the west and Main Street to the east" (1972, p. 29). Area No. 2 included the Civic Centre Complex.

Urban Renewal Area No. 3: "Area bounded on the north by the C.P. Railway, by the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers to the south, Main Street to the west and the Red River to the east (1972, p. 30). Area No. 3 included the Centennial Centre Complex.

Redevelopment efforts were cost shared between the City, Province and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 22). Given priority was an "...area bounded by Main Street, Salter Street, Sutherland Avenue and Selkirk Avenue" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 11). The Lord Selkirk Park redevelopment involved the construction of several hundred affordable residential dwelling units, which led to the expansion of the neighbouring elementary school and park, and facilitated the rehabilitation of surrounding businesses (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 22-24).



In the early 1960s, government began to focus increasingly on an area “bounded by the CPR yards, Notre Dame, Main Street and Arlington Street” (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 74). According to Lyon and Fenton (1984), the structures within the boundaries of this area were predominantly in either fair or poor condition (1984, p.74-75). As such, the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal designated this area as Urban Renewal Area No. 2 (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 73). The major development undertaken as part of this urban renewal scheme was the government-led demolition of the existing City Hall and construction of the Civic Centre Campus, which included a new modern City Hall, the Public Safety Building and the Civic Centre Parkade.

The Department of Housing and Urban Renewal prepared a detailed renewal scheme for Urban Renewal Area No. 3 in 1967, which was the area east of Main Street and south of the C.P. Railway. Redevelopment in this area included construction of a “...concert hall, museum, planetarium and theatre...” (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 78-79). According to the Conceptual Master Plan for the Cultural Centre Renewal Scheme (1967) itself, however, redevelopment efforts were also supposed to have included the creation of a vast public plaza with direct access to the banks of the Red River (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1967, Map 4). However, Lyon and Fenton (1984) suggest that changes to *The National Housing Act* in 1973 shifted the national focus towards opportunities for “rehabilitation and conservation” (1984, p. 76) and away from renewal and redevelopment. In fact,

...the federal government began to withdraw from large-scale urban renewal programs – given the cost, controversy and social disruption that became associated with this approach to reshaping older urban centres (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 76).

Lyon and Fenton (1984) suggest that over the course of its existence, the City of Winnipeg's Department of Housing and Urban Renewal facilitated the creation of numerous studies of the city's core area and evaluated the condition of its housing stock. When federal priorities shifted away from complete redevelopment of blighted areas towards increased efforts to conserve and rehabilitate, the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal also had to refocus its efforts. Rather than carry out the complete Area No. 3 redevelopment scheme, as it had intended to do, the Department was obligated to transition its efforts towards less invasive fixes. New programs initiated at the federal level were "designed to upgrade local services and community facilities, and to encourage citizen participation in neighbourhood development" (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 77). In 1970, the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal undertook a "neighbourhood improvement study" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 30), in Winnipeg's North Point Douglas area. In the end, the study recommended that increased resources be made available to enable the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. The Department acknowledged that any "program must involve both public and private action" (Department of Housing and Urban Renewal 1972, p. 31).

### **3.1.4 The Era of Tri-Level Programs: The 1980s**

#### **3.1.4.1 The Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg Tripartite Agreement 1981-1986**

In spite of the City of Winnipeg's efforts through its Department of Housing and Urban Renewal, downtown deterioration was unrelenting. This suggests that the urban renewal tactics of the 1960s and 1970s, where entire neighbourhood blocks of blight were wiped out, was not the solution. It also suggests that programs designed to address merely

physical symptoms of blight were inadequate. Rather, efforts would also have to be made to address the root causes of downtown decline. Tri-level funding provided by way of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative (CAI) Agreement enabled the continuation of residential rehabilitation programs, but it also pursued job creation for core area residents and improvements to community services and facilities (Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates 1990, p.

The CAI Agreement was one attempt to find a solution to the complex problem of urban decline in Winnipeg's core area. Layne (2000) explains the Agreement as follows:

Spanning a decade and reflecting unprecedented tri-level governmental cooperation, the CAI was considered to be a unique and notable experiment in public policy and drew considerable attention through North America and Europe (Layne 2000, p. 250).

According to Kiernan (1985, p. 23), the tri-level funding agreement was an attempt to reverse trends and encourage the revitalization of a deteriorated core area, which, geographically speaking, included Winnipeg's downtown and surrounding inner city neighbourhoods for a total land area of approximately 10 square miles. Kiernan further describes Winnipeg's core area, at the time, as being home to approximately 100,000 of the city's most underprivileged residents. In addition, the movement of retail and commerce out of the city centre and into the suburbs significantly reduced the availability of employment in the inner city that was available to core area residents (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1986, p. 2). The economic and social consequences of this were pronounced. Kiernan (1985) provides evidence of the economic reality of this time:

The core area's unemployment rate was double the city average, and its incidence of families below the poverty line was five times the average (Kiernan 1985, p. 23).

The CAI Agreement saw \$96 million in public dollars infused into Winnipeg’s core area between 1981 and 1986. Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates (1990) suggest that this was “...the largest budget for a single programming initiative ever seen in Winnipeg” (1990, p. 51). According to the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Policy Committee (1981, p. 3), the federal, provincial and municipal governments made equal contributions of \$32 million over the 5-year period of the Tripartite Agreement’s mandate. The distinctiveness of the tri-level agreement was not limited to its funding model. In her doctoral dissertation, Stewart (1993, p. 89) references a second element: “equality in decision-making.” The scope of the initiative allowed all three levels of government to work in partnership towards a common goal because each level was able to approach its contribution through a different lens. While the CAI’s intent was to address the overall deteriorating condition of Winnipeg’s inner city, the federal government was able to place an emphasis on economic development; the Province instead could focus on social programs; while the City of Winnipeg’s priority was on physical redevelopment.

The overarching core area revitalization scheme of the tri-level partnership was intended to be met through the creation and implementation of thirteen separate programs, which are identified in Table 1.

Table 1: Core Area Initiative Agreement Programs and Funding Allocation

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
Program 1: Employment and Affirmative Action	\$14.7 million
Program 2: Housing	\$12.9 million
Program 3: Community Improvement Areas	\$5.6 million
Program 4: Community Facilities	\$5.6 million
Program 5: Community Services	\$5.3 million
Program 6: Industrial Development/Small Business Assistance	\$10.6 million
Program 7: North of Portage/Ellice Revitalization Program	\$16.2 million

Program 8: CN East Yards	\$7.9 million
Program 9: Historic Winnipeg Area Redevelopment	\$4.0 million
Program 10: Neighbourhood Main Streets	\$4.3 million
Program 11: Management and Consultation	\$2.9 million
Program 12: Public Information	\$1.7 million
Program 13: Evaluation	\$800,000
TOTAL	\$92.9 million

Source: Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates 1990, p. 10-12

In some cases, the programs focused on job creation and on housing rehabilitation, such as “Program 1: Employment and Affirmative Action” and “Program 2: Housing.” According to Kiernan (1985),

No other single urban policy intervention in North America has been as comprehensive or ambitious in its attempt to integrate the physical, economic, and social dimensions of urban problem-solving (Kiernan 1985, p. 23).

According to Stewart (1993), at the close of its five-year mandate the Core Area Initiative had “provided training opportunities for 1,413 individuals and job placement for 634 individuals in permanent employment” (Stewart 1993, p.101). Through the housing program, the tri-level funding agreement also “produced 484 new housing units” (Stewart 1993, p. 106) and managed to leverage close to “\$50 million in key-site investment by private and non-profit sources,” specifically for housing (Stewart 1993, p. 109).

Other programs were instead designed specifically to address the declining physical state of particular blocks or neighbourhoods within the downtown. According to the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Policy Committee (1981, p. 13), such examples were “Program 7: North of Portage Redevelopment”, “Program 8: CN East Yards” and “Program 9: Historic Winnipeg Area Redevelopment.”

The intent of Program 7 was to address the decline that had plagued the area north of Portage Avenue in the post-war years. Although several smaller-scale development

projects were pursued, a large-scale development project along Portage Avenue was a primary recommendation. The most efficient method with which to carry out this recommendation, it was determined, was through a development corporation. The emergence and subsequent development activities of the North Portage Development Corporation are explored further in Section 3.2.1. The mandate of Program 8 was to re-examine the potential for an intensive redevelopment of the former Canadian National Railway's East Yards at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in downtown Winnipeg. According to the Institute of Urban Studies (1986), "...the redevelopment of the C.N. East Yards has been discussed since the early 1970s" (1986, p. 23). Consequently, several conceptual redevelopment plans were submitted to the three levels of government throughout that decade, but none were "deemed worthy of serious consideration" (Institute of Urban Studies 1986, p. 34). The establishment of The Forks Renewal Corporation and subsequent redevelopment of the East Yards is further discussed in Section 3.2.2.

Between 1981 and 1984, funding offered through the Heritage Program (Program 9) facilitated the renovation of several historic structures in Winnipeg's downtown (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1985, p. 44). For example, the Ashdown Warehouse, located on Bannatyne Avenue in the East Exchange District, received \$12,500 from Program 9 to assess the feasibility of a residential conversion (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1985, p. 45). The Traveller's Building, located on the corner of King Street and Bannatyne Avenue, was provided with over \$25,000 to expand their restaurant and to clean the exterior of the historic structure (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1985, p. 44). In addition, the *Status Report* (1985) suggests that within the first three years of the

Agreement’s mandate, it has leveraged over \$1.5 million in private sector investment with an approximate \$450,000 public contribution through the CAI’s Program 9.

According to the report, this encapsulates “...a leverage of approximately 1:4” (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1985, p. 44).

### 3.1.4.2 The Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg Tripartite Agreement 1986-1991

The Core Area Agreement was renewed and a second partnership was forged between the three levels of government in 1986. This tri-level agreement saw \$100 million invested in Winnipeg’s core area until the Agreement’s 5-year mandate expired in 1991. As with the original agreement, this second agreement was intended to address issues of social and economic decline and physical deterioration in Winnipeg’s core area. The programs were continued in order to carry out the Agreement’s mandate.

Table 2: Renewed Core Area Initiative Agreement Programs

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
Program 1: Industrial and Entrepreneurial Support	\$4.0 million
Program 2: The Exchange District Redevelopment	\$9.0 million
Program 3: East Yards Redevelopment	\$20 million
Program 4: Riverbank Enhancement	\$5.0 million
Program 5: Strategic and Capital Projects	\$13 million
Program 6: Neighbourhood and Community Development	\$16 million
Program 7: Inner City Foundation	\$1.0 million
Program 8: Housing	\$10.5 million
Program 9: Training and Employment	\$12 million
Program 10: Neighbourhood Main Streets and Small Business Support	\$5.0 million
Program 11: Central Administration	\$2.8 million
Program 12: Public Information and Programming	\$1.3 million
Program 13: Evaluation	\$400,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$100 million</b>

Source: Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates 1990, p. 16, 17 & 19

CAI programs targeted more directly at addressing downtown decline were Program 2 (The Exchange District Redevelopment) and Program 3 (East Yards Redevelopment). Under the auspices of Program 2, many Exchange District structures were renovated thanks to financial support provided under the renewed CAI agreement. For example, whereas the first CAI agreement had provided funding for a feasibility study to the Ashdown Warehouse, the renewed CAI agreement supplied \$1.5 million towards the rehabilitation and conversion of the Ashdown Warehouse on Bannatyne Avenue (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 2-2). The total project cost was \$10.5 million (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 2-2). The Exchange District Redevelopment Program made a contribution of \$250,000 towards the \$1.2 million redevelopment of the Walker Theatre so that it could be used as a live theatre (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 2-6). Funding under this program was also directed towards larger-scale capital projects. For example, \$2.5 million in funding from both Program 2 and Program 5 (Strategic and Capital Projects) of the renewed CAI agreement was provided to the Pantages Playhouse Theatre as a contribution towards the theatre’s renovation and expansion (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 2-7).

Table 3: Program 2 Investment (The Exchange District Redevelopment)

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
Core Area Initiative	\$7.8 million
Other Government Grants	\$4.2 million
Government Loans	\$2.7 million
Private Sector	\$16.7 million
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>\$31.4 million</b>

Source: Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 2-1



Program 3 of the renewed CAI Agreement contributed over \$20 million dollars towards projects associated with the redevelopment of the former Canadian National Railway East Yards (1992, p. 3-1). According to the *Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Final Status Report* (1992),

The program was established to provide for the redevelopment of the East Yard area via a tri-governmental agency, The Forks Renewal Corporation (FRC). The FRC is responsible for the development of the 56-acre site in accordance with a Concept and Financial Plan approved by Canada, Manitoba and Winnipeg (1992, p. 3-1).

The \$7 million “Forks Public Market” (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 5-1) renovation was facilitated by Strategic Capital (Program 5) funding in the amount of \$5 million. The scope of work was “to renovate two historic stable buildings for use as a year-round public market” (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 5-1). When the Forks Market opened to the public in 1989, the work of The Forks Renewal Corporation was far from complete. An archeological dig was instigated by the FRC between 1989 and 1990, which resulted in the discovery of ancient artifacts (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 3-3). In addition, the FRC facilitated,

...construction of The Forks Historic Walkway connecting The Forks to the public walkway along the Assiniboine River to the west and the Canadian Parks walkway to the east (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 3-4).

Other initiatives pursued by the renewed CAI agreement related to housing, job creation and neighbourhood community development. According to the second Agreement’s *Final Status Report* (1992, p. 8-4), between 1986 and 1991, Program 8 funding facilitated the repair or renovation of 488 rental-housing units and 535 homeowner units. In addition, Program 8 generated a net increase of 307 housing units in Winnipeg’s core area over the initiative’s five-year directive.

Under the auspices of the renewed CAI agreement, \$2.4 million dollars of CAI funding went directly to stimulate the construction of new affordable housing units (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 8-1). The Core Area Initiative's involvement, in turn, leveraged \$1.5 million of additional government grants and private sector investment for the creation of new affordable housing units (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 8-1). This equates to a public-private ratio of approximately 2:1. As with the first Agreement, CAI programs provided assistance for employment and training, and funding for targeted projects, such as \$6.2 million that was budgeted for riverbank enhancement (1992, p. 4-1). In the end, Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates (1990) indicate that:

Across all of its programs, close to \$150 million in funds cost-shared under the model had been invested in concert with \$159 million of other government funds and \$335 million in private resources in inner city revitalization (1990, p. 93).

All the same, the Core Area Agreements have been criticized. Earl Levin (1984), for example, believed that the complex problems facing Winnipeg's core were far greater than the mandates that the tri-level agreements ever set out to address. He claimed that the initiatives undertaken as part of the Core Area Initiative Agreements merely addressed "...the symptoms rather than the cause of the city's malaise..." and "...that malaise is the condition of no growth" (Levin 1984, p. 5-6). However, the state of the Canadian economy throughout the mandate of the 10-year long Tripartite Agreements should be considered. In a speech made to the Canadian Club of Toronto on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, then Governor of the Bank of Canada, Gordon Thiessen, explained that high inflation throughout the 1970s and 1980s, followed by a severe recession in 1990 – 91,

led to many of Canada's economic challenges over the course of the decade (Thiessen 2001, p. 1). In particular, Thiessen argued:

Defaults, restructurings, and downsizings became the order of the day. With all this, unemployment took a long time to recover from the 1990 – 91 recession and, in many instances, wages and salaries were frozen or reduced (2001, p. 2).

Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates (1990), substantiate this argument in their evaluation of the CAI model (1990, p. 44). Specifically, Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates argue that were several external factors that may have contributed to the outcomes of the tri-level funding agreements (1990, p. 44). Specifically,

Most of the programs comprising the initial model were launched at the height of the severe recession (1982). High interest rates and widespread weakening of the city's economy served to impede delivery of several of the model's programs which were dependent on private sector investments initiatives (e.g. industrial development, heritage building renovation) (Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates 1990, p. 45).

As a consequence, some of the CAI programs were unable to successfully leverage the additional economic spinoffs that the three levels of government had anticipated. In particular,

The model's intended linkages between job creation and training/affirmative action elements were, for the most part, not realized due to delays in take up of the model's economic stimulus components (Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates 1990, p. 45).

It is also important to consider what the state of Winnipeg's core area would have been had it not received the targeted investments made possible by the Core Area Initiative's programs. The answer cannot be known with any degree of certainty, but given that the economy was in a downturn, it should be considered that the private sector might not have participated to the degree that it did, had it not been for the core area investments made possible by the CAI Agreements.

### 3.1.4.3 The Winnipeg Development Agreement

A three-year hiatus followed the conclusion of the second Core Area Initiative Agreement. It was not until 1995 that a renewed tri-level funding agreement was achieved, this time under the name: the Winnipeg Development Agreement (WDA). This third tripartite Agreement led each level of government to contribute \$25 million over a six-year period. Unlike the two tri-level Agreements that preceded it, the WDA did not have a geographical focus. Rather, it provided funding for projects and initiatives citywide. Fourteen programs were established to deliver the Agreement's mandate. According to Part 2 of the WDA's Final Report (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 1-26), the programs were:

Table 4: Winnipeg Development Agreement Programs and Funding Allocation

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Funding Allocation*</b>
Program 1: North Main Street Development	\$9.2 million
Program 2: Urban Safety	\$2.9 million
Program 3: Neighbourhood Improvement	\$7.4 million
Program 4: Housing	\$1.2 million
Program 5: Job Access	\$7.5 million
Program 6: Career Access	\$600,000
Program 7: Innovative Pilot & Demonstration Projects	\$7.0 million
Program 8: Innovative and Preventive Child & Family Services	\$3.6 million
Program 9: Transportation	\$5.0 million
Program 10: Information Technology Applications	\$2.8 million
Program 11: Downtown Revitalization	\$3.6 million
Program 12: Tourism	\$4.3 million
Program 13: Heritage Resource Incentives	\$5.6 million
Program 14: Strategic Initiatives	\$4.5 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65 million</b>

\*Funding Allocation represents funds committed to March 31, 2000

Source: Winnipeg Development Agreement. (2002). *Final Report 2002: Part 2*. Winnipeg, MB.

Under the auspices of the first program (North Main Street Development), WDA funding facilitated land acquisition at the southeast corner of Main Street and Higgins Avenue and led to the development of “Circle of Life Thunderbird House and Medicine Wheel” (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 1). A contribution of just under \$500,000 from Program 2 (Urban Safety) led to the establishment of the Downtown Watch, which is a “...year round civilian safety patrol operated by the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ to deter crime in downtown Winnipeg” (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 2). Program 11 (Downtown Revitalization) facilitated initiatives including but not limited to: a study to assess the cost and scope of restoring the Metropolitan Theatre on Donald Street (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 19); the creation of a parking strategy for the downtown (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 19); an “...investment fund to match monies invested by property-owners in street level improvements to Portage Avenue properties” (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 19); and a contribution to CentreVenture to assist the development corporation with the establishment of its “development bank” (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 19).

The WDA stood apart from the two CAI Agreements that preceded it in that the geographical focus of the WDA was not limited to the core area. For example, the emphasis of “Program 3B” (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 4) was recreational improvements at the neighbourhood level. In all, 101 community centres, recreation facilities, school playgrounds and neighbourhood parks, including many in suburban locations, benefited from WDA funding under this program (Winnipeg Development Agreement 2002, p. 4-8).

### 3.1.5 The Major Planning Phase: The 1990s

Following the large tri-level investments of the 1980s and realizing that the downtown still needed significant work, it was deemed necessary that a broad, long-term plan be developed to guide land use and development specifically within the downtown. CentrePlan was subsequently created, based on this need, and was to serve as the City of Winnipeg's planning policy and development framework for the downtown. CentrePlan was composed of three documents, initially developed during the 1990s. The first of the three documents, *CentrePlan Vision and Strategies (Vision and Strategies)* is the conceptual part of the overall plan. A substantive public consultation process was undertaken by the CentrePlan Committee prior to the document's adoption by City Council in 1994. It was that process helped to shape the *Vision and Strategies* document. The plan not only illustrates a new vision for the downtown but it also outlines a series of general strategies that could be followed over the long run in order to reach that vision.

The second document, *CentrePlan Action Plan (Action Plan)*, is more tangible in that it not only provides specific actions that should be undertaken to realize the vision of the first document, it suggests which players should be at the table and how they might succeed in accomplishing the required tasks. In particular, the *Action Plan* provides recommendations as to which of those players should take the lead role, initial steps to be taken, and ideas for possible funding sources. The intent of the *Action Plan* was that it be updated every year in an effort to remain relevant in the downtown Winnipeg context.

*Vision and Strategies* differentiates the two documents succinctly by stating:

CentrePlan Committee has established a comprehensive vision for downtown, developed strategies for attaining that vision, and put in place an Action Plan to initiate progress in support of the vision (City of Winnipeg 1994a, p. 5).

Winnipeg City Council approved both the *Vision and Strategies* and the *Action Plan* documents in 1994 (CentreVenture Development Corporation, 2008c, p.1). In large part, the creation of Winnipeg's downtown plan was a response to groundwork laid in the City of Winnipeg's development plan at the time, *Plan Winnipeg ... toward 2010*. According to the *Vision and Strategies* document (1994a), a new plan for downtown Winnipeg was long overdue.

Most cities are accused of not having an adequate plan for their downtown. They are typically out of date and are seldom comprehensive. This is true of Winnipeg. The last Downtown Plan was prepared in 1969 when the Metropolitan government was still in existence. It was a long range plan intended to guide development over a 20 year period (City of Winnipeg 1994a, p. 4).

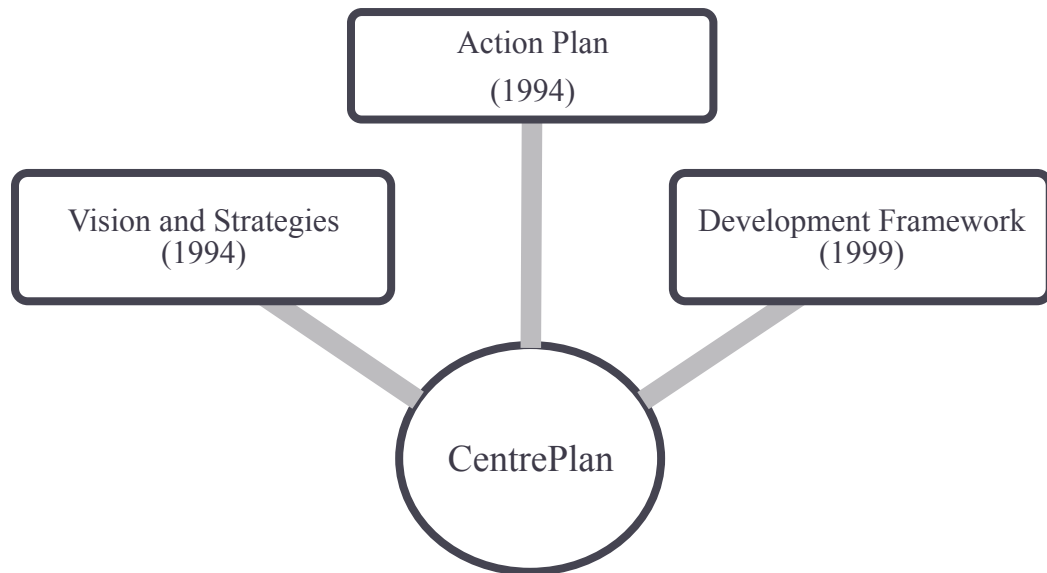
The timing was such that CentrePlan was able to influence the programs and initiatives identified as part of the Winnipeg Development Agreement, which, as was discussed in Section 3.1.4.3, was the tri-level agreement initiated in 1995.

*CentrePlan Development Framework (Development Framework)* followed suit in 1999. This third CentrePlan document was meant, "...to act as a guideline for development in downtown Winnipeg" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2008c, p. 1). Furthermore, it was "...intended to provide physical direction and illustrate in a graphic format the vision articulated in CentrePlan" (CentreVenture Development Corporation, 2008c p. 1). The *Development Framework* essentially took the *Action Plan* a step further by advocating for a special organization to be appointed to oversee implementation of the vision and recommendations of the CentrePlan documents, which had been previously adopted by City Council. One of the primary recommendations of the *Development Framework* (1999a, p. 5) was to "...plan, develop, operate & manage the downtown as a single & special entity." The plan expands on this concept by stating:

Downtown needs leadership and concentrated planning efforts through a planning and urban design entity at the City. Legitimate planning processes such as CentrePlan must be supported and continued, but require expanded resources to conduct research, analyses, consultation, information dissemination, planning, design and implementation schemes. Downtown needs to maintain the shared vision, sustain commitment to the plan’s potential and produce implementation mechanisms that ensure high quality, incremental development over time (City of Winnipeg 1999a, p. 6).

The *Development Framework* was updated in 2008.

Figure 1: CentrePlan Components



### 3.2 The Emergence of Development Corporations

#### 3.2.1 North Portage Development Corporation (NPDC)

As indicated in Section 3.1.4.1, the mandate of the Core Area Initiative’s 7<sup>th</sup> program was to address the urban decline occurring immediately north of Portage Avenue. According to the NPDC’s *Final Concept and Financial Plan* (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 9), by 1983 the federal, provincial and municipal



governments had placed an increased focus on the geographic area north of Portage Avenue. Specifically,

...the three levels of government committed themselves to significant levels of financial investment in order to spur major redevelopment effort in this key zone in the central business district of Winnipeg (1984, p. 9).

Consequently, the three levels of government (the Corporation's shareholders), each contributed \$22 million towards the establishment of the quasi-public organization and towards the realization of its mandate. Five million dollars was made available from Program 7 of the original Core Area Initiative Agreement and shareholders permitted the NPDC to initially leverage \$5 million in borrowed funds, for a total public investment of \$76 million. (North Portage Development Corporation, 1984, p. 11 & 29). The North Portage Development Corporation was formally established in December 1983 and it was mandated to:

...undertake the redevelopment of the area generally bounded on the south by the lane immediately south of and running parallel to Portage Avenue, on the west by Colony and Balmoral Streets, on the north by Notre Dame Avenue, and on the east by Hargrave Street (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 11).

A Board of Directors was subsequently established and Dr. Arnold Naimark was appointed as the Board's first Chairperson (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 3). According to the Shareholders' Agreement, the Board of Directors "is responsible for managing the affairs of the Corporation" (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 3). The three levels of government (the shareholders) each appointed three members to sit on the NPDC Board and the Chairperson served in 10<sup>th</sup> position (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 3). Initially, the Board of Directors looked to other cities that had successfully implemented downtown redevelopment strategies in an effort to obtain precedents for the formulation of a

Winnipeg model. Their research concluded that to leverage private sector participation in downtown redevelopment efforts, the public sector, and in this case the NPDC, would have to take a leadership role in addressing downtown decline and would need to approach the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg with conviction (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 17). The NPCD's Board of Directors made the following assertion:

The complexities of downtown redevelopment and the need for continuity in a process which lasts several years require the establishment of a quasi-public entity to function as a plan coordinator and project co-developer and, in general, to facilitate the interaction of the public and private sectors (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 17).

Furthermore, according to the Urban Land Institute (as cited in North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 31):

...government agencies acting directly are not the most effective mechanisms in real estate project development. This may result from legislative or political constraints or policies and procedures which were developed for other purposes and do not provide the rapid response times often necessary in major and complex redevelopment projects. Quasi-public development organizations such as the North Portage Development Corporation organized for specific public purposes have proven highly successful in a number of cities. Such organizations can act in a timely manner, be flexible and conduct their business with a level of discretion and privacy required for successful negotiation. They mediate and coordinate the process of development involving the public and private sectors. This mechanism has been an essential feature of downtown development where other approaches were financially, economically or politically ineffective (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 31).

North Portage, based on direction from its shareholders, embarked upon the first phase of Portage Avenue redevelopment. One of North Portage's initial tasks was to acquire and assemble "...all 11 acres of land required for the Phase 1 development" (North Portage Development Corporation 1991, p. 4). A newsletter published by the Corporation in 1985 clarified that the mixed-use development with significant retail component for the north

side of Portage Avenue would extend from Colony Street to the west and Carlton Street to the east (North Portage Development Corporation 1985, p. 2). To facilitate the shopping centre's development, Kennedy and Edmonton Streets would be closed off to vehicular traffic. Three years after the project had been conceived, Portage Place opened to the public. The retail complex "...contain[ed] 200,000 sq. ft. of retail space" and "...include[d] skywalks integrated to South Side of Portage Avenue, Eaton's and The Bay" (North Portage Development Corporation, 1991, p. 4). Just as the concept plan for the NPDC had proposed in 1984, both market rental and seniors housing units were created as part of the overall development (North Portage Development Corporation 1991, p. 4). In fact, as outlined in the Corporation's 1990 Annual Report:

The constant adherence to the plan has resulted in a project that very closely resembles its original concept (North Portage Development Corporation 1991, p. 3).

According to the Board of Directors, the \$76 million in public sector investment towards Phase 1 development was intended to leverage more than \$150 million in private sector and institutional spending in the NPDC mandated area.

### 3.2.2 The Forks Renewal Corporation (FRC)

At the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in downtown Winnipeg there are nearly 100 acres of land where Winnipeggers and tourists alike have, for nearly 30 years, gathered at this historic "Meeting Place (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 18) to celebrate holidays and festivals, attend public concerts, and gain access to the rivers for boat rides in the summer and for ice skating in the winter. The history of this site dates back thousands of years to when Aboriginal populations first settled at the

junction of the rivers, followed by European fur traders who had immigrated to Canada.

According to Lyon and Fenton (1984, p. 86),

Winnipeg's first central business district (CBD) was located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, known as the Forks. This was the location of a series of native and European encampments and forts culminating with the reconstruction of Upper Fort Garry by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1835-38 (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 86).

Following the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg in 1874 (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 17) and the subsequent growth in both population and economy, "...the CBD shifted as the downtown area expanded" (Lyon & Fenton 1984, p. 86). In the midst of an industrialized era, the former Aboriginal settlement in the heart of Winnipeg was transformed into a rail facility. The site remained that way for a better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 17), until a tri-level initiative facilitated the reclamation of riverfront property citywide and enabled the federal government to reclaim the East Yard lands from the Canadian National Railway.

In recent years, officials at all levels of government have acknowledged the need to build on Winnipeg's natural assets and in 1978, the Agreement for Recreation and Conservation (the A.R.C. Program) was undertaken. Over the nine years of the Program, \$13 million in total has been expended on river-related projects from Netley Creek to St. Norbert, including the St. Boniface Docks and the Parks Canada National Historic Park, which is to be completed in 1988 (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 18).

The first CAI Agreement (1981-1986) facilitated the establishment of the East Yard Task Force by means of a \$650,000 grant (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 14). This Task Force was directed by all three levels of government to create a framework, including conceptual plans, for the potential redevelopment of the Canadian National Railway's land at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers (East Yard Task Force 1986, p. 1). It remained in place until "The Forks Renewal Corporation was

established in July 1987 by agreement among Canada, Manitoba and Winnipeg” (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 14). Twenty million dollars was provided to the FRC, as part of Program 3 of the second CAI Agreement, with an understanding that the development corporation would “...own and redevelop a major riverfront site...” and that it would “...co-ordinate redevelopment of the surrounding East Yard Area” (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 7). According to the *Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Final Status Report* (1992), the development corporation is structured as follows:

The Forks Renewal Corporation is an independent non-profit development agency established with three representatives appointed by each level of government. The chairperson is unanimously appointed by the three levels of government (1992, p. 3-1).

The chairperson and the nine appointed members make up The Forks Renewal Corporation’s Board of Directors. It is this Board that “is responsible for all decisions within its authorized mandate” (Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1992, p. 3-1). G. Campbell MacLean, the FRC’s first chairperson, was a respected member of the community who was a practicing lawyer and who served on numerous boards throughout his career. The members of the Board came from a variety of backgrounds and professions, but some notable members of the FRC’s first Board of Directors include Dorothy Dobbie (former Member of Parliament), Alan Artibise (an academic with a Ph.D. in Urban History) and Jean Friesen (former Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and academic).

According to the Phase 1: Concept and Financial Plan (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 13), the redevelopment area incorporated 90 acres of land, including 58 acres of public lands for the FRC to own and operate on behalf of its shareholders, 8.8 acres of Parks Canada lands for development of a National Historic Park (The Forks

Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 37 & 39), and approximately 18 acres to be retained by the Canadian National Railway, to be "...redevelop[ed] for commercial uses..." (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 13). Following a public consultation process in the summer and fall of 1987, the FRC's Board of Directors prepared a concept plan, including scope and cost estimates for the first phase of redevelopment, for submission to and approval by its shareholders (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 14-15).

Redevelopment of The Forks site was predicated upon the understanding that "...rail activities at The Forks [would] be terminated during the spring and summer of 1988" (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 22). The Board of Directors concluded that development would proceed in phases, given the immense size of the subject lands (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 22). Initial concepts proposed mixed-use development, public recreation space and housing for the site. The FRC's initial responsibilities were to acquire all required lands, address access into and out of the site, address heritage and archeological issues, and continue to consult with the public. Within the first five years of the FRC's mandate, the Board expected the \$20 million of CAI funding to leverage an additional \$100 million from "private, institutional and other investment" sources (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 9-10). In fact,

The Corporation is expected to achieve financial self-sufficiency within a reasonable time period (The Forks Renewal Corporation 1987, p. 9).

The North Portage Development Corporation and The Forks Renewal Corporation ceased to operate independently in 1994 when the two Corporations were united under the umbrella corporation, the Forks North Portage Partnership (FNPP). According to The Forks North Portage Partnership (2014), the members of the FNPP's

Board of Directors are selected by the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. In addition,

The Chief Executive Officer directs the business affairs of the organization through one central administration office responsible for the management of The Forks and North Portage sites (Forks North Portage Partnership 2014).

### **3.3 CentreVenture Development Corporation**

#### **3.3.1 The Emergence of CentreVenture: Pre 1999**

For the decades following the Second World War, Winnipeg struggled to retain its downtown population as residents fled to the suburbs in increasing numbers. As a consequence, the downtown's vitality began to weaken. Even though the city faced adversity in the post-war years, Winnipeg tried to maintain the downtown's relevancy by implementing varying initiatives decade after decade. As discussed in Section 3.1, numerous efforts were made throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to reverse the trends that plagued Manitoba's capital city post-war and to revitalize what had become its decaying downtown. The inception of CentreVenture Development Corporation in 1999 was yet another effort. However, equipped with a new set of tools, this initiative marked a different approach to a deeply rooted problem in Winnipeg's core. CentreVenture developed incentives and tools that developers and planners could utilize to discernibly revitalize the downtown in order to bring the heart of the city back to life.

According to CentreVenture's *Startup Business Plan* (1999, p. 4), the concept for the downtown development agency originated from a task force created by Economic Development Winnipeg in 1998. This working group was charged with evaluating the downtown Winnipeg marketplace in an effort to identify its weaknesses and its strengths

(CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 4). The task force membership was selected by Economic Development Winnipeg and consisted of members from the business community as well as local community leaders (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 4). The Task Force recommended:

That a sustainable Downtown Development Authority be created to provide leadership in planning, development, coordination and implementation of projects and activities in the downtown: and that a public-private partnership approach be pursued to build on the expertise and innovation of the private sector and the political leadership and policy development capability of the public sector (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 5).

However, as mentioned in Section 3.1.5, the City of Winnipeg had adopted its downtown secondary plan, CentrePlan, only a few years earlier in 1994. The vision and policies presented in this plan laid the groundwork for Economic Development Winnipeg to conduct its downtown assessment and enabled the Task Force to make its recommendations, which were intended to address the many challenges downtown Winnipeg was facing in the late 1990s. Although the Development Corporation had not yet emerged, CentrePlan defined the geographic boundaries of downtown Winnipeg and CentreVenture eventually used these boundaries to designate its mandated area. In addition, the downtown secondary plan's policies genuinely underpinned the agency's charter. CentrePlan considered Winnipeg to be a city that sought "to make the downtown an attractive, distinctive, and vibrant place for Winnipeggers and visitors alike" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 6). Just how Winnipeg was going to achieve this vision was the real challenge. In the end, the extensive research and visioning undertaken as part of the CentrePlan process, and the ensuing vision and policies, truly underpinned the work that Economic Development Winnipeg was able to conduct in 1998. As a result of these efforts, CentreVenture was "incorporated under the



Laws of the Province of Manitoba” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p.8) and was formally established on July 9, 1999. CentreVenture would serve as the entity for implementation of CentrePlan’s vision and recommendations.

According to the agency’s *Startup Business Plan* (1999), CentreVenture’s overarching mandate, as initially enunciated was:

...to function as the catalyst to revitalize downtown Winnipeg through the cooperation, partnering, involvement and support of all levels of government, current and potential investors, developers, home owners, renters, the arts community, cultural groups and all citizens of the City of Winnipeg (Centre Venture Development Corporation 1999, p. 14).

CentreVenture attempted to achieve this overarching mandate by simultaneously fulfilling three functions. The Development Corporation intended to act as a “...Design Review Committee...,” serve as a “...Marketing and Information Bureau...” and to operate an “...Urban Development Bank...” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 9). The establishment of CentreVenture’s Design Review Committee streamlined other design committees that had been operating in the downtown into a single entity. The downtown agency’s board of directors appointed the members of this committee and one board member ultimately served as chair (Centre Venture Development Corporation 1999, p. 26 & 27). The intent of the Design Review Committee was to create a single design review and approval process for the entire downtown, to oversee the design plans of all new development projects in the downtown, and with the assistance of the City of Winnipeg’s Chief Administrative Officer and the Department of Planning, Property and Development, to ultimately serve as the approving authority (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 25 & 27). According to the agency’s *Startup Business Plan* (1999), this would ensure that “all restoration or

development is compatible with the spirit and intent of the vision as detailed in the CentrePlan Development Framework” (1999, p. 28). CentreVenture could also ask the City of Winnipeg to expedite development applications requiring zoning by-law amendments or variances (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 27). However, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2003), there was concern that when CentreVenture acquired responsibility for design review that it:

...created the impression that authority for downtown issues was being shifted from elected officials to a semi-private organization with less political accountability (2003, p, L-5).

Inadequate funding, however, ultimately forced the downtown design review function to return to the purview of the City (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2003, p. L-5).

Centre Venture’s second function was to serve as a “Marketing and Information Bureau” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2000, p. 2) and to aggressively market both downtown Winnipeg and itself to potential investors to maximize potential development opportunities for the downtown (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 30). Thirdly, CentreVenture was to operate an “Urban Development Bank” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2000, p. 2). According to the agency’s *Startup Business Plan* (1999), the “Development Bank” serves to assist developers by taking on the burden of the initial financial risk of a development project (1999, p. 18). For Winnipeg, which struggled to attract private investment into its downtown, this function was considered critically important. According to CentreVenture’s *Strategic Business Plan: 2006-2009* (2006):

Development Bank projects proceed with alternative sources of security or at a higher degree of risk than those available through conventional lenders

(CentreVenture Development Corporation 2006, p. 7).

According to the agency's *Startup Business Plan* (1999), CentreVenture was permitted to fund, utilizing the development bank, costs associated with "feasibility and architectural studies for potential projects" (1999, p. 18). Even if a project did not proceed to the development phase, CentreVenture became proprietor of the report and would be able to pursue development opportunities for the project. According to CentreVenture (1999, p. 20), this was an effective use of the Development Corporation's dollars. The agency also offered gap financing, which was intended to facilitate the financing and subsequent development of riskier projects that may not have been able to secure financing through standard means. Specifically,

In CentreVenture's strategy, gap financing will be the shortfall solution between conventional financing, owner's equity and any other public or private sector initiatives (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 20).

In addition, the downtown agency was given the ability to provide flexible loan repayment options to investors (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 20). Re-investment into the development bank would be facilitated as loans were repaid to CentreVenture.

In order to fund the aforementioned initiatives, the City of Winnipeg provided CentreVenture with the initial funds required to begin operation. The City provided an initial \$250,000, which enabled the agency "to hire a CEO, develop a business plan, set up the physical office and hire office staff" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2002, p. 3). In addition to the operating grant, the City also provided CentreVenture with \$3 million of capital funding, which the agency's Board of Directors chose instead to use as a contribution towards its development bank. This enabled the agency to fulfill its third

short-term objective (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2000, p. 3).

As CentreVenture's *2011-2013 Business Plan* (2011b) emphasizes, in addition to the City's initial \$3 million capital contribution, it also gifted the Development Corporation with what it considered to be its "economic engine" (2011b, p. 16), which were its surplus properties. According to the *Heart of Gold Strategic Business Plan* (2007):

Under an Asset Agreement, the City of Winnipeg vested control of non-performing, surplus, City-owned properties in downtown – present and future – in CentreVenture (2007, p. 11).

### 3.3.2 The Evolution of CentreVenture: 1999 – 2006

While still in its infancy, CentreVenture initially focused on pursuing and on financing smaller-scale projects in downtown Winnipeg until it could grow the size of its development bank (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 22). At this time, two general areas were given priority:

The first area will be defined as the Central Business District, with priority given to Portage Avenue, Broadway and the City's Historic Centre. The second area will be defined as the National Historic Site. This area includes the Forks, the Exchange District, Chinatown and North Main (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 9).

Another tool available to CentreVenture was the Heritage Tax Credit, which it administers on behalf of the City of Winnipeg (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2003, p. L-2). The Development Corporation was able to utilize the tool in order to:

...stimulate capital investment in the conservation and adaptive reuse of historical buildings in the heart of the city. The tax credit is provided to property owners who invest in the restoration, repair and reuse of designated heritage buildings and is calculated on the basis of 50 per cent of the net private investment made in eligible

work. The maximum assistance available is \$250,000 per building (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2003, p. L-2).

According to CentreVenture's *Report to City of Winnipeg* in April 2002, the Heritage Tax Credit program was fully subscribed three years into the Development Corporation's mandate (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2002, p. 9). That same year, in 2002, CentreVenture received a commitment from Winnipeg City Council through to 2006 when it extended its financial commitment to the Development Corporation and contributed an additional \$7 million towards the agency's development bank (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 11). According to CentreVenture's *2007 Annual Report* (2008), this increase in resources enabled the Development Corporation to participate in major projects including,

...the reclamation and redevelopment of crumbling downtown structures into valuable facilities such as Red River College and the Crocus Building in the Exchange (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2008, p. 6).

Arguably the most elaborate undertaking for CentreVenture during its first seven years was its involvement in the creation of Waterfront Drive. Prior to the agency's involvement, however, riverfront properties in the East Exchange District were decaying and the area was blighted. CentrePlan had also acknowledged the declining state of this riverfront area and considered the Exchange District waterfront to be an "opportunity to aid in the revitalization of the Downtown" (Scatliff + Miller + Murray 2001, p. 4).

According to the Development Corporation's *2007 Annual Report* (2008),

CentreVenture brought together three levels of government to invest \$9.1 million dollars in the project that is known as Waterfront Drive. It facilitated the development of the Wellington West office building, the Drive's gleaming cornerstone. The Corporation was also instrumental in initiating and approving four major residential Waterfront Drive projects, in essence creating an entirely new neighbourhood (2008, p. 6).

According to the *Waterfront Drive Concept Report* (2001), the Waterfront Committee, which was established as part of CentrePlan, underpinned the vision and the concept for Waterfront Drive (2001, p. 2). Having acknowledged the riverfront's proximity to many of the city's primary cultural destinations (e.g. Manitoba Theatre Centre and Centennial Concert Hall), the Committee envisioned that this existing cultural development could link to the proposed commercial and residential development on Waterfront Drive (Scatliff + Miller + Murray 2001, p. 2).

In the end, CentreVenture was able to leverage \$9 million in tri-level government funding for the Waterfront Drive project, which in turn leveraged a private sector investment of \$57.5 million. In other words, for every one public dollar spent on this development, six private dollars were invested. This investment created more than 200 dwelling units along the picturesque Waterfront Drive and added residential population to an area that had long been an industrial wasteland. For the seven years between 1999 and 2006 CentreVenture:

...sold 21 surplus properties for \$2.9 million, awarded \$3.2 million in Heritage Tax Credits and \$1.0 million in Heritage Grants (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2008b, p. 6).

In terms of physical change to the downtown, the Development Corporation participated in the rehabilitation of "...26 historic buildings..." and helped to "...realize almost 500 new housing units" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2008b, p. 6).

### 3.3.3 The Evolution of CentreVenture: 2007 – 2010

The *Heart of Gold Strategic Business Plan*, which was prepared by CentreVenture in 2007, was intended to provide the Development Corporation with its strategic direction

through to 2009. Its goal was:

To create enough visible improvement, and enough atmosphere of change and momentum, to achieve a ‘tipping point’ in people’s perception of the downtown, i.e. to make them believe that Winnipeg’s Heart of Gold is on the rise, that it is an exciting and vital place – and that it is getting better (2007, p. 11).

A primary component of the *Heart of Gold Plan* was a focus on community projects within the downtown area. This marked a shift in scope for the Development Corporation. In fact, the *Heart of Gold Plan* set aside \$5.5 million for nine “Public Destination” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 14 & 15) projects for completion within a three year timeframe, between 2007 and 2009. This initiative was built upon the skateboard park project at The Forks, in which CentreVenture had been a contributing partner (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 35). In fact, based upon the success of that project, it was determined that:

CentreVenture is perfectly positioned to lead, and to work with, its downtown partners (The Forks North Portage, Destination Winnipeg, the Downtown BIZ and Exchange BIZ, and the University of Winnipeg Renewal Corporation, amongst others), as well as with all three levels of government, foundations and private corporations and citizens – to develop world-class destination parks (“Public Destinations” or “PD”) in the downtown area (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 36).

According to CentreVenture’s financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2008, the Development Corporation contributed \$1 million towards the refurbishment of Central Park, found in a part of the city’s core that is home to many new immigrants (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2009, p. 14).

According to the *Heart of Gold Strategic Business Plan* (2007), completion of all proposed projects in the plan would involve an investment from CentreVenture of \$17 million (2007, p. 24). However, the Development Corporation anticipated that this level of funding would leverage an additional \$21 million of public funds and more than \$155

million in private sector investment (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2007, p. 24). CentreVenture's goal, therefore, was to leverage ten times its own investment.

With a new Chief Executive Officer in Ross McGowan, CentreVenture began to market the downtown extensively beginning in 2007. According to CentreVenture's *2011-2013 Business Plan* (2011b), the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 brought with them the creation of approximately 400 new residential dwelling units in downtown Winnipeg (2011b, p. 12). This was occurring in and around the same time that CentreVenture's so called "economic engine" – its land bank – had been "fully depleted" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2011b, p. 16). From an operational standpoint, there was no more surplus land with which to generate revenue and with each subsequent community investment; the size of the "Urban Development Bank" was shrinking. CentreVenture would have to find an alternative funding mechanism. According to the *2011-2013 Business Plan*, "CentreVenture has become more reliant on borrowed funds as the source to generate capital for loans" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2011b, p. 22). In addition,

CentreVenture's capacity to provide loans in support of Heritage Conservation Tax Credit programs and the Downtown Residential Development Grant, require more investment capital than CentreVenture's own UDB allows. Accordingly, the City of Winnipeg has guaranteed a \$10 million line of credit, which CentreVenture has arranged to fund its growing portfolios of loans and mortgages (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2011b, p. 17).

Even so, CentreVenture's contribution towards community projects, such as the Central Park and Market Square redevelopments, was considered critically important and was considered an important component of the overall goal of revitalizing downtown Winnipeg.

During this period of CentreVenture's evolution, the Development Corporation



began to increasingly focus its efforts on the redevelopment of North Main Street. In 2008 the agency collaborated with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) to negotiate the relocation of its head offices to the North Main Street area (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2009, p. 2). Existing structures between Logan and Henry Avenue were demolished to make way for the new 74,000 sq. ft. WRHA structure and adjacent 300-stall parkade. According to the Development Corporation's *2008 Annual Report* (2009), the project was to be:

...the major catalyst of North Main Street redevelopment and will bring 200 administrative and health workers to the area and generate \$1 million a year in incremental taxes (2009, p. 2).

The following year in 2009, CentreVenture worked with the United Way of Winnipeg to relocate their head offices to the North Main Street area as well, at the corner of Alexander Avenue. In 2011 both the renovated Bell Hotel on North Main Street and the new Centre for Youth Excellence at the corner of Main Street and Higgins Avenue opened their doors to residents of this lower-income neighbourhood in Winnipeg's core area.

In 2009, CentreVenture collaborated with private sector investors to facilitate development of "479 residential units" (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010a, p. 4) in 6 unique residential buildings. CentreVenture's ability to leverage private sector participation in downtown housing development was amplified when the Governments of Winnipeg and Manitoba announced the creation of the three-year Downtown Residential Development Grant Program in 2010 (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2011a, p. 5). According to the Development Corporation's *2012 Annual Report* (2013):

The DRDG Program has attracted numerous residential developers to build in downtown Winnipeg. The Program can potentially quadruple the number of

residential units brought into the market annually in downtown Winnipeg. The majority of residential projects in-development as a result of the DRDG are located in the Exchange Waterfront District (2013, p. 3).

#### 3.3.4 Trajectory of CentreVenture: 2011 – 2014 (and Beyond)

Following a collaboration process with the Downtown Council, CentreVenture released the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* in 2010. Following a major public sector investment on Portage Avenue with Manitoba Hydro Place a few years earlier, the *Strategy* (2010b), acknowledges that public sector investment cannot be so heavily relied upon as a redevelopment mechanism as we look into the future. Rather, although “...public investment is often the necessary catalyst to development, the objective should be to attract and support private investment” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 2). As such, CentreVenture, along with the Downtown Council, determined that the creation of a strategic plan for Portage Avenue would be necessary in order to convince private sector participants to invest along the historic avenue. A primary component of the plan was to:

Focus investment inward towards Portage Avenue thereby increasing development density and pedestrian traffic that in turn support existing attractions such as the retail district on Portage and Graham, the MTS Centre, Portage Place, The Bay, the University of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Convention Centre (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 3).

The *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* (2010b) also identified four separate and unique districts, “each contributing in its own way to the character of the Avenue (2010b, p. 4), which would be the focus of intensive revitalization schemes. The four participating districts are:

1. The University District;
2. The Retail District;

3. The Sports and Entertainment District; and
4. The Commercial District

The University of Winnipeg, which is prominently located on Portage Avenue and which accommodates a student population of around 10,000, anchors the University District. The *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* (2010b) suggests that this educational institution “could emerge as the most significant contributor to future downtown growth” (2010b, p. 6), and as such that improved connections are necessary in order to better link the school and its students to the rest of the downtown (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 6). Specifically, the *Strategy* (2010b) recommends that a new segment of downtown’s “weather protected walkway system” (2010b, p. 6) be constructed across Balmoral Street in order to connect the University of Winnipeg with Portage Place.

CentreVenture’s *2011-2013 Business Plan* (2011b) identifies retail as a new focus for the Development Corporation (2011b, p. 13). In fact, in 2011 CentreVenture made a commitment to collaborate with its downtown partners to:

...take the lead in developing appropriate retail strategies that complement the emerging residential neighbourhoods and the comprehensive redevelopment of Portage Avenue (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2011b, p. 13).

The development of retail is also supported in the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* (2010b). CentreVenture has identified the area east of the University District as the downtown’s Retail District (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 8).

The Retail District, long since reduced in size from the heyday of the 1950s and 60s, is essentially bounded by Graham Avenue to the south, Portage Place to the north, The Bay on the west and Hargrave Street to the east (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 8).

The anchor for this district is The Hudson's Bay store at the corner of Portage Avenue and Balmoral Street, which opened its doors in 1926 and has been operating as a downtown department store ever since.

The Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District (SHED) is currently a major focus for CentreVenture and has been widely marketed by the Development Corporation, especially between 2012 and 2014. According to the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* (2010b), the SHED would be developed around two anchors – the MTS Centre on Portage Avenue and the RBC Convention Centre (formerly the Winnipeg Convention Centre) located on York Avenue. In fact, CentreVenture has suggested that the creation of the SHED would be “the focal point of the new Portage Avenue” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 9).

The fourth district envisioned as part of the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* (2010b, p. 11) is the Commercial District.

As the principal anchor to the east, efforts to include this important revenue source should not be lost in the planning of Portage Avenue (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2010b, p. 11).

As Ross McGowan declares in *An Unfolding Vision*,

We know from experience that with a focused and strategic approach to development, a significant change can occur. What is clear is that we are seeing a renaissance that will change the city forever. The key to CentreVenture's success is rooted in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that makes moving mountains possible. Together we are moving forward, one brick at a time, one block at a time. And as a result, we are seeing a unified, cohesive vision for downtown. Confidence – publicly, corporately, civically and provincially – has never been higher and we need to capitalize on this extraordinary opportunity (Gray c.2013, p. 15).

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is yet another tool available to CentreVenture to assist the Development Corporation in generating development in downtown Winnipeg. According to Weber and Goddeeris (2007), TIF is an “economic development tool”

(2007, p. 3) used by municipalities to encourage redevelopment in blighted or underdeveloped areas. It can be used to finance residential and commercial developments, as well as public infrastructure. TIF provides developers with up front grants to help finance a portion of building and construction costs. Specifically,

TIF is essentially a tool for harnessing future revenues to pay for current expenditures. It is a reallocation of property tax revenues from a city's general fund to a smaller, more local jurisdiction – a TIF district (Weber & Goddeeris 2007, p. 2).

The Tax Increment Financing tool is “critical to the success of PADS [Portage Avenue Development Strategy] and the implementation of the SHED” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2012, p. 9). According to CentreVenture’s *2011 Annual Report* (2012),

Revenue from the TIF is key to financing improvements within the district – not only to fund streetscaping and other improvements to the public realm, but also initiatives that enhance lighting, safety and security, retail attraction and retention (CentreVenture Development Corporation 2012, p. 9).

#### **4.0 Results: Findings from Key Informant Interviews**

As part of this study's primary research, eleven interviews were conducted with key informants, who represented municipal planning, private sector planning and development corporation interests. In addition, effort was also made to incorporate views and perspectives spanning the different eras of downtown Winnipeg's redevelopment. As such, research participants included those who participated in the tri-level agreements of the 1970s and 1980s, those that had been directly involved in municipal plan making in the 1980s and 1990s, as well practitioners currently involved in downtown development efforts.

The researcher expected to learn perspectives on the influence of a dedicated downtown development organization on downtown revitalization. The researcher also expected to gain deeper insight into the economic, political and social conditions that may have led to the emergence of a particular dedicated downtown development agency – CentreVenture Development Corporation in Winnipeg, Manitoba – and its recent evolution. Ultimately, the intent of communicating firsthand with the research participants was to better inform the study's underlying research questions, which were identified in chapter 1.

By speaking with key informants directly, the researcher expected to identify constructively critical perspectives and patterns among the research participants. In order to facilitate this, the open-ended interview questions posed to research participants were grouped into three general categories: the emergence of CentreVenture, the evolution of CentreVenture and the future trajectory of CentreVenture.

#### **4.1 Emergence of CentreVenture (Pre 1999)**

The research participants were asked to share their perspectives on the environment and economic landscape of the late 1990s in the City of Winnipeg. The intent of this was to provide some additional background for readers and some context in reference to the decisions made (or those that may not have been made) by public sector decision-makers as a way to address the extensive decline of the downtown during this period. The research participants were relatively consistent in their viewpoints and assessments as they relate to this phase in Winnipeg's history. In particular, many of those interviewed as a part of the study referenced the slow and even stagnant population growth as a primary contributing factor leading to the downtown's deterioration. In fact, research participants 4 and 7 (RP4 and RP7) suggested that the city experienced negative population growth during this time, meaning that the city actually lost more population (largely due to interprovincial migration) than it gained. RP1 described this population trend by saying "it was almost like a rat leaving a sinking ship." Some research participants also referenced the reduction in transfer payments from higher levels of government as a contributing factor in downtown Winnipeg's decline. This reduction in funding, it was explained, was a symptom of the overall state of the economy at the time, which led to increasing fiscal restraint by all levels of government. RP4 observed:

What happened to Winnipeg, which was used to a lot of government transfers especially for development for downtown, was there was significant stagnation.

Furthermore, RP4 clarified that around 1992 and 1993, the federal government had retreated from participating financially in local economies. In particular, the federal affordable housing initiative was eliminated. The provincial government at the time was unable (or unwilling) to fill this funding gap and this subsequently led to "a significant

spike in homelessness,” (RP4). Another participant shared their perspective on Winnipeg City Hall during this period.

Politically, there was a real push to try and reduce expenses, to try and keep costs contained, to try and reduce the size of government, partly in anticipation of that reality – the fact that the city wasn’t going to be growing (RP7).

RP9 added that land values in the downtown were not stable at the time and as a consequence, banks were not loaning money for development. It was also pointed out that the City of Winnipeg had antiquated zoning by-laws during this period. This led to significant frustration on the part of developers and planners alike. Specifically,

We evolved from by-laws that actually restricted residential development into by-laws that became so complicated that even planners didn’t know how to interpret [them] (RP9).

Research participants were also asked to reflect on the concept of downtown revitalization and to comment on how they interpret the term. For RP11, the terms revitalization, redevelopment and rejuvenation can be used interchangeably. For this research participant, the concepts generally mean:

Efforts that are undertaken to make the downtown a more dynamic place both from a people perspective and from an economic perspective.

Research participants were then asked to share their perspectives on the planning context of the late 1990s and on the influences that may have led to CentreVenture’s emergence. RP1 and RP7 made reference to the creation of downtown Winnipeg’s planning document – CentrePlan. RP7 indicated that while simultaneously practicing fiscal restraint, the City of Winnipeg came to the realization that it needed to prioritize downtown Winnipeg and work towards revitalizing a core that had been left to decay over the previous several years, if not decades:



We started looking at the downtown and saying it was high time that we really took a better, stronger stance on downtown and revitalization and take some initiatives to try and improve the downtown (RP7).

As a result, the City focused on creating a plan for the downtown. RP1 credits then Mayor Susan Thompson as the political driving force behind the creation of CentrePlan.

She got CentrePlan happening. CentrePlan was a really major initiative that helped get the city and the community thinking about downtown in a positive way, and actually preparing a game plan for what was needed to make improvements from all different aspects. That was a good starting point.

RP7 elaborated on this notion by explaining that the City did not want CentrePlan to become yet another government plan that would sit on a shelf collecting dust. Rather, there was a push to involve local downtown stakeholders in the creation of the Plan. This was deemed critically important because “all of these groups actually had a stake in the Plan and contributed to it” (RP7).

As RP8 indicated, a conclusion of the CentrePlan document was that “an arms-length agency be created to facilitate and promote development in the downtown.” RP7 added that it was this arms-length organization that would implement the policies of CentrePlan. Moreover, “... we needed to have an organization that could deliver on the promises as quickly as possible” (RP7).

Several research participants credited former Mayor Glen Murray for the emergence of CentreVenture. He succeeded Mayor Susan Thompson in 1998 as Mayor of the City of Winnipeg. When asked about CentreVenture’s emergence, RP1 remarked: “I know it was the brainchild of Glen Murray.” RP4 credits the leadership at the time by stating:

At the time, we had an interesting leadership at the municipal level. We had a mayor in Glen Murray who was interested in cities and understood the need to have a vibrant downtown.

RP8 indicated that having the right people in the right place at the right time was incredibly important. Specifically, this research participant credited having the Director of Planning, Property and Development, the Mayor and a potential CEO all on the same page – as the underlying influence for the emergence of Winnipeg’s dedicated downtown development agency – CentreVenture Development Corporation.

#### **4.2 Evolution of CentreVenture (1999-2013)**

In an effort to begin documenting CentreVenture’s evolution, research participants were asked to describe how the emergence of CentreVenture fit into the (downtown) planning context of the late 1990s and early 2000s. RP1 shared that the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ was influential in the development of downtown Winnipeg’s plan. In particular, they indicated that this organization pushed to ensure that CentrePlan would be a practical document that would be used to guide development in downtown Winnipeg. RP7 indicated that CentreVenture was never intended to be a planning entity. Rather, it was meant to be an implementing agency. Describing CentreVenture, this research participant stressed:

It was an organization that was deemed to be the best model to put deals together, to make the recommendations of CentrePlan come true (RP7).

RP9’s interpretation of the interview question offered an alternative perspective. They referenced an environment of competitiveness, that had been created as a result of (certain of the) planning and development functions for the downtown being transferred out of the City’s Planning, Property and Development Department and over to CentreVenture. In particular, RP9 suggested that,

[City of Winnipeg] planners may have felt undermined that this near and dear process of planning in our downtown was pushed aside as we turned to a downtown development agency. So it was giving business the green light and planning the yellow/amber to hold back and just assist... (RP9).

It seemed – to this participant – that it took the City of Winnipeg planners a long time to realize that better results could be generated if both parties worked together.

Research participants were then asked to provide their interpretation of a dedicated downtown development agency's role and to share their perspective on where this type of organization might fit in – amongst an array of downtown organizations, such as business improvement zones/districts or economic development agencies. According to RP1, employing the model of a dedicated downtown development agency was not the first time that governments had been involved in downtown development in Winnipeg. This research participant referenced the tripartite agreement that was the Core Area Initiative, and the subsequent tripartite agreement that was the Winnipeg Development Agreement. They suggested, however, that the City's role with this particular intervention (CentreVenture) was much greater – because of its complement of surplus lands that was used to generate some activity in the downtown. RP4 elaborated on this concept by linking this opportunity directly to the agency's mandate.

I think the primary focus for CentreVenture was really about getting rid of and helping market properties that just weren't selling, that Winnipeg Property and Planning Division, which was marketing properties, just wasn't moving fast enough. And we had a bit of a glut of surplus properties from either tax sales or closures or outright City-owned. And on top of that we had a downtown that was stagnant, that was facing significant challenge. The idea was to create kind of a third party or arms length organization to market properties that were struggling to sell and try to spark some development by either giving loans or doing whatever they needed to do to get people to invest in downtown and get rid of those surplus properties (RP4).

RP2 felt that a dedicated downtown development agency would be able to get more involved in actual development, when compared to other players in the downtown revitalization arena. This research participant referenced CentreVenture's unique ability to identify, and subsequently assemble, parcels of land for the purpose of development. RP11 indicated that although individual downtown revitalization entities have fairly specific and unique mandates, each has important roles in the downtown and each can do things that governments simply cannot do. According to this research participant, governments have a responsibility to its constituents to operate in a transparent manner. Arms-length organizations, however, do not have that obligation and as such can do business deals more easily and can move more quickly on development opportunities. Referencing particular downtown revitalization organizations, RP11 elaborated by stating that Canadian business improvement zones are made up of business owners. As a consequence, "they have certain limitations around what they can do." In Winnipeg, however, a business improvement zone's primary roles and responsibilities are to keep its jurisdiction clean and safe. According to RP11, business improvement zones are important and quite necessary, but alone they cannot fulfill the entire complement of downtown revitalization efforts that are required. In the Winnipeg context, The Forks North Portage Partnership (FNPP) is yet another player in the downtown revitalization arena. According to RP11, the land that this organization owns within the downtown geographically limits its abilities to bring about positive change throughout the entire downtown. FNPP's role is to reinvest revenues – generated from parking and land leases – into downtown projects within its mandated geographic area. In comparison, the roles and responsibilities of a dedicated downtown development agency differ significantly.

Building on RP2's earlier comments, RP11 explained that although this type of organization would be involved in development, it is not an actual developer. Rather, a dedicated downtown development agency, such as CentreVenture, acts as a facilitator of development. RP11 provided further detail when suggesting that CentreVenture's strengths were in bringing development participants together, assembling parcels of land for the purpose of development, and assisting with financing in order to make development projects actually happen. Specifically, this research participant defined CentreVenture's job as:

... doing real estate development to enhance the quality of public and private investment in the downtown.

RP7 explained that CVDC was meant to complement the existing downtown organizations. In other words, in no way was CentreVenture ever meant to duplicate the work already being done elsewhere. RP9 labeled the assortment of downtown organizations as the "economic development world":

CentreVenture is the bricks and mortar part of that economic development model... It is closing the deal. It's building the development or taking options on land so that development can occur (RP9).

When asked whether they thought CentreVenture had adapted appropriately to downtown Winnipeg's changing landscape, RP1 responded that their mandate to encourage and participate in development in the downtown is very much the same today as it was back in 1999. Research Participant 10 delved deeper into the question and responded that CentreVenture's business plan has changed over time. When the Development Corporation emerged, its business plan placed the development focus on Main Street. After a few years, however, that focus (and associated business plans) shifted to Portage Avenue. RP10 goes on to say, however, that although there once was a

focus on housing – such as with Waterfront Drive – this initiative seems to be less important now with the advent of the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District.

Research participants were then asked to reflect on areas, initiatives or particular projects where they felt CentreVenture had succeeded over the course of its operation. RP1 felt that CentreVenture experienced success in that it expected more of its projects than merely the status quo in terms of design and quality of development. As RP1 explained, “we wanted to see it as the norm rather than the exception.” RP4 and RP10 believed that as far as a general project is concerned, Waterfront Drive was highly successful.

I think the key piece of their work was certainly the marketing and reconstruction of Waterfront. That’s their landmark project (RP4).

In addition, RP4 thought that the concept of the SHED was innovative. In particular, they explained that “the promotion [and] the creation of this idea of an identity within part of the downtown” was a positive approach with which to encourage sports, hospitality or entertainment-related development in a specific part of the downtown. In the same vein, however, they expressed concern that this initiative would lead to the compartmentalization of downtown. RP7 suggested this was actually a positive outcome. Specifically,

One of the things I really like about what CentreVenture does it that it’s broken down the downtown into sectors and I think that’s really important... That’s what I like about some of the work they do – that they’re able to sort of compartmentalize the downtown into discreet components that you can then focus some attention, focus some resources, and try and attract some development activity...

This was a particular response to RP7’s sense that downtown Winnipeg was too large.

Specifically they said that “downtown is as big as downtowns of cities three or four times

the size of Winnipeg, so we have too large a downtown.” RP10 had this to say on the topic:

It did make sense to focus in clusters and not spread their influence out too thin because downtown Winnipeg is big. It does make sense to focus on a few strategic areas – first Main Street and then Portage Avenue.

RP5 felt that CentreVenture had been particularly innovative with respect to “land accumulation for the hotel projects and the Convention Centre.” On the other hand, they also had the following to say with respect to CentreVenture’s success:

Its achievements are more related to the drive of the private sector than its own initiative.

RP8 referenced the positive returns that CentreVenture’s development projects have generated.

Our return to our shareholder is measured in increased assessment values. So over the course of time the value of the downtown is going up, and it’s going up almost exponentially (RP8).

RP9 suggested that the SHED initiative and the redevelopment of several blocks between City Hall and the Higgins Avenue underpass on North Main should be labeled as success stories. RP10 added that a success not widely advertised has been the quality of the development agreements entered into by CentreVenture and developers.

At the other end of the spectrum, research participants were also asked to comment on any areas, initiatives or particular projects where they felt CentreVenture could have done better.

At some level I think people really just want to be engaged... I think people probably largely feel that CentreVenture is doing a good job – and I think they are – but again it’s just that case where at some level we’ve got to figure out a way to create a sense that people have some ownership in all of this. Whether it’s the planning department kind of stepping in and they work in tandem... but something has to give (RP4).

RP9 questioned CentreVenture's management of its urban development bank by raising the issue of its community investments, such as its \$1 million contribution to the refurbishment of Central Park in Winnipeg's core. This research participant explained that these investments into communities have contributed to the depletion of the Development Corporation's urban development bank because these investments don't generate revenues in the form of incremental taxes. Given that their land bank has also been exhausted, RP9 expressed concern that CentreVenture had placed itself in a precarious position. RP7 voiced disappointment with respect to the revitalization of North Main Street. In particular, they felt that although the closure of some hotels along that stretch of Main may have given the impression of success, the initiative failed to address the root causes of a problem that had become an epidemic. As a consequence public intoxication merely shifted to the next open beverage room. In addition, RP7 had concerns that an entire block of unique buildings was torn down to make way for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's headquarters. They felt it was reminiscent of Robert Moses' urban renewal philosophy. RP7 stated:

If there's one criticism [it] is that sometimes in their desire to get things done and get things done quickly, I think they sometimes settle for projects that aren't, I think... where the quality isn't as high as I think it could have been.

In response to the same question, RP4 suggested that CentreVenture's lack of public consultation has always been a concern. In particular they stated:

I think the key thing for me [has] always been whether or not they have engaged or [have] been required to engage the general public. And I think even from the Waterfront to the SHED to where they are today, I'm not sure it's in their mandate to consult and I find that kind of draws them further away from the idea of planning to just being an implementation firm... somebody's got to be doing the consultation. You can't just [have] 100% emphasis on implementation.



RP2 expressed some concern with CentreVenture's operations by referencing the dedicated downtown development agency's systematic lack of transparency:

Sometimes I don't want to know how they get things done. I think they carry a fair bit of power in terms of their role and they do make things happen. I'm not sure how they do it and I'm not sure I need to know or I want to know. I'm glad that they do it and I don't know whether they're politically connected and how much interaction there is between the politicians and CentreVenture versus CentreVenture and the City's administration, but they seem to be able to make things happen.

RP1 suggested that CentreVenture has been operating outside of its mandate by getting increasingly involved in marketing and promotion of the downtown. This type of work, they argue, should be done by an organization such as the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ.

Most companies believe that you stay on your core – your core business. You end up getting into trouble when you get off into things that aren't your core business. And CentreVenture's core business is development (RP1).

Research participants were then asked to comment on the type of planning that a dedicated downtown development agency like CentreVenture would do for itself and what type of planning it would do with others. RP2 observed that the intent of any planning undertaken by CentreVenture is to protect the very private investment it is attempting to encourage in the downtown. In particular, this research participant commented that,

They're [CentreVenture] kind of acting like the planning department for the downtown and I think in some ways that's not necessarily a bad thing (RP2).

RP11 commented that with the exception of the broad public consultation process involved in the development of *Our Winnipeg*, the City of Winnipeg's newest development plan, there is a lack of planning in the city in general and in the downtown in particular. This research participant clarified that it is not CentreVenture's job to be the planner for the City. Rather, a dedicated downtown development agency must work

within any existing planning context and work with municipal planning departments in order to move development projects forward. RP11 elaborated by explaining that CentreVenture works closely with the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department and by all measure has "done a reasonably good job at working within [the existing planning] context."

Research participants were asked whether they thought CentreVenture had adequately bridged the gap between the public and private sectors. In particular they were asked to reflect on whether the Development Corporation had managed to bridge the gap between what the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department had been able to achieve and what the private sector was willing to do on its own. In response, RP1 provided a rating, utilizing a scale from 1 to 7, with the number 7 representing a job "extremely well" done. They gave CentreVenture a rating of 5.5 out of 7. Research Participant 2 suggested that CentreVenture fills a very important role in downtown Winnipeg. In particular, they specified that a dedicated downtown development agency can "understand the economics in a way that a city planning department does not and might not even want to." This research participant elaborated by implying that the various City departments do not effectively work together and as a consequence, "they are not necessarily focused on the kind of things that are needed to make downtown successful." RP7 provided additional insight into this relationship by indicating that although CentreVenture – and its CEO in particular – may be successful in leveraging relationships and in working with the development community, there is still significant room for improvement on the part of the City.

The weak link in the chain has always been the relationship with the City of Winnipeg Planning Department... If we're going to have a more effective organization, that really needs to be strengthened (RP7).

RP8 suggested that the City's Planning Department was doing everything it could to issue permits and take care of their own planning responsibilities with the resources available at its disposal. RP9 shared that CentreVenture had very much been successful in bridging the gap. RP11 suggested that Winnipeg's dedicated downtown development agency hasn't necessarily bridged the gap between the public and private sectors. Rather, CentreVenture has helped to close this gap.

#### **4.3 Trajectory of CentreVenture (2014 –)**

Research participants were asked to comment on what they perceived CentreVenture's most likely trajectory to be looking into the future. RP4 suggested that in the next 5 to 10 years, they would like to see CentreVenture establish targets with which to meet their goals. For example, if

CentreVenture's mandate is to encourage residential, target to say within 5 years we'd like to grow the population to 20,000. Within 10 years, we'd like to be at 25,000. And within 15 years we'd like to double the population to 30,000. Given that we're around 15,000 right now, we've got 5 years to get to 20,000, and then 10 years to get to 25,000, and 15 years to get it to 30,000. Let's try to figure out how we're going to do that (PR4).

RP5 commented that they expected CentreVenture to wind down over the next 5 to 10 years because the Development Corporation would no longer be able to justify itself in terms of its costs. RP7 expressed hope that CentreVenture would continue to operate in a similar fashion to how it currently operates. However, they indicated that they would like to see the relationship between CentreVenture and the City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department strengthened. In particular, RP7 suggested that,

CentreVenture would be increasingly successful over the next decade, largely as a result of some solid downtown planning efforts on the part of the City of Winnipeg, followed up by a complementary implementation agency that CentreVenture establishes itself as.

Looking at the longer term, RP8 suggested that CentreVenture would “take on the character of whoever is running it, to a large extent.” When asked if the Development Corporation would still be needed, this research participant replied: “I think it will be needed even more.” RP9 suggested that based on the success that the present CEO has had, they would like to see CentreVenture morph into a sort of mobile redevelopment team. Rather than focus on specific areas of the downtown, as they’ve historically done, they could instead focus on specific areas of the city as a whole. This research participant admitted, though, that change would be likely to occur – no matter what that change is – when the current CEO retires.

We’ve got some big challenges as a City, budget wise, and I’m hoping that our politicians don’t see limiting what CentreVenture can do because of some short-term funding issues. I think we need to turn around and say right now our \$300,000 grant is leveraging about \$4 million in municipal property taxes, which is our only lifeblood... the only way that our city can continue to grow is with municipal property taxes and right now [CentreVenture] is filling lots, they’re putting development in vacant buildings. We need to make sure they continue to do that (RP9).

RP11 argued that working with CentreVenture on downtown development projects is “part of kind of a culture of doing business in Winnipeg.” They further suggested that it would be a mistake to cease CentreVenture’s operations, in the near future at least. They admitted that one day the organization may very well “work themselves out of a job,” but suggested that CentreVenture should continue to play an integral role in downtown revitalization efforts into the distant future and that the organization should “structure [itself] for the long-term.” In contrast, RP4 made the following suggestion:

I think we're probably at a time where we're getting closer to being able to turn off the tap than we've ever been in terms of how we fund these agencies.

Finally, research participants were asked whether they thought development and revitalization in the downtown would have occurred to the scale that it has over the past 10 to 15 years had it not been for CentreVenture's involvement. Although all research participants responded with differing degrees of enthusiasm, a strong majority felt unequivocally that development and associated revitalization would not have occurred to the scale that it did had it not been for Winnipeg's dedicated downtown development agency. Furthermore, many respondents also felt that the City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department simply could not have achieved these results on its own.

## **5.0 Analysis and Synthesis**

### **5.1 Planning**

When CentreVenture Development Corporation emerged in Winnipeg in 1999, its mandate was to encourage private sector investment and to facilitate a wide range of developments in downtown Winnipeg. The agency has been able to carry out its mandate through the use of a variety of tools at its disposal, including a land bank, an urban development bank, and through the administration of grants and loans, including tax increment financing. CentreVenture was expected to function within the existing land use planning framework provided by CentrePlan and any additional planning initiatives undertaken by the City of Winnipeg. The planning and development functions were expected to be complementary while being undertaken and coordinated by two separate jurisdictions. However, as the downtown Development Corporation has evolved, the planning function appears to have become increasingly a part of the CentreVenture mandate.

In 2008, CentreVenture was involved in plan making, or more appropriately – plan updating – when it redrafted one of downtown Winnipeg’s planning documents, the CentrePlan Development Framework. Unlike the extensive consultation process that took place during the 1990s when CentrePlan: Vision and Strategies was originally drafted, the public was not consulted when the Framework component of CentrePlan was updated. The requirement to consult is not within the downtown development agency’s mandate. Perhaps this can be justified since the Development Corporation was never really established to undertake planning, as iterated during the study by RP7.

In 2010, the Development Corporation completed the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy*, where it delineated four separate and distinct districts within Portage Avenue and its environs in order to focus planning and development toward specific goals. The expediency with which the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy* had to be completed is understood. A developer's timeline does not necessarily correspond to that of a municipal planning authority. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, the arms-length nature of "quasi-public development organizations" (North Portage Development Corporation 1984, p. 31) allows such organizations to respond to a developer's timeline. The structure also enables them to operate more discretely than government would be able to. In 2011, CentreVenture completed the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District Master Plan, representing one of the four newly identified districts.

Thus in recent years, CentreVenture has increasingly taken on a planning role. The research revealed that planning undertaken by CentreVenture was regarded as necessary (by the agency) to encourage investment and to attract appropriate urban development, as was the case with the *Portage Avenue Development Strategy*. However, the research has also revealed that the relationship between the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department and CentreVenture Development Corporation has been contentious for years. Although the Planning, Property and Development Department is the City of Winnipeg's municipal planning authority, it did not update the *CentrePlan Framework* in 2008, it did not draft the *Portage Avenue Revitalization Strategy* in 2010, nor is it currently creating the plan for the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District. CentreVenture determined it was necessary that these plans be produced, but the Planning, Property and Development Department either

could not or did not produce them within the timeframe required. As a consequence, CentreVenture felt obligated to prepare these plans.

Nearing the mid-point of CentreVenture's evolution, attempts were made on the part of the arm's length agency to mend this relationship and improve communication between several downtown organizations through the creation of the 'Downtown Council.' CentreVenture ensured that the Director of Planning, Property and Development had a seat at the table.

If an arm's length development corporation, whose mandate is to facilitate development in the downtown, is same organization who is creating the plans for the downtown, how can we ensure that planning in downtown Winnipeg is being done for the public good? As a consequence, the responsibility for downtown planning should rest with the Planning, Property and Development Department at the City of Winnipeg with the understanding that the planning function must ensure that the planning needs associated with thoughtful and timely development are met.

## **5.2 Development and Revitalization**

As discussed in the historical context section presented in chapter 3, prior to CentreVenture's emergence onto the Winnipeg landscape of the late 1990s, efforts to facilitate development in the downtown and to revitalize Winnipeg's core area were very much guided by the public sector. This was seen with the construction of large-scale development projects – The Forks and Portage Place for example – which were bricks and mortar outcomes of tripartite public funding conceived from the Core Area Initiative Agreement. This occurred at a time in history when there were nationwide economic



challenges causing increasing fiscal restraint on the part of all governments, but which subsequently led to a reduction in transfer payments from the federal government to the provinces and to the territories. The effect on Manitoba was particularly devastating given that the province was experiencing slow (and at times even stagnant) population growth during this time. This has been heralded as a primary contributing factor leading to downtown Winnipeg's deterioration. To neutralize the decline and associated absence of private sector investment in the downtown, public funds were infused into large-scale development projects with the anticipation that such public sector investments would facilitate downtown revitalization.

...while it is possible to make out a strong case in theory for government intervention in the development process, what really matters is how this works out in practice in specific places (Adams & Tiesdell 2012, p. 123).

As stated previously, CentreVenture as a dedicated downtown development authority is considered to be a particular intervention executed by Winnipeg's municipal government at a particular time, in an attempt to achieve what Adams and Tiesdell categorize as a move away from "bureaucratic hierarchies" (2012, p. 111) and a transition towards greater participation of the private sector in development within the downtown.

...discovering the right balance, in any particular context, between private initiative, voluntary commitment and public direction is crucial to delivering successful places (Adams & Tiesdell 2012, p. 123).

At the time of the agency's emergence, it had long been a significant challenge to encourage private sector investment (and associated development) in the downtown. The dedicated downtown development authority model marked a different approach to a deeply rooted problem in Winnipeg's core. CentreVenture went beyond merely marketing the downtown and presented new options to the development community, in

an effort to facilitate development. CentreVenture possesses several unique characteristics that have made the Development Corporation effective at facilitating development in downtown Winnipeg and that have made it a successful model to achieve downtown revitalization.

### 5.2.1 Board Structure

As discussed in Section 3.2, members of the Boards of Directors for the North Portage Development Corporation, The Forks Renewal Corporation, and more recently, The Forks North Portage Partnership, have been selected by their shareholders, which are the three levels of government. CentreVenture's Board of Directors, however, is self-appointing, which means there are no political appointments on its Board. According to Research Participant 8, this governance structure has been a critical piece in enabling CentreVenture to effectively fulfill its mandate. This key informant further suggested that the existing Board structure has allowed CentreVenture to attract the right people and has allowed the Board to remain free of political influence. As a consequence, CentreVenture has been able to focus on the best interest of the downtown, rather than what might be or what might not be, in one's political interest.

### 5.2.2 Funding Model

Although CentreVenture is not the first development corporation to have operated in downtown Winnipeg, it is the first to have been afforded such a comprehensive set of tools with which to achieve its goals. Initially, the Development Corporation was provided with \$3 million with which to fund its development bank. With funds from this

account, CentreVenture was able to facilitate the development of projects that may not have occurred otherwise. At the time of the Development Corporation's emergence, conventional financial institutions may have regarded particular downtown projects to be too high a risk. As a consequence, banks may not have offered the appropriate level of financing to get a project done from beginning to end. CentreVenture, however, was able to enter the market and offer gap financing, meaning that it would cover the shortfall between the project cost and the developer's resources. The Development Corporation could also provide flexible loan re-payment options to investors, which conventional banks were unlike to provide. As developers repaid loans, the development bank would be restored. In 2002, when CentreVenture had proven its ability to foster private sector investment in downtown Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg infused an additional \$7 million into its development bank, which enabled the Development Corporation to provide assistance for an increased number of projects.

Under an Asset Agreement, CentreVenture acquired control of the City of Winnipeg's non-performing surplus properties. These were properties that may have been acquired through tax sales or other means, were often in a declining or derelict state, and were not generating tax revenue for the City. CentreVenture was then afforded with the ability to market the properties, assist developers in financing associated projects and get the properties back on the City's tax rolls.

CentreVenture Development Corporation is able to leverage further private sector investment in the downtown by linking prospective developers with available government grants and tax credits. Specifically, CentreVenture has been afforded the

opportunity to administer heritage tax credits and the Downtown Residential Grant Program on behalf of the City and the Province.

### 5.2.3 Accountability

Although CentreVenture does not operate with the degree of transparency that would be required by government, the Development Corporation is accountable to taxpayers through City Council. CentreVenture is required to obtain Executive Policy Committee approval for their business plans, which identifies goals, specific project targets and budgets, and annual reports, which report on performance. In addition, the Development Corporation is required to obtain annual external independent audits to ensure that its finances are in order.

### 5.2.4 Broad Mandate

CentreVenture's shareholder (the City of Winnipeg) has not imposed a restrictive mandate onto the Development Corporation. Rather, the City has largely allowed the agency to pursue development projects, which it has considered suitable, utilizing the tools at its disposal. CentreVenture has, since its inception, been able to address a variety of downtown issues, including residential development, heritage building conservation and rehabilitation, commercial development, community projects, and most recently, entertainment development with the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District.

### 5.2.5 Business Model

Even though CentreVenture is an arms-length agency of the City of Winnipeg, it is able to, in many ways, operate like a business. Specifically, CentreVenture is not obligated to operate with the same degree of transparency that would be required of government. As a result, the Development Corporation's model allows for development negotiations to be conducted independently and with discretion. Recently, the City of Winnipeg approved a \$25 million line of credit for CentreVenture. Each time CentreVenture wishes to utilize these funds, it does not have to request permission from City Council. This flexibility allows CentreVenture to be nimble – to be able to respond quickly to development opportunities that may arise.

### 5.2.6 Downtown Council

In 2007, CentreVenture's Chief Executive Officer established a 'Downtown Council' in an effort to break down existing silos between the different organizations operating in the downtown. The informal board, which is comprised of senior representatives from the City, the Province, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown and Exchange District Business Improvement Zones, The Forks North Portage Partnership and the Winnipeg Police Service, meets regularly to discuss ongoing issues in the downtown. The intent of the 'Downtown Council' is not only to ensure that all parties are cognizant of activities in the downtown, but also to ensure that there is no duplication of work, while identifying opportunities for cooperation. Most importantly, however, the 'Downtown Council' serves to improve communication and build relationships between the many organizations operating in the downtown.

### **5.3 Facilitation & Integration**

This study has sought to explore the extent to which a dedicated downtown development authority has facilitated the better integration of (mainly public) planning and (mainly private) development in a downtown revitalization context. By means of a case study (CentreVenture Development Corporation) and key informant interviews, the researcher explored the emergence, evolution and trajectory of a dedicated downtown development agency in a local context, which also allowed for learning about the general themes of planning, development, facilitation and integration.

The key informant interviews revealed that the private sector development community in Winnipeg is heavily reliant on CentreVenture to assist them in navigating the multiple layers of municipal bureaucracy that is characteristic of development work in the downtown. Not only does the agency serve as an information hub, but it also can walk participants through the development processes. According to RP11, if a development is being undertaken in the downtown, CentreVenture is either involved in it or at the very least is aware of it. Furthermore, it was learned that CentreVenture is most successful at assembling parcels of land and bringing development participants together. Thus, it is inferred that this dedicated downtown development authority has helped to simplify the development process for the private sector and it has helped to bring together the various components in order to better facilitate development projects. The study's research participants corroborated this viewpoint by indicating that CentreVenture is not and never was meant to be a developer. Rather, the arms-length agency was put in place in order to encourage private sector investment and to facilitate development projects in the downtown.

## 6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Response to Research Questions

As indicated in Section 1.2, this research sought to:

- 1) identify the extent to which a downtown development corporation facilitated the better integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg;
- 2) determine the significant aspects of CentreVenture Development Corporation's emergence, evolution and trajectory; and
- 3) identify those features of CentreVenture's model that could be applicable in other comparable downtown revitalization settings.

#### 6.1.1 Research Question One

This Major Degree Project first endeavored to answer this question: *To what extent has the presence of a downtown development agency facilitated the better integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg?* The case study analysis, and particularly the key informant interviews, has revealed that CentreVenture Development Corporation entered the Winnipeg marketplace at a time when population growth was stagnant, governments were making cuts across departments, land values were unstable and banks were seldom (if at all) providing loans for riskier development projects. In 1999, CentreVenture began to offer gap financing and loans with flexible repayment options, and to link prospective developers with government grants and tax credits. The research suggests that CentreVenture addressed a market gap in downtown Winnipeg. The Development Corporation filled an important role within the downtown since it had the knowledge and ability to negotiate with investors and to get projects done

with the discretion and expediency required in the private sector. The research also suggests that, had it not been for the Development Corporation's involvement in the Winnipeg marketplace, downtown development, and associated revitalization, would not have occurred to the degree that it has since 1999.

In addition, the research suggests that the relationship between the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department and CentreVenture Development Corporation has been contentious for years. The research revealed that when CentreVenture emerged in 1999, municipal planners within the Planning, Property and Development Department felt that the planning process was being circumvented and that private business interests were being prioritized by City Council.

Nearing the mid-point of CentreVenture's evolution, attempts were made on the part of the arm's length agency to mend this relationship and improve communication amongst several downtown organizations by creating the 'Downtown Council.' CentreVenture ensured that the Director of Planning, Property and Development had a seat at the table. As discussed in Section 5.1, responsibility for downtown planning should rest with the Planning, Property and Development Department at the City of Winnipeg. However as the research has shown, CentreVenture has continued to create plans for the downtown over the past several years. Thus, the creation of the Downtown Council and inclusion of the Director of Planning, Property and Development at the table does not appear to have led to the better integration of the public planning and private development sectors.

The Department of Planning, Property and Development should be responsible for planning in the downtown; however CentreVenture Development Corporation is



responsible for planning in the downtown. This is a significant point of tension between the Department and Development Corporation. Although this model may be working effectively under CentreVenture's current leadership, the model itself is concerning. How can a model that integrates planning and development under the same organization ensure that planning is conducted for the public good rather than being utilized to prioritize private sector or business interests?

### 6.1.2 Research Question Two

The research also sought to determine: *What are the salient aspects of the emergence, evolution and trajectory of CentreVenture Development Corporation (in terms of its contribution to the integration of planning and development in downtown Winnipeg)?* Through a review of the literature, case study analysis and through key informant interviews, it has been suggested that the writing and subsequent adoption by City Council of a downtown plan, encompassing the family of CentrePlan documents, served as an essential first step that eventually allowed CentreVenture to emerge at the time that it did in 1999. However, the existence of a recommendation within a plan in and of itself did not guarantee CentreVenture's emergence. Although this circumstance may have laid the necessary groundwork, the will to actually implement the recommendation also had to be present. To make matters more complicated, it was not just the resolve of a single participant that ensured action. Rather, multiple persons in multiple roles had to be on the same page at the same time. Mayor Glen Murray was a leader who understood and appreciated the relationship between a vibrant downtown and the health and success of a city as a whole. Downtown Winnipeg had experienced decline, decay and disinvestment

for decades. Revitalization efforts had previously been made, however. As explored in Section 3.1, the Core Area Initiative Agreements saw unprecedented levels of funding invested into downtown Winnipeg for many projects including: the rehabilitation and creation of housing, the development of Portage Place, and for the remediation of a former rail yard at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Although the CAI Agreements did leverage private sector investment, the economic climate throughout the 1980s created additional challenges.

The emergence of CentreVenture Development Corporation in 1999 represented a different approach to addressing the problems of downtown decline, but one that attempted to leverage private sector participation in the downtown by utilizing a series of tools to stimulate investment rather than taking on development projects on its own. This strategy proved successful as a number of development projects were successfully executed.

The City of Winnipeg's renewal of CentreVenture's mandate in 2002 marked a critical point in the Development Corporation's emergence. A renewed mandate by the City gave the agency clear direction and also suggested that it had obtained the confidence of Council. At the same time, the City provided CentreVenture with an additional \$7 million with which to fund its development bank. This enabled CentreVenture to pursue more substantial projects in the downtown, such as Red River College's Princess campus. The adoption by Council of CentreVenture's *Heart of Gold Strategic Business Plan* in 2007 also marked an important milestone for the Development Corporation. Following CentreVenture's involvement with and subsequent success of the skateboard park project at The Forks site in 2005, the *Heart of Gold Plan* recommended

that the arm's length agency shift its focus and expand its scope and contribute increasingly to community projects, including the rehabilitation of Central Park.

However, the Heart of Gold Plan also acknowledged that available City-owned surplus land was quickly depleting. From an operational standpoint, a combination of no more surplus land with which to generate revenue and an increase in community investments were reducing the size of the agency's development bank.

In 2010/2011, CentreVenture underwent a subsequent shift in focus when it adopted a planning function. An absence of planning for downtown Winnipeg from the Planning, Property and Development Department required CentreVenture to take on this additional role. In addition, the depletion of the land bank and reduction in size of the development bank meant that the Development Corporation would have to find an alternative funding mechanism. Recently, the City of Winnipeg approved a \$25 million line of credit with which to fund the required improvements that are a part of the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District.

### 6.1.3 Research Question Three

Finally, this study sought to discover: *What potentially transferable best practices can be learned from CentreVenture Development Corporation that might be applicable in other comparable downtown revitalization contexts?* Based on the research, the following potentially transferable best practices are offered to other slow-growth medium sized cities, which are undertaking their own downtown revitalization efforts:

### Board Structure

CentreVenture's Board of Directors is self-appointing, which means there are no political appointments on its Board. According to Research Participant 8, this governance structure has been a critical piece in enabling CentreVenture to effectively fulfill its mandate. This key informant further suggested that the existing Board structure has allowed CentreVenture to attract the right people and has allowed the Board to remain free of political influence. As a consequence, CentreVenture has been able to focus on the best interest of the downtown; rather than what might be or what might not be, in one's political interest.

### Funding Model

Firstly, CentreVenture's development bank allows it to offer gap financing for riskier projects that were unable to obtain financing by conventional means. This enabled the Development Corporation to finance projects that may not have occurred otherwise. Secondly, the Development Corporation's acquisition of City of Winnipeg surplus properties under an Asset Agreement provided CentreVenture with tangible assets with which to sustain its operations. This was a critical element in the Development Corporation's emergence. This tool enabled CentreVenture to market and sell the properties, and to subsequently assist developers in completing development projects. Thirdly, CentreVenture Development Corporation is able to leverage further private sector investment in the downtown by administering heritage tax credits and the Downtown Residential Grant Program on behalf of the City and the Province. Each tool available to CentreVenture enables it to address different challenges in the downtown.

Before the land bank was exhausted, CentreVenture was able to sell vacant properties to developers at a reduced cost. Funds from the development bank enabled CentreVenture to assist with project financing. Heritage tax credits provided specific incentives for heritage building redevelopment and the DRGP provided developers with additional incentives for residential development. It was and continues to be important for CentreVenture to have a range of options available to facilitate development in downtown Winnipeg.

### Broad Mandate

CentreVenture's shareholder (the City of Winnipeg) has not imposed a restrictive mandate onto the Development Corporation. Rather, the City has largely allowed the agency to pursue development projects, which it has considered suitable, utilizing the tools at its disposal. CentreVenture has, since its inception, been able to address a variety of downtown issues, including residential development, heritage building conservation and rehabilitation, commercial development, community projects, and most recently, entertainment development with the Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District.

### Accountability

Although CentreVenture's mandate is broad, its choice of projects has to be approved through its business plans, which is approved by the Executive Policy Committee of Council. Similarly, CentreVenture must report annually to City Council on its performance in relation to the adopted business plan and must present a set of audited financial statements. Thus, although the Development Corporation does not operate with

the degree of transparency that would be required by government, the Development Corporation is accountable to taxpayers through City Council.

### Business Model

CentreVenture's model allows it to operate much like a private business operation would. The Development Corporation is not required to be as transparent as government, which allows development negotiations to be conducted independently and with discretion. City Council's recent approval of a \$25 million line of credit for CentreVenture suggests that the Development Corporation continues to hold the confidence of City Council, since use of these funds does not have to be approved by elected officials.

### Breaking Down Silos

The Downtown Council has brought together senior representatives from the City, the Province, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown and Exchange District Business Improvement Zones, The Forks North Portage Partnership and the Winnipeg Police Service, meets regularly to discuss ongoing issues in the downtown. It serves to improve communication and build relationships between the many organizations operating in the downtown.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The research has concluded that there exists a very good relationship between CentreVenture and the development community. However, there is tension between the

Planning, Property and Development Department and CentreVenture Development Corporation. Even though the CEO of CentreVenture attempted to mend this relationship with the creation of the Downtown Council and by inviting the Director of Planning, Property and Development to sit at the table, there is still concern that the function of the Planning Department itself is compartmentalized from the function of CentreVenture Development Corporation. There is merit in taking additional steps to rectify this relationship.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That responsibility for downtown planning be confirmed as resting with the Planning, Property and Development Department. However, in order to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities, the Director of the Planning, Property and Development Department and the CEO of CentreVenture Development Corporation should negotiate an operational commitment between the two institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the City of Winnipeg's representation on the Downtown Council should be expanded to include the Chief Planner as well as the Director of Planning, Property and Development, in order to address the tension that exists between the Planning, Property and Development Department and CentreVenture.

CentreVenture was not mandated to plan. Rather, the Development Corporation was mandated to work within an existing planning framework and “to function as a catalyst to revitalize downtown Winnipeg” (CentreVenture Development Corporation 1999, p. 14). However, CentreVenture has chosen to create its own plans for the

downtown. The Development Corporation has done so because the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department was not creating the plans that CentreVenture required within its required timeframe. According to key informants, the City of Winnipeg was doing everything it could to issue permits and to manage its own daily development applications that it was unable to produce the long-range plans required by CentreVenture.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That a municipal planner within PPD responsible for downtown be placed within the CentreVenture organization structure to work cooperatively and complementarily with CentreVenture staff to carry out the planning function for the downtown. With staff in both organizations working side by side (though not necessarily full-time) there is a greater likelihood that communication and understanding on both parts would be enhanced. Furthermore, there is a greater likelihood of achieving a proper balance between the interests of the development community and the public good.

### **6.3 Biases and Limitations that Arose During Fieldwork**

Downtown Winnipeg has undergone a development boom recently. According to the literature and to anecdotal evidence gleaned from key informants, this level of development has not been seen in this city for nearly 100 years. As a consequence, it should be acknowledged that research participants may have unconsciously allowed their interview responses to be swayed by an overall increase in optimism as it relates to



development, and associated revitalization, in downtown Winnipeg. If this in fact did occur, it would represent a bias that arose during the primary research.

A limitation of the research is that the researcher was not afforded an opportunity to conduct interviews with all persons who may be considered key players in CentreVenture's emergence and/or evolution. It would have been fruitful to conduct interviews with former heads of council and former chief executive officers of CentreVenture. In addition, an alternative perspective may have been gained by including a municipal representative, currently serving on City Council, in the primary research. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and scheduling, this was not possible.

The relationship between a downtown development agency and a municipal planning authority plays a prominent role within the study's recommendations. It has been argued that an absence of public plan-making for downtown Winnipeg has, over the years, imposed onto CentreVenture a requirement to create plans. The plans created by the agency have not been master plans – as a municipal planning authority would be expected to do. Rather, the plans created by CentreVenture have been investment plans. According to some of the study's research participants, this type of plan-making has been necessary in order to attract new private sector investment into the downtown and in order to protect any existing investments. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only one representative from the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department was interviewed as a part of this project. As a consequence, the City of Winnipeg's perspective may not have been adequately portrayed in the research.

## 6.4 Directions for Future Research

This research argues that plan making for downtown Winnipeg be conducted exclusively by the city's municipal planning authority, the Planning, Property and Development Department. As discussed in Section 5.2, CentreVenture was not mandated to plan, but has done so out of necessity. The Development Corporation began creating plans because the Planning, Property and Development Department was not doing so effectively. As such, a direction for further research is to investigate the history of the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department in an effort to determine whether the amalgamation of the Planning and the Property and Development Departments in the early 1990s has negatively impacted the City of Winnipeg's municipal planning function. Research Participant 5 made reference to and expressed concern over the amalgamation of the municipal departments in their key informant interview. Research participant 7 suggested that a reduction in transfer payments to the City led to a reduction in the civil service in an effort to achieve efficiencies. However, RP5 implies that the cost of doing so may have been significant:

When one thinks of it, how can you have someone making the decisions on the day-to-day needs of permitting involved with future planning and contingency (RP5)?

This key informant argued that this bureaucratic change ultimately led to the "death of the Winnipeg planning process." If this statement can be verified, it might present an opportunity for the City of Winnipeg to make drastic change within the public planning sector. This is relevant to CentreVenture in that an absence of action from the City's Planning, Property and Development Department has forced the arms-length Development Corporation to create the plans itself. If RP5 expressed deep concern about

the City's long-term planning authority working in unison with the daily permitting function, they might also express serious concern that an agency charged with facilitating development is the same agency preparing the plans. How then can it be ensured that planning documents are being written with the long-term sustainability of downtown Winnipeg in mind rather than being written merely to facilitate specific development projects?

## References

- Adams, D., & Tiesdell, S. (2013). *Shaping Places: Urban Planning, Design and Development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Aremu, S., Brundrige, R., Lowe, J., & Ziotas, I. (1986). *C.N.R. East Yards Redevelopment '84: A Showcase of Winnipeg's Past and Future*. Winnipeg, MB: Institute of Urban Studies.
- Artibise, A. (1977). *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History*. Toronto, ON: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers.
- Blanchard, J. (2005). *Winnipeg 1912*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.
- Canadian Urban Institute. (2012). *The Value of Investing in Canadian Downtowns*. Toronto, ON.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (1999). *Startup Business Plan*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2000). *First Year in Review: Report to Executive Policy Committee*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2002). *Report City of Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2006). *Strategic Business Plan: 2006-2009*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2007). *Heart of Gold Strategic Business Plan: 2007-2009*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2008a). *Annual Business Plan: 2008-2010*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2008b). *Annual Report: 2007*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2008c). *CentrePlan Development Framework*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2009). *Annual Report: 2008*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2010a). *Annual Report: 2009*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2010b). *Portage Avenue Development Strategy*. Winnipeg, MB.

- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2011a). *Annual Report: 2010*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2011b). *2011-2013 Business Plan*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2012). *Annual Report: 2011*. Winnipeg, MB.
- CentreVenture Development Corporation. (2013). *Annual Report: 2012*. Winnipeg, MB.
- City of Winnipeg Community Programs Division. (1992). *Report on Core Area Initiative: Neighbourhood Services and Neighbourhood Facilities Programs*. Winnipeg, MB.
- City of Winnipeg. (1994a). *CentrePlan Vision and Strategies*. Winnipeg, MB.
- City of Winnipeg. (1994b). *CentrePlan Action Plan 1995-1996*. Winnipeg, MB.
- City of Winnipeg. (1999a). *CentrePlan Development Framework*. Winnipeg, MB.
- City of Winnipeg. (1999b). *CentreVenture Working Draft*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Clatworthy, Leskiw and Associates. (1990). *An Evaluation of the Winnipeg Core Area Agreement Tripartite Model*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Conference Board of Canada. (2014). *Metropolitan Outlook 1: Economic Insights Into 13 Canadian Metropolitan Economies*. Ottawa, ON: Lefebvre, M., Arcand, A., Sutherland, G., Wiebe, R., & McIntyre, J. Retrieved from [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/c2617190-f52f-45c4-994a-202a154dab38/5953\\_mobook1\\_winter2014.pdf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/c2617190-f52f-45c4-994a-202a154dab38/5953_mobook1_winter2014.pdf)
- Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. (1967). *City of Winnipeg Cultural Centre Renewal Scheme*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. (1972). *Urban Renewal Progress and Evaluation: City of Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Distasio, J., & McCullough, S. (2013). *Downtown Winnipeg: Developments and Investments, 2005-2013*. Winnipeg, MB: Institute of Urban Studies.
- East Yard Task Force. (1986). *Report to Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Policy Committee*. Winnipeg: MB.
- Fielding, N., & Thomas, H. (2008). Qualitative interviewing. In Nigel Gilbert (Ed.), *Researching Social Life* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

- Fillion, P., Bunting, T., Pavlic, D. & Langlois, P. (2010). "Intensification and Sprawl: Residential Density Trajectories in Canada's Largest Metropolitan Regions." *Urban Geography*, 31(4), 541-569.
- Filion, P., & Gad, G. (2006). Urban and Suburban Downtowns: Trajectories of Growth and Decline. In T. Bunting & P. Filion (Eds.), *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local Through Global Perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 171-191). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Filion, P., & Hoernig, H. (2003). Downtown Past, Downtown Present, Downtown Yet to Come: Decline and Revival in Middle-Size Urban Areas. In J. Grant (Ed.), *A Reader in Canadian Planning: Linking Theory and Practice* (pp. 372-375). United States: Nelson.
- Forks Renewal Corporation. (1987). *Phase 1 Concept and Financial Plan: Report to Shareholders*. Winnipeg: MB.
- Ford, L. R. (2003). *America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention?* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Grant, J. (2006). Shaped by Planning: The Canadian City Through Time. In T. Bunting & P. Filion (Eds.), *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local Through Global Perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 320-337). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Gray, K. (c.2013). *An Unfolding Vision*.
- Gray, K. (c.2012). *Downtown on the Rise*.
- Gratz, R. B. (1998). *Cities Back From the Edge: New Life for Downtown*. Washington, DC: Preservation Press.
- Hodge, G. (2003). *Planning Canadian Communities: An Introduction to the Principles, Practice, and Participants* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Scarborough, ON: Nelson.
- Holle, P., & Owens, D. (2002). *Fixing Winnipeg's Downtown: Big-Picture Policy Changes to Revitalize the Inner-City*. Winnipeg, MB: Frontier Centre for Public Policy.
- Holstein, J.A., & Gubrium, J.F. (Eds.). (2003). *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Kiernan, M. (1985). Coordination for the City Core: The unique Winnipeg initiative can be a continuing model for inter-governmental action on the problems of inner cities. *Policy Options*, 6(7), 23-25.

- Layne, J. (2000). Marked for Success? The Winnipeg Core Area Initiative's Approach to Urban Regeneration. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, 23(2), 249-278.
- Leo, C. (1998). *Urban Development in a Slow-Growth City: The Case of Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives & Institute for Urban Studies.
- Levin, E. (1968, April). *Winnipeg: Downtown or Downhill?* Address to Downtown Business Association, Winnipeg, MB.
- Levin, E. (1984). *Beyond the Core Area Initiative: Prospects for Downtown Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MB: Institute of Urban Studies.
- Lyon, D., & Fenton, R. (1984). *The Development of Downtown Winnipeg: Historical Perspectives on Decline and Revitalization*. Winnipeg, MB: Institute of Urban Studies.
- Mason, J. (2000). *Qualitative researching*. Second edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. (1963). *Metropolitan Urban Renewal Study: Interim Report*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Nerbas, D. (2004). Wealth and Privilege: An Analysis of Winnipeg's Early Business Elite. *Manitoba History*, 47(Spring), 42-64.
- Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- North Portage Development Corporation. (1984). *Final Concept and Financial Plan for North Portage Redevelopment: Report to Shareholders*. Winnipeg, MB: Board of Directors.
- North Portage Development Corporation. (1991). *Annual Report: 1990*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Scatliff + Miller + Murray. (2001). *Winnipeg Exchange District Waterfront Drive Concept Report*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Scott, B., Kives, B., & Samson, J.K. (2013). *Stuck in the Middle: Dissenting Views of Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MB: Great Plains Publications.
- Skerritt, J. (2012, August 7). Central Park shines gloriously. *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/central-park-shines-gloriously-161705745.html>

- Stewart, D. (1993). *The Winnipeg Core Area Initiative: A Case Study in Urban Revitalization*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.
- Thiessen, G. (2001, January). *Canada's Economic Future: What Have We Learned from the 1990s?* Address to Canadian Club of Toronto, Toronto, ON.
- Tomalty, R. (2003). *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*. Ottawa, ON: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- Weber, R., & Goddeeris, L. (2007). *Tax Increment Financing: Process and Planning Issues*. (Working paper). Urban Land Institute, Chicago, IL.
- Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Policy Committee. (1981). *Proposed Winnipeg Core Area Initiative*. Winnipeg, MB: Axworthy, L., Mercier, G. & Norrie, B.
- Winnipeg Core Area Initiative. (1985). *Status Report of Program Activities to December 31, 1984*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Winnipeg Core Area Initiative. (1992). *1986-1991 Core Area Agreement: Final Status Report of Programs and Projects to December 31, 1991*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Winnipeg Development Agreement. (2002). *Final Report 2002: Part 2*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Ziesel, J. 2006. *Inquiry by design*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.



## **Appendix A: Interview Guide**

### **A. CentreVenture's Emergence:**

1. Can you please share your perspective on the environment and economic landscape of the late 1990s, at the time when CentreVenture emerged as a development corporation in Downtown Winnipeg?
2. Why do you think CentreVenture emerged when it did?
3. Can you please speak to the influences that led to CentreVenture's emergence? Who were the key players at this stage, and how did the concept benefit from unusual political support?
4. Can you please describe how the emergence of CentreVenture fitted into the (downtown) planning context of the late 1990s and early 2000s?

### **B. CentreVenture's Evolution:**

5. Broadly speaking, do you think there is a role for a dedicated downtown development agency in tackling downtown revitalization?
6. What do you perceive the role of dedicated downtown development organizations to be amidst the array of other organizations mandated with filling vacant office space downtown and encouraging development, such as economic development and downtown business organizations?
7. How would you describe such an agency's relationship to planning? Specifically, what planning must the agency do for itself and what type of planning must it do with others?
8. How well do you feel CentreVenture has adapted to Downtown Winnipeg's changing landscape over the past decade, and how do you feel its mandate has adapted accordingly?
9. Where do you think CentreVenture has particularly succeeded? What best practices has the dedicated downtown development corporation embodied? How and where do you think it has been particularly innovative?
10. Where do you think CentreVenture has been unsuccessful in relation to its mandate? Why do you think it has not met intended targets; what could have been done differently?

11. How well do you think Centre Venture has bridged the gap between the public and private sectors? Specifically, how well do you feel CentreVenture has bridged the gap between what the City's Planning, Property and Development Department was able to achieve and what the private sector was willing to do on its own?

**C. CentreVenture's Trajectory:**

12. In your expert opinion, do you believe that development and revitalization in Downtown Winnipeg would have occurred, to the scale it has, had it not been for the influence of a dedicated downtown development organization in Winnipeg? Why?

13. What do you perceive as CentreVenture's most likely trajectory over the next five to ten years? What is in its future? Are there any threats or opportunities?

14. If you have any additional comments I invite you to share them with me at this time.

## Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Architecture  
Department of City Planning  
201 Russell Building  
84 Curry Place  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2  
Tel: (204) 474-9558  
Fax: (204) 474-7533

### Consent Form

**Principle Researcher:** Elisabeth Saftiuk

**Date:** September 12, 2013

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

**Title of Project:** Facilitating the Integration of Planning and Development for Downtown Revitalization: CentreVenture Development Corporation's Involvement in the Redevelopment of Downtown Winnipeg

#### Description and Purpose of Research

This research project studies the relationship between planning and development in the context of Downtown Winnipeg. In particular, it aims to discover the extent to which Centre Venture Development Corporation has facilitated the integration of planning and development in the city's downtown and whether it has aided or accelerated tangible development.

#### Participant Activities

Study participants will be invited to share their expertise and opinions as it relates to Centre Venture's emergence, evolution and trajectory as a local anchor institution via semi-structured key informant interviews. The expectation of time required for study participants is approximately 60 minutes for an interview.

#### Audio Recording and Confidentiality

With participants' permission, interviews and focus groups may be audio recorded and transcribed at a later date for research purposes, so that analysis may be completed with greater ease and efficiency. All information, including audio recordings, will be treated as confidential and stored in a private and secure place. All unpublished materials (including transcripts) will subsequently be destroyed after a period of one year. The researcher will be responsible for destroying the data. Where information appears within a transcript, names and other personal information will be omitted from the final document unless such permission has been explicitly granted.

#### Dissemination of Results

Information collected from participants will be incorporated into the researcher's Master's practicum in partial fulfillment of her Master's of City Planning degree. Information may also be used to inform the writing of academic journal articles or conference presentations, particularly for the purpose of research regarding the integration of planning and development for downtown revitalization.

Once all interviews have been completed and transcribed, the researcher will provide a debriefing to study participants. This may be done in person, over the phone, by mail or electronically by email, enabling participants to read interview transcripts and/or summaries. This debriefing will occur within two months of the interview and will ensure that all information included in the study is in accordance with the information shared by participants during the course of the research.

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

**Contact Information**

Elisabeth Saftiuk, Graduate Student, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba, 201 Russell Building, Winnipeg MB R3T 2N2.



Dr. Ian White, Thesis Supervisor, Associate Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba, 201 Russell Building, Winnipeg MB R3T 2N2.



The Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) of the University of Manitoba has approved this research project. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the above-named person or the Human Ethics Secretariat by phone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted]. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Thank you for participating in this research project. Your cooperation and insights are tremendously valuable and are truly appreciated.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to the inclusion of my name in publications (Name of Participant: please print) resulting from the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **DO NOT** consent to the inclusion of my name in (Name of Participant: please print) publications resulting from the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to the dissemination of (Name of Participant: please print) material provided to the researcher for use within the final report and subsequent reports and articles.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **DO NOT** consent to the dissemination of (Name of Participant: please print) material provided to the researcher for use within the final report and subsequent reports and articles.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to allowing my research participation (e.g.

(Name of Participant: please print)

interview) to be audiotaped for use within the final report and subsequent reports and articles.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **DO NOT** consent to allowing my research

(Name of Participant: please print)

participation (e.g. interview) to be audiotaped for use within the final report and subsequent reports and articles.

Please indicate whether you would like access to a summary of the research findings following data analysis.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the information I provide will be incorporated in a presentation and report by the principle\_researcher. I understand also that all information will be treated as confidential, stored in a private and secure place, and subsequently destroyed at the end of the project by the Principle Researcher.

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

Name of Principle Researcher

Date

---

Signature of Principle Researcher

Date