

The Value of Investing in Canadian DOWNTOWNS

May 2012



HALIFAX

FREDERICTON

OTTAWA

TORONTO

LONDON

WINNIPEG

SASKATOON

EDMONTON

VANCOUVER

VICTORIA



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du Canada

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Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
City of Vancouver
City of Edmonton
The Partnership – Saskatoon

City of Saskatoon
Downtown Winnipeg BIZ
City of Winnipeg
City of London
Downtown London
Downtown Yonge BIA

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INTRODUCTION

The **Canadian Urban Institute (CUI)** has been engaged by the **International Downtowns Association – Canadian Issues Task Force** to carry out one of the most significant reviews of Canadian downtowns to date.

This project is the first of its kind - examining 10 Canadian downtowns (Halifax, Fredericton, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria) to assess changes in attitudes, perceptions, functionality and performance over time. This project also aims to inspire and inform city builders, with many excellent and innovative approaches to downtown revitalization that are being applied across the nation.

PROJECT AIMS

Measure the Performance of Canadian Downtowns

This project aimed to measure the economic, social, and cultural health of our 10 downtown study areas. To achieve this aim, CUI (with the support of our project partners) developed five principles that contribute to a successful downtown, and then assembled extensive time series data sets to measure how well each downtown is performing relative to each of these principles. Analysis of these data sets provide city builders with information (in many instances for the first time) on the levels of growth and investment being experienced in their downtown.

Benchmark the Performance of Canadian Downtowns

The second aim of this project was to be able to compare the performance of all downtown case study areas. To this end, the downtowns have been assessed against the same principles and data has been consistently collected (i.e. where possible data is drawn from the same sources and time periods) for each of the 10 downtown case studies to maximize opportunities for comparability. Data has also been consistently organized into sets of indicators for each downtown; these indicators are often measured on a per capita, percentage or intensity per hectare basis to allow for comparability between downtowns of varying sizes and functions. This provides important information to city builders to gauge how their downtown is developing relative to other downtowns across Canada.

Assess Municipal Capital Investments in Canadian Downtowns

This project aimed to determine the level and type of investments in the various downtowns. To support this aim, our project partners took on the immense task of assembling municipal capital project data from the past decade. These data sets provide downtown stakeholders with information on the level of priority being given to their own downtowns, as well as the level of downtown investment across Canada.

Share Success Stories from Canadian Downtowns

The project also aimed to identify opportunities for Canadian downtowns to overcome the challenges they face and prosper into the future. From the cities featured in this report, it is clear that Canadian downtowns are facing similar challenges and that each downtown is doing *at least* one thing really well and in a way that others could learn from. This project showcase the most successful and innovative programs and policies being implemented by municipalities and/or business improvement districts in downtowns across Canada.

Create a Baseline for Future Data Collection

Few municipalities in Canada collect data specifically relating to their downtowns. This project aimed to highlight the importance of collecting data on the health of Canada's downtowns and strengthen this practice. This study approach has been designed to be dynamic and flexible to fulfill the goal of creating a baseline for the health of Canadian downtowns that can be expanded and developed long into the future.

Additionally this project aims to be a living and breathing document that is constantly evolving. Stage two of this project is currently underway, as Regina and St Catharines have signed up to be a part of the study. A second volume of this report is anticipated to be released later on in 2012. As this report is updated, it will incorporate 2011 Census data, which will be fully released by the end of 2012.

PROJECT DESIGN

Every downtown featured in this report is unique. A number of downtowns play multiple roles, which has a bearing on their economic performance and relative importance within the wider city. In this regard, several downtowns carry the responsibility of being a Provincial Capital. Others function as gateways, either to a continent, a region, or the immediate economic hinterland. Some cities – and therefore their downtown – have had to reposition themselves in light of dramatic shifts in the economic focus of their province or the country; others have needed to demonstrate resilience and staying power, either to replace the economic driver responsible for this creation or to find ways to sustain and continue to lead. The project has been designed to account for these differences and the following section assesses and summarizes the complex dynamic of city building – and downtown resilience – with the use of ten downtown case studies analyzed through five common criteria.

Principles for a Great Downtown

One of the most critical elements of the project design was the development of five principles that underpin a successful downtown in Canada. The principles developed were sufficiently broad to account for the uniqueness of every downtown case study, but specific enough to create a platform for comparison. The CUI developed indicators and a range of metrics to measure performance of the downtowns against each of these principles.

CUI developed these principles using a three-pronged approach. Firstly the project team surveyed CUI staff and Board members to determine 'What Makes a Downtown Great?' (responses are summarized on the right). Secondly the team undertook a detailed literature review to consider how others had developed principles relating to urban growth. The project team was particularly influenced by Michael A. Burayidi's (2001) text, *Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities*. From this text, passages from Kent Roberston of Saint Cloud State University were used to help further articulate and define the principles. The third prong of the approach involved testing the principles throughout the research to ensure that they were being reinforced by our research findings.

The project team surveyed CUI staff and board members on – WHAT MAKES A DOWNTOWN GREAT? – and received the following responses:

Architecture and Design: landmark projects, heritage protection, development at the human scale

Connectivity: appropriate forms of public transit, walking, cycling, marine, design for all ages

Culture: vibe, values, virtuosity

Innovation: education and research, partnerships and networks, universities and colleges, educated and skilled labour force

Employment: a variety of and medium sized enterprises, creative industries, diverse economic base

Public Realm: quality streets and streetscape, plazas and squares, parks and other gathering places, destinations, private space that enhances the public realm (e.g. sidewalk cafes)

Sustainability: sustainable development, good air and water quality, community energy projects

Diversity: open fluid society that facilitates participation and opportunities for new immigrants

Venture Capital: availability of venture capital and management of market research

From this background research, CUI developed the following five principles for a successful downtown below:

VISIBILITY Does the downtown have an integral and central role in the life of the wider city?

A downtown can have a complex relationship within a large, sprawling city. In the context of ongoing city growth and expansion, a downtown can suffer declining interest from the public and private sector. To measure how well a downtown is performing against this principle, the CUI team undertook interviews to learn about the history and make-up of each downtown -- its role, function and vitality and the contribution the downtown makes to the wider city.

VISIONARY Does the downtown benefit from a multiplicity of strong, bold leaders who collaborate to achieve and sustain a shared vision?

Strong leaders, a bold vision and a high degree of collaboration are critical ingredients for a downtown to achieve its potential. To measure the strength of the vision in each downtown, the team analyzed the perceived effectiveness of downtown plans and policies, the level of priority being given to the downtown, as well as attitudes towards collaboration between the public and private sector.

PROSPERITY Does the downtown have a robust and innovative economy?

A cornerstone of a strong downtown is a prosperous and diverse economy. To measure the strength of a downtown's economy, the team tracked property and financial data, both downtown and city-wide and analyzed how this has changed over time.

LIVEABILITY Is the downtown vibrant, liveable and connected?

A liveable core contributes to a downtown's vibrancy and attractiveness and can cement its place as the literal and symbolic heart of the city as a whole. To measure liveability, the project team considered how people use, move around and enjoy the downtown core.

STRATEGY Is the city investing strategically in its future?

Strategic investments are important, as they leverage further investments. To measure the degree to which investments have been made strategically, the CUI examined the type, value and location of public investment, as well as how various investments fit together to complement and support each other.

Defining downtown boundaries

The responsibility for defining downtown boundaries lay with the project partners, given their intimate knowledge of their city and their role in collecting the data to support each case study. Yet defining boundaries is a major challenge, as one can be sure that each person living in a city will likely have a different understanding of what constitutes their "downtown" based on their personal frame of reference – are they a resident, a worker, how do they utilize the downtown and how often? Having said this, the project partners had to balance these various expectations and other key considerations in selecting this boundary. CUI provided support to each project partner to create a boundary that made sense for each city. The preferred approach was adopting the working definition of "downtown" used by the relevant municipality in plans and policies. Yet where the municipality had not created a definition of the "downtown" or where this definition would create challenges for the data collection, CUI developed general criteria and considerations to help guide the creation of these boundaries.

There were four key criteria/considerations for defining the downtown. Firstly, the downtown boundary had to include the City's financial core. Secondly, the downtown study area should include diverse urban elements such as the City's main "high street," a concentration of commercial and mixed use buildings, major civic buildings such as the City's Town Hall, major public spaces, such as a city square or plaza, religious or ceremonial spaces and residential land uses. Third, where possible, CUI recommended a hard edged boundary such as major streets or train tracks, or a natural feature such as a body of water. Lastly, an overarching consideration was that data compiled was to align

with the selected downtown study areas. Therefore project partners had to consider Census Tracts and other important data collection boundaries that would make the study area workable and logical for the purposes of the project.

The project has also been designed to balance challenges that come with each city determining their own boundaries. For example, some cities have decided on more generous boundaries than others. This could mean that when collecting raw data, the population of residents or jobs etc may appear to be larger than if a smaller area was selected. To balance this, CUI measures trends over time (% growth) and intensity factors (for example population and jobs per hectare) and places these numbers alongside raw numbers to allow for a clearer picture of downtown activity. Additionally, in the downtowns where a more conservative boundary has been selected, the project team has provided significant commentary about key assets, pieces of infrastructure and residential communities just beyond downtown boundaries, as well as the inner core suburbs that support each of the downtown case studies.

Overall, endless debate could be had around the exact boundaries of a downtown, what constitutes a downtown and what elements should be 'in and out.' Yet it is the hope of this study that anyone picking up this report and flicking to their home city will generally think "*yes, give or take a little, this downtown boundary makes sense to me for my own home city.*"

Data collection and limitations

This project is the first attempt to compile a comprehensive set of downtown specific data across Canada. This project brings together StatsCan Census data from 1996, 2001 and 2006 (2011 StatsCan Census data will be integrated into this study in due course); downtown economy data (from 2000-2010); municipal finance data (from 2000-2010); capital projects data (from 2000-2010) and GIS data. It is noted that unless a source has been provided for the data, the team has sourced data from the respective municipality or business improvement district.

In collecting data to support this project, the team were challenged to access usable and understandable data from consistent sources. These challenges generally stemmed from: municipalities not having data organized in a way that would easily support CUI's data request, or municipalities being constrained by time and resources to support CUI's substantive data request. As a result, the project team could not collect complete sets of data for every downtown case study and there are several data gaps. The project team has noted these gaps throughout the report, and left some downtown case studies out of data comparisons. In some instances, CUI was also compelled to develop its own methodology to fill data gaps. Where this has occurred, CUI has provided a detailed explanation of the approach taken.

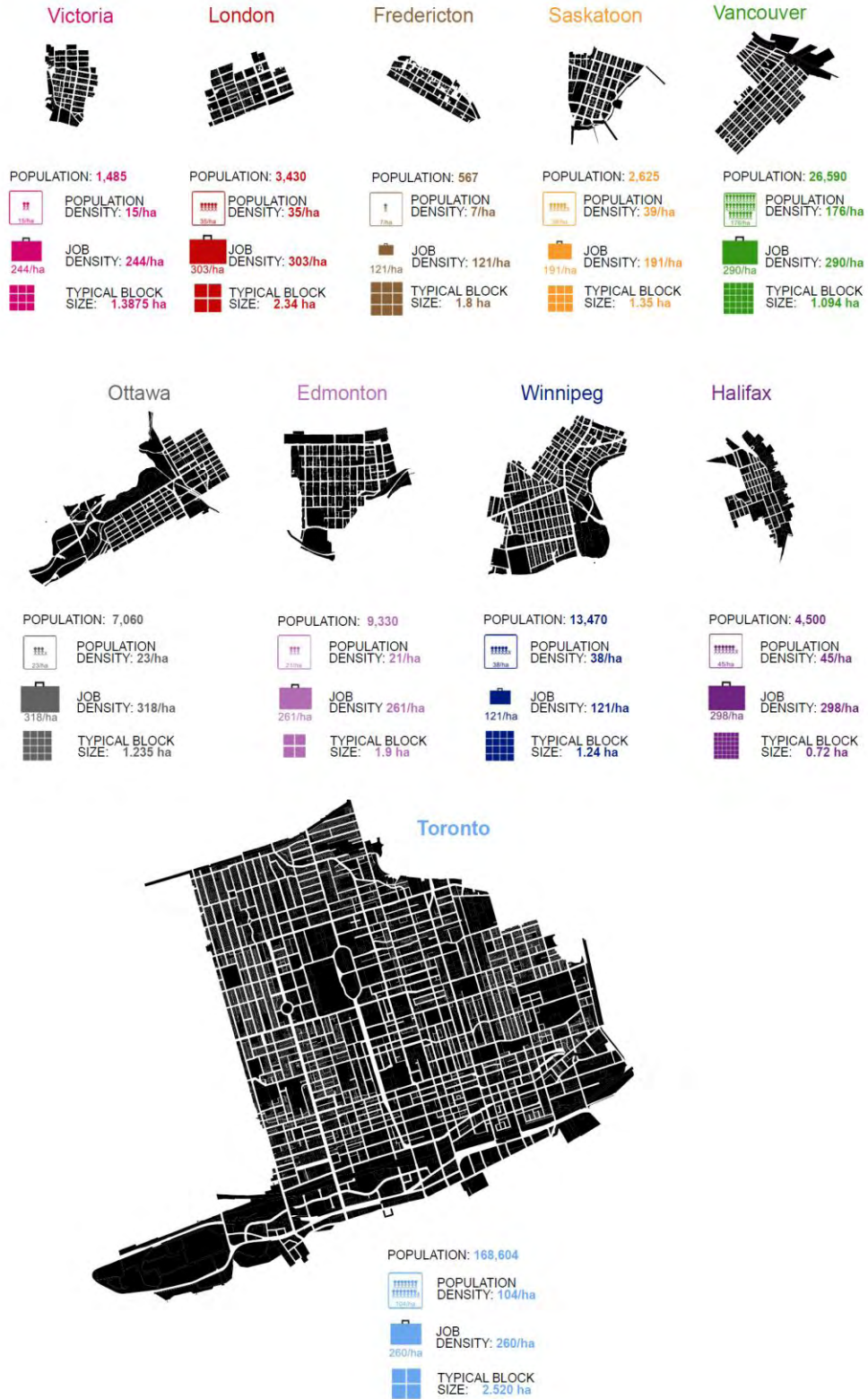
Overall, it is critical to understand that this is a dynamic document and it is the hope of the study team that the importance of collecting data on downtowns will become a growing priority for cities across Canada. In time, it is hoped that data will continue to be collected for downtowns and eventually data will be fully available so every partner city can have a complete data set of data to fully inform decision makers and city builders on the most beneficial ways to approach downtown revitalization.

A detailed explanation of: the project design and methodology; criteria for defining the downtown boundaries; approaches to data collection and types of data collected; data limitations; and detailed information on project principles and indicators is provided in APPENDIX 1.

DOWNTOWNS AT A GLANCE

The following image provides an overview of the 10 downtown case study areas:

All downtown grids are at the same scale



KEY FINDINGS

The project team developed the following key findings with respect to the overall performance of the 10 downtown case studies, relative to the five principles for a successful downtown:

VISIBILITY Does the downtown have an integral and central role in the life of the wider city?

Downtowns across Canada are undergoing a renaissance

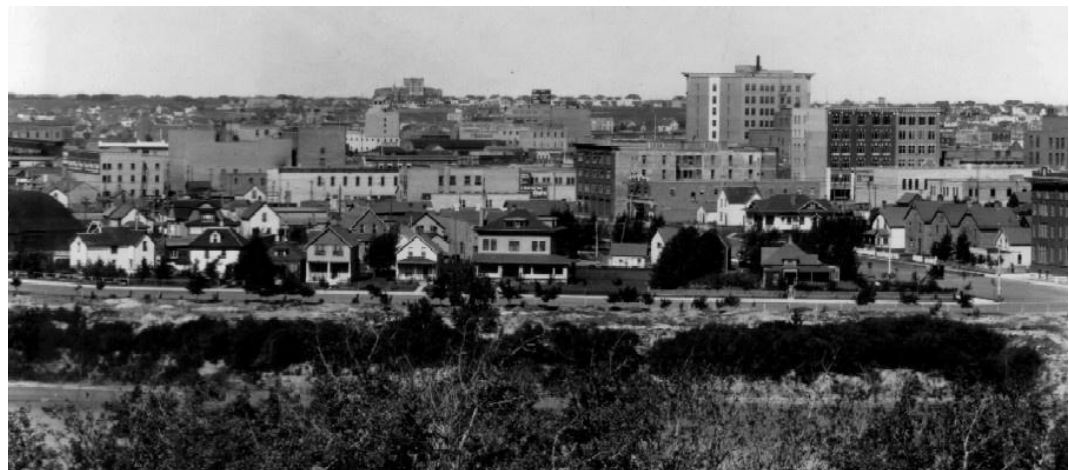
Even though each downtown is uniquely shaped by its history, size and geographical context, downtowns across Canada share more similarities than differences. The downtowns featured in this report have each faced many common experiences and distinct stages in their evolution and they are all currently experiencing a renaissance.

The Powerful Downtown - Until the 1950s

Historically the dominant role of Canada's downtown was secure, and the downtowns all had the advantage of being the most central and accessible neighbourhoods in their respective cities. Downtowns possessed key assets such as major transportation routes and were home to the principal concentration of offices, retail, entertainment, and public services. Moreover these downtowns were developed with well defined street grids, strong heritage features and were closely connected with adjacent suburbs. As is clear from the case studies, all the downtowns benefit from this legacy and remain at the centre of their city's transportation network, contain historic civic and institutional buildings, are still connected to a strong inner ring of suburbs, are highly walkable, and have a strong heritage fabric.



Toronto in the 1910s



Downtown Saskatoon, 1913

The Declining Downtown – 1950 - 1980s

In the post war era, each of the downtowns featured in CUI's case studies underwent a period of economic decline and reduced interest; some faced a more serious state of decline than others. This decline was generally brought about by increased congestion in the core, higher land values out of sync with economic returns and deteriorating surrounding neighbourhoods, accompanied by a perception that downtowns were fast becoming less desirable to businesses and residents. The mix of uses was also being seen in a more negative light against emerging zoning regimes that sought to segregate land uses across cities. Moreover, declining support for downtowns was coupled with major technological advancements that were dramatically altering the production and movement of goods and the way people moved around the city. The advent of climate controlled buildings ushered in a reduced interest in street related activity. These factors combined in a powerful way, to hollow out the downtown of businesses and residents and facilitated what is often known as a 'flight to the suburbs.' In response to this challenge, downtowns were often the focus of large scale revitalization efforts, such as major highway projects, housing developments and enclosed shopping malls. These projects had varying levels of success, but each project had an enduring impact on the form and structure of the "downtown" for decades to come.

The Downtown Renaissance – 1980s - 90s - 2000s

In the 1980s many municipalities started to re-evaluate what was happening in their downtowns. 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.

Revitalization efforts began once again, but a different approach was adopted than those of the earlier decades. These revitalization approaches focused on enhancing the unique, physical and heritage features comprising the downtown cores. Efforts were focused on areas where the downtown enjoyed a competitive advantage and was able to differentiate the downtown experience from the suburbs. These efforts coincided with renewed attempts to achieve a mix of land uses (rather than the more segregated approach of the previous decades) and had a strong focus on bringing residential development back to the downtown.

During this period, business improvement districts were also starting to grow in strength and contribute to revitalization efforts. The first ever Business Improvement Area (BIA) was established in the 1970s in Toronto's Bloor West Village¹ and this movement has since spread throughout the world. Currently there are close to 400 BIAs throughout Canada and many of these groups have been working hard to improve quality of life in their downtowns.

Overall, as illustrated in these case studies, downtowns are well on their way to coming full circle. Each of the downtowns featured are surging forward, focused on rebuilding their strength and momentum to emerge as the centre and heart of their respective communities.



A transforming street corner in downtown Victoria exemplifies these distinct stages of Canada's downtown evolution. Historic building was replaced with a gas station in the 1970's. A condominium building is starting construction in 2007.

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/westcoasthistory/501140525/>

¹ TABIA. (2011). *Resource Guide for BIAs and Small Businesses, 2011 – 2012*. Retrieved from: http://www.toronto-bia.com/images/stories/tabia/ResourceGuide/resourceguide_2011_web.pdf. Accessed 2011 September 12.

Downtowns are iconic and powerful symbols for a city

The downtowns featured in this report often contain the most iconic landmarks, distinctive features, and unique neighbourhoods in their respective cities. Moreover, given that the downtowns were one of the oldest neighbourhoods citywide, they offered rare insights into their city's past, present and future. For example, downtown Halifax is one of Canada's oldest maritime cities where people can experience the past simply by walking the same distinct street grid pattern from the 1700s, looking down to the same harbour, and up to the same Citadel as residents did centuries ago. The downtown case studies also provided a strong representation of the city in the present. For example, Toronto has emerged as a powerful financial centre, its downtown skyline reflects this prosperity and dominance more than any other neighbourhood. Lastly, the downtown provides an opportunity for each city to differentiate themselves. For example, the City of Vancouver is striving to emerge as one of the world's greenest cities and many of the major projects that set an example are located downtown.

Downtown views are iconic and known around the world



Downtowns may be physically small in area, but are typically highly visible

The downtowns in this project occupy only a small land area (some do not even take up one percent of their City's total land area). Yet, these downtown nodes are all major economic, social and cultural hubs and are highly visible and valued by the population at large. Despite this high level of visibility, a challenge frequently referenced by interviewees is that as cities grow in size and area, the downtown can receive declining priority as efforts and resources are directed to building new communities on the peripheries.

CANADIAN DOWNTOWNS

City-Wide Context Maps

Fredericton



0.6% (82 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (567) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 56% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 11% (2007) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN

Victoria



5% (98.3 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 2% (1485) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 58% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE

Saskatoon



0.2% (99 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (3,430) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 53% % OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 5% (2010) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN
 10% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

Vancouver



1% (151ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 4.6% (26,590) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 73% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 13% (2010) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN
 19% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

London



0.2% (99 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (3,430) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 81% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 9% (2010) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN
 9% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

Edmonton



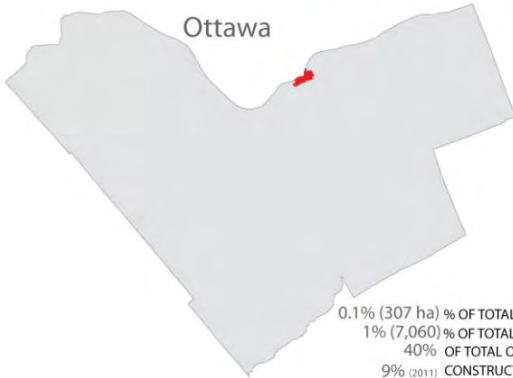
1% (242 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (9,330) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 65% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 7% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

Winnipeg



1% (350 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 2% (13,470) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 77% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE

Ottawa



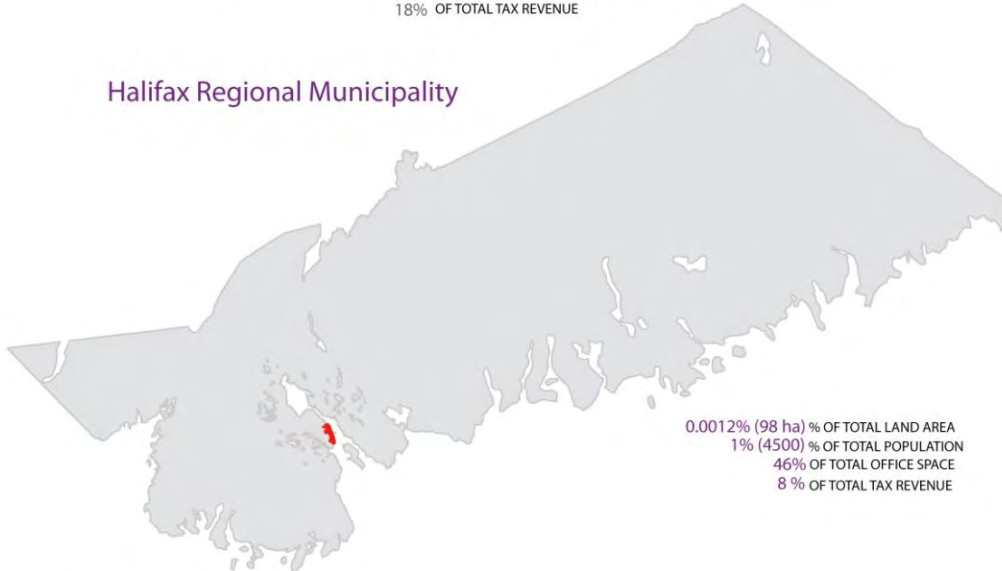
0.1% (307 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (7,060) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 40% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 9% (2011) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN
 18% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

Toronto



3% (1,618 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 7% (168,604) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 53% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 17% (2010) CONSTRUCTION VALUE DOWNTOWN
 25% OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

Halifax Regional Municipality



0.0012% (98 ha) % OF TOTAL LAND AREA
 1% (4500) % OF TOTAL POPULATION
 46% OF TOTAL OFFICE SPACE
 8 % OF TOTAL TAX REVENUE

The Value of Investing in Canadian Downtowns

VISIONARY Does the downtown benefit from a multiplicity of strong, bold leaders who collaborate to achieve and sustain a shared vision?

A clear and unifying but flexible vision goes a long way

Downtowns with a clear, flexible and unifying vision tended to have the most momentum behind revitalization efforts. A clear vision is important to guide both decision makers and the many individuals responsible for implementation. For example, several interviewees in Vancouver noted that they envisaged the core as ‘a downtown for people.’ This is not only a simple and inspiring idea but it simultaneously provides a framework for determining priorities. A flexible vision is also important to support the interests of diverse stakeholder groups at work in the core, as well as allowing for it to be adapted to reflect changing circumstances and attitudes in the downtown. Lastly, a unifying vision is important for attracting enthusiasm, excitement, momentum and above all, connecting independent stakeholder revitalization efforts to resources and to each other.

Realizing a vision for the downtown takes patience

A vision by itself is not enough - the downtowns that have achieved the most success and transformation have been patiently committed to revitalization efforts for decades. They have pursued their vision over many political cycles. Moreover they have adapted their vision to reflect changes in trends, attitudes, land uses and activities taking place in the core and across the city. Interviewees from almost every downtown case study discussed the need for patience when achieving a vision, commenting that they had watched their downtown decline over several decades (around the 1950s-80s) and that this could not be turned around overnight. They also acknowledged that downtown revitalization must be understood as a continuous process, a race that never ends, due to the cyclical process of renewing urban economies.

Specific Downtown Master Plans are helping to shape and articulate visions for the core

In the development of a workable vision, many downtown case studies have been increasingly the subject of downtown specific master plans. Halifax, Victoria and Edmonton have recently undergone comprehensive planning processes to develop a vision for the future. Moreover London, Saskatoon, Ottawa and Fredericton are also in the process of developing and/or releasing a new downtown specific master plan. Toronto does not have a master plan for its downtown per se, but it does have broad principles to guide the evolution of the core and the City is implementing various secondary and neighbourhood level plans across downtown.

As well as creating a vision, these master planning processes can be valuable for bringing together stakeholders and building trust and consensus, which can in turn unlock development potential in the downtown. For example, Halifax, London, and



Meeting with the community on the transformative Katz Development in downtown Edmonton



Toronto's Waterfront vision is powering ahead



Downtowns Saskatoon's new vision for River Landing



Vision for downtown London at the Forks at the Thames

Victoria have very sensitive downtown cores due to the presence of a significant number of heritage buildings. These downtowns have each undertaken planning processes to work through issues associated with how to create positive and respectful development forms, which will enhance heritage qualities. As a result, these downtowns are seeing increased levels of new development, but this is happening in a way that can be understood and supported by the community.

Overall from the dozens of interviews undertaken with both public and private sector stakeholders, there was consensus that these downtown-specific planning processes can be highly beneficial and are able to unify stakeholders across the downtown. Yet it was also emphasized by interviewees that it is critical for these downtown plans to be underpinned by an investment strategy or an implementation strategy to make sure that the great ideas contained in the plan can become a reality.

Implementation of a downtown master plan must carefully consider local circumstances

It was also apparent that there is not 'one way' to realize a vision and municipalities have adopted all manner of approaches (and in many instances a combination of approaches) to build a stronger, more vibrant downtown. For example, some of the downtowns have benefited from a bold city council that has led by example and demonstrated faith in the future of the downtown through a committed investment program. London, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and Fredericton have each developed their own approaches to investing in downtown projects that deliver high profile public facilities, a high quality public realm and leveraged private investment and improvements.

Other cities have worked on achieving their vision through a stronger focus on good design. For example, Vancouver has a strong, overarching vision and philosophy for its downtown core, but this is coupled with detailed design guidelines to achieve an aesthetic vision – a “look and feel” of the downtown and its neighbourhoods. The approach is the result of a beneficial partnership between City planning staff, ratepayer groups, and the city’s development community – forged during a period of rapid growth – with support from City Council. Design outcomes also play an important role to achieving the visions developed for downtown Victoria and Halifax. This type of approach seems particularly successful when there is a strong development demand in the core.

Overall what makes these varying approaches successful is that they have each been developed in response to local conditions. Whether it is creating an investment program that is tailored to meet the needs of the city, or working on achieving inspiring new designs in the core, these programs have each been designed to generate increased interest and investment in the downtown core from the community and the private sector.

Implementation efforts benefit from strong partnerships

Building strong and strategic relationships has been a critical element for the downtown case studies to realize their respective visions. Moreover several interesting partnership models have been established that have given rise to increased investment activity and vitality. In downtown Halifax, the Strategic Urban Partnership provides a forum for stakeholders to meet and discuss new developments and partnerships opportunities. This forum has been highly successful at connecting key stakeholders from different sectors and organizational backgrounds. In Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, City, and private sector interests have worked to build an influential partnership. Similarly Edmonton created the Downtown Vibrancy Taskforce comprised of 'blue ribbon' businesses, community, and social agencies that work together to prioritize and implement catalytic projects identified in the downtown master plan. Winnipeg has also established an arms-length agency Centre Venture, which has had tremendous success at forming the partnerships and conditions needed to realize major investments and redevelopment projects. The partnership developed through the efforts of Downtown Yonge BIA, the City of Toronto, and Ryerson University also illustrates how a multi-sector collaboration can have beneficial results. Dundas Square has emerged as the nexus of considerable public and private sector investment. Partnerships are also important for realizing the full potential of individual redevelopments and the Woodward's Building just outside the defined boundary in downtown Vancouver demonstrates a successful partnership between Simon Fraser University, the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, the City of Vancouver and the wider community. Overall the importance of partnerships cannot be under estimated when working to implement a specific downtown master plan and its accompanying vision.

Tracking and monitoring downtown achievements is invaluable to plan implementation, but rarely carried out

With a couple of exceptions, the performance of downtowns has not been closely tracked. London stands out as a positive exception as the City has been tracking the performance of its downtown for close to a decade through the semi-annual 'State of the Downtown Report.' This monitoring has empowered city builders to make informed decisions and see the value of the various investments they have made. The Saskatoon report 'Public Spaces, Activity and Urban Form' is a major inventory on the quality and utilization of the City's public realm. Although this is a new study, it will likely become a critical building block for downtown revitalization in Saskatoon. The value of quality information and data cannot be overstated. Measuring downtown performance can help city builders to understand the value of their downtown programs and investments, build ongoing support and momentum for these programs, as well as demonstrate the health of the downtown and the role it is playing relative to the wider city.

"Residential growth has really brought back vitality to the downtown and helped to fill the holes left when retailers moved to the suburbs."
CUI Interview with Downtown Stakeholder



Saskatoon has now developed a detailed inventory of its public realm, it can be accessed here:
<http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/UrbanDesign/CityCentrePlan/Pages/Phase1.aspx>

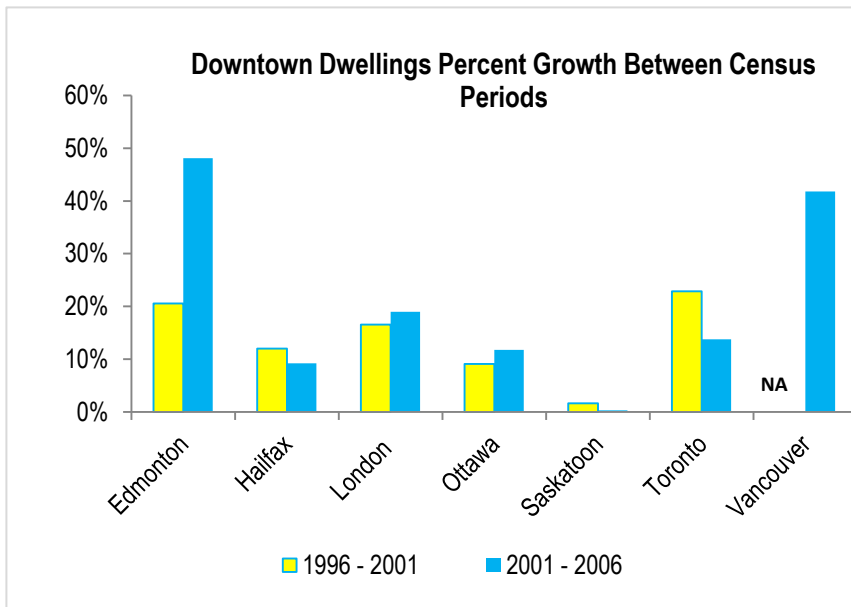


A summary of London's 2011 State of the Downtown Report can be accessed here:
http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/2011_State_of_theDowntownPowerpoint_Final.pdf

PROSPERITY Does the downtown have a robust and innovative economy?

Residential development is bringing vitality back to downtowns

All of the downtown case studies were experiencing positive levels of residential growth. In absolute terms, downtown Toronto and Vancouver were leading the charge with dramatic condominium booms in recent years. In percentage terms, Edmonton had the highest levels of residential growth. London, Ottawa, and Halifax were also attracting unprecedented levels of growth. Data was unavailable for Winnipeg, but the City has created a major new residential community on a brownfield site along its riverfront. Saskatoon is also likely to be on the brink of significant residential growth, with development opportunities emerging in the city’s new downtown neighbourhoods.



Achieving a vibrant retailing sector is a major challenge for downtowns

The retailing sector in every downtown was severely impacted by the creation of suburban malls in the post war era and then once more by the emergence of the ‘big box’ stores in more recent decades. While many downtowns have started to recover and no longer face the reported ‘extreme vacancy challenges’ of the 1970s and 1980s, the impression that emerged from dozens of interviews is that downtown retailing is still challenged by competition from suburban retailing.

Notwithstanding this negative assessment, promising trends for downtown retail are emerging. In the same way that retailers followed residents out to suburban areas in the post war era, so too are retailers following people back into the core.



Downtown Edmonton experienced the greatest residential growth, proportionately, from 2001-2006.

“Retail is always a market follower, it is never a market leader and it will always go where the people go.”
Kennedy Lawson Smith
http://youtube/wSKe1_fu9lc



Many cities are working hard to attract a supermarket downtown. London’s year-round covered farmer’s market, Covent Garden Market, offers an alternate model for bringing fresh food to smaller downtowns.

For example, Toronto's core has experienced major population growth and has simultaneously seen renewed interest from national retailers such as Canadian Tire and Best Buy stores. Downtown Toronto has also seen more than a handful of large format supermarkets open in the core in recent years. Notably these large format retailers are adopting new compact urban formats. Similar trends have been reported in Vancouver. Winnipeg has also recently attracted a new Mountain Equipment Co-Op. Overall these trends are very positive for downtown retailing and will likely continue as downtown populations continue to grow.



Downtown Victoria has experienced significant population growth in recent years



Downtowns are retaining office space

Downtowns have generally been able to maintain their concentration of office space and remain at the heart of commerce and jobs in their respective cities. Most have managed to retain over half of their city's office space inventory. Yet with the exception of London, which introduced policies to direct office space downtown, the portion of office space located in each of the downtown case studies has declined over the past decade. Therefore, if the downtowns are to maintain their dominance long into the future, it will be important that they can reverse this trend and increasingly attract office growth.²

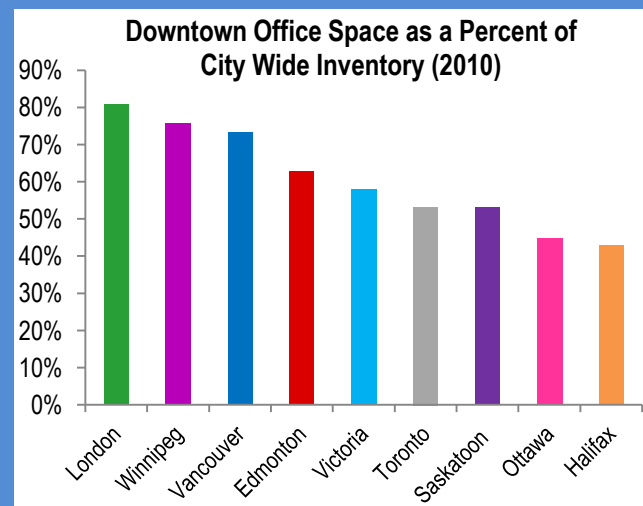
Attracting major new office buildings is a challenge for all downtowns. Downtown Edmonton faced close to two decades without a large office development before it managed to attract the new EPCOR building that is reportedly helping to stimulate additional commercial interest. Downtown Saskatoon also faced a prolonged period of minimal activity, until 2009 when the new Discovery Plaza was built. Other downtowns have also seen recent surges in commercial development, for example downtown Winnipeg accommodated the Manitoba Hydro building in 2009. Downtown Fredericton saw the development of the new Chancery Place in 2011; and, The Atrium was developed in downtown Victoria in 2010.

² The case of Toronto is somewhat more complex and has been summarized in more detail in subsequent pages of the report.

Calculated from Google Earth



Even 'big box' stores will follow downtown population growth. This large format store is located at the corner of Denman St. and Robson St. Vancouver



2010 Data Provided by Municipalities, with support from CB Richard Ellis

These are very promising signs, yet simply because a new office tower has not been built, levels of leasing activity may belie the assumption that nothing is happening. Similarly, renovations and upgrades can still be critical to ensuring the downtown is still providing high quality office space. For example, downtown Toronto has benefited from high levels of reinvestment in its office space as a result of changing official plan policies in the mid-1990s that led to massive amounts of office space in former industrial businesses located in 'brick and beam' buildings. Downtown Ottawa could face significant challenges because in some instances this reinvestment has not occurred. More specifically the federal government is looking to upgrade and consolidate many of its office functions in coming years, which could potentially move many jobs outside the core and create vacancies in lower grade office space in the downtown.

Downtown Vancouver also has an interesting story with office space, as the downtown saw a major increase in residential units that were undermining opportunities for commercial development. In response the City introduced policies to preserve lands for employment uses and commercial development into the future. Downtown Vancouver is now seeing several major office buildings under development. Many other downtowns may be able to take lessons from this, as while there is a strong move towards residential growth it will be important that the downtowns protect space for place-based employment into the future.

Overall it will be critical for downtowns to help promote the market conditions to attract office space to core. This is critical not only for downtown vitality but to maximize transportation investments and infrastructure that is focussed on the downtown. The importance of office buildings to house place-based employment is increasingly recognized as an issue that needs to be acknowledged in public policy.

Downtowns have a concentration of jobs

The downtowns featured in this report all have a strong and dense concentration of jobs. Unsurprisingly Toronto (by far the largest of the downtowns studied) has the highest number of jobs. Downtown Ottawa follows with the second largest number of jobs, but also boasts the highest intensity of jobs at 318 per hectare. The compact downtowns of London and Halifax have a similar number and intensity of jobs, with 303 and 298 jobs per hectare, respectively. Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Fredericton have a very high number of jobs, but



More than three-quarters of Winnipeg's office space is located downtown, among the highest proportions in Canadian downtowns. The new Manitoba Hydro Place is a prestigious addition to the downtown skyline.



Department of National Defense is consolidating staff from over 40 locations across the National Capital Region to the former Nortel Buildings. These and other efforts to consolidate federal government employees could have a significant impact on the vibrancy of the downtown core.



relatively lower intensity, which could be due to the larger land area that comprises their downtown study area. While, Edmonton, Victoria and Toronto each have a similar intensity of jobs in their downtown cores despite the dramatic differences between the physical lay out size of the three downtown study areas.

Downtowns are increasingly attracting educational institutions

Many of the downtowns have been successful in attracting post secondary institutions over the past decade. Downtown Toronto stands out in this regard, as the university sector is emerging as one of the most transformational city builders in the core. The University of Toronto, Ryerson University, George Brown College and OCAD University have each been responsible for iconic and inspiring additions to the downtown. London, Edmonton, and Winnipeg have also had great success attracting universities to re-purposed/heritage buildings; while downtown Saskatoon has attracted a satellite campus for the University of Saskatchewan. In downtown Vancouver, the redevelopment of the Woodward's Building is an exemplary project that adds an SFU campus to existing satellite campuses in the core.

This trend is highly promising as the role of post secondary institutions in the downtown essentially provides a double value. Firstly, post secondary institutions bring a student population to the core that is able to support local business, and add a critical mass of pedestrian activity throughout the day and evening. Secondly each university has a generation of students that may form bonds and attachments to the downtown and decide to stay on after they have completed their studies, adding to a highly skilled labour market.³

³ International evidence of this comes from Paris, where the national government provides subsidies to the regional government to allow that government to invest in student housing. This invariably cultivates vibrancy in the downtown and ensures downtown residency is feasible for all income levels. Farro, S. (1997). *Les aids au logement*. Retrieved from <http://sos-net.eu.org> Accessed 2012 February 13.



The Sharp Centre of Design at OCAD University, designed by Alsop Architects.



Red River College led an exciting new program downtown that restored 6 heritage façades in downtown Winnipeg.



The University of Alberta's downtown campus in Edmonton occupies the renovated Hudson's Bay building, constructed in 1894.

Downtowns are making a major contribution to the bottom line of municipalities

Downtowns often take up as little as 1% of citywide land area, but attracted ten or twenty times that in terms of contributing to the City's assessment base and generating property tax revenues. All of the downtowns featured in this report are making major contributions to their City's bottom line and economic prosperity.

From the data available, the two cities that made the most significant contribution to their City's property tax base were downtown Vancouver and downtown Toronto. Downtown Vancouver comprises 10% of the City's assessment base and generates a fifth of all property taxes collected by the City of Vancouver. In Toronto, the downtown also generates a quarter of the City's property tax revenues. In both cities, this contribution has been relatively stable in recent years.



Downtown redevelopments generally benefit from existing infrastructure



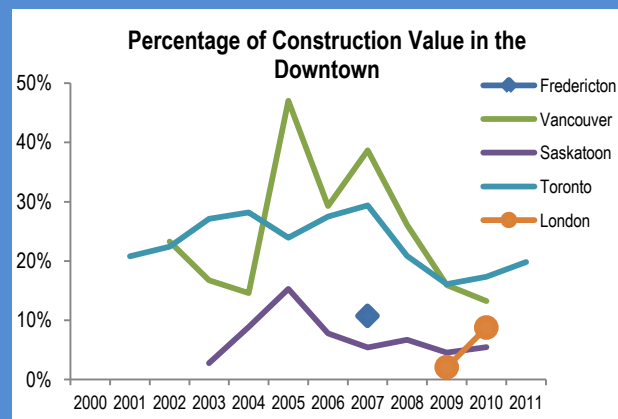
Data provided by municipalities for 2010

A worrying trend in some downtowns is although they may have an increasing assessment value, they have a declining portion of the City's assessment base. Reportedly a City that was cognisant of this trend and managed to reverse it was Edmonton. The downtown had a declining tax base in the 1980s/90s which meant that residential taxes in other parts of the City needed to be raised to maintain City services. As the municipality was beginning to lose a major source of revenue, it started to shift its focus back to achieving a strong downtown core. Today downtown Edmonton is surging forward and is contributing 7% of the City's assessment base (almost double its contribution from 2004). Other cities could learn from this, where there is evidence that new suburban investment outstrips efforts to intensify the core.



Edmonton worked hard at rebuilding a strong tax assessment base downtown

Downtowns also attract a large portion of citywide construction value. Where data was available the downtown case studies averaged around 17% of total city construction value per year (values are pictured right). The percentage of construction value downtown provides some insight on if the city is generally moving towards intensification or decentralization. Additionally as downtowns generally attract increased residential growth, it will be important to keep in mind that tax revenues associated with residential properties are generally lower than taxes associated with commercial properties that could also impact the City's revenue potential in the downtown core.



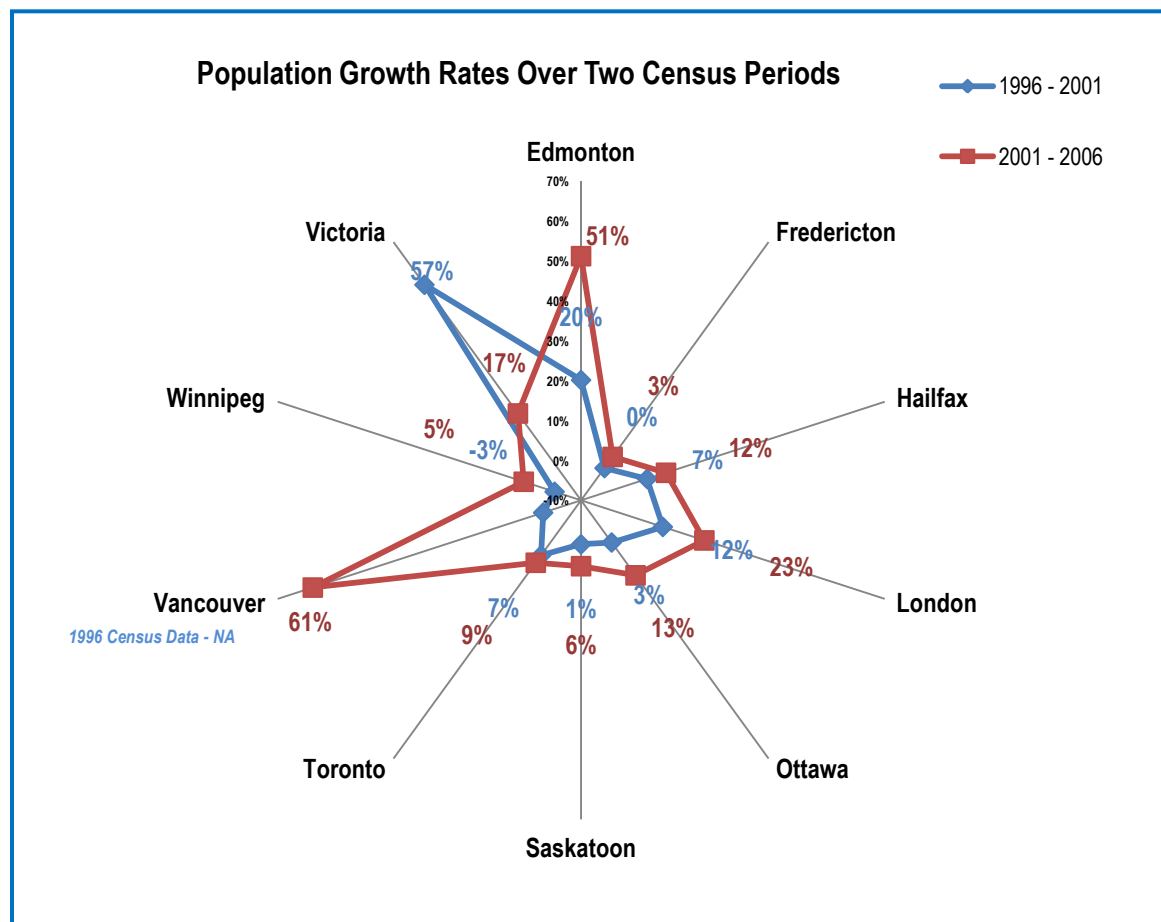
LIVEABILITY Is the downtown vibrant, liveable and connected?

Downtowns are experiencing positive population growth

The downtown case studies are all enjoying positive population growth. Levels of growth varied, and some downtowns experienced more rapid levels of growth than others, yet overall there was a strong increase in the number of people living in the downtown. It is widely considered this growth reflects changing attitudes and lifestyles that people now desire to live in more active neighbourhoods, close to high quality amenities and their workplaces so they can avoid a long commute times. This trend will likely continue.

Many interviewees from downtowns that had experienced more rapid levels of population growth described that their downtown almost reached a 'tipping point.' More specifically, their downtown had been experiencing slow but steady growth for many years, but once the population reached a critical mass it served to further accelerate population growth. It was considered by many interviewees that once a downtown is able to support a large format supermarket, this can make a major contribution to the attractiveness of the downtown as a place to live.

The downtown case study that has experienced the most rapid population growth in percentage terms is Victoria, with 83% growth between 1996 and 2006. This is closely followed by downtown Edmonton with an 82% growth rate during the same period. Other cities such as London saw its population grow by over one third (37% growth), and Toronto, Halifax and Ottawa saw an increase of around one fifth. Vancouver also experienced a 62% increase in its downtown population between 2001 and 2006.



The densest downtown is Vancouver at 176 people per hectare. This was followed by Toronto with 104 persons per hectare. London, Winnipeg, and Saskatoon also have similar population densities at 35, 38, and 39 persons per hectare. Despite having one of the highest rates of population growth, the population density in downtown Victoria is one of the lower population densities at 15 persons per hectare. When reviewing these figures it is also worth while looking at the size of the study areas that were selected for each downtown, some were significantly larger than others, which can impact density calculations.



2006 Census

Downtowns are accommodating young, educated populations in smaller households

The downtown case studies all had younger population profiles compared to citywide results on average. Downtowns also had consistently smaller household size and their residents usually had higher levels of education. In many cases, this is probably linked to the presence of post secondary institutions. Yet, this will be an important trend for city builders to understand as it could contribute to less diverse communities. For example, in CityPlace (in downtown Toronto), a “doorman survey” conducted by Councillor Adam Vaughan’s Office found only 128 children living in the nearly 5,000 units that have been completed.⁴ As each of the downtowns continues to grow it will be important that strategies are developed to achieve vibrant, diverse, and multi-generational communities that are able to meet the needs of their populations for an entire life span.



CityPlace in Toronto is a large condo development built on the old Railways Lands.



“Vancouver has been so successful at attracting families back to the central neighbourhoods that it had to build new schools”
Sheila Pratt, Reporter for the Edmonton Journal, November 7, 2011.

⁴ Keenan, E. (2011). *Is City Place Toronto’s Next Ghetto*. Retrieved from <http://www.thegridto.com/life/real-estate> Accessed 2012 January 16.

Downtowns are providing a growing number of dwellings but are challenged with housing diversity and affordability

While the downtown case studies have generally enjoyed many successes in attracting residential development, providing a range of unit types has been more difficult. Driven by high land costs and relatively tight sites, developments are marketed to young adults or older “empty nesters.” Condo units are typically priced per square foot, with the result that most buildings often offer only bachelor, one or two bedroom units. Family sized units – with three or more bedrooms and appropriate amenities – are rare. The City of Vancouver has made some strides here, pioneering designs for the provision of 2-3 bedroom units on the lower floors of residential buildings that look out over communal space where children can play. Yet these types of strategies will be increasingly important to consider in providing a wider range of housing in Canada’s downtowns in the future.

Downtowns have to overcome perceptions and concerns over lack of safety

The most prominent deterrent and misconception of downtown areas is the level of safety. Exodus from the downtowns in the post war period was in part attributed to a lack of safety. The suburbs were seen as cleaner and greener and more attractive to populations. All of the downtowns have been working hard on improving perceptions of crime and some struggles are fiercer than others. Yet one theme that clearly emerged is that the busier and more vibrant a downtown is, the less there are concerns over safety with people tending to feel more comfortable with larger crowds and a wide range of downtown users. More specifically, many downtowns reported that increased residential development helped increase that level of activity on the streets, which in turn contributed to downtown users feeling safer.

Downtowns are a blend of the old and new, they often contain the City’s key heritage assets

Given the downtowns are one of the oldest neighbourhoods in each of their respective cities they all have a rich collection of heritage buildings. For example, Victoria has 65% of the heritage sites in British Columbia and 240 buildings are concentrated in the downtown. Ottawa, Halifax, Fredericton, Winnipeg and London are also renowned for their historic cores. This concentration of heritage buildings provides significant and exciting redevelopment opportunities for a downtown. Yet it can also create challenges, as anti development sentiment can emerge in response to new developments proposed in historic areas. Moreover it can be costly to revitalize heritage properties. Downtown Halifax has made great strides in responding to both of these challenges through the HRMbyDesign planning process that achieved a more positive dialogue around new development with a focus on good design outcomes, as well as a more generous heritage incentive scheme.

“Just look at all these ‘occupy protests’, they are all happening in Canada’s downtowns – that is because downtowns are always the place where these matters play out...downtowns are always the place where groups organize, where people go to be heard, where decisions are made and this has been going on for centuries.”

CUI Interview with Downtown Stakeholder



Heritage designated buildings in downtown Victoria can take advantage of financial assistance to support facade restoration, structural improvements, upgrading required by building codes, and other rehabilitation costs.



The 19th century wing of City Hall in Ottawa originally built in 1874.

Downtowns are important places for public expression

The downtown case studies were all important places for public expression. They tended to offer a central meeting place for all manner of regional events and cultural activities. Moreover, downtown streets are open to all and often the place where some of the community's most significant social struggles play out (i.e. against homelessness, addiction, civil disobedience and even riots). This complicated range of activities and experiences are at play in downtowns every day and contribute to the core being one of the most important neighbourhoods for bringing people and ideas together.

Downtowns are inherently mixed use and committed to increasing diversity of activity

Downtowns are inherently mixed use neighbourhoods. While the downtown case studies are dominated by commercial development, they also accommodate substantial areas of institutional, retail, recreational and residential uses. The downtown case studies are each true mixed use communities, and provide an important model for development in other locations.

To illustrate this point, the following page provides an overview of land use data for most of the downtown case studies. It is acknowledged this data has some limitations. The key challenge stems from differences in the way that municipalities collect and categorize 'land use' information. For example commercial parking lots are an area where there is some divergence. Most municipalities classify parking lots as a 'transportation' use, yet some classify it as 'commercial' use and others as 'vacant.' There is also some complexity when it comes to mixed use development. For example, residential buildings with retail at grade are classified in all manner of ways by their respective municipalities. To deal with this, the CUI team aimed to present data to show the predominant use at the parcel level. Therefore it is important to interpret this data cautiously and with the knowledge that it provides a great starting point for understanding the different components that make up each of the downtown case studies.

For example, this data provides a lot of insight into development opportunities that exist in each of the downtown case studies. The 'transportation' category generally provides an indication of the amount of surface parking lots in the downtown (with the exception of the Vancouver Waterfront Station and London Railway Station). When combining this proportion with 'vacant' land there is an even more accurate picture of how much developable land is in the core. For example in Winnipeg's large downtown more than a quarter (27%) of the total land area is either 'vacant' land or 'transportation' land (primary surface parking lots), reflecting significant development opportunities. Downtown Victoria also has a large portion of 'transportation' land (19%), some of which is the large parking lots along the harbour front that offer tremendous opportunity for future redevelopment, while downtown Edmonton has 19% of its land utilized for 'transportation' or classified as 'vacant'. Additionally, downtown London is rife with development opportunities as surface parking lots comprise around a fifth of its land area. The scarcity of land in downtown Vancouver is also reflected with limited vacant land and 6% classified as 'transportation' land, which is to a large extent taken up by the Waterfront Station.

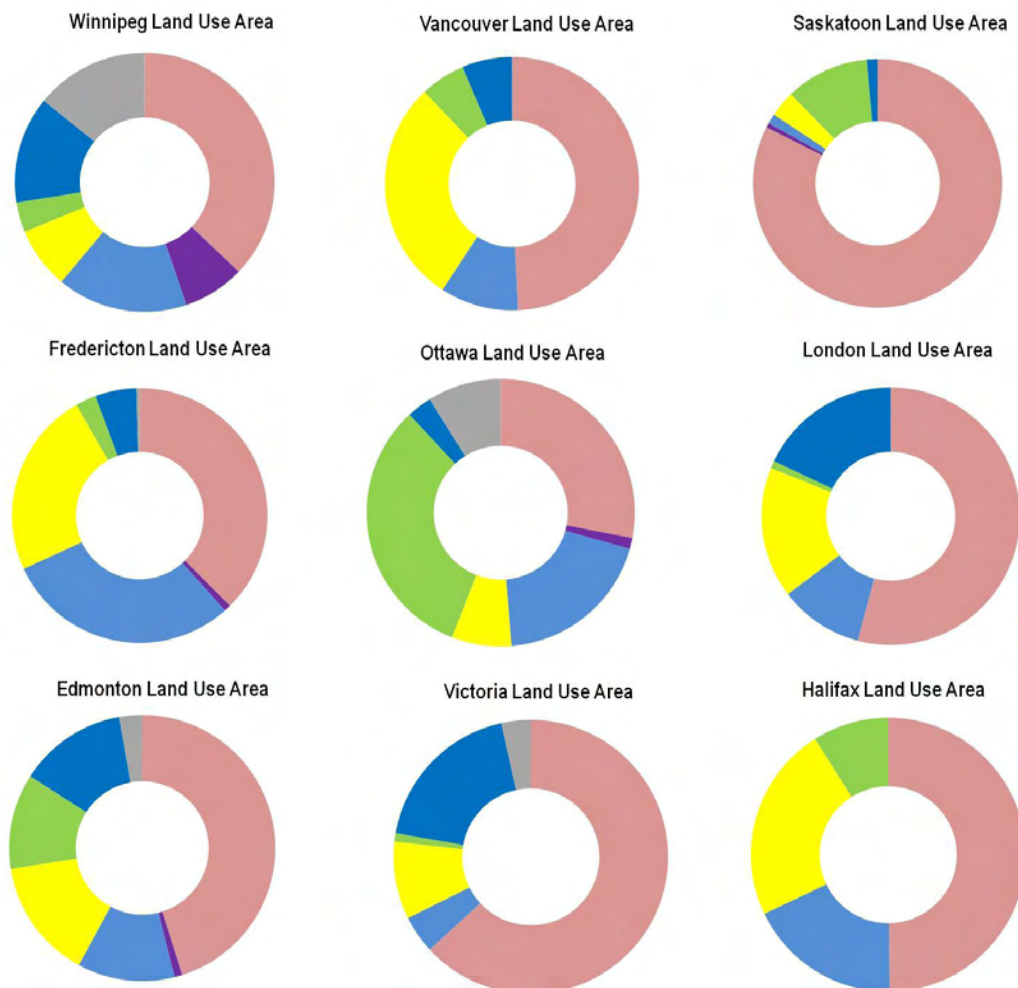
The downtowns of capital cities also have the largest proportions of institutional functions. Just under a third (30%) of land in downtown Fredericton is occupied by institutional uses. In Ottawa a fifth of land area (20%) is classified as having an institutional function. Downtown Winnipeg and Edmonton have 16% and 12% of institutional uses respectively. Downtown Victoria is a slight exception to this pattern, due to its Legislature being just beyond the southern border of the downtown study area. Additionally, the ceremonial role and functions carried out in Ottawa are reflected with the high proportion of open spaces, 32% of land downtown.

These data sets also help us see how successful downtowns have been at attracting residential growth. Winnipeg, Ottawa, Saskatoon and Victoria have seen a recent residential influx, yet residential land uses still only occupies a smaller area of the core (under 10% of land area). Edmonton and London have similar proportion at 15% and 16% respectively. While some of the downtowns only have a significant portion of residential development, such as downtown Vancouver with 29%. Downtown Fredericton also has a high level of residential land uses (24%), yet this largely reflects the lower density, historic dwellings that circle the downtown's financial core. In most cases, municipalities receive a measure of compensation for this type of land use through receipt of 'tax in lieu' payments from federal or provincial governments.

Land Uses* **	Winnipeg	Vancouver	Fredericton	Ottawa	London	Saskatoon	Halifax	Edmonton	Victoria
Commercial	37%	49%	38%	28%	54%	82%	50%	45%	63%
Industrial	8%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Institutional	16%	10%	30%	19%	11%	1%	18%	12%	4%
Residential	8%	29%	24%	7%	16%	3%	23%	15%	9%
Open Space	4%	6%	3%	32%	1%	11%	9%	12%	1%
Transportation	13%	6%	5%	3%	18%	1%		13%	19%
Vacant	14%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%		3%	3%

*This data is based on land parcels only – not streets and roads.

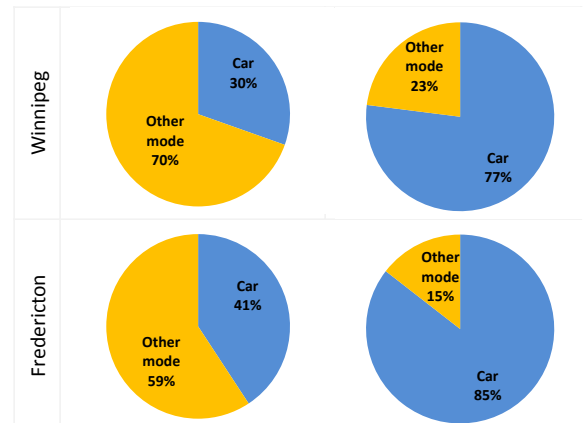
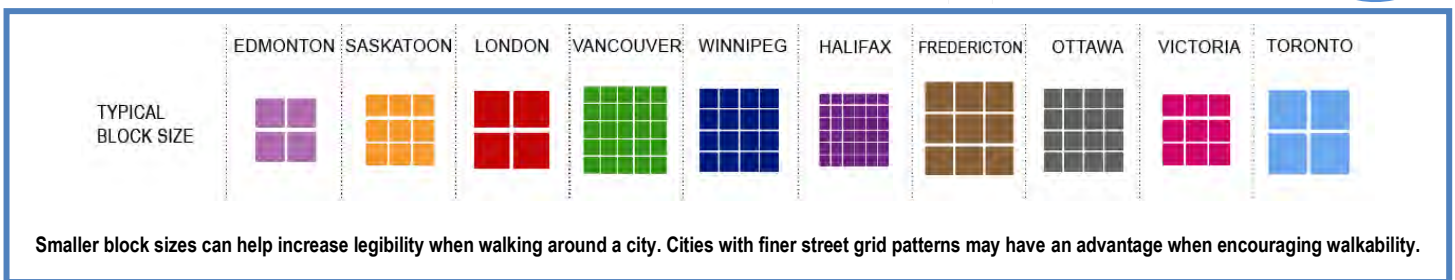
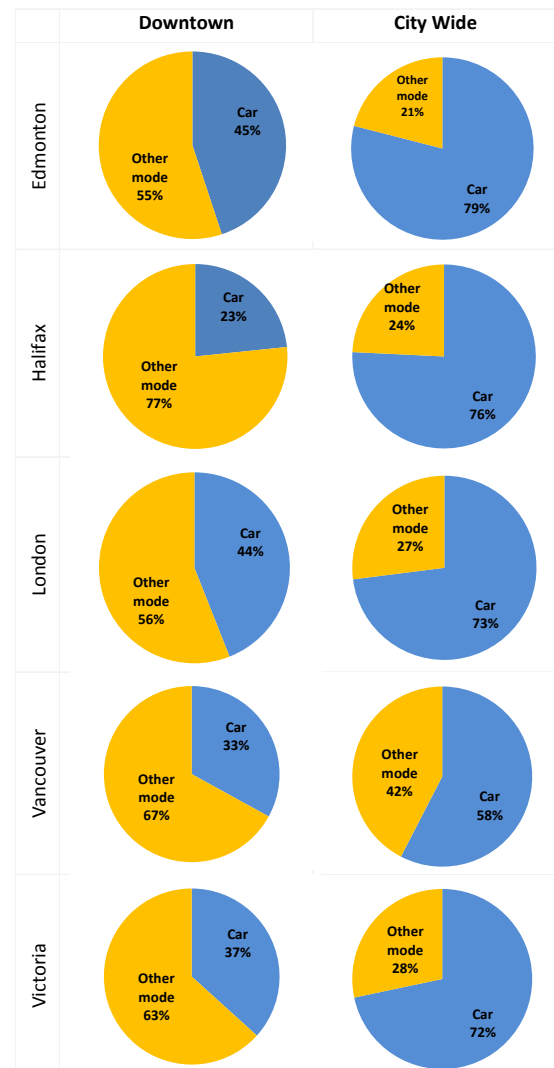
** Every municipality collects land use data in different categories. To overcome this challenge, we have generally aimed to present data to show the **predominant use** at the parcel level. For example, in this study a residential building with retail at grade is classified as residential. While this presents some limitations, this data provides a good starting point for understanding the different components that make up each of the downtown case studies.



Downtowns are great places to encourage walkability and transit use

The downtown case studies tend to be the most easily accessible neighbourhoods. The downtowns are generally at the centre of their city’s transit network and are invariably well served by the road network. The downtown case studies also tend to have a high level of amenities and a concentration of culture and activities. Perhaps, because they have places to walk to, downtown residents also have far higher rates of walking, cycling and utilizing transit, which will be important to moving people more seamlessly around the city in the future. Moreover, this accessibility makes the downtown an ideal location for the provision of essential public services and major investments in cultural or entertainment infrastructure, as well as the place to concentrate commerce and jobs to provide for maximum accessibility for all city residents.

Yet to fully leverage these benefits it is important that effort is placed on achieving these levels of walkability. Vancouver has gone to a lot of effort to improve its sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and has seen great results. Saskatoon has also upgraded its pedestrian realm. Toronto has taken a lot of positive initiatives with its highly functional PATH system and improvements to its sidewalks. However, one Toronto interviewee described the downtown as having a lot of ‘forced walking’ where downtown residents are walking because there is not enough capacity on transit; and many believe walking will be quicker than waiting for a transit vehicle to come along that has space for them.



Big investments grow confidence in the downtown, but the value of these investments can be maximized with small scale financing incentives

Downtown revitalization efforts are maximized when they are happening on multiple levels. The impression emerging from dozens of interviews is that big investments are important to grow confidence and increase the profile of the downtown core, yet small scale financial incentives can lead to many improvements that add up. A mix of these actions can therefore demonstrate a City Council's ongoing commitment to enhancing the core and help spur more favourable market conditions to attract private investment.

The City of London has had significant success investing in both large scale cultural and entertainment facilities designed to bring new users to the core, coupled with smaller scale financing programs and waiving of residential development charges in priority areas of the downtown. As a result the core has increased its levels of vitality with more visitors and residents, as well as seen significant public realm improvements from property owners making use of incentive programs to enhance their buildings. The City of Edmonton has adopted a similar approach, yet they have taken the lead on many public realm improvements in emerging neighbourhoods to increase the attractiveness of these areas for new residential developments. Reportedly, this formula has seen significant success and has been used to stimulate growth in various new neighbourhoods across the core.

A downtown that has generally made large scale investments is Winnipeg. These investments have increased confidence in the core, signalled by the return of the Winnipeg Jets and high levels of commercial growth (\$469.6M between 2005 and 2009).⁵ Yet one interviewee commented that while downtown Winnipeg received lots of large scale investments, these by themselves have not attracted the residential development that city builders hoped to see (approximately \$159.2M between 2005 and 2010). In response new residential incentives have been introduced to the core and this is reportedly spurring residential development in downtown Winnipeg. Downtown Ottawa on the other hand, has been focused on small scale investments in the downtown, primarily through the waiving of development charges that has helped the City see \$235M in residential growth between 2002 and 2011.

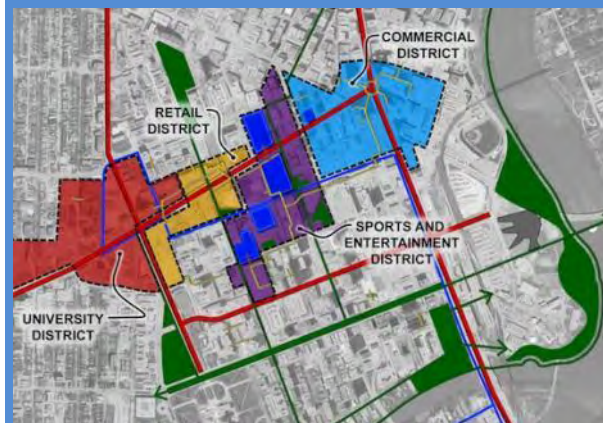
⁵ Downtown Winnipeg Biz. (2011). *BIZ Trends 2010-2012*. Retrieved from: http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/resource/file/DBIZ_Trends_2010.pdf. Accessed 2011 November 29.

“Downtowns have all of the infrastructure in place to support communities. Attracting residential growth to the core saves the entire city money as it makes better use of well serviced downtown properties.”



<http://www.downtownlondon.ca/mediafiles/photogallery/17.jpg>

The John Labatt Centre is a new arena and entertainment centre that formed a key project in the revitalization of downtown London



Future plans for SHED (Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District) along Portage Avenue, surrounding the MTS Centre in Winnipeg.



Artscape Wychwood Barns is a historic TTC streetcar repair shop repurposed into a community centre. Artscape is a not-for-profit organization known for creatively transforming underused buildings in Toronto.

Downtown Toronto and downtown Vancouver are in a different position to the other case studies. This could be due to a range of factors, such as their size, economic conditions, land constraints, established residential populations, or local life style preferences. These two municipalities have not had to go to the same lengths to attract new growth to their downtowns. In fact the City of Vancouver has had to place limits on residential growth in the core. A recent report on the competitiveness of Toronto's office market by the CUI, was also critical of a trend that has seen a depleting number of sites for office developments in the downtown.⁶ Moreover both cities are leveraging private funds from new developments rather than providing financial incentives to attract growth. Each have benefited from private investment in community facilities, public realm upgrades, parks, public art etc. This is an ideal scenario, yet it is still important that both municipalities continue to invest in their downtowns to strengthen these communities for years to come.

Overall there is no one 'right way' for a City to invest, yet it seems that many of the downtowns which are receiving both large and small scale public investments are seeing some of the most significant transformations. Moreover the impression emerging from dozens of interviews with private developers is that they are motivated to invest in the downtown if they see a City Council consistently prioritizing the core, showing high levels of both vision and commitment to a variety of investments over a sustained period of time. Therefore having a comprehensive range of investments allows for a municipality to lead by example and demonstrate its ongoing support for the downtown.

Investments that are designed to meet local needs have seen exciting transformations

There are many similarities between each of the downtown case studies, yet what works well in one downtown cannot necessarily be transplanted to another. For example building the MTS Centre in downtown Winnipeg helped attract a National Hockey League team, but this is by no means a formula every downtown could rely on when building an arena. Therefore it is the downtowns that have collaboratively reviewed their aims, goals, limitations and resources, and designed their investment strategy accordingly, that have seen some of the most significant transformations. This approach also allows for a long view and an understanding of the interconnections between various investments that can help sustain momentum in the downtown over time. Similarly, the success of Ottawa's and Fredericton's recently opened Convention Centres and the prospect of one in Halifax are examples of strategic investment that will accrue long-term gains for their respective cities.

Downtowns are supporting a wide range of new capital projects, yet there are many challenges to gaining a full picture on performance

When a City makes a major investment it would be ideal if they could have a clear understanding of the impact that this investment has on their downtown. It would be even better if a City could start to gain an understanding of how much more beneficial one investment has been over another, or the way that various investments are able to support each other. This study provides a baseline to begin considering these important issues; however it is acknowledged that this study has faced many challenges in the collecting capital projects data for each of the downtown case studies.

More specifically the data underpinning the capital projects information presented in this study has several limitations. Firstly the data varies in terms of the years collected; the key reason for this is that capital projects are funded over many years, yet data is often collected as a single line item for the total amount spent on a project, which makes it difficult to separate out the period being studied. Secondly the types of investments collected vary, which again

⁶ Canadian Urban Institute. (2011). *The New Geography of Office Locations, As Consequences of Business as Usual in the GTA*. Retrieved from: http://www.canurb.com/sites/default/files/reports/2010/TOC_CUI_Report_April2011.pdf. Accessed 2011 October 15.

relates the issue of aggregated amounts being spent on projects, some downtown case studies have been able to separate out the downtown portion of major citywide investments other have not. In these instances there is a notation that data collected may not reflect every single investment that has occurred downtown over the past decade. Lastly there is variation in the methodology for data collection, which largely results from municipalities all collecting this data differently. Some of this data have been collected by a municipal representative filtering through a long list of capital projects from the past decade and selecting those which have occurred in the downtown; other lists have been compiled from scratch by a municipal representative connecting with various city departments and receiving input on their investments in the downtown; while a couple of the lists were compiled based on filtering city wide building permits to separate public and quasi public investments in the core. Overall, these limitations can create challenges for comparison and readers should apply some caution when comparing one downtown to another on the levels of municipal capital expenditure.

On a positive note however there are many similarities between the data collection process and data collected for downtown Halifax, Vancouver, Fredericton, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and London. Therefore there is some opportunity to cautiously compare the value of investments in these downtowns (keeping in mind the notations relating to each of the sets of data). Despite the potential limitations of the data, it does allow for a clearer understanding of the types of investments being made by municipalities and their revitalization priorities for the downtowns case studies.

To compare the types of investments that have been made, the project team has categorized the capital projects as follows:

- **Civic Spaces and Streetscapes:** Streetscape projects, city squares, urban design studies for streetscape improvements, street tree programs, new furniture and large scale programs.
- **Community Facilities and Services:** Improvements to City Hall, social housing, community child care, police stations, fire stations and public pools.
- **Arts and Entertainment:** Entertainment venues and arenas, public art programs, statues and galleries.
- **Parks and Open Space:** Upgrades to parks and facilities i.e. upgrade to parks spaces and park buildings etc
- **Educational:** Universities, high schools, elementary schools, research facilities, libraries and museums.
- **Commercial and Conference Facilities:** Conference centres, car parking facilities, investments in hotels or office buildings.
- **Development Incentives:** Investments to leverage private investment or large scale redevelopments.
- **Infrastructure, Utilities and Transportation:** Investments in water, energy and/or transportation infrastructure.

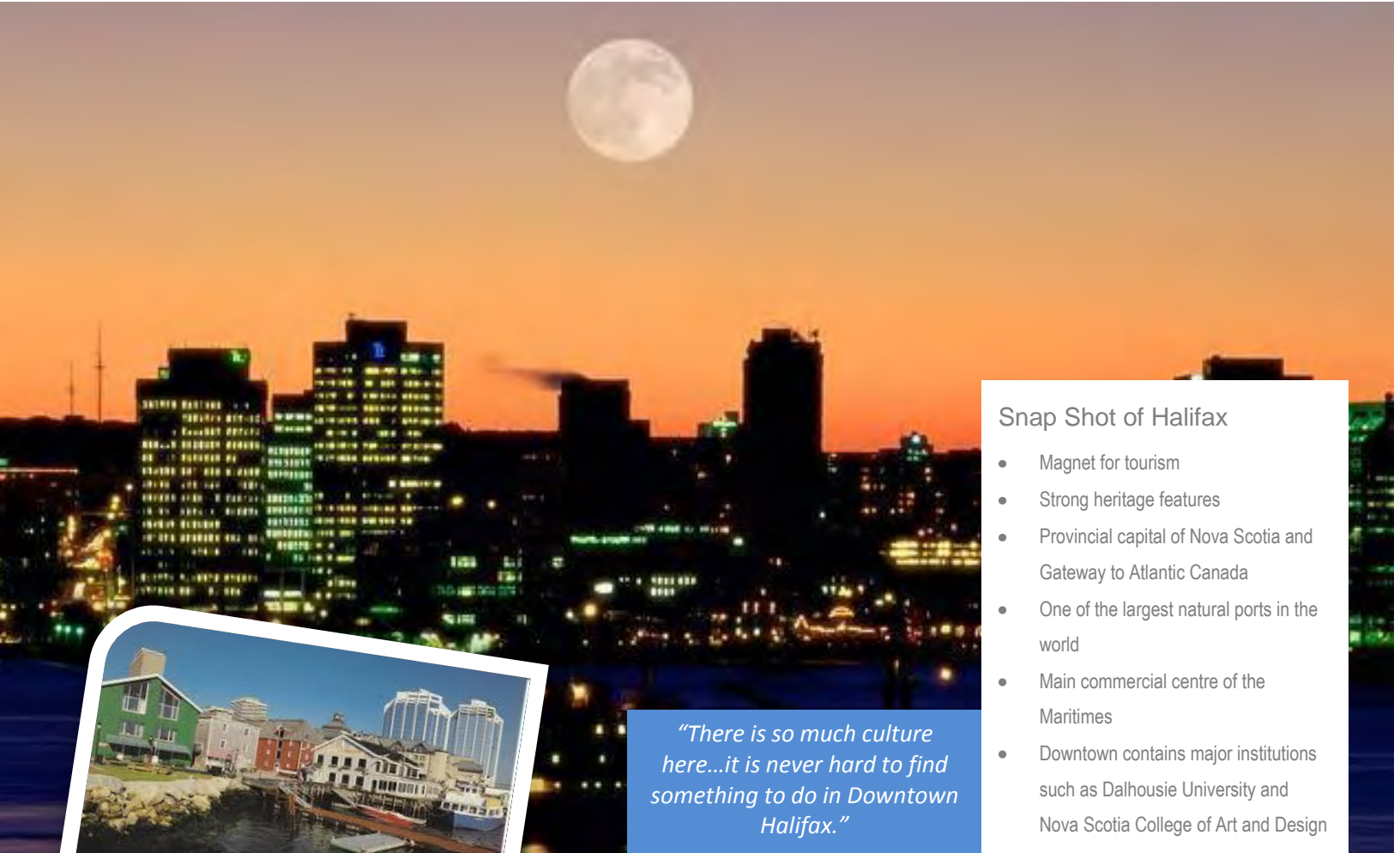
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Downtown Vancouver - Municipal Investments - 2002 -2010																			
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Downtown Halifax - Municipal Investments - 2000-2014																			
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DOWNTOWN CASE STUDIES

HALIFAX

The gateway to Atlantic Canada.....



Snap Shot of Halifax

- Magnet for tourism
- Strong heritage features
- Provincial capital of Nova Scotia and Gateway to Atlantic Canada
- One of the largest natural ports in the world
- Main commercial centre of the Maritimes
- Downtown contains major institutions such as Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

“There is so much culture here...it is never hard to find something to do in Downtown Halifax.”



Halifax is the gateway to Atlantic Canada, a large port city, the capital of Nova Scotia and an extensive urban region. Downtown Halifax is a vibrant, historic and energetic place at the heart of this region, and the core is strengthened by the presence of large institutions (post-secondary campuses, and a Canadian Forces base) and tourism. Yet for many years, the growth of downtown Halifax was challenged by complex, divisive and an inconsistent regulatory environment that resulted in significant decentralization. To address this issue, the City led the ‘HRMbyDesign’ process that successfully renewed interest in the downtown, rebuilt trust and introduced many regulatory reforms. This Plan is continuing to build momentum; in the two years since its adoption downtown Halifax has seen more development activity than it has seen in the last 30 years. Downtown Halifax is looking forward to the future and seems to be on the brink of a major resurgence.

Downtown Halifax Timeline 1749 - 2011

1749 - 1784

1749 - First permanent European presence

1784 - Subdivided to accommodate local control for Loyalists (American Revolutionary War)

1758 - Siege of Louisbourg (instrumental in the French and Indian War)
(Largest Royal Navy Force on the Atlantic Coast).
First representative committee in Canada



1803 - 1917

1813 - Large Navy captured American ships and invaded Washington DC from Halifax

1914 - Departure and supply point for Canadian soldiers and allies during WWI

1803-1815 - Significant growth during Napoleonic Wars

1842 - Incorporated as Halifax

1917 - Munitions explosion that was the largest man-made explosion before the atomic bomb



1939 - 1978

1939-1945 - 17,593 vessels went through port and Halifax created 7,000 vessels during WWII

1966 - Central Dartmouth Urban Renewal Plan sees several major urban renewal projects undertaken in Dartmouth

1973 - Metropolitan Area Planning Commission was established

1978 - Municipal Planning Strategy for Halifax

1955 - Opening of the MacDonald Bridge

1964 - Halifax County Official Plan put into effect in urban and suburban areas

1970 - Burnside Industrial Park built. New Murray MacKay Bridge Completed

1975 - Halifax-Dartmouth Regional Development Plan



1992 - 2011

1996 - Halifax Regional Municipality was created

1998 - Municipal Government Act

2006 - Regional council adopted the Regional Plan

2011 - Began Regional Plan 5 Year Review

1992 - "Facade and Signage Improvements for Downtown Dartmouth" for DT Development Corporation

2000 - Downtown Dartmouth Secondary Planning Strategy

2008 - By-law H500 Heritage Conservation District (Barrington Street). The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Act created.



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



The Harbour (1)

Halifax Harbour was historically strategic, spurring much of the City's early economic development and population growth. The Harbour's dominant role in global trade routes is long-standing as it served as Canada's dominant point of access to the Eastern United States and Europe prior to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Port Authority also administers a Cruise Ship Pavilion and Pier 21, Canada's National Museum of Immigration, on the site.



The Citadel (2)

Completed in 1856, this National Historic Site sits at the top of Citadel Hill overlooking the city. Visitors can interact with historical interpreters who commemorate Halifax's role as a key naval station in the British Empire. Protecting views from the Citadel has historically created challenges for taller buildings in the core.



Halifax Common (3)

Created by surveyors immediately following the settling of Halifax in 1749, Canada's oldest urban park remains a popular place for Haligonians to walk and gather. The park contains amenities including softball diamonds, tennis courts, a soccer field, swimming pool, and skateboarding facilities as well as an all-ages music club and a new long-track skating oval.



Public Gardens (4)

The Halifax Public Gardens are designed to embody a formal Victorian Public Garden, complete with wrought iron gates, statues, and fountains. The gardens have remained relatively unchanged since their opening in 1867.



Province House (5)

Canada's oldest house of government, the Nova Scotia Legislature, has met in this Palladian-style edifice since 1819.



Granville Mall (6)

Formerly part of Granville Street, this space was closed off to vehicular traffic and converted to a pedestrian mall in 1963. This action has allowed the historic streetscape to remain relatively impervious to modernization initiatives, forming one of the last remaining continuous nineteenth-century commercial districts in Canada.



Source: Flash Earth

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (7)

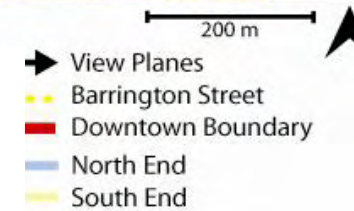
The largest art museum in Atlantic Canada and one of the premier arts institutions in Canada houses a permanent collection of over 15 000 objects. It opened at its present location in the Dominion Building (circa 1867) in 1988 and expanded a decade later to the Provincial Building.

Historic Properties and Harbourfront (8)

This collection of buildings constructed by settlers in the late 1700s contains seven structures designated as National Historic Sites. This tourist attraction, along with a nearly 4-kilometer harbourfront boardwalk, contains a multitude of restaurants, pubs, and shops and serves as a location for prominent events – such as the Tall Ships Festival and Buskers festivals – throughout the year.

Central Library (9)

The new Halifax Central Library, to be completed in 2014, will be a prominent addition to one of Halifax's most popular shopping and walking streets, Spring Garden Road. The new library will span over 108 000 square feet – over 2.5 times the size of the present Spring Garden Library, and is an exciting new addition to the downtown.



Dalhousie University (10)

Founded in 1818, Dalhousie is one of Canada's largest and most respected research hubs. The 79-acre campus is located a few blocks southwest of Downtown and is comprised of beautiful heritage buildings and greenery. There are currently approximately 16,700 students enrolled at Dalhousie.



Halifax Metro Centre (11)

The Halifax Metro Centre is Atlantic Canada's most prominent entertainment and sporting event venue with a seating capacity of over 10,000. Built in 1978, the arena underwent renovations in the late 1990s.



Rail Yards (12)

The Rail Yards, immediately south of the study area, demonstrate Halifax's integral role as a national shipping and transportation hub and its historic function as the eastern gateway to Canada for immigrants.



Grid Layout (Refer to Legend)

The tight street grid in Halifax was laid out in 1749 and contains small blocks, which allow for the creation of very small and unique spaces. The grid layout also follows two strong orientations as it bends along the shore line and climbs the hills leading up from Halifax Harbour.



Argyle Street (Refer to Legend)

With professional theatre, live music and numerous restaurants and nightclubs, this small street running from City Hall to St. Mary's Basilica is often the centre of evening activities in downtown Halifax. As well, many formal civic events, such as the annual outdoor New Years Eve celebrations, take place on the Grand Parade in front of City Hall.



Walkable Halifax

Adjacent to the downtown, on three sides, are predominantly residential areas – known by their geography, they are peninsular Halifax's "North End", "South End" and "West End" communities. All are within walking distance of the downtown. These areas contain two major health complexes, four universities and Canada's East Coast Naval base, in addition to the local shopping amenities one would find in traditional residential neighbourhoods.



VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

“We reached a stalemate downtown, protecting heritage and the environment were at the centre of it... but while all this was going on the downtown declined.”

Downtown Halifax is the core of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) which is centred on the Halifax Peninsula (that includes the downtown study area) and Dartmouth. HRM is comprised of 23 former municipalities and some 200 communities including seaside villages, rural and farming communities, suburban neighbourhoods, and urban centres.¹ The downtown occupies a mere 0.0012% of the HRM, only 98 hectares of over 9.2 million ha. The HRM is one of the largest urban municipalities in Canada.

HRM is the largest municipality studied, and the size of HRM creates inherent challenges for the downtown in getting the attention it requires to thrive and endure as the strong heart of this region. With so many distinct communities, the downtown must compete to attract growth at the same rate as newly emerging neighbourhoods outside the core. For example, the proportion of office space in the downtown has steadily declined over the past decade from near 60% to only 46%. The downtown has been only attracting a small portion of overall regional investment, which is likely attributed to HRM's complex regulatory regime and downtown land being more expensive than in the suburbs yet failing to provide a strong enough return on investment.

Many regulatory challenges in downtown Halifax stemmed from the desire to protect Halifax's unique, high quality urban fabric, which included not only protection of buildings but also the view-planes extending to the harbour and the Citadel. Debate around these important issues – spanning from the 1960s to early 2000s – was fierce and appeared polarized, positioning “heritage” and “development” as mutually exclusive. The downtown suffered through this debate, and while perhaps some insensitive developments were halted, the downtown received little investment in the heritage features that it so desperately prized. Most recently, the ‘HRMbyDesign’ process helped to transform this debate into a productive discussion that bridged these opposing views by shifting the focus to what constitutes responsive, high quality design that will contribute to a more attractive and vital downtown.

Overall, the City has started to make inroads towards revitalization of its downtown with new financial incentives and a Downtown Plan to create confidence, instil certainty and guide development. This will be critical to growing the visibility of downtown Halifax in the context of such a large region, as well as contributing to the downtown's re-emergence as the centre of commerce and a place to invest.

Downtown comprises

0.0012%

of Halifax's area (98ha)

1%

**of the Halifax's population
lives downtown (4,500)**

Downtown has

46%

**of office floor space
(4427078sf)**

Downtown Halifax has

298 jobs/ha

or 29,360 jobs (15%)

Downtown generates

8%

Of HRM's property tax revenue

Downtown generates

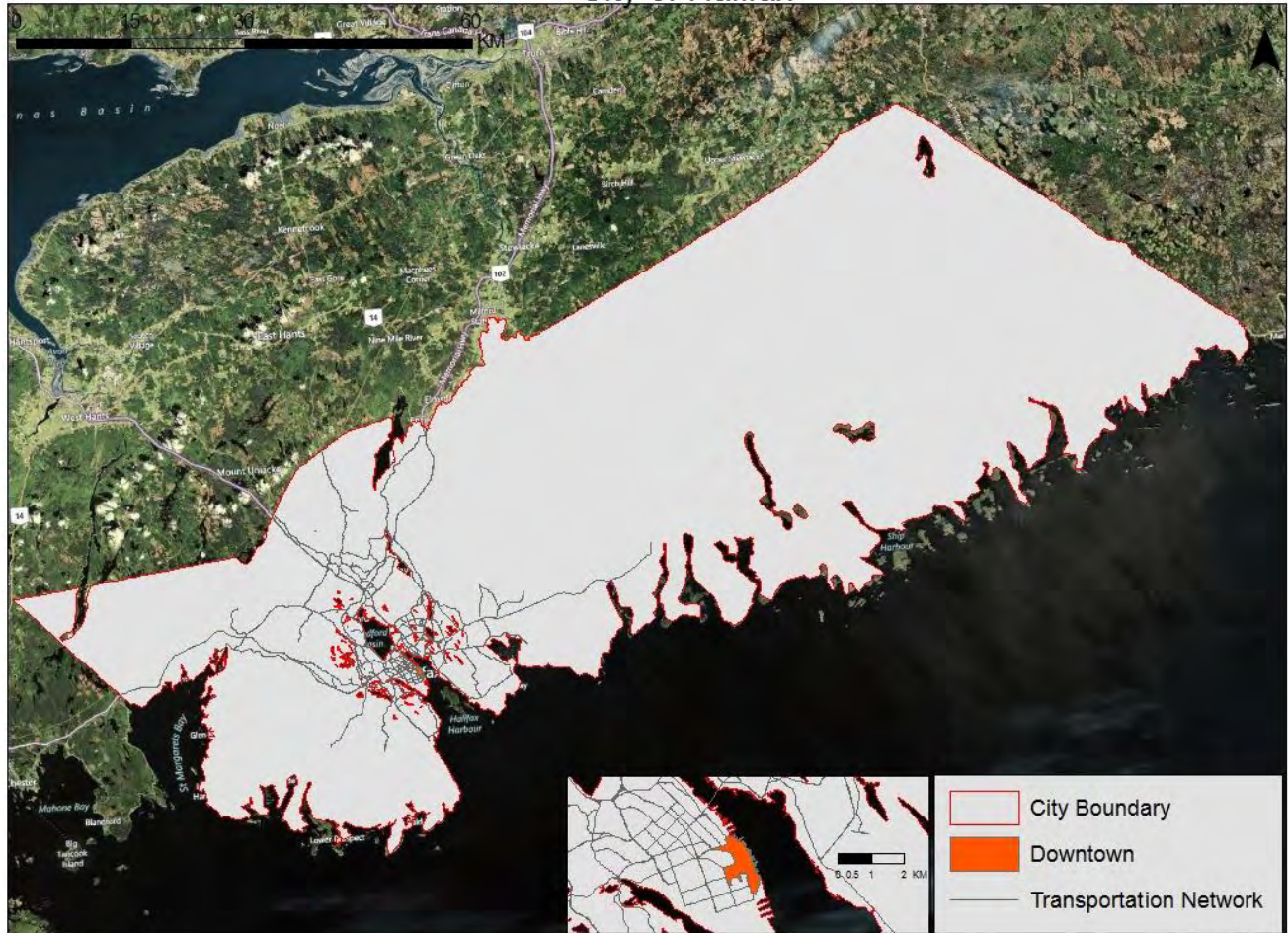
\$414K/ha

in property tax revenue

¹ Region of Halifax (2012). *Urban Planning*. Retrieved from: <http://halifax.ca/regionalplanning/Region/region.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Context Map: Halifax Regional Municipality and its Downtown

City of Halifax



Name: HRMContext022512

Date: 12/03/2012

Downtown Halifax comprises a mere 0.0012% of the diverse Halifax Regional Municipality

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Downtown Halifax strives to attract and retain more businesses and residents, as well as preserve its valued heritage features. The local community has played a strong role in realizing this vision. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s the community successfully railed against a large expressway project along the waterfront that would have destroyed a large number of historic buildings and many older neighbourhoods.² The waterfront area has since emerged as one of the downtown's most valued assets.

Vision

The HRMbyDesign process, launched in 2005, created a new shared vision for downtown Halifax that unified the community. The plan envisions vibrant streets, increased live-work opportunities within new mixed use infill developments, and a stronger 'culture of walking.' This vision also seeks to balance development opportunities with heritage considerations, as well as bring clarity to issues around the protection of view-planes. This vision is guided through nine downtown districts, and each of these districts possess corresponding development styles.³ This new vision of downtown Halifax is both positive and powerful, and many credit it for moving both the downtown and the entire City forward.

Leadership and Collaboration

Leadership has been challenging in the downtown, as in the past there has been many conflicting opinions on how downtown Halifax should evolve. Discussion has been particularly fierce around building heights. Beginning in the 1970s, a blanket 'as of right' building height restriction of 45ft was applied across the

downtown. While this contributed to lower development forms, it did not necessarily lead to quality developments that respected heritage features. More recently these height limits have been reconsidered and redefined into nine districts throughout the HRMbyDesign process. Strong leadership to implement the new Downtown Plan is producing certainty and transparency, and has facilitated improved planning outcomes that will help revitalize downtown Halifax. As new tall building proposals emerge, it will be important to rely on the principles captured in the HRMbyDesign documentation.

To help implement the new Downtown Plan and strengthen relationships across HRM, the City Strategic Urban Partnership has been formed. This joint venture is comprised of major downtown stakeholders whose job it will be to identify strategic urban investments that will precipitate private development and make the downtown more competitive in attracting growth. In the context of downtown Halifax, a core with many large public and quasi-public land holdings, it is particularly important that these stakeholders have the opportunity to strengthen dialogue around planning issues in the downtown and grow a shared vision for future growth.

A leadership challenge for downtown Halifax is that the area is now part of the Halifax Regional Municipality – an expansive urban area that includes urban, suburban, and rural settlements consolidated in 1996. This means that the downtown must compete with a much larger and disparate region for attention. Fortunately the downtown is now gaining what it needs to thrive. Still, strong public sector leadership will be important for continuing the momentum behind downtown revitalization.

²Renwick, C. (2010). *City Building and Architectural Renewal: A Historical Study of Five Buildings in Halifax, Nova Scotia*. Retrieved from http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/7010/1/Renwick_MA_F2010.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

³Region of Halifax (n.d.). *Vision, Guiding Principles and the Precinct Approach*. Retrieved from <http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/documents/Vision.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

PROSPERITY

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Halifax Shipyards was awarded a \$25 billion federal government contract in October 2011. While the ship building yards are not located downtown, this announcement will bolster the economy of Halifax and Nova Scotia for years to come. New apartments and homes will be needed to accommodate new employees and older homes are expected to rise in value. Office, industrial and retail markets will also receive a boost, with new and growing suppliers supporting the Halifax Shipyards and its employees.⁴

Residential Development

Increasing residential density in the business district is crucial to instilling vibrancy in downtown Halifax.⁵ This densification began in the past decade, and the number of dwellings downtown grew by almost a quarter between 1996 and 2006, compared to 18% citywide.

Office Development

Office development in downtown Halifax has been relatively slow; between 2004-2010 office space grew by 3% compared to 9% growth citywide. As a result of strong growth in suburban office space, the portion of downtown office space has declined from 48% in 2004 to 46% in 2010. This decline will need to be reversed if downtown Halifax wishes to retain its dominant position as the commercial centre of HRM.

Retail Development

There are several 'high streets' in downtown Halifax that offer a range of retailing experiences. Granville Mall is a pedestrian mall, Barrington Street is a historic retailing strip, and Spring Garden Road also serves as a popular location for retail.

⁴Colliers International. (2011). *Real Estate Report: Halifax, Nova Scotia*. Retrieved from: <http://www.collierscanada.com/~media/Files/Research/2011/Halifax%20Office%20Real%20Estate%20Report%202011%20Q3.ashx>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁵Taylor, R. (2011). *Wanted: Downtown Dwellers*. Retrieved from: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/33223-wanted-downtown-dwellers>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Educational Institutions

HRM is home to many highly regarded educational institutions. Northumberland College is located in the downtown study area, as well as Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. Unfortunately the latter institution is experiencing financial difficulty and may not continue in its present form. Notable neighbours to downtown Halifax include Dalhousie University, one of Canada's leading comprehensive research and teaching universities, which serves 15,000 students.

Municipal Tax Base

In 2010, the downtown generated \$40M in tax revenue, which equates to approximately 8% of the City's property tax base. This proportion has remained relatively steady since 2006, when the downtown generated 7% of total property tax revenue. The tax base downtown has grown at a stronger rate each year than the tax base for the HRM. More specifically, property tax generated by the downtown grew 32% compared to 22% city wide from 2006 to 2010 indicating the high levels of growth being achieved downtown.

Jobs

Downtown Halifax has 29,360 jobs or 15% of HRM's total. Household income downtown is generally lower than city-wide despite higher rates of post secondary education, which likely reflects the large student population.

The no. of dwellings grew

22%

from 1996-2006, compared to 18% more dwellings citywide.

Downtown has

46%

of office floor space (4,427,078 sf)

Downtown has

29,360

jobs

LIVEABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

As downtown Halifax overcomes some of its development challenges, the population growth has been relatively strong. From 1996 to 2006, the population grew by 25% to 4,500. Growth in downtown Halifax outpaced HRM's growth, which was 13% during the same decade. Downtown Halifax still relies heavily on workers who outnumber the day time population 6:1. Additionally, tourists play a key role in creating vitality in the downtown core with one and half millions tourists per year.

Diversity

Downtown Halifax has a younger population profile compared to the entire city; the median age is almost a decade lower in the downtown.

While largely beyond the boundaries of the study area, the Old North neighbourhood is one that has historically been characterized with diversity, as well as socio-economic challenges. In the 1960s, many historic dwellings in Old North were cleared and replaced with high rise housing towers, as part of major urban renewal projects. For example, the removal of Africville between 1964 and 1969 created major rifts in inner core's community lasting until commemoration of this event and an apology was provided by the City in 2002. Africville is now designated as a national heritage site. This experience illuminates some of the shortfalls to widely accepted approaches to urban renewal from 60s and 70s and the way the legacy of these decisions can impact communities for decades.

Housing

A quarter of housing downtown is in buildings less than five storeys and 60% is in apartments taller than five storeys. Single detached dwellings make up 2% of housing downtown compared to 50% citywide. The average household size in downtown is also smaller than city wide, 1.7 compared to 2.4 respectively.

Housing prices downtown have also close to doubled in the past decade, correlating with increases experienced across the City.

Safety

A recent survey (the CityThink Survey) found that most Haligonians feel safe in downtown Halifax. The survey found that 71% of respondents thought downtown was either "mostly" or "very safe". Haligonians are feeling much safer in downtown Halifax compared to several years ago; in 2007, the same survey revealed only 50% of residents felt "mostly" or "very safe".⁶

Downtown has

4,500

residents

21%

**population growth
downtown between 1996-
2006 (compared to 13%
citywide)**

1.7

**is the average household
size (compared to 2.4
citywide)**

Downtown has 2

grocery stores

⁶ Thompson, Aly. (2011). "Majority feel safe in downtown Halifax" in *Metro News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.metronews.ca/halifax/local/article/857004--majority-feel-safe-in-downtown-halifax>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Public Realm

Downtown Halifax attracts both residents and visitors alike who enjoy the downtown's historic buildings and streetscapes, restaurants, and the harbour. Initiatives such as sidewalk cafes along Argyle Street showcase and unite the unique assets of downtown Halifax and contributes to its success and vibrancy.⁷ Interestingly, the sidewalk cafes were initiated because of the G7 summit being held in Halifax in 1995. This example illustrates how large events can encourage new ideas and bring about permanent changes in the life of a city.

The downtown's heritage features are a prized aspect of the public realm. Within the downtown Halifax area there are over 120 municipally registered heritage properties, 15 provincially registered heritage properties, and 11 National Historic Sites, including the Citadel, which is one of the downtown's defining features. Concentrations of contiguous registered buildings line Barrington Street, both in the old commercial area between Duke Street and Spring Garden Road and in the south Barrington area between Bishop Street and Cornwallis Park, and in the Historic Properties area. While there are many heritage properties in the downtown, it is also a functional core where people live, work, and shop daily. The downtown's multi-functionality creates both challenges and opportunities for heritage protection.

Halifax's view planes – down to the harbour and from the hill to the Citadel – have been a driving force in prescribing downtown development. The protection of these view planes has often created resistance to new developments in this community. Moreover, complex height controls and by-laws that sought to protect these view-planes (prior to the current Downtown Plan) tended to create uncertainty for developers, who became increasingly drawn to suburban locations with fewer development constraints.

The downtown's public realm is also challenged by vacant sites, and while these sites present exciting opportunities in the future, this presence can create some challenges in the shorter term. As part of the HRMbyDesign process, vacant sites were mapped in the downtown and 'it was really astonishing to see how many gaps there were.' Another major insight gleaned from this mapping process was that the City discovered that 'more than half of the vacant sites were in public ownership.' It was then that 'the penny dropped and the City started to realize a sense of responsibility and consider opportunities to release land for development.' In response, the City developed the Opportunities Site Task Force to identify prime



Potential Re-urbanization Projects in Downtown Halifax
Image within Planning and Design Centre Newsletter

⁷ Planning and Design Centre (2010). *Seek Issue 004*. Retrieved from <http://pdcentre.ca/2010/11/seek-newsletter-volume-004/>. Accessed 2012 February 13.

sites for redevelopment that are currently in public ownership.

The downtown's public realm is also influenced by the presence of large public and quasi-public entities — universities, schools, Federal agencies (i.e. the Department of National Defence and Parks Canada), the Waterfront Development Corporation, and other Provincial and Municipal bodies. Large areas of land have been claimed by these institutions for a single land use. While the City can leverage city-owned properties, it often has little control or influence — or even communication — with these other "public" land owners. This can create challenges for planning for the flow, permeability, and vitality of the city itself. Therefore in response to this challenge, the City has established the Strategic Partnership which unites these groups and allows them to forge a strong collective dialogue and plan for the downtown. The Strategic Partnership provides an excellent model on how this type of group can be successfully established.

Overall, downtown Halifax has a quality public realm that attracts tourists from all over the world. Yet it will be important that the City continues to build and expand on this framework to realize its full potential and vibrancy.



Top: The *Sands of Salter*, was a provincial project that created a hugely popular urban beach, it also hosted the FIVB volley ball tournament in 2011 and 2012.

Middle: The summer side walk cafes have also been a major success in the downtown. An attractive feature is the innovative use of "seasonal extensions" to the permanent sidewalks. In addition to providing space for restaurants and cafes to expand their presence on the street, the increased activity during the summer months also acts as a "traffic calming" measure.

Connectivity

Downtown Halifax sits on a historic grid characterized by small blocks and narrow roadways. The grid is set out on a steep hill. While this intimate pattern creates a positive experience for pedestrians, these narrow streets and the City's topography often creates challenges for vehicles, freight, and cyclists moving around the downtown. Contrary to most North American cities, Halifax has recently taken measures towards implementing more one-way traffic flows (Sept 2011), to reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes with the goal of increasing street space available for on-street parking, bike lanes, and other potential uses.⁸ Initiatives such as these contribute to a more interconnected downtown that encourages alternative modes of transportation.

⁸ CBC News. (2011). *Sackville and Lower Water Streets to be One-Way*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2011/09/08/ns-halifax-streets-one-way.html>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

In the past, downtown Halifax has faced many challenges in procuring both private and public investment as it was burdened with a complex array of policies, pressures and economic realities that deterred – and encouraged the decentralization of – growth and investment. However these challenges have been tackled head on as part of the HRMbyDesign process, and momentum behind investing in the downtown continues to build.

In particular, between 2000 and 2009, HRM invested approximately \$2.6M in the downtown. Since implementation of the Downtown Plan there has been increased public investment activity in the core and major projects are underway such as the new Central Library (\$20.3M until 2014) and there are new heritage incentives in place for private land owners. HRM has also taken the lead on many streetscape improvement projects, particularly along the waterfront and has upgraded several parks and recreation facilities such as Halifax Common Speedskating Oval (\$2.9M) which is located just outside the downtown boundary. Moreover HRM has been championing the development of a new Convention Centre by committing \$56M to its construction, which could represent one of the most significant public investments for downtown Halifax in decades.

Overall increased public investment is generally coinciding with increased private investment in downtown Halifax. There have been a total of 41 downtown development projects created between 2009 and 2011, with more projects in the past two years than the past 30 years combined. More specifically of these 41 projects: five are approved for development; five are in the pre-application stage; six are soon to be in pre-application stage; and there are 25 projects are on Barrington Street (for example, heritage upgrades).⁹ These impressive results show the powerful connection between the regulatory environment and its private investment. Overall, HRM is moving forward on downtown revitalization and it is the hope of those interviewed that downtown Halifax is now in the position to enjoy a period of renaissance.

Data Collection Process

Representatives from HRM's financial department developed a list of municipal capital projects in downtown Halifax from 2006 and 2010. This data set was completed by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission that held a list of municipal capital investments between 2000 and 2006. Projects such as the Central Library that extend to 2014 have been included in this list, as construction is underway and a large portion of this project has already gained municipal funding. This list does not include capital projects that are likely to be rolled out in the next few years such as the convention centre that has \$56M in municipal funding committed or proposed streetscaping projects that are still under development and do not have any formalized financial agreement in place.

⁹ Presentation by Andy Fillmore, Manager of Urban Design, 2010

Summary of Municipal Investments

Project Name	Municipal Investment	Project Name	Municipal Investment
Central Library	\$20,300,000	Public Gardens Upgrade	\$400,000
City Hall Stone Restoration	\$3,000,000	Scotia Square Transit Terminal	\$360,000
Halifax Common Speed Skating Oval	\$2,850,000	Nathan Green Square (Ferry Terminal)	\$200,000
Centennial Pool Energy Upgrade	\$2,000,000	Waterfront upgrades (Chebucto Landing Wharf)	\$100,000
Peninsula Gym (Citadel High School)	\$1,900,000	Kiosks	\$ 53,000
Halifax Seaport Farmers Market	\$1,000,000	Furniture and bike racks	\$50,000
New sidewalks and streets (Lower Water, Duke, George, Prince Sackville)	\$760,000	Landscape Design (Lower Water St. bus layby)	\$38,000
MetroPark Upgrades	\$500,000	Mural project (on NFB site)	\$6,000
Spatz Theatre (Citadel High School)	\$500,000	Total	\$34,017,000

Key Patterns of Investment:

1. Central Library project

An exciting new investment in the downtown is the Halifax Central Library, which will replace the current Spring Garden Road Memorial Library and serve as a central resource centre for residents. Funding for this project has been provided across all three levels of government, with the Government of Canada providing up to \$18.3 million (from the Major Infrastructure Component of the Building Canada Fund), the Government of Nova Scotia providing \$13 million and HRM contributing \$23.7 million toward the project, which has a total estimated cost of \$55 million.¹⁰ The library is approximately 100,000-square-feet and the facility will include a larger book collection, additional meeting and study rooms, a 250-seat cultural and performance space, and areas for computers and emerging technologies. The building will reflect a modern design vision; it will be LEED Gold certified and will integrate two new public plazas.¹¹



'This [the new Central Library] is the first step, and it is a symbol that the public sector is investing in the Downtown again.'

Library Under Construction

<http://www.mbchamber.mb.ca/2010/12/another-8-million-raised-for-canadian-museum-for-human-rights/>

The City strategically released a large city-owned parking lot beside the library for new mixed use development. Once this entire development is complete, it will set a new standard for design in downtown Halifax and deliver a vibrant new mixed use community with a combination of both public and private spaces. The additional public space will be welcomed by the many visitors to Spring Garden Road, one of Halifax's most popular 'high streets.'

2. Heritage Incentives – Barrington Street Historic District

Downtown Halifax possesses a rich collection of heritage buildings. However, a general lack of investment in these edifices over the past few decades has left them in a variety of conditions and some have reached a relatively serious state of decline. The HRMbyDesign process aimed to reverse this trend and established new incentives to address this challenge.

Previously HRM did provide heritage incentives, yet the HRMbyDesign planning process revealed that the citywide program would not be large enough to support the extensive restoration work needed downtown – particularly concerning the revitalization of Barrington Street. It was estimated that in this heritage district, approximately one half of the buildings were in need of improvement.¹² Consequently HRM has created new incentives specifically for Barrington Street Heritage District and has made several million dollars available for in grants and tax credits over five years. This program has been very well utilized and since 2009, there have been 12 restoration projects approved through the Barrington Heritage District grants and incentives program and it is anticipated that this fund will be exhausted before the five years is up. Details on the first 10 approved restoration projects are provided below:

¹⁰ Infrastructure Canada (2011). *Government Project Breaks Ground on Halifax Central Library Project*. Retrieved from: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/media/news-nouvelles/2011/20111107halifax-eng.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹¹ EllisDon (2011). *Summary*. Retrieved from: <http://ascribehq.com/ellisdon/portfolio/5826>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹² Regional Municipality of Halifax (2009). *Barrington Street heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan*. Retrieved from <http://halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/documents/BarringtonPlan.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

	Building	Total Grant + Tax Credit
2009	Colwell (Mamoya, Certainly Cinnamon)	\$11,000
	Freemason's (TAO, Korean Grill)	\$300,000
	Green Lantern (Pogue Fado, Tribecca)	\$585,000
2010	NFB (Façade, Argyle Bar & Grill)	\$476,000
	Barrington e-Space (3 buildings)	\$502,000
	NS Furnishings (Telus/Canada Manpower)	\$25,000
2011	Farquhar (Venus Pizza)	\$205,000
	Old Carsand Mosher (Argyle Fine Arts)	\$168,000
	G.M. Smith (Oddjects)	\$19,000
	Brander-Morris (Attica)	\$36,000
	TOTAL HRM Grants + Tax Incentives	\$2,327,000
Source: Presentation by Andy Filmore, Manager of Urban Design, 2010		

The success of this program shows the willingness of private land owners to invest in their buildings and utilize these incentives. As Barrington Street is upgraded, HRM may be well served considering other targeted incentives to restore, reclaim and repurpose the wide range of heritage buildings that comprise the downtown.

3. Investing in Civic Spaces and Recreational Facilities

HRM has invested strongly in civic spaces and recreational facilities. A key vehicle for this has been the HRM Community Facility Partnership Fund that was launched in 2008 to support the municipality's Cultural Plan and Economic Development Strategy. This fund provided support to community non-profit groups and public institutions as a means to foster innovation and develop enduring community cultural and economic infrastructure. The program's first grant supported the creation of the Seawall Farmers' Market. Spatz Theatre at Citadel High School also received funding from this innovative program.¹³ While the HRM was forced to temporarily suspend the Partnership Fund in 2011 due to fiscal constraints, there is hope it will be reinstated in subsequent years.

Downtown Halifax has also benefited from investments in a range of other civic amenities and recreational spaces, such as the Victoria Park upgrade, which will help make the downtown more enjoyable for people living in the residential areas within a short distance of the park. The waterfront has also seen a series of upgrades that will help draw more vitality to the core. Furthermore, in 2010 HRM provided \$1.1M to upgrade the Public Gardens along Spring Garden Road and financed several other streetscape improvement projects while in 2011, Council approved an economic strategy that called for the creation of a 5-year \$50 million public realm improvement fund, to come from three levels of government, to be used in the urban core.

¹³ Halifax Regional Municipality. (No Date). *Partnership fund template*. Retrieved from: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/bccgrants/documents/HRMFacilityPartnershipFundTemplate.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 1.

Future Investments

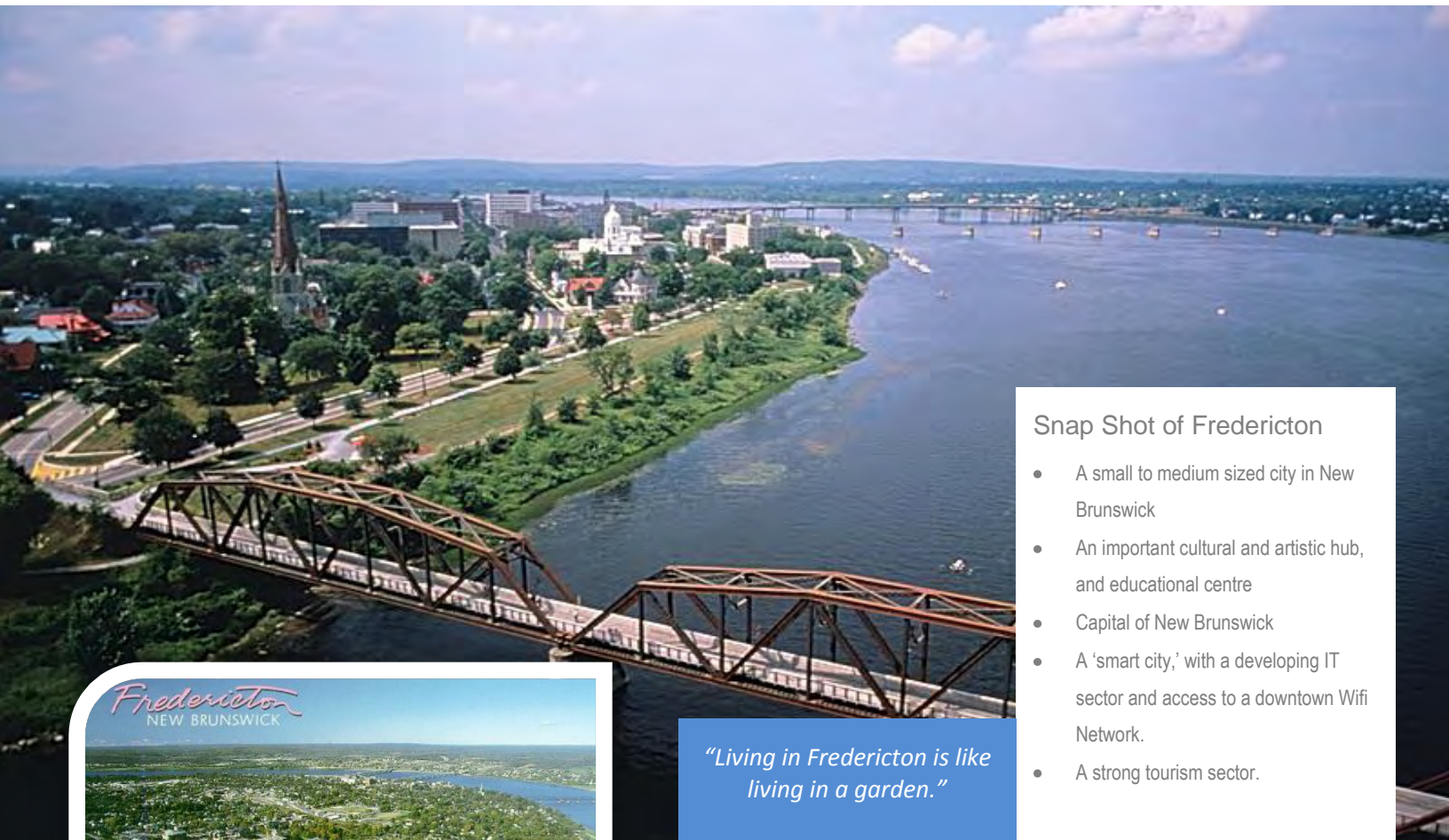
The proposed Convention Centre in downtown Halifax is another major investment that is in the final planning stages. Located in the heart of the entertainment district, the convention centre will be part of a multi-use private development that will also encompass a hotel, an office tower and retail and public space. The convention centre has approved funding from the municipal, provincial and federal governments, totalling \$163 million, of which \$56 million represents the municipal investment. The developer is in the process of securing tenants for the private portion. The project is scheduled to begin in 2012.



Proposed Convention Centre

FREDERICTON

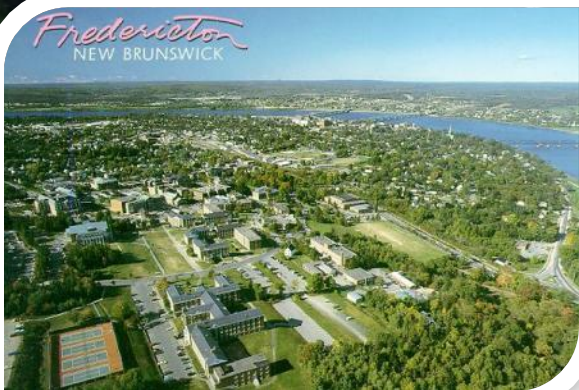
Smart city



Snap Shot of Fredericton

- A small to medium sized city in New Brunswick
- An important cultural and artistic hub, and educational centre
- Capital of New Brunswick
- A 'smart city,' with a developing IT sector and access to a downtown Wifi Network.
- A strong tourism sector.

"Living in Fredericton is like living in a garden."



Fredericton has a small but mighty downtown. It is a compact core, characterized by its human scale, high levels of accessibility, concentration of cultural, retailing and entertainment facilities, as well as its outstanding heritage features. Nestled alongside the St John River, the downtown has strong connections to nature with an extensive trail system and a marina that strengthens the connection between the core and the wider region. It is also a downtown with many leaders and champions who are working towards a shared vision for a stronger core. Yet the downtown faces some challenges, such as growing its residential population, achieving quality urban design, improving safe traffic flow, growing transit ridership and attracting a hotel to support the City's new Convention Centre. Overall, Fredericton stakeholders have taken many positive steps forward to create a diverse and vibrant downtown core.



Downtown Fredericton Timeline 1749 - 2011

1692 - 1876

1692 - France gained control over what today is Fredericton and Joseph Robineau Villebon established a fort where the Nashwaak River drains into the St John. This was an area prominent for fur trading

1759 - The area comes under English jurisdiction after they defeat the French at Ste. Annes Point

1731 - Floods destroy the fort, but Fredericton was established again by French Acadians whom called the area Ste. Annes point. They settled where the Old Government House stands today

1783 - After the American Revolution, around 2000 loyalists settled in Ste. Annes Point

1785 - The University of New Brunswick was founded, which is now a major part of the downtown with a large campus and 9000 students. The city adopts the name Fredericstown and becomes the provincial capital.



1845 - Queen Victoria makes Fredericton a "Cathedral City" and the city landmark that still stands today known as the Gothic Cathedral was completed in 1854



1876 - City Hall is constructed.

1938 - 2011

1938 - The New Brunswick College of Craft and Design is created and stands as the only college of fine crafts and design in Canada

1964 - The Historic Garrison District is named a National Historic Site

1982 - Downtown Fredericton was incorporated

1984 - City Hall designated a national historic site

2001 - The award winning Fredericton-Moncton highway is built

2010 - First Gay Pride parade takes place in city centre. City also investing in revitalizing its City Hall, and pedestrian bridge over the St. John River

1958 - The Beaverbrook Art Gallery was built. The gallery is internationally known for its collection of British paintings

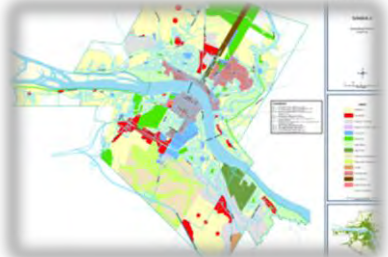
1973 - Amalgamation with surrounding communities of Silverwood, Nashwaaksis, Barker's Point and Marysville

1981 - Westmorland Bridge opened, connecting Fredericton's North and South riverfronts

1996 - All railway tracks removed as freight services are cut. Passenger service cut 11 years earlier; Downtown Fredericton completed streetscape improvements

2007 - City launches its Municipal Plan to guide growth and development, as well as the Green Matters campaign targeting a reduction of emissions from the city

2011 - City builds new Convention Centre, associated with a multi-level parking facility and new office building.



**DOWNTOWN
FREDERICTON**
www.downtownfredericton.ca



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



City Hall (1)

Built in 1876, City Hall is one of Fredericton's most iconic buildings. In 1984, City Hall was designated a national historic site. Currently the building is undergoing a restoration project to protect and revitalize the landmark.



Bill Thorpe Walking Bridge (2)

The Bill Thorpe Walking Bridge, once the city's rail bridge, is a city landmark that connects Fredericton's North and South sides. The bridge is an iconic part of the Fredericton trail system with over 85km of trails. These trails add to the creation of a greener more enjoyable city and in 2009 Fredericton was named Up Magazines "Most Walkable City in Canada".



Christ Church Cathedral (3)

Early settlers build this provincial landmark after Queen Victoria made Fredericton a "Cathedral City". Originally known as the Gothic Church Cathedral, the Christ Church Cathedral is one of Fredericton's oldest buildings. The building is a great example of Fredericton's heritage preservation.



Historic Garrison District (4)

Created when British troops were garrisoned in the area in 1874, the historic Garrison District is a main part of Fredericton's military compound and the city's rich military history. The District is a Class A tourist attraction and has the distinction of being both a National and Provincial Historic Site. Located in the heart of the city's downtown, the District is a hub for cultural activity. The Garrison is a centre of activity with the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival, New Brunswick Fine Craft Festival, Outdoor Summer Theatre, Changing of the Guard Ceremonies, and many other events taking place downtown.



Lighthouse on the Green (5)

The Lighthouse on the Green is one of the major outdoor attractions in downtown Fredericton along the St John River. The Lighthouse provides activities such as outdoor yoga and guided bike tours.



Source: Flash Earth

- *** New Development
- ↔ Regent St. turns into 4 lane road
- ↔ St. Annes Point Dr(connects E toW)
- ↔ Westmorland St. Bridge

- Red outline: Downtown Boundary
- Yellow: King St. Commercial Area
- Blue: Military Compound
- Green: Riverfront Open Space Area
- Light Green: West End Mixed Use Area
- Purple: Boyce Mixed Use Area
- Pink: East End Development-Area/Cultural Centre
- Purple: Carleton St. Institutional Area
- Dark Blue: East End Residential Area
- Grey: Brunswick Street Transition Area
- Red: Institutional Precinct
- Light Blue: George Street Residential Area

500 m

The Fredericton Playhouse (9)

The Fredericton Playhouse was built in 1964 and is among the Province's premiere centres for the performing arts. The Playhouse has undergone certain upgrades and is now an ideal professional downtown venue for local and international artists.

Science East (10)

Located near the downtown, Science East is Fredericton's Science Centre. Science East has over 100 exhibits and is a popular attraction for school aged education groups. It also represents one of the best and most recent examples of land use redevelopment – the building was once the York County Jail.

New Brunswick College of Craft and Design (11)

Built in 1938, The New Brunswick College of Craft and Design is dedicated entirely to fine craft and design. It boasts an impressive teaching staff made up of award-winning fine craftspeople.

Kings Place (12)

Kings Place is Fredericton's downtown mall and shopping centre. The shopping centre has an exciting mix of exclusive retail and service retail outlets.

Beaverbrook Art Gallery (13)

The Beaverbrook Art Gallery located near the Convention Centre is known for its collection of British paintings. The Art Gallery also supports First Nations, Francophone and local artists. The museum displays many pieces by artists that practice in New Brunswick.

Regent Street Warf (14)

The Regent Street Warf is a popular overnight destination for Maritime boating enthusiasts. Located in the downtown core, overnight boaters are able to tie up and enjoy the many shops, bars and restaurants of downtown Fredericton.

Chancery Place (15)

In 2007, the Premier of New Brunswick announced that the Province would lease the new government office building. The lease would be in the new office tower which was built as part of the City of Fredericton's downtown redevelopment project. The development project includes a government office tower, conference centre and parking garage.

Fred-e-Zone

Fredericton is the first free wireless city in Canada. A city owned network has provided many areas of the town with free Wi-Fi services.

Boyce Market (6)

The Boyce Farmers Market was named one of Canada's top 10 community markets. It's a local weekend tradition all year long in the city. The market itself has over 250 local suppliers from across the province, selling products from fresh and healthy food and produce to local handmade crafts.

Provincial Assembly (7)

Built in 1882, the Legislative Assembly Building is the head building for provincial government affairs in New Brunswick. The Provincial Assembly Building holds the seat of government in New Brunswick and is architecturally beautiful.

Fredericton Convention Centre (8)

The newly erected Fredericton Convention Centre is a state of the art facility downtown boasting a 12,500 square foot ballroom. The Convention Centre itself was opened in January 2011 and received LEED certification for energy and environmental building design.

VISIBILITY

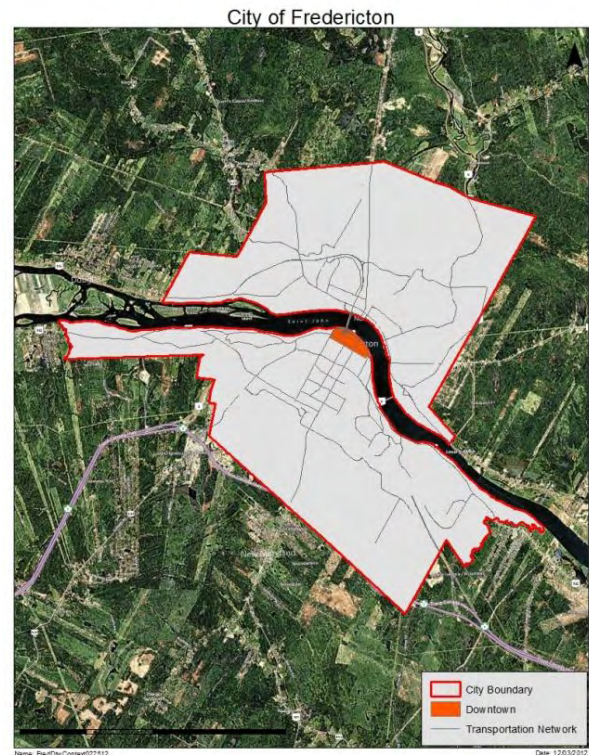
Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

Fredericton is a medium sized city in New Brunswick. The downtown occupies 0.6% of the total City area, and acts as the commercial, cultural, historical centre of the community. As the capital of New Brunswick and home to the provincial legislature, Fredericton's downtown is the focal point of government functions; the historical civic core – The Garrison District; as well as the centre of cultural facilities such as Fredericton Playhouse, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery and Science East.

Downtown Fredericton, like other cities across North America, is recovering from challenges it faced due to the suburbanization of retailing. In response to this challenge, business improvement organizations from across the province formed a group called 'Downtown New Brunswick' to draw attention to this decline and leverage increased public investment. This group was very successful and leveraged \$46 million in provincial funding in 1990 to be shared among all the downtowns across the Province. Fredericton received over \$3.5M in streetscape funding to go towards underground power lines, curbing, decorative streetlamps, trees, flower planters, benches and sidewalks. This was considered to be a turning point for the downtown, bringing renewal and confidence for a brighter future.

Downtown Fredericton is very fortunate to have always held a strong concentration office space and jobs. More specifically, the downtown accommodates over half the City's office space, which has been helped to a large extent by the centralization of provincial office space. Additionally, approximately 10,000 people work in the downtown every day. The City and Province have also made important investments in the downtown to improve the core's economic performance and competitiveness.

The downtown is also fortunate to be supported by the Downtown Residential Platt, comprised of approximately 8,000 residents. This area is adjacent



to the downtown and within a few minutes' walk from the core.

Overall downtown Fredericton positions itself as the traditional heart of the wider city region. It strives to act as the City's commercial, development, financial entertainment and hospitality centre. Increasingly, the downtown is also aiming to increase its residential population and provide diverse housing options to meet the needs of future residents.

Downtown comprises

0.6%

**of Fredericton's area
(82ha)**

1%

**of
the population lives
downtown (567)**

56%

**of office space is
downtown (1,160,766sf)**

Downtown has

121 jobs/ha

or ~10,000 jobs

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Downtown Fredericton is widely considered to be the 'traditional heart and pulse' of the city-at-large. It acts as the City's commercial, development, financial, entertainment and hospitality centre. Downtown stakeholders continue to work hard to strengthen and enhance the core's retailing streets, waterfront and increase its residential population.

Vision

There appears to be significant and unified support for revitalizing downtown Fredericton and planning efforts have generally been highly collaborative. For example, in 2000 an independent committee was established to create a 5 year action plan for downtown Fredericton, with support from the business community across all economic sectors.

The resulting plan 'Developing the Vision - Revitalizing Downtown Fredericton' report outlined 23 strategic directions for encouraging downtown development, improving the physical, economic, cultural and social environment, fostering the creation of quality attractions and events, promoting the features and benefits of downtown Fredericton, and identifying the specific actions in various sectors to implement these initiatives. These general themes have been sustained over the past decade, although a stronger emphasis is now placed on increasing residential growth and housing choices downtown.

In addition a more comprehensive downtown plan is being developed in the coming year. This plan also represents a partnership, as it will be jointly funded by the City of Fredericton and Downtown Fredericton Inc. This plan will reinforce and better articulate the vision downtown Fredericton into the future.

The City is also working on strengthening the waterfront through the Fredericton Southside Riverfront Development Plan (Draft).¹ As this plan is

finalized and implemented it should strengthen the trail systems, the riverfront walkway and outdoor landmarks and activity nodes such as the Lighthouse, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, and the Historic Garrison District downtown. These efforts will contribute to the broader goal of creating a beautiful and active downtown.

The City of Fredericton also promotes itself as a 'smart city' and has some of the best Information Technology infrastructure in North America. The City of Fredericton offers free Wi-Fi services, known as the Fred-e Zone, to many areas of the city including downtown.

Overall, the downtown aims to keep building on its strengths: its heritage features, economic base, natural features and infrastructure along the waterfront.

"What sets us apart is that so many of us have the same vision, the same dream and the same appreciation of the importance of downtown....and we all keep at it."

Leadership and Collaboration

Downtown Fredericton has benefited from significant collaboration between the Province of New Brunswick, the municipality and the private sector through Downtown Fredericton Inc. There are many examples of strong partnerships and combined financing efforts, such improvements to the Fredericton Playhouse and Historic Garrison District along with the creation of a Convention Centre and parking garage. These efforts will likely continue and be strengthened by the new downtown plan that will again align downtown's stakeholders behind a strong vision for the downtown core.

¹City of Fredericton (2011). *Riverfront Development Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fredericton.ca/en/citygovernment/resources/RiverfrontPresentationJune2011.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Fredericton is a vibrant city with a growing and diversifying economy. Over time the city has seen its economy shift from trading to agriculture and forestry to knowledge based industries. Fredericton was recently recognized as one of the five 'Technology Boomtowns' in Canada by the Globe and Mail.² As the Provincial capital, Fredericton is the centre for federal and provincial government offices. Moreover, the City is a centre for heritage and culture, hosting the University of New Brunswick, St. Thomas University and a number of colleges and other learning institutions.³

Residential Development

In the past, most of the residential developments in Fredericton have taken place outside of the downtown. However, the core is increasingly attracting residential growth. For example, Regency Park is an excellent example of a mixed use development at the east end of the downtown. While a new residential development at the west end of downtown is also underway, which will see 36 high-end apartments. Moreover, a City owned property is out for tender in the west end that aims to provide high end condominiums. The City aims for these new residential developments at the east and west ends of the downtown to act as bookends, attracting new growth to the core. In addition, "shop-top housing" is also being encouraged.

The City is also focused on encouraging development in the Residential Downtown Plat, just south of the downtown core to increase its vibrancy.⁴

Office Development

Downtown Fredericton is the economic centre of the city, encompassing 56% of the City's office space. The Province of New Brunswick and the City of Fredericton have played a major role in contributing to this concentration of office space. For example development of the new Chancery Place office building (attached to the Convention Centre) was spearheaded by the City of Fredericton, but has been purchased by the Province. The downtown also attracts financial and banking services, as well as investment firms, law firms and other professional offices.

**Downtown has
~10,000
jobs**

383

dwelling units

\$60.2M

**on construction downtown
(2006-2010)**

**Downtown has
1,160,766sf
of office floor space**

² City of Fredericton. (No Date). *Economic Highlights*. Retrieved from: <http://www.teamfredericton.com/en/communityprofile/economichighlights.asp>. Accessed 2012 March 6.

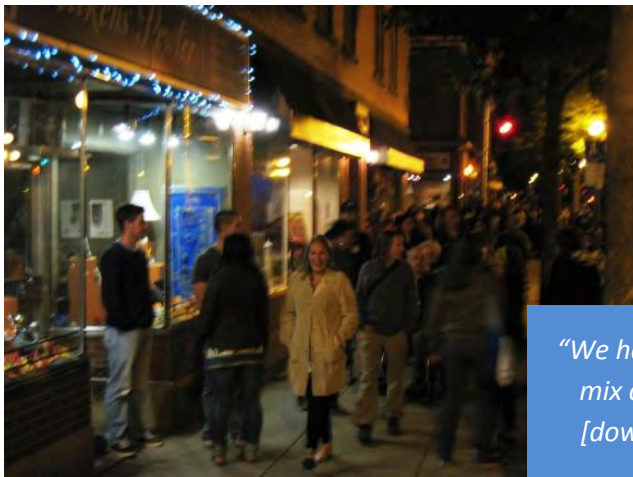
³ City of Fredericton. (2007). "Section 2.8: The Economy" in *Master Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fredericton.ca/en/citygovernment/resources/Section2.8Economy.pdf>. Accessed 2012 March 6.

⁴ City of Fredericton. (2007). "Section 3.5: Residential Town Plan" in *Master Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fredericton.ca/en/citygovernment/resources/Section3.5ResidentialTownPlan.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

The City of Fredericton has also worked hard to develop its information technology infrastructure with projects such as Fred-e-Zone and the Knowledge Park. The Knowledge Park is located outside the core, and is the only other location in Fredericton to offer Class A office space. While the Knowledge Park is evolving into a hub for information technology and is proximate to the City's universities, this type of development has the potential to undermine the downtown's role as the centre of office and employment.

Retail Development

Historically, retail space in Fredericton was located downtown, but this has changed as large regional malls have been built on the city's edge. In response, downtown retailers have attempted to distinguish themselves by providing quality service and high-end boutique retailing. The downtown also offers a unique range of restaurants, bars, cultural and entertainment attractions and a local farmers market. It was noted that downtown Fredericton is appreciated for its ability to provide a more intimate approach to retailing, and has close ties to the local community.



"We have done a really good job at keeping a mix of interesting and unique retail stores [downtown] and we have not just tried to replicate the mall."

Educational & Institutional Development

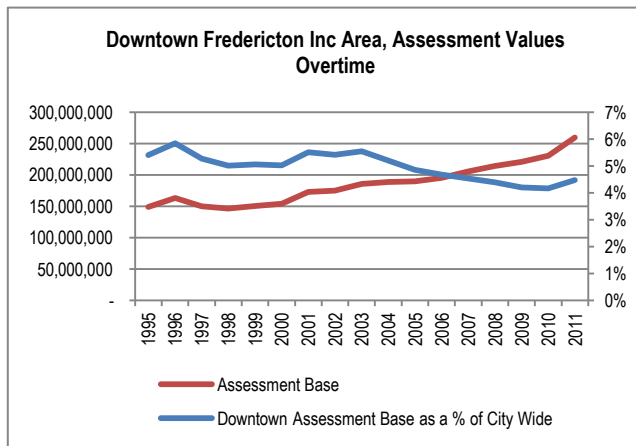
As the capital, downtown Fredericton benefits from many Provincial and Federal government buildings, as well as the historic institutional centre – The Garrison District. In terms of educational facilities, the downtown directly benefits from the New Brunswick College of Fine Craft and Design, which is located in the heart of the core. Indirectly, the downtown also benefits from having two major universities in close proximity – University of New Brunswick and St Thomas University. St. Thomas University is developing a 'universal bus pass' that, along with other benefits, would increase students' access to downtown.⁵



⁵ Fowler, S. (2011). *UNB Looking into Universal Bus Pass*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaq.net/2011/unb-looking-into-universal-bus-pass/-8091>. Accessed 2012 February 28.

Municipal Tax Base

Since 1995, the assessment base generated in the the Downtown Fredericton Inc (DFI) area has been trending upward (please note, the DFI areas is significantly smaller than the downtown study area). However, the proportion of assessment being generated in the DFI area has been decreasing. Presently, the assessment generated in the DFI area is approximately 4.5%, yet this number was near 6% in 1996. It will be important that this trend is more fully understood by downtown stakeholders to learn about the reasons for this decline.



Jobs

There is a strong concentration of jobs downtown, approximately 10,000. These jobs are largely focused on those working in the provincial government, banking, legal and finance sectors. Increasingly there has been the presence of IT firms and call centres in the downtown. This concentration of jobs is critical to supporting the many restaurants and entertainment venues located downtown.



LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Downtown Fredericton has a population of 567 people, which has grown 3.5% between 2001 and 2006. While Fredericton has a small downtown population, the core is heavily supported by the City's inner ring neighbourhoods (known as the Residential Plat) with some 8,000 people. These inner city populations are able to access the downtown by foot and are strong supporters of downtown's retailing, services and activities. Approximately 9% of the downtown's population are international migrants.

Housing

There is limited housing in the commercial core of downtown Fredericton. Available housing is largely in the form of shop-top housing or is in one of the few midrise condo buildings. However, along the south and south west edges of the downtown are more historic residential communities, largely comprised of separate or semi detached houses. The City is increasingly aiming to grow the downtown population, and is contributing to this through residential developments on some on City owned land, as well as planning policies designed to encourage growth in the core.

Safety

Downtown Fredericton takes great pride in its safety record and experiences a low crime rate.⁶ The City of Fredericton and organizations like Downtown Fredericton Inc. are working to restore street lamps, sidewalks and other local infrastructure that makes a city centre feel safer and more attractive to users.

Land Uses

The downtown is primarily used to serve commercial functions (38%). However, the presence of government agencies is strongly reflected in the downtown 'Land Use' map, with almost a third of land designated for institutional uses. Residential neighbourhoods also make a quarter of the land uses downtown.

Downtown has

567

residents

3.5%

**population growth downtown
between 1996-2006 (compared
to 0.1% citywide)**

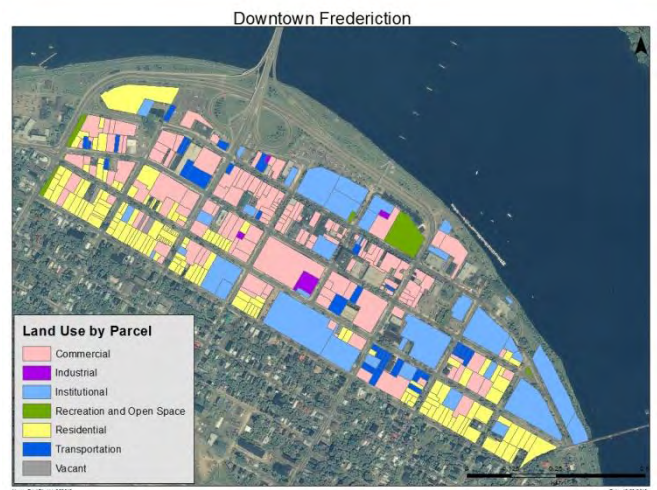
9%

**of the downtown population are international
migrants**

1.2

**is the average household size
(compared 2.2 citywide)**

Commercial	38%
Institutional	30%
Residential	24%
Transportation	5%
Open/Recreation	3%
Industrial	1%



⁶Tourism Fredericton (n.d.). *Quality of Life*. Retrieved from: <http://www.teamfredericton.ca/en/communityprofile/qualityoflife.asp>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Public Realm

Downtown Fredericton has a strong and vibrant public realm, due to a collective commitment to enhance the downtown's heritage, cultural and natural features. Both the City and the Province have invested money in restoring its public heritage areas such as the Historic Garrison District and Phase I of the riverfront redevelopment. The Province, City and the private business sector have invested in street upgrades and enhancements, as well as facade improvements.

The downtown has also worked hard to attract events like the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival and New Brunswick Fine Craft Festival to increase its vitality. The Garrison district also offers outdoor children's summer theatre, Under the Stars classic movie nights, 'Changing of the Guard' ceremonies and an outdoor summer concert series.

The public realm is also influenced by a community push to cultivate more sustainable lifestyles in downtown Fredericton. Along with the protection of many parks, Fredericton has an expansive trail system. This allows people to enjoy Fredericton's landscape and commute downtown in an environmentally friendly way. The Bill Thorpe walking bridge is one of the largest pedestrian bridges in Canada and connects the North and South sides of Fredericton

Connectivity

Downtown Fredericton is laid out on a compact grid and enjoys high levels of connectivity. One challenge noted by interviewees was the decision to widen Regent Street. Resulting in the removal of on-street parking and creating a four lane road through the downtown, this has reportedly increased the speed at which vehicles travel through the downtown and contributed to pedestrians feeling less safe. The lack of high frequency transit routes was also considered a challenge for those aiming to move around Fredericton without a car.

The other major connectivity challenge noted is the four lanes of traffic that run between the downtown and the St. John River. While there is a pedestrian bridge, the highway remains a major barrier for pedestrians. When speaking with Mayor Brad Woodside, he imagined the possibility of closing this highway for brief periods during the summer months (such as on a Sunday afternoon) to create an exciting community gathering place and a continuous space between the downtown and the River. This would encourage residents across the city to get outside and enjoy both the downtown and the waterfront and make use of the City's extensive trail system that radiates outward from the downtown.



Downtown Fredericton takes great pride in the upkeep of its streets and heritage buildings



The Boyce Farmers Market – Recognized as one of Canada's best community markets



Fredericton Playhouse

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

The City of Fredericton is investing in both the east and west ends of its downtown, with the aim that this will help stimulate investment in the centre of the core. These investments have generally been designed to create a more interconnected and sustainable city, as well as support the business and residential sectors' by providing quality amenities and infrastructure. On the east side of the downtown core, the City has worked to develop a cultural and business centre that will draw people and investment into the area. The City has invested in renovating the Fredericton Playhouse, as well as building the Convention Centre, the provincial government office building, and a parking garage. In the west end, the City of Fredericton is focused on residential development that will help create a more compact and dense core. If attractive housing (low rise and some condominiums) are developed in the west, then this will help stimulate a critical mass and foot traffic in the core.

Additionally, investments in the downtown have also focused on the City's natural qualities, by enhancing the waterfront along the St. John River. Downtown Fredericton benefits from being connected to an extensive trail system. The riverfront walkway connects the core to many city landmarks such as the lighthouse, world renowned Beaverbrook Art Gallery and Historic Garrison District. The trail has been developed through strategic public investments.

Overall, for its size, the City of Fredericton has made substantial investments in its downtown core that should serve the City well for years to come. These investments have potentially contributed to a private development response, with \$60.2M was spent on downtown construction projects between 2006 and 2011. While the majority of these investments were in the non-residential sector, there are some significant medium density residential developments emerging in the core. A growing number of residents will likely help to stimulate further interest in the downtown, by generating higher volumes of foot traffic and increase 24/7 vitality.

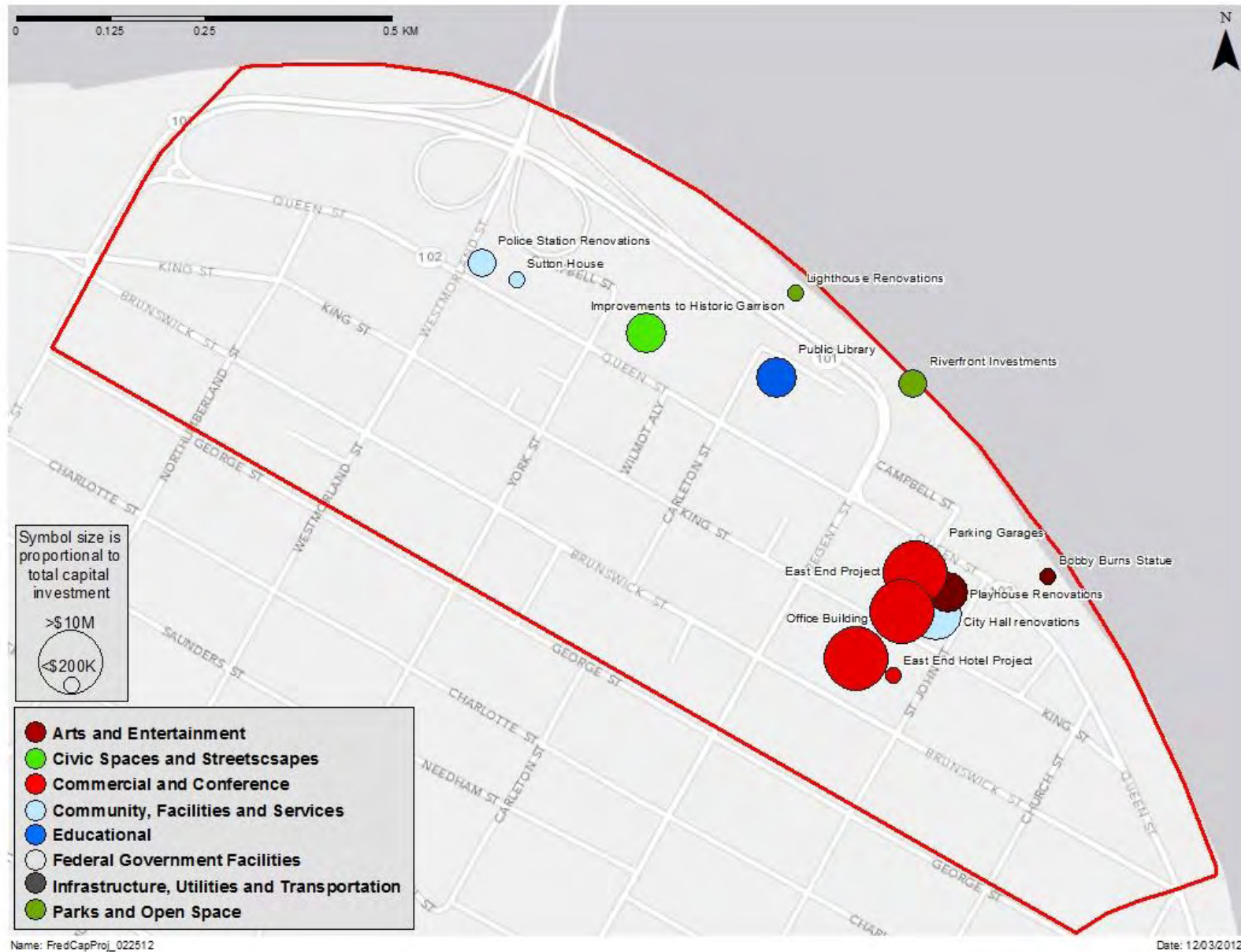
Collection of Municipal Capital Projects Data

Capital projects data for downtown Fredericton was compiled by a staff member from the City of Fredericton, who confirmed the list with the representatives of each City department.

Summary of Capital Projects

Municipal Project	Amount Invested	Municipal Project	Amount Invested
City Hall Renovations	\$1,680,487	Office Building	\$33,936,610
Public Library (various)	\$924,058	East End Project	\$32,981,052
Playhouse Renovations	\$954,767	Parking Garages	\$11,905,477
Historic Garrison Infrastructure	\$551,214	Riverfront investments	\$438,182
Sutton House	\$47,500	East End Hotel Project	\$35,256
Police Station Renovations	\$325,256	<i>Total on map</i>	<i>\$84,097,550</i>
Bobby Burns Statue	\$131,003	<i>Other unmapped (taken from background study)</i>	<i>\$3,579,018</i>
Lighthouse Renovations	\$186,688	Total Capital Investment	\$84,097,550

Municipal Investments in Downtown Fredericton – 2006-2010



Key Patterns of Investment

1. Creating a cultural centre

The City of Fredericton has worked hard to develop a cultural cluster on the east side of its downtown core. This includes a new Convention Centre, a new parking garage, upgrades to the Fredericton Playhouse Theatre and the creation of a new office building. The office building (Chancery Place) was a municipal project, but was supported by the province as the Government of New Brunswick entered a lease agreement for the building worth about \$4.5-\$5 million per year.⁷ These facilities also leverage cultural and institutional facilities that exist in the area, such as the Provincial Legislative building and Beaverbrook Art Gallery. This cultural centre will ideally draw new residents, visitors and employees to the area.

To maximize the benefits of these new investments, particularly the Convention Centre, it will be critical that the City of Fredericton continues with its plans to attract a new downtown hotel. This hotel will be able to accommodate out of town visitors to the Convention Centre and ensure that they are able to stay and fully experience the downtown core. Currently only one of the larger hotels in Fredericton is downtown, near both the Convention and Cultural centre. The Delta, Ramada, Best Western, Comfort Inn and Howard Johnson are all outside of the core, some of which are over 6 km away from the Convention Centre.

The City of Fredericton has also invested in its Historic Garrison District. The Garrison District, which is located downtown, is one of Fredericton's most visited tourist attractions. Since 2006 there has been a good amount of investment in the district totalling \$551,214 spent on upkeep and restoration⁸. The creation of new washroom facilities has made this area more user friendly for tourists and also regular users of the downtown. The City and its partners have also invested in events, such as the outdoor summer theatre, Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival and New Brunswick Fine Craft Festival draw many visitors to the area. .



New Downtown Convention



Changing of the Guard ceremony, Historic Garrison District



Beaverbrook Gallery

⁷ City of Fredericton. (2007). *Province will lease new office tower from city of Fredericton*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fredericton.ca/en/citygovernment/2007Dec21EastEndDeal.asp>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁸ All investment numbers from "copy of DFI request" (excel document)

2. Enhancing the waterfront

Committed to further developing the downtown waterfront, the City of Fredericton and Downtown Fredericton, Inc. invested \$438,182 in key facilities along the riverfront in 2010-11. The Lighthouse benefited from the significant enhancements and renovations totaling \$186,688. Additionally, the riverfront walking trail and the Bill Thorpe walking bridge were also improved. The waterfront is undoubtedly one of Fredericton's key assets and will be a critical element of all efforts to revitalize the downtown.



OTTAWA

a capital grows up...



Snap Shot of Ottawa

- The national capital of Canada.
- The combined cities of Ottawa and Gatineau make up the National Capital Region (NCR).
- NCR is Canada's fourth largest Census Metropolitan Area (1.1M).
- The City of Ottawa amalgamated 11 municipalities and a regional government in 2001.
- Downtown has a rapidly growing residential population.

"The Convention Centre is a game changer for Ottawa"

As the nation's capital, Ottawa is strongly entrenched in the hearts of Canadians. Many Canadians carry an image of downtown Ottawa in their minds, namely 'the Hill' where the Canadian Parliament sits. Yet downtown Ottawa is increasingly diversifying its 'government town' image and positioning itself as a vibrant city in its own right. The downtown has a rapidly growing population and critical mass of activity that is allowing it to emerge as a 24/7 place to live, work and visit. Yet downtown Ottawa faces a range of challenges, including coordination between the many agencies with governance responsibilities for the downtown, congestion from heavy vehicle traffic in the core and creating development forms that achieve site responsive design and support from the community downtown. Ottawa is undergoing many exciting changes and it will be important that leaders capitalize on this momentum to carry it into the future.

Downtown Ottawa Timeline 1792 - 2011

1792 - 1900



1809 – Bytown settled and benefits from booming lumber industry.

1800 – Wrightsville (present day Hull) established, becoming a spring board for the settlement of Ottawa



1849 – First City hall constructed in Bytown.

1826 – Site chosen for the entrance to the Ottawa Canal in present day downtown.

1857 – Queen Victoria designates Ottawa the Capital of the Province of Canada. Influx of delegates and public service officials begins.

1855 – Bytown becomes the City of Ottawa on January 1st



1891 – Ottawa Electric Railway founded and creates a vast public transportation network.

1866 – Parliament Buildings completed. Appear as they exist today after reconstruction in 1927.

1900 – Hull – Ottawa fire devastates the city and much of the waterfront industry.



1912 - 1979



1912 – Chateau Laurier and Union Station built. Ottawa serves as a major rail hub.

1927 – Ottawa Improvement Commission tasked with beautifying downtown.



1950 – Greber plan shifts Ottawa away from industry and manufacturing. Focus on green space and modernism.

1939 – Confederation Square completed with new war memorial and adjacent Central Post Office.



1962 – Juliana Apartments completed. First of many downtown modernist apartment buildings

1959 – National Capital Commission (NCC) created to oversee planning and development of Ottawa and Hull (now Gatineau).



1966 – Queensway completed as an east west linkage. Many parkways completed during this time. New train station built out of the downtown signals the end of railways presence. Spark Street Mall opens- one of North America's first pedestrian only zones

1979 – First Winterlude Festival commences

1983 - 2011



1990's – Influx of tech industries gives Ottawa the title of "Silicon Valley North"

1983 – Transitway begins service. Rideau Centre Opens downtown.

1993 – Removal of Rideau Bus Mall

2004 – CBC Broadcast Centre constructed. Minto Metropole development completed.

2000 – New Ottawa City Hall opens in downtown.



2001 – Eleven municipalities amalgamated to form the City of Ottawa. O-Train completed.

2011 – Lebreton Flats development entering 3rd phase. City in the midst of a condominium construction boom.

2013 – LRT construction to begin with expected completion in 2017 and fully commissioned and operational by mid-2018.



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



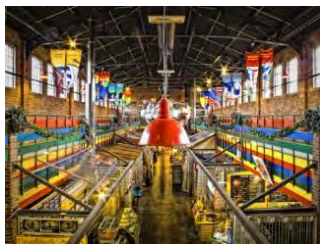
Parliament Hill (1) - Known as, “the Hill”, Parliament Hill is the foundation of the Canadian government. “The Hill” is a National Historic Site of Canada and attracts approximately 3 million visitors a year. The most prominent features are the 3 parliament buildings. Numerous monuments and statues are also on the site.



Rideau Canal (2)
The Rideau Canal, known as the “Scenic Waterway” is the oldest operational canal system in North America. It opened in 1832 after the War of 1812 to act as a supply route between Montreal and Kingston. The canal connects Lake Ontario with the Ottawa River. The Rideau Canal is recognized as a National Historic Site of Canada, a Canadian Heritage River and a UNESCO World heritage site



Ottawa City Hall (3)
Ottawa City Hall is home to government operations of the City of Ottawa.



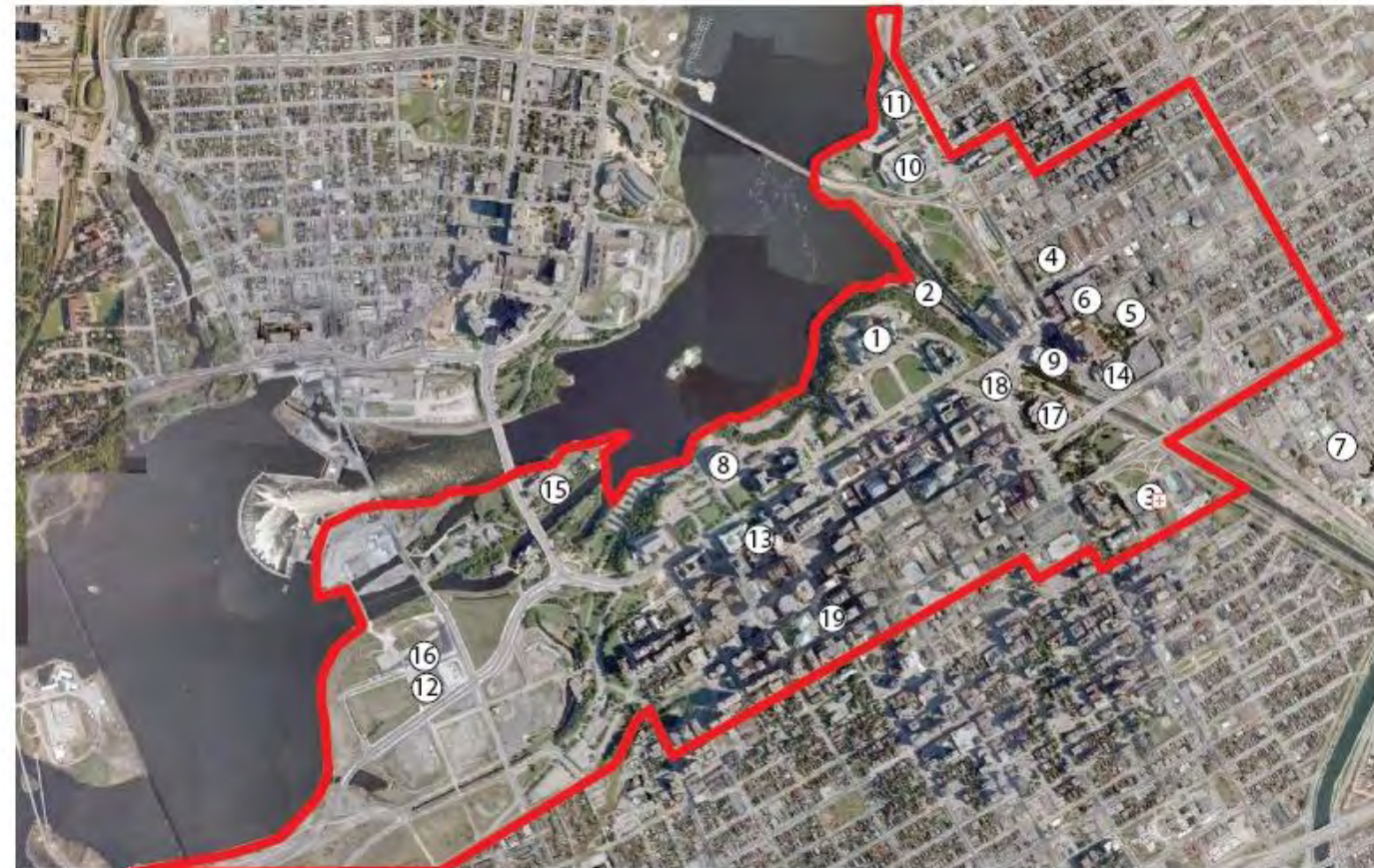
ByWard Market (4)
Established in 1826, ByWard Market has become one of Canada’s oldest and largest markets. The market is Ottawa’s premier tourist attraction and is within the boundaries of Cathcart, Cumberland and George Streets and Sussex Drive. Activities such as cafes, boutiques, galleries, pubs, restaurants, museums and other specialty shops entertain visitors at the market.



Rideau Centre (5)
The Rideau Centre is a 3 level shopping centre that opened in 1983 and acts as a business and transportation hub. The total floor area is 1,020, 849 square feet. There are 150 leased units in the centre. Rideau Centre has a garden rooftop and acts as pedestrian thoroughfare 24 hours a day.



Rideau Street (6)
Rideau Street is Ottawa’s “main street”, flanked by the Rideau Centre and also serves as the gateway to Parliament. It functions as the traditional main retail street and is currently the primary transit access spine Downtown from eastern Ottawa. In addition, it is the main street of the tourism designated area, the cultural precinct, and of the Fashion, Arts and Theatre District. The street is home to ten cultural performance stages and three galleries, is surrounded by hotels and the new Ottawa Convention Centre, and is also currently undergoing revitalization.



Source: Flash Earth

— Downtown Boundary 500m

University of Ottawa Campus (7)

University of Ottawa, known as “Ottawa U”, opened as the College of Bytown in 1848. It has been an anchor for downtown Ottawa since its establishment and is one of the oldest universities in Canada. With approximately 38, 000 students, Ottawa University is the largest bilingual university in North America. Ottawa U specializes in medicine and law.

Supreme Court of Canada (8)

The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court in Canada.

Government Conference Centre (GCC) (9)

The Government Conference Centre was originally built as Ottawa’s Union Railway Station. It was completed in 1912. The GCC acts as a gathering place for governmental functions. The building is designated as a Classified Federal Heritage building.

National Gallery of Canada (10)

The National Gallery of Canada is home to the country’s most comprehensive collection of Canadian art.

Royal Canadian Mint (11)

Established in 1908, the headquarters of the Royal Canadian Mint is housed in downtown Ottawa.

LeBreton Flats (12)

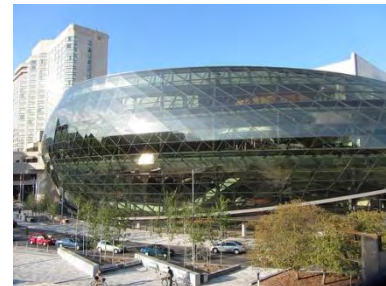
A major Downtown revitalization project announced by the National Capital Commission in 2000. The Flats are becoming one of the most desired communities in Ottawa

Sparks Street (13)

Sparks Street is in the core of Ottawa which puts a visitor in close proximity to Parliament, dining, hotels, entertainment and shopping. This is a historical district as evidenced by the 30 Heritage buildings that are along the route. Sparks Street was one of the first pedestrian streets in North America when it was converted in 1966.

Ottawa Convention Centre (14)

The Ottawa Convention Centre (OCC) opened in 2011, replacing the Ottawa Congress Centre. The OCC is a state of the art convention centre that accommodates major meetings, conferences and exhibits. The OCC almost triples the hosting capacity of the Ottawa Congress Centre.



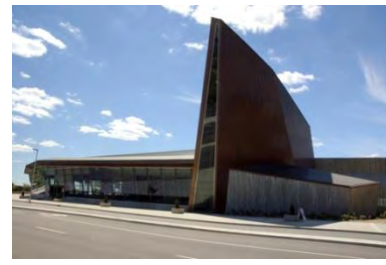
Victoria Island (15)

Victoria Island, located at the border between Ottawa and Quebec, is of great historical importance to Canada and First Nations. The island is also sacred to the Algonquin Nation. During the summer months, its historical roots are celebrated with a re-creation of an Aboriginal Village.



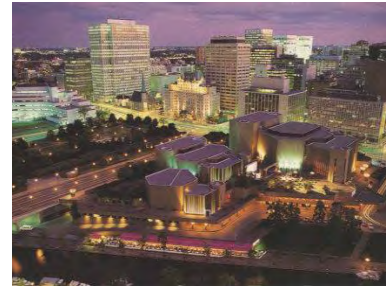
Canadian War Museum (16)

The Canadian War Museum recounts Canada’s military history and its influence on Canada. It is one of Ottawa’s newest museums.



National Arts Centre (17)

The National Arts Centre opened in 1969. The centre contributes to the performing arts by offering performances in French theatre, English theatre, variety, dance and community programming. The centre is recognized for its activities with youth.



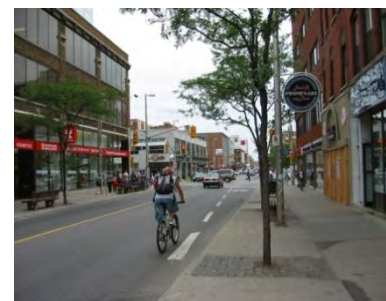
National War Memorial (NWM) (18)

The National War Memorial was a site designed to honour Canadians who were killed in World War 1 but has evolved to honour all Canadians who have died in service to Canada. The NWM hosts National Remembrance Day every November 11.



Bank Street (19)

Bank Street is a historical promenade in Ottawa. It provides some of the best shopping experiences in the city. For instance, “Downtown Bank” stretches 15 city blocks and has more than 200 venues for entertainment such as shops, nightlife, restaurants and services. Bank Street is part of a redevelopment plan initiated in 2006.



Residential Development

From 2003 - 2008 Downtown Ottawa accommodated 37 new residential developments. These developments downtown will invigorate downtown living.

VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

The City of Ottawa is located on the south bank of the Ottawa River in the eastern portion of Ontario and borders Gatineau, Quebec (on the north bank of the Ottawa River). The combined cities of Ottawa and Gatineau form the National Capital Region (NCR) and also Canada's fourth largest Census Metropolitan Area, with an estimated combined population of more than 1.1 million in 2006.⁹

The City of Ottawa was created in 2000 through the amalgamation of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton and 11 local municipalities, including the former City of Ottawa. The downtown now forms a mere 0.1% of this extensive municipality, only a portion of which can be considered "urban." Downtown encompasses a number of important elements, anchored by a strong concentration of institutional, educational and cultural facilities. The downtown also has one of the country's most successful malls (the Rideau Centre), the very busy ByWard Market and contains 40% of the City's office space.

Downtown Ottawa is strengthened by a series of investments in national attractions. These include (but are not limited to) the National Gallery, the National War Museum and Memorial, the National Library and Archives, and the National Arts Centre. Moreover, the downtown benefits from many beautification programs and investments in public spaces that strengthen the national image of Ottawa. These federal investments significantly increase the visibility of downtown Ottawa nationally and even world-wide.

Overall, downtown Ottawa has been resurgent in recent years, attracting significant residential growth which has contributed to increased levels of vibrancy, and diversified its image from a 'government town' to a 24/7 city where people come to work, live and play.

"We have had a reputation for being a sleepy government town...we are working to overcome that....we don't roll up our sidewalks at 5pm.."

Downtown comprises

0.1%

of Ottawa's area (307ha)

1%

**of the population lives
downtown (7,060)**

40%

**of Ottawa's office
space is downtown
(36,692,890sf)**

Downtown has

318 jobs/ha

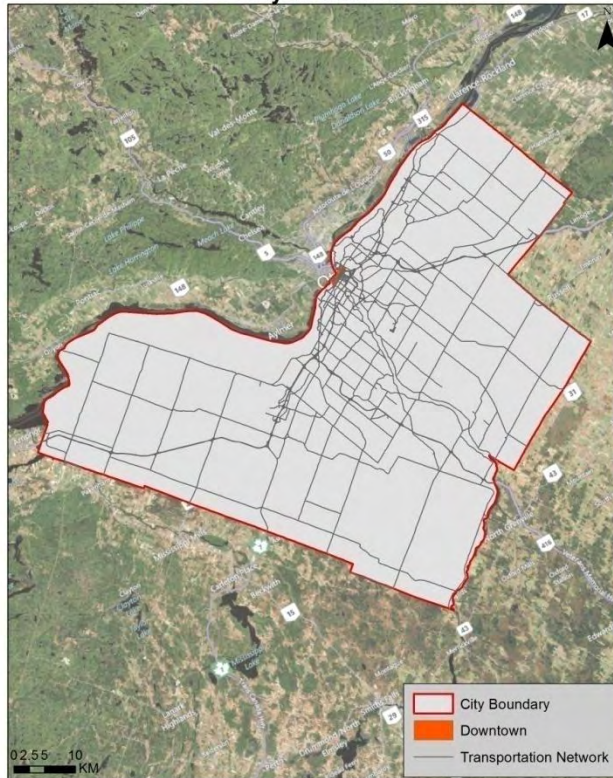
or 97,768 or 19%



View of Parliament Hill and Downtown Ottawa

⁹ Montague, A. (2007). *Ottawa Book of Everything*. Retrieved from: http://www.bookofeverything.com/website/docs/OttawaBOE_Essentials.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

City of Ottawa



**Downtown Ottawa
comprises 0.1% of the
City of Ottawa's total land
area**

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Downtown Ottawa is envisioned as a beautiful and inspiring focal point for the city, with a rich local history that is integrated with the City's unique role as Canada's National Capital. The City also envisions an increased residential population that will be accommodated through urbanization projects.

Vision

The current vision for downtown Ottawa is largely expressed through the downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20 that dates from 2004. This study established a broad urban design framework that aimed to create a lively downtown for residents and visitors alike. The vision for downtown Ottawa also focuses on the City's heritage qualities and the downtown's role as a national capital.

Ottawa's vision for a stronger residential population emerged in the 1960s-80s when there was an exodus of residents from the downtown. To respond to this, the former City of Ottawa developed a new Official Plan in the late 1980s that outlined strong policies to

revitalize 'The Central Area.' While this plan did not have any highly specialized or advanced policies to support downtown growth, it did *'get people excited about the downtown.'* This was followed by a strategic decision in 1994, when the City placed a moratorium on development charges in Ottawa's downtown core under a program known as Re-Do-It (Residential Downtown Intensification). The program was a success, attracting 1,100 new residents to the downtown core.¹⁰ However the absence of development charges created challenges for the City to fund upgrades to some of its aging infrastructure. While the City made use of Section 37 agreements under the Ontario Planning Act (where municipalities negotiate development density in exchange for facilities and services) it still struggled to cover all associated costs. Given this challenge and the strong surge in residential development, development

¹⁰ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (No Date). *Adaptive Reuse: Conversion of a commercial building to condominium apartments*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/bude/himu/inbu/upload/The-Laura-Secord-Building.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 29.

charges have recently been reinstated (late 2011) in downtown Ottawa as this incentive no longer necessary to support residential growth in the core.¹¹

Leadership and Collaboration

Governance in Ottawa is complex; there are three main authorities that have a large hand in shaping both the downtown and the City. The Department of Public Works and Government Services determines the location of federal office buildings. The National Capital Commission (NCC) is a federal crown corporation independent of the government, whose mandate is to ensure the face of Ottawa is positively represented to the nation; it is responsible for “developing, preserving, and improving Canada’s Capital Region for Canadians.”¹² In addition, the City of Ottawa (the amalgamation of 11 municipalities in 2000) has significant planning powers and delivers municipal services to Ottawa’s residents.

A leadership challenge is that federal agencies are not obligated to follow requirements of local municipalities. The NCC has embraced high levels of collaboration with the City of Ottawa, while the Department of Public Works and Government Services also strongly collaborates with the NCC. However, given the federal authorities are not bound by municipal laws, this can create challenges for the City of Ottawa to plan for in the delivery of services to meet the needs of a growing community.

The challenge is exemplified by recent discussions that the federal government could vacate more than 10 million square feet, or one-quarter of its current office portfolio in downtown by 2016. The Department of Public Works and Government Services is expected to leave some of its outdated buildings and take possession of approximately 4.5 million square feet of new office space over the

coming years on Elgin Street, at the Train Yards and in Gatineau.¹³ Given that much of this new office space is not in downtown Ottawa, the relocation could pose major challenges for the downtown, although some see this as an opportunity to attract non-government office tenants.

Overall the need to balance competing priorities among so many agencies with such a large stake in the downtown and the City of Ottawa can create real challenges for collaborative, co-ordinated leadership that prioritizes the downtown.



New condominiums in downtown Ottawa



NCC championed Bixi Bikes in Ottawa

¹¹ Reeveley, D. (2011). Downtown Ottawa needs play structures, green space, for new condo members. Retrieved from: <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Downtown+Ottawa+needs+play+structures+green+space+condo+residents/5605046/story.html>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

¹² National Capital Commission. (2012). *What we manage*. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/property-management/what-we-manage>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹³ Kovessy, P. (2011). *Federal Cuts Weigh on Ottawa’s Office Market: Altus InSite*. Retrieved from: <http://www.obj.ca/Real-Estate/Non-residential/2011-10-06/article-2768280/Federal-cuts-weigh-on-Ottawa%26rsquo%3Bs-office-market%3A-Altus-InSite/1>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

*“Whenever the economy is in a decline...
Ottawa seems to sail smoothly through....
...we are lucky because we have such a stable
employment base from the federal government ...”*

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

The significant government presence lends Ottawa's economy a lot of stability. While there has been a trend toward smaller government, changes to the public sector generally do not happen as rapidly as in the private sector, stretching job losses out over a longer time period. Ottawa is also recognized as a global technology centre and more than 1,800 companies are involved in telecommunications, software, technologies, tourism and media. Ottawa's stable economy has led to a quality of life that is rated among the top 20 cities in the world.¹⁴

Residential Development

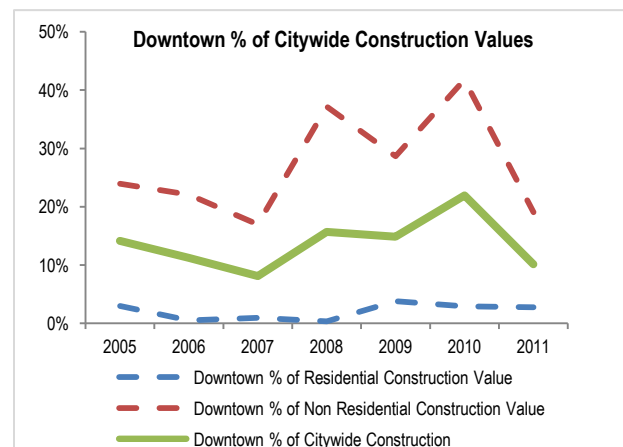
The residential market in downtown Ottawa has been explosive in recent years. Between 2003 and 2008 almost 40 major new residential developments were built in the downtown.¹⁵ Moreover, between 2002 and 2011 the total value of residential construction was \$235M. This major growth is primarily in the form of mid rise and high rise towers, with some smaller scale town house developments and the re-adaptation and repurposing of heritage buildings. The City has supported this growth and waived \$9.2M in development charges since 2004.

The NCC (in collaboration with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) is also leading the rejuvenation of Lebreton Flats, creating a major new residential and mixed use community on a former brownfields site on the west side of the downtown. In 2005, this area became the new home for the Canadian War Museum, and the new residential developments broke ground in 2006. As this area continues to be revitalized it will make a significant contribution to the downtown.

It is also important to note that, while the City of Ottawa is supportive of downtown intensification priorities (in principle) and has been experiencing strong residential growth, new residential developments have faced resistance. Concerns are particularly strong around proposed heights of new towers. Several interviewees expressed concern that debates were focusing too strongly on building heights, rather than good planning outcomes, and that this was leading to a lack of certainty and trust in planning process between the municipality, developers and the community.

Office Development

Approximately 40% of office space is located in downtown Ottawa, with the remainder spread around the city in business parks and federal compounds. Office space downtown grew at a slower rate than it did citywide between 2006 and 2010, at 9% and 13% respectively. This decentralizing trend is reflected in a declining proportion of non-residential development downtown, dropping from 37% in 2008 to 19% in 2011.



The federal government is the main office tenant in downtown Ottawa as well as the City as a whole. As a result, recent proposals to consolidate federal government office space outside of downtown could have a major impact.

¹⁴ City of Ottawa (2011). *Ottawa's Economy*. Retrieved from: http://www.ottawa.ca/visitors/about/economy_en.html. Accessed 2012 January 31.

¹⁵ City of Ottawa (2011). *Downtown Ottawa Construction 2003-2008*. Retrieved from http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/planning/downtown/construction_en.html. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Many of the federally occupied buildings downtown are older and out of date; if these buildings are vacated, they may need to be updated or converted to a new use to attract new tenants. For example, consolidation is being planned for the Department of National Defence, and an estimated 6,000 of its workers (spread across the NCR) will be moved to the former Nortel Networks headquarters on the western edge of Ottawa.¹⁶

Attracting office space to the downtown is also important as there is still a great deal of development potential in downtown. The 'Central Area Development Capacity Analysis 2009: Estimated Office and Employment Potential in Downtown Ottawa' identified 22 vacant sites with office development potential.¹⁷ The distribution of office space in downtown Ottawa is also notable for being heavily focused on the west side of the canal (only 6% is located east of the canal.) Attracting employment east of the Canal would provide economic activity in this part of the core.

Retail Development

The downtown contains about 3% of citywide retail. Moreover the downtown retail inventory is growing at half the speed of citywide retailing (5% downtown compared to 12% city wide). The resilience of downtown retailing, however, is evident in low vacancy rates (around 3%) and the Rideau Centre is said to be one of the most successful malls in Canada. The mall also has plans to open out onto Rideau Street and be better integrated with surrounding properties.

Diversifying the downtown retail offerings will be important for meeting the needs of a growing residential population. During our interviews, several

¹⁶ CBC (2010). Feds to Buy Nortel's Ottawa Campus. Retrieved Jan. 16th, 2012. From

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2010/10/19/ottawa-purchase-nortel-carling-campus.html>

¹⁷ City of Ottawa (2010). *Central Area Development Capacity Analysis 2009: Estimated Office and Employment Potential in Downtown Ottawa*. Retrieved on Jan. 16th, 2012. Retrieved from.

<http://www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/ec/2011/01-25/12%20-%20ACS2011-ICS-PGM-0006%20DOC%201%20-%20Central%20Area%20Development%20Capacity%20Analysis%202009.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 31.

interviewees raised concerns that the vast majority of the big box stores (hardware stores, large format furniture stores, discount departments stores, supermarkets etc) were located outside the downtown and generally not well connected to the City's transit network. There were concerns that this could create challenges for future residents to access the goods that they require for living downtown.

Educational & Institutional Development

The University of Ottawa is located on the eastern edge of the downtown. The University has more than 27,500¹⁸ students and houses 3,000 students on campus. The city also has educational facilities such as Carleton University, St Paul University, Algonquin College, and Le Cité Collegiale.

Municipal Tax Base

Downtown Ottawa makes a substantial contribution to the City's bottom line, generating 18% of the City's property tax revenues. This proportion has remained steady over the past five years.

Jobs

The core accommodated ~100,000 jobs in 2006. Almost half of these jobs (46%) were in the 'Federal Public Administration' and 13% were in 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.' While the number of jobs in downtown Ottawa has grown by almost 30,000 since 1981, the proportion of jobs downtown has dropped from 23% to 19% of jobs citywide.

The no. of dwellings grew

18% from 1996-2006, compared to 8% more dwellings citywide.

\$235M

on residential development
downtown 2002-2011

\$2.4B

on non-residential
development
downtown 2001-2011

**Downtown has
14,715,998sf of office
floor space.**

**Downtown has
97,768**

jobs

¹⁸University of Ottawa (2012). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved from: <http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/default.aspx?tabid=1875#8>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Between 1996 and 2006, the population of downtown Ottawa grew 17% to reach a total of 7,060 residents. The downtown is increasingly vibrant thanks to this growing residential population, particularly around the ByWard Market and downtown Rideau on the east side of downtown; while the west side struggles more with vitality outside the business day, given its major concentration of office space. The downtown is also supported by inner core neighbourhoods, many of which have strong heritage qualities. Despite rapid residential growth, the population density is still relatively low in the downtown at 23 people/ha; this will likely increase as large brownfield sites are redeveloped.

Diversity

“Twentysomethings” represent 25% of the population of downtown (compared to 14% citywide); around the University of Ottawa up to 58% of the population is in their 20s.¹⁹ Additionally Ottawa is ethnically diverse and both downtown Ottawa and the City of Ottawa have a relatively high level of international migrants, 24% and 22% respectively. It has been noted that immigration patterns in Ottawa are unique among Canadian cities, as the City attracts disproportionate shares of both well-educated immigrants and refugees. The former are likely attracted by jobs in technology industries and the federal government; the latter likely come to Ottawa because it is the nation’s capital.²⁰ Downtown also has a smaller average household size of 1.5, compared to 2.5 citywide.

Housing

While almost half of Ottawa’s housing stock is single detached dwellings (43%), three quarters of dwellings downtown are in apartment buildings greater than five storeys. Approximately a quarter of downtown residents (21%) live in apartment buildings that are less than five storeys.



ByWard Market – Vibrant 24/7

Downtown has

7,060

residents

17%

population growth

**Downtown between
1996-2006 (compared
to 13% citywide)**

%24

**of the downtown population are
international migrants
(compared to 22%
citywide)**

**1.5 is the average
household size
(compared to 2.5
citywide)**

¹⁹ City of Ottawa (2012). *Ottawa Counts*. Retrieved from: http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/statistics/counts/counts_jul_04/index_en.shtml. Accessed 2012 January 16.

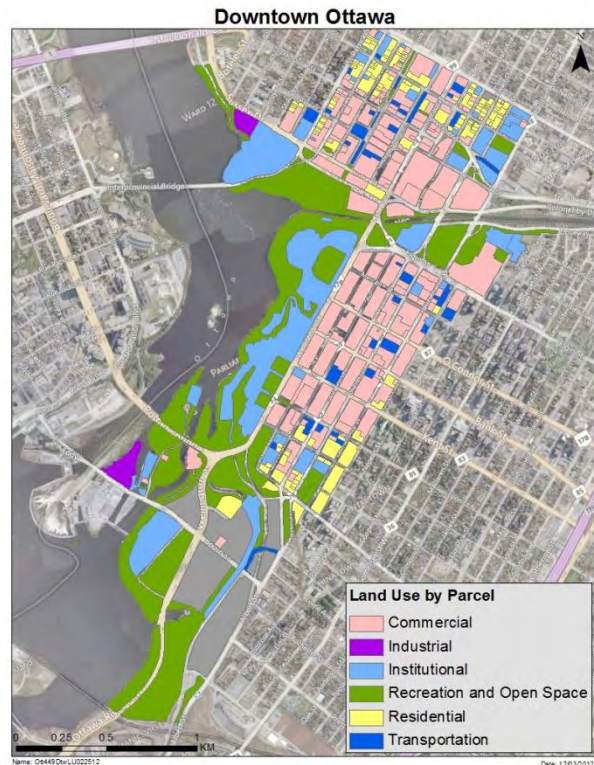
²⁰ City of Ottawa (2012). *Ottawa Counts: The Housing Choices of Immigrants*. Retrieved from: http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/statistics/counts/housing_immigrants/index_en.html. Accessed 2012 January 31.

Safety

Downtown Ottawa is seen as a safe and secure area. It was suggested by an interviewee that the federal government increases the police presence in downtown Ottawa to maintain high levels of security. However, downtown Ottawa, around the Rideau Street core faces challenges with homelessness. It was recently found that the ByWard Market, Rideau Street, and Montreal Road areas (on the downtown’s eastern edge) have the highest concentration of homeless and related social services in the country.²¹ To address this challenge, Downtown Rideau and its neighbouring Business Improvement Areas (ByWard Market and Quartier Vanier) have partnered with many social agencies to develop street outreach, public awareness, job skills development and employment programs²² to improve the situation for homeless people and to also reduce negative perceptions about safety that can stem from homelessness, panhandling and so forth in the core.

Land Uses

As the nation’s capital, Ottawa has substantial areas of open space, comprising almost a third (32%) of total land area. Additionally, the downtown has over 28% of its land utilized for commercial purposes and 19% for institutional purposes. Currently, 9% of land is designated as vacant and 3% for transportation (largely surface parking lots), which present exciting development opportunities for the downtown in the long term.



Open Space	32%
Commercial	28%
Institutional	19%
Vacant	9%
Residential	7%
Transportation	3%
Industrial	1%

Public Realm

There is a strong focus on the public realm in Ottawa. More specifically, one of the key tasks of the NCC is to create a quality public realm and well designed city. The NCC owns and maintains many parks in the downtown. Combined with the Rideau Canal, these amenities contribute significantly to the recreational experience in downtown Ottawa – even on the coldest days. The most recent contribution to Ottawa’s public realm is the “Rink of Dreams” – a 12,500 square foot outdoor skating rink at Marion Dewar Plaza commissioned by the City, the Sens Foundation, and the Hockey Canada Foundation²³.

²¹ Ducharme, P. (2007). *Responding to the Impact of Homelessness on Downtown*. Retrieved from <http://www.canadiandowntownnetwork.ca/pdf/respondingtotheimpactofhomelessnessondowntown.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

²² Ibid.

²³ Brodie, R. (2012). *Rink of Dreams springs to life as community legacy*. Retrieved from: http://www.sensfoundation.com/en/default.asp?sensfoundation=343&urlkeyword=Rink_of_Dreams_Project. Accessed 2012 February 13.

To support a quality public realm, the NCC has its own Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Realty. This committee also advises on long-range plans and policies for the use of public lands and properties, design proposals affecting these federal lands and real property matters. The committee consists of Canada's leading experts in real estate development; environmental, urban and regional planning; urban design; architecture and landscape architecture. This group has significant influence on the quality of developments being achieved in downtown Ottawa.²⁴

The NCC also manages substantial areas of public space in downtown Ottawa, yet interviewees expressed that this open space is not always able to accommodate a wide range of activities and meet the needs of a growing downtown population. More specifically, it was noted that this green space is often decorative, ceremonial and/or set aside for accommodating large national events, rather than meeting the daily needs of active downtown citizens. It was seen as the responsibility of the City of Ottawa to provide public space that can be utilized by a growing, active downtown population.

Another critical element of downtown Ottawa's public realm is the City's heritage features. Downtown Ottawa prizes its heritage features and they are well protected by a range of progressive policies. However it is reported the City's heritage qualities are often closely related to anti development sentiments and concerns about building height. It will be important that the City continues to address these issues through its downtown planning processes, expanding the dialogue to consider good planning outcomes rather than height per se, as well as building relationships and trust between the private sector and the community.

Connectivity

Downtown Ottawa benefits from a high level of connectivity and generally the core is very walkable. In winter, sidewalks are cleared of snow to increase movement. The City also benefits from over 170km of bicycle paths, many of which connect to the downtown. For example, there is a large loop around the core that passes by many of downtown's major attractions. Dedicated bike lanes installed in 2011 along the downtown stretch of Laurier Avenue have significantly increased bicycle traffic in the area. The City also has an extensive bus system that provides mass



Skating on the Rideau Canal - A much loved past-time and great way to bring people downtown in the winter



Crowds in front of the Bay Department Store

²⁴ National Capital Commission. (2012). *Corporate, Advisory, and Special Committees*. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadacapital.gc.ca/about-ncc/corporate-advisory-special-committees>. Accessed 2012 February 13.

transit service downtown and across the Ottawa region. The system has the highest per-capita ridership for a region of its size in North America.

Downtown Ottawa, will soon enhance its levels of connectivity with the development of a 12.5 km light rail transit line that will extend from Tunney's Pasture to Blair Road, with 13 transit stations. The approved route includes a downtown tunnel from Lebreton Flats to the University of Ottawa, with four stations at Lyon/Bay, O'Connor/Metcalf, the Rideau Centre and the University of Ottawa Campus. This project is intended to reduce the existing heavy concentration of bus traffic through the downtown. Planners and designers are working with local stakeholders to mitigate the impact "on the street" at key transit interchanges.

The historical focus of downtown's retail, arts and fashion activities is Rideau Street. Under the watchful guidance of local business interests, the area continues to evolve. In 1983, in an attempt to halt the steady decline in retail market share of downtown resulting from suburban competition, the local, provincial and federal governments undertook the Rideau Area Project, in partnership with several private developers. The major investment was the Rideau Centre, which is now the largest regional shopping facility in Ottawa. Following extensive consultation, an agreement was reached on a plan to improve vehicular circulation in the area (including the ByWard Market). Another feature of the plan was the creation of a bus-only Transit Mall, modelled on the highly successful Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis. Rideau merchants remained concerned about the impact of an enclosed transit mall adjacent to street-front shopping, and argued for better pedestrian linkages between the mall and the street. A compromise solution that sought to replicate the climate controlled environment available within the mall led to the construction of glass and steel enclosures along each sidewalk, which had the unfortunate effect of restricting rather than enhancing the customer experience. When these ungainly, hard to maintain structures were removed in 1993, the street was rebuilt as a traditional main street, open to all traffic. With the support and advocacy of the merchants, a \$4.2 million dollar investment in design and landscaping Rideau Street was made by Downtown Rideau property owners and businesses and the City of Ottawa²⁵.

With Rideau Street functioning as an arterial road once again, Rideau serves as a transit corridor, generating heavy bus traffic along Rideau Street. This activity is compounded by a large number of heavy trucks that pass through on their way to Quebec. Rideau Street is a segment of the only interprovincial truck route in the National Capital Region. This high level of heavy traffic reportedly makes Rideau Street challenging to navigate for the thousands of commuters and patrons that pass through the area daily. With the prospect of additional pedestrian traffic related to the planned LRT, stakeholders will be working with the City and transit authorities to arrive at satisfactory design solutions.

Right: Rideau Canal,
Petr Maur



²⁵ Downtown Rideau BIA. (No Date). *History*. Retrieved from: <http://www.downtownrideau.com/index.php?page=181&sec=7>. Accessed 2012 February 13.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

Downtown Ottawa has benefited from some significant investments from all three levels of government in recent years. In the past decade, one of the most significant tripartite investments has been in the new downtown Convention Centre (opened to great acclaim in 2011). Moreover downtown Ottawa will soon benefit from the proposed LRT line that again represents collaboration between all three levels of government.

As the nation's capital, Ottawa (particularly the downtown) is heavily influenced by the federal government. The federal government has invested heavily in national institutions in the core, as well as services and amenities to promote Ottawa's image around the world. More specifically, in the past 10 years the federal government has invested \$435M in upgrading and redeveloping federal government office buildings. In addition, the federal government has had a key role in funding the Canadian War Museum (\$7.5M), the Supreme Court and Archives (a \$3M investment) and other federal government institutions.

The City of Ottawa has also made some important investments in the core. For example, the City supported investment in the Convention Centre and others arts and entertainment facilities, such as Arts Court. The City of Ottawa has also made a major investment in the downtown via the removal of development charges for residential development. This investment totals \$9.2M since 2004 and has resulted in significant returns for the City.

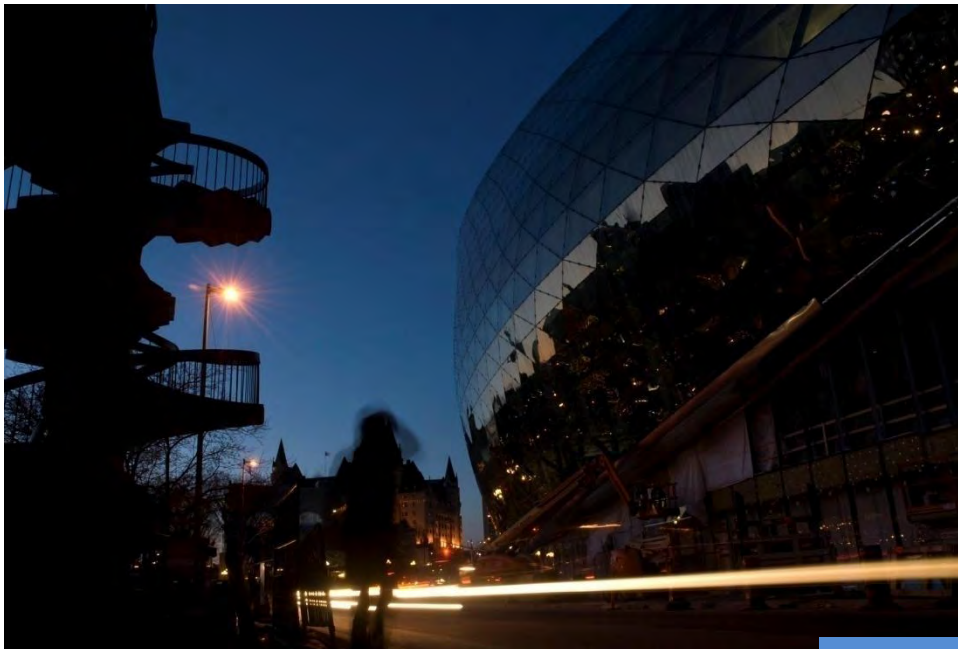
The City waived
\$9.2M
in development charges from 2004 to
2011

Capital Projects Data Collection Process

From the outset it is critical to acknowledge that the project team faced significant challenges in the compilation of a complete set of Capital Projects Data for the City of Ottawa. Therefore the team utilized a methodology to present capital projects data that differs from the other case studies. More specifically to develop the capital projects map, the team utilized Building Permit Data for the past 10 years. The team identified the value of building permits that were classified as 'institutional' in the City's record of building permits. The team also examined each of the building permits that were classified as 'commercial' to ensure there were no public investments in this list, i.e. the Convention Centre was classified as a 'commercial development' but has been included in the list below. This methodology has some limitations as it fails to capture investments being made that do not trigger applications for building permits i.e. social programs, small scale public realm upgrades and/or undertaking a detailed planning process. Moreover this approach fails to account for the municipal proportion of investment; rather it captures the total value of the capital investment. However, given the data limitations faced, this approach is considered optimal for gaining a preliminary spatial understanding of where, when and how much is being invested in public and quasi public facilities over the past decade in downtown Ottawa.

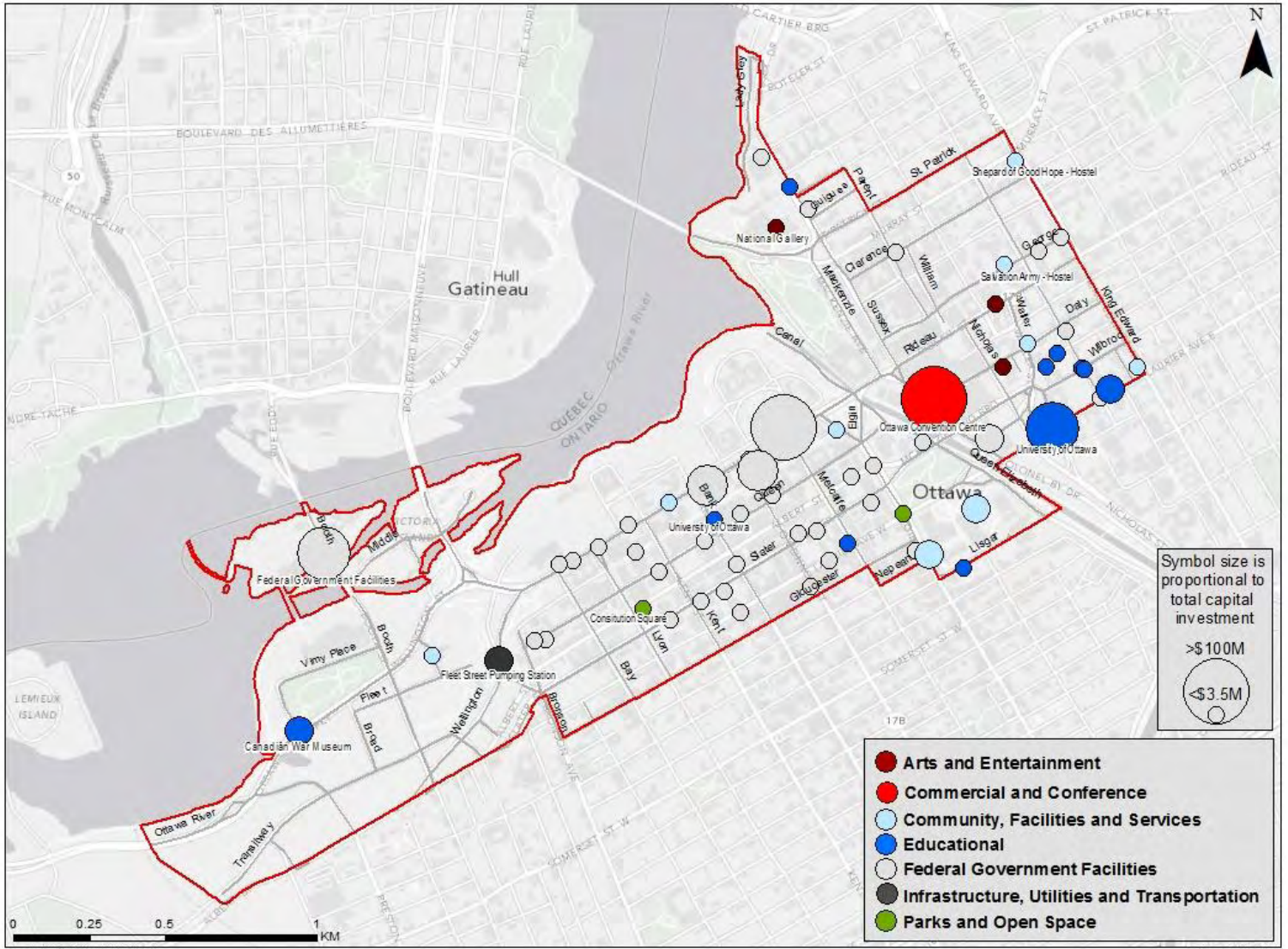
Summary of Public Investments

Public Investment	Total Capital Investment	Public Investment	Total Capital Investment
Federal Government Office Buildings	\$435,027,901	Main Library Branch	\$755,960
Ottawa Convention Centre	\$212,134,570	Post Office	\$490,000
University of Ottawa	\$117,080,400	Ottawa School of Art	\$431,000
Provincial Courthouse	\$10,529,360	Constitution Square	\$393,800
Canadian War Museum	\$7,544,050	Arts Court	\$320,000
Department of National Defense	\$6,340,000	Canadian Firefighters Memorial	\$205,325
City Hall Renovations	\$5,851,664	Fire Station 13	\$80,000
Fleet Street Pumping Station	\$4,183,000	L'Esplanade Laurier	\$48,400
Supreme Court and Archives	\$3,040,000	Sheppard of Good Hope - Hostel	\$34,000
The Ottawa Mission - Hostel	\$1,189,000	National Gallery	\$30,000
Salvation Army - Hostel	\$840,810	Lisgar Collegiate Institute	\$26,000
		Confederation Park	\$8,700
		Total Capital Investment in Public Facilities and Buildings	\$806,583,940



“The Convention Centre is a game changer for Ottawa”

Map of Public Investments in Downtown Ottawa (*Value of Institutional Building Permits 2000 and 2010*)



Key Patterns of Investment:

Convention Centre

The new Ottawa Convention Centre (opened in 2011) is one of the most significant public investments in the downtown. The project's cost was \$212M, for a four-level 192,000 square feet (17,800 m²) facility. The cost was shared by three levels of government: ~\$50 million came from the federal government; ~\$50M from the Ontario government; ~\$40M from the City of Ottawa and the remaining was borrowed by the centre itself.²⁶ Today, the facility is owned by the provincial government. It is estimated that the Ottawa Convention Centre will boost tourism and business investment, generating an estimated \$200 million in economic benefits over the next five years. Moreover, a high level of confirmed events has resulted in the creation of almost 3,000 jobs.²⁷ The facility is also associated with the Westin Hotel and the Rideau Centre, which will help stimulate the core's economy and increase foot traffic and the number of tourists downtown.



New Downtown Convention Centre

Development Incentives

The City launched the Residential Downtown Intensification (Re-Do-It) initiative in 1994, to help reverse the decentralization of the downtown's residential community and help revitalize the core. The program included a waiver on development charges and a reduction in building permit fees for residential development in targeted areas. The program continued after amalgamation and in 2002 the program was extended to include the east side of the downtown (initially, the program only applied to the downtown area west of the Rideau Canal.) Removing these charges was also coupled with other complementary actions, such as: expediting development approval processes, reducing parking requirements, compiling and advertising a list of vacant sites, and undertaking plans to enhance the public realm and connectivity. Overall the City of Ottawa has waived \$9.2M in development charges dating back to 2004.²⁸ The City also made some reforms to property tax rates for apartment buildings. Recently, this program has expired and development charges will again apply to the downtown. Overall, this program was considered highly successful. While the City faced significant revenue loss in the short term, it was found that typically fee exemptions were recouped in less than four years through an increased property tax base.²⁹ As well, the removal of these charges helped to attract \$235M in downtown development between 2002 and 2011.

Future Investments

The City of Ottawa has plans to develop an LRT line that will significantly improve connectivity around the City of Ottawa. Cost estimates for this project are in the order of \$2.1B, with the province and the federal government each making \$600M available.³⁰ Investments in higher order transit are well known for their ability to deliver a private development response. Those interviewed for the purposes of this project, had also commented on development plans currently being discussed along the proposed line and at future LRT stations.

²⁶ Canwest Media. (2008). *Ontario Hands over \$50m for new Congress Centre*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=c6d97904-5383-490a-9da3-650c8259649f>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

²⁷ Government of Ontario (2011). *Ottawa Convention Centre Opens for Business*. Retrieved from: <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2011/04/ottawa-convention-centre-open-for-business.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

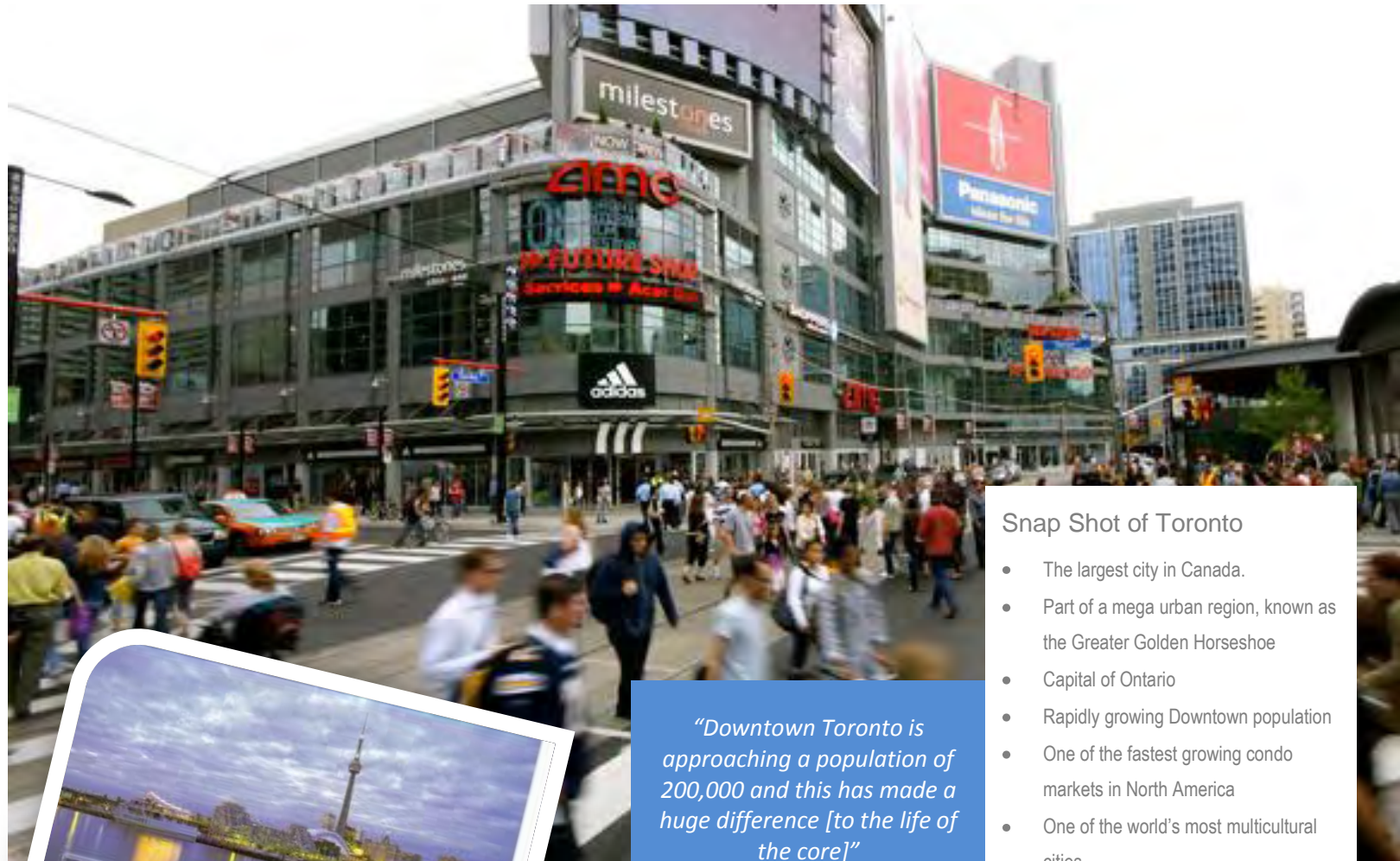
²⁸ Information provided by the City of Ottawa on February 10, 2012 1:20 PM

²⁹ City of Ottawa (n.d.). *Residential Intensification Case Studies*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/upload/Exemption-from-Planning-and-Development-Fees-Ottawa-Ont.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

³⁰ CBC News. (2011). *Ottawa LRT Announcement Set*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/07/06/ottawa-ltr-announcement-watson.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

TORONTO

Canada's largest metropolis...



Snap Shot of Toronto

- The largest city in Canada.
- Part of a mega urban region, known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- Capital of Ontario
- Rapidly growing Downtown population
- One of the fastest growing condo markets in North America
- One of the world's most multicultural cities.
- Canada's largest financial centre.

"Downtown Toronto is approaching a population of 200,000 and this has made a huge difference [to the life of the core]"



Downtown Toronto is the heart of the City of Toronto, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the urban region known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Today, downtown Toronto is bustling, vibrant and alive in almost every corner, but this has not always been the case. A strong residential influx over several decades has been at the centre of this dramatic transformation. Downtown Toronto now boasts a strong financial core, complemented by a vibrant mosaic of neighbourhoods that offer distinct characters, heritage qualities, scales, densities and cultural influences, all of which are woven together by a series of 'main streets'. Yet downtown Toronto faces many challenges, such as improving mobility and managing high levels of congestion, servicing new populations, connecting emerging waterfront neighbourhoods to the historic core, attracting a diverse range of residents and household types, upgrading aging infrastructure, managing pollution and dealing with constraints on available land.

Downtown Toronto Timeline 1793 - 2011

1793 - 1921



1793 – John Graves Simcoe founded the “Town of York” as the capital of the new colony of Upper Canada

1813 – Battle of York fought as part of the War of 1812. The Americans loot the town and set many buildings on fire.



1817 – Toronto General Hospital constructed.

1827 – King’s College, later renamed “University of Toronto” founded by royal charter.

1834 – City of Toronto incorporated

1841 – Toronto loses its capital status with creation of United Province of Canada. Montreal and Quebec City outpace growth and development



1845 – Toronto Board of Trade established.



1851 – Construction of the railway begins.

1858 – Grand Trunk Railway builds first Union Station.

1869 – Eaton’s Department Store founded.

1873 – Second Union Station built to accommodate for increased growth and rail traffic.



1899 – Toronto City Hall Constructed. Now known as “Old City Hall”

1904 – The “Great Fire” destroyed much of the Toronto’s industrial and manufacturing sector in the downtown. Toronto Industrial Exhibition (later called the CNE) takes place for the first time.

1911 – Toronto Harbour Commission created by the federal government to improve the quality of the city’s waterfront. Plan drafted in 1912.

1921 – City creates Toronto Transportation Commission to take over from failing Toronto Railway Company.



1927 - 2011



1929 – Canadian Pacific Railway completes the Royal York Hotel

1949 – Construction of Regent Park, Canada's first public housing project, begins.



1966 – Gardiner Expressway Completed, one of many proposed downtown highways.



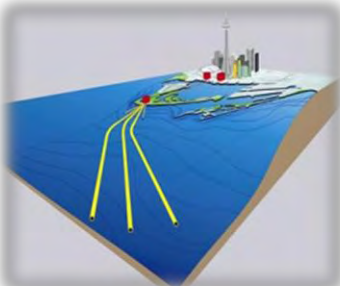
1971 – Premier William Davis halts the Spadina Expressway project at Eglinton Avenue in response to widespread citizen opposition led by Jane Jacobs.

1976 – The CN Tower and Toronto Eaton Centre open. City's population surpasses that of Montreal, becoming the largest city in Canada.



1998 – Premier Mike Harris abolished Metro Toronto to create the single-tiered City of Toronto to govern the same territory encompassed by Metro and its composite municipalities. Mel Lastman becomes the first Mayor of new City of Toronto

2004 – Partnership between City of Toronto and Enwave Energy Corp. results in the creation of the world's largest Deep Lake Water Cooling System.



2010 – City hosts the G20 Summit, the most expensive security operation in Canadian history.

2011 – Concord City Place development nearing completion. Beginning in 2003, it currently has built 5000 of 7500 planned units.

1927 – Union Station officially opened by the Prince of Wales.

1930 – Eaton's store at College and Yonge constructed. The 38 storey tower was never completed due to the depression.

1953 – Province creates Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, comprised of Etobicoke, York, Scarborough, North York, and the City of Toronto.

1954 – Yonge St. subway begins operation from Union Station to Eglinton Ave. Hurricane Hazel strikes the city, flooding large areas and killing 81 people.

1965 – New City Hall opens at Nathan Phillips Square.

1969 – Toronto-Dominion Complex, designed by Mies van der Rohe, is completed, building upon the existing Toronto Dominion Tower.

1972 – Mayor David Crombie creates a 45ft building height restriction.

1970s – Creation of St Lawrence Neighborhood. This neighbourhood has been critically acclaimed as a major success in urban planning.

1987 – City of Toronto becomes coordinator of the PATH network and oversees its management and development.

1995 – decision to "deregulate" zoning in "the kings," a project initiated by the Canadian Urban Institute.

2002 – Yonge and Dundas Square completed as part of the City's attempt to revitalize the downtown.



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown

Yonge Street (1): Yonge Street is Toronto's spine, dividing the city into eastern and western halves. Along Yonge there are numerous tourist attractions, retail stores, restaurants, hotels and theatres. Over 50 million people visit the area annually. Downtown Yonge BIA was established by the business community to promote and improve the area as the preeminent commercial destination in Toronto.

Yonge-Dundas Square (2): Completed in 2002, Yonge-Dundas Square has become the city's most prominent public meeting place and venue for festivals and performances. It is the first public square in Canada to be maintained through a public-private partnership.

Ontario Place (3): Located on the shore of Lake Ontario, Ontario Place is owned and administered by the Province of Ontario as a multi-use attractions facility. In 2010, a major redevelopment plan was announced, and the province has since closed the site.

Chinatown (4): Chinatown, centered on the intersection of Dundas Street and Spadina Avenue, hosts ethnic shops, restaurants, street vendors and an array of other services to tourists and residents of Toronto.

Little Italy (5): Little Italy is located on College Street between Euclid Avenue to Shaw Street and has many trendy shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

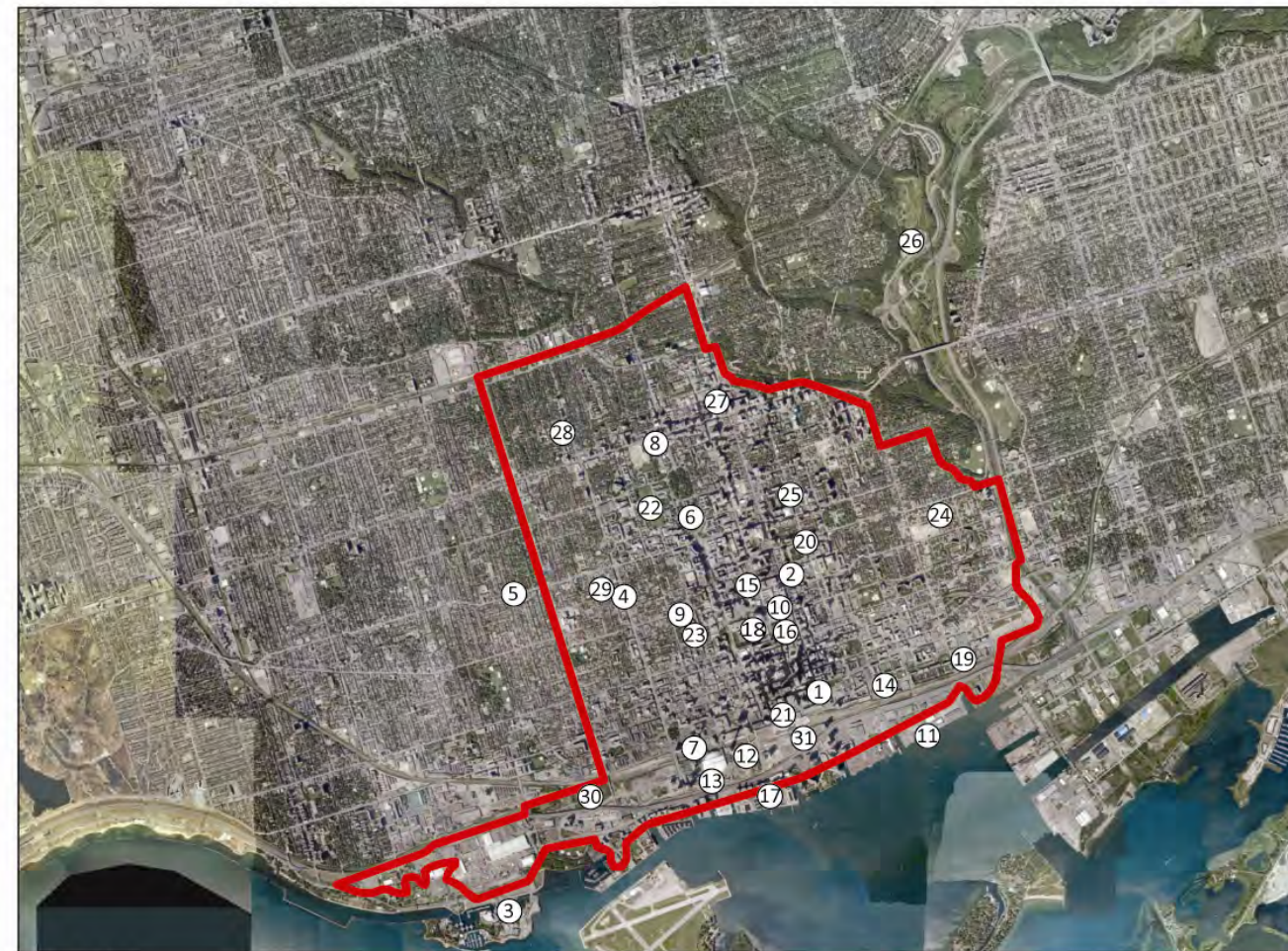
Queen's Park (6): Queen's Park is a park and the site of the Ontario Legislative Building, completed in 1893.

Metro Toronto Convention Centre (7): Metro Toronto Convention Centre is one of the top convention halls in North America. The 60,000 square foot hall provides a venue for large events such as the G-20 Conference.

Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) (8): The ROM was opened in 1914 by the Ontario Government and was recently renovated and expanded to include the iconic 'Crystal,' designed by Michael Lee-Chin. 1.6M people visit the ROM per year.

Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) (9): The AGO opened in 1900 by a private group and today is one of the largest art museums in North America. The AGO was recently renovated and expanded by Frank Gehry and has become an iconic building for the Downtown.

Toronto Eaton Centre (10): The Toronto Eaton Centre is the largest mall in downtown Toronto and the top tourist attraction in Toronto. It boasts the highest sales per square foot ratio in North America with \$1143 of sales per square foot of retail space.



Source: Flash Earth

— Downtown Boundary 1 km

Waterfront Revitalization (11): Toronto's Waterfront Revitalization is the largest urban revitalization project in North America. Six areas on Lake Ontario are being remediated and developed into livable and environmentally sound communities, including a new George Brown College campus and the 2015 PanAm Games Athletes Village.

CN Tower (12): The CN Tower, standing at 553 meters, is the most prominent structure in Toronto's skyline. The CN Tower, which has been classified as one of the Seven Wonders of Modern World, was completed in 1976. The Tower is a major attraction that provides an outstanding view of the city, restaurants and shopping.

Rogers Centre (13): The Rogers Centre, opened in 1989, is a primary entertainment venue in Toronto. The Centre is the home field for the Toronto Blue Jays and Toronto Argonauts. This facility has a capacity well over 50,000 and is one of the first to have a retractable roof.

St. Lawrence Market (14): St Lawrence Market is the largest indoor market in Toronto. The south market offers vegetables, fruits, meats and other types of shops. The north market is utilized by farmers on Saturdays during the summer months.

Toronto Coach Terminal (15): Toronto Coach Terminal, opened in 1931, is the main connecting bus station in Toronto. Several bus companies have lines that utilize the station.

Old City Hall (16): Old City Hall, a National Historic Site since 1984, is located next to the current city hall and was used by city council from 1899 - 1966. Today it is used by the Ontario Court of Justice.

Harbourfront (17): Harbourfront is a venue that provides both tourists and residents a variety of activities such as entertainment, shopping and sight-seeing. The Harbourfront hosts more than 4,000 events a year and more than 12 million visits occur annually.

Nathan Phillips Square (18): Completed in 1965, the plaza is located in front of Toronto's City Hall and hosts many events. The site is active in the winter when the fountain is transformed into a skating rink.

Distillery District (19): The revitalized Distillery District opened in 2003 and is a destination for arts and culture. The former industrial district is one of Toronto's premiere tourist attractions and a National Historic Site.

Ryerson University (20): Ryerson is an urban campus situated in the downtown core of Toronto. Ryerson is recognized for its career focused programs. Approximately 28,000 students attend Ryerson.

Union Station (21): Union Station is a National Historic Site and the primary transportation hub in Toronto and most heavily used rail station in Canada, with more than 250,000 people passing through every day.

University of Toronto (22): The University of Toronto is consistently rated as one of the top universities in the world. Approximately 52,296 students attend the downtown campus.

Ontario College of Art and Design University (23): OCAD University is the largest art and design institute in Canada. Approximately 3,500 students attend.

Regent Park (24): Regent Park is Canada's first and largest social housing project. The City of Toronto approved a revitalization plan in 2003, and redevelopment began in 2005 with an expected 15 years completion schedule.

Church-Wellesley Village (25): The neighbourhood is Toronto's largest Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) neighbourhood and location of Toronto's internationally-acclaimed Pride Week.

Evergreen Brickworks (26): Formerly an industrial brick making area, the site has been transformed into an illustration of green design and urban sustainability. The year round environmental community centre utilizes the historic factory buildings.

Yorkville (27): Yorkville is Canada's most expensive shopping districts and one of the most expensive in the world. The Bloor Street BIA was created to implement the Bloor Street Transformation Project, which created a more pedestrian-friendly and upscale streetscape.

The Annex (28): The Annex is a residential neighbourhood north of the University of Toronto. Urban theorist Jane Jacobs called The Annex home and was instrumental in preventing construction of the Spadina Expressway, which would have divided the neighbourhood.

Kensington Market (29): Kensington Market is a unique multicultural market that sells fruit, vegetables, meats, baked goods and similar items. Kensington Market was designated as a National Historic Site of Canada in 2006.

Historic Fort York (30): This historical interpretive centre and exhibit complex comprises Canada's largest collection of original War of 1812 buildings and is now a popular tourist attraction. The Battle of York occurred here in 1813.

Air Canada Centre (31): Home of the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Toronto Raptors, the Air Canada Centre is a multi-purpose sporting arena completed in 1999. Maple Leaf Square, adjacent to the Air Canada Centre, is the site of recent extensive high-end residential and commercial development.



VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

Toronto, located in Southern Ontario on the north-western shore of Lake Ontario, is Ontario's capital and Canada's largest city. With over 2.5 million residents in the city and over 5.5 million in the metropolitan area (the GTA), Toronto is the fifth most populous city and seventh largest metropolitan region in North America. Downtown Toronto is the centre of the wider urban region known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), home to over 8.1 million residents—approximately 25% of Canada's population.

Downtown Toronto encompasses the City's major financial core with 53% of citywide office space and Canada's largest stock exchange. Downtown Toronto also has one of the fastest growing condominium markets in all of North America with 17,000 units built in the core between 2001 and 2006.¹ Additionally, the downtown offers a comprehensive range of cultural, educational and retailing opportunities and has a strong concentration of the City's heritage buildings and major institutions. In addition, the downtown has benefitted from a number of high profile investments in cultural facilities such as the Four Seasons Centre, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario. Downtown Toronto (the CN tower and the Toronto skyline) also offers one of the most iconic views of the GTA and arguably Canada. The core presents a strong and powerful image to the rest of the world, helping to attract visitors, new residents and grow investment in the city and the region.

While downtown Toronto is undergoing a period of intensification, it is also part of a rapidly growing urban region. There is major pressure on existing infrastructure and enormous pressure to decentralize. For example, there is now more office space just beyond the boundaries of the City of Toronto than in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton combined. However, this peripheral growth lacks quality transit connections.² As growth continues to move outward and more residents and workers have little choice but to drive, congestion across the entire region worsens. The GTA is now the fourth most congested urban area in North America, behind Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago.³ This congestion challenges the downtown on many levels, but it will also likely diminish its competitiveness as it becomes less accessible and thus less important in the lives of those living beyond its boundaries.

Overall, Toronto has a dynamic, diverse, creative and exciting downtown. Yet the core faces many challenges, related to mobility, managing high levels of population growth and upgrading infrastructure to meet population growth. If these challenges are not adequately addressed, this could undermine the strength and prominence of downtown and the momentum behind revitalization efforts. The City will need to continue to focus on giving priority to the downtown considering the strength it gives the City of Toronto and the region.

¹ Ostler, T. (n.d.). *Living Downtown Survey. Housing Preferences in Downtown Toronto*. Retrieved from: <http://www2.webcastcanada.ca/nhrc-cnr/archives/flash/may4-5-09/pdf/Presentation%20WG%20HD%20T.%20Ostler.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

² Canadian Urban Institute. (2011). *The New Geography of Office Location and the Consequence of Business as Usual in the GTA*. Retrieved from: http://canurb.org/sites/default/files/reports/2010/TOC_CUI_Report_April2011.pdf. Accessed 2012 May 14.

³ Peville, P. (2008). *Toronto's Traffic Time Bomb*. Retrieved from: <http://www.torontolife.com/features/monster-jam/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Downtown comprises

3%

of the city area (1,618ha)

7%

**of the population lives
downtown (168,604)**

53%

**of the City of Toronto's
office space is
Downtown (78,707,717sf)**

Downtown has

260 jobs/ha

or 420,500 jobs (33%)

Downtown generates

25%

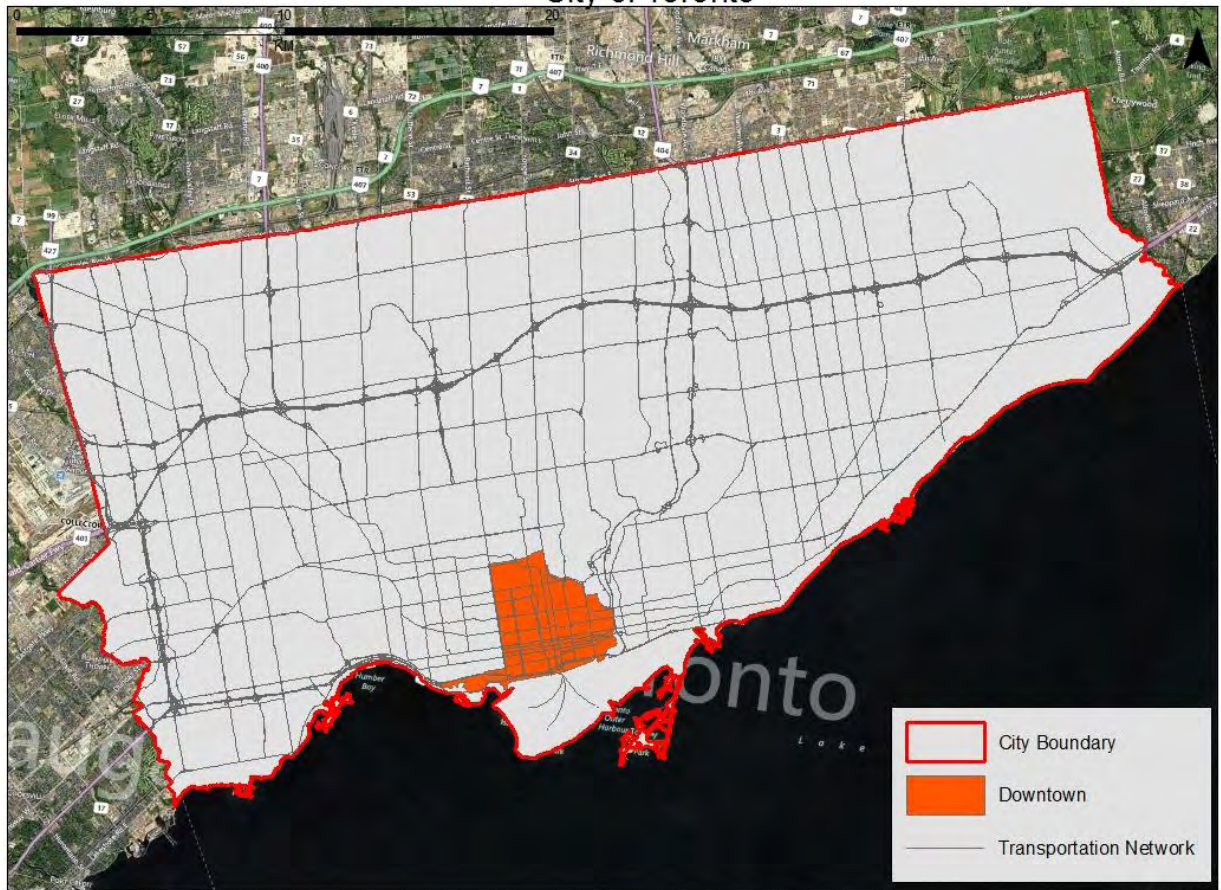
**of the City's property tax
revenue**

Downtown generates

\$475K/ha

in property tax revenue

City of Toronto



Name: Tor149 Context022512

Date: 12/03/2012



The downtown study area differs slightly from the City's Official Plan designation of 'Downtown and Central Waterfront Area' as it does not include the Portlands. On the map to the right, Toronto's Financial District is denoted in blue.

http://www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/pdf_chapter1-5/6_downtown_oct2009.pdf

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Downtown Toronto is the focus of revitalization and intensification efforts on a number of fronts. Provincial and municipal plans endorse strengthening the downtown as a way to support sustainable urban growth, vitality, efficient use of infrastructure and public services, and to protect natural areas from urban sprawl. While the importance of building a strong, sustainable and mixed use downtown is well understood, there is no clearly defined vision for the downtown core. Rather, visioning for downtown Toronto tends to be driven on a smaller, neighbourhood scale, through the multitude of organizations and communities that exist in the core.

Vision

For decades, there has been an overarching vision to intensify residential and commercial development in downtown Toronto. The Central Area Plan adopted by City Council in 1976 was the first to respond to the growing pressure to decentralize across the GTA. The Plan established clear aims to contain office development, encourage residential growth and restrict high densities to the financial district, as well as a commitment to halting expressway construction linking the Central Area to the outer areas as a means to inhibit decentralization.⁴ This Plan was credited by some interviewees as being critical in maintaining the strength of the downtown through the 70s, 80s and 90s.

Today the City's Official Plan recognizes the importance of the downtown and continues to encourage high density development in the core. The Plan also acknowledges the crucial relationship between downtown vitality and maintaining a strong and competitive economic climate in the City. However, the City's Official Plan does not present a cohesive vision or framework to weave together the diverse goals of business improvement areas, major

institutions, neighbourhoods groups and resident associations active in the downtown.



The Province's 'Places to Grow Initiative' has identified downtown Toronto as an 'Urban Growth Centre', where it has been targeted to increase to 400 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031

Leadership and Collaboration

Downtown Toronto has a multitude of players and leaders involved heavily in city building. Reportedly, there is a sense that these stakeholders are collaborating and moving in the same direction on many important downtown revitalization projects. However, it was also expressed that the divergent interests and aims of these stakeholders can lead to efforts being divided and fragmented across the downtown.

The City of Toronto has been a key player in downtown revitalization efforts. Furthermore, the City has established many agencies and partnerships to further these efforts. For example, Build Toronto was established in 2009 as an arms-length agency to partner with the public and private sector to attract new investment to the city as a whole. A recent Build Toronto initiative is the proposed development of a 75 storey condominium downtown, with private developer Tridel. Projects like this illustrate the City's strong commitment to transforming and investing in the core.

The City has also collaborated with the provincial and federal governments on a number of major redevelopment projects. For example, Waterfront

⁴Gunter Gad. (Spring 1999). "Downtown Montreal and Toronto: Distinct Places with Much in Common". *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*. Pp. 143-170.

Toronto was established in 2001 to oversee and stimulate the renewal of Toronto's waterfront, an area encompassing 800ha. The organization has successfully driven a number of revitalization projects.

The provincial and federal governments can also be credited for their contribution to key pieces of infrastructure and social programs in downtown Toronto. For example: supporting arts and culture (e.g. Art Gallery of Ontario), economic growth and innovation (e.g. the MaRS Centre), tourism (e.g. Fort York Visitor Centre), social housing (e.g. Regent Park redevelopment), enhancing universities (e.g. Student Learning Centre at Ryerson), improving transit (e.g. Union Station revitalization) and upgrading energy infrastructure. These investments are critical to strengthening the downtown for generations to come.

Institutions in downtown Toronto have also had a major role to play in revitalization efforts. For example, Ryerson University established the Ted Rogers School of Management, where a campus was built above several 'big box stores' in the very heart of the downtown. George Brown College has also been pioneering a new campus on the waterfront. Many other institutions (University of Toronto, MaRS Centre, OCAD University to name a few) can also be credited for positive additions to the downtown and significantly increasing vitality.

Toronto's 11 downtown Business Improvement Associations have played a key role in shaping the downtown. Recently the Bloor-Yorkville BIA completed an extensive streetscape enhancement that set a new standard for the public realm in downtown Toronto, while the Downtown Yonge BIA has helped maximize the benefits stemming from investment in the Yonge-Dundas Square, among other things. Within the core, a new BIA was recently established to represent business owners in the Financial District. Unification and collaboration

between these groups occurs through the Toronto Association for Business Improvement Areas (TABIA).

Additionally, the private sector has had a major role in transforming the downtown. The private sector has invested in all manner of residential, non-residential, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities and has also enhanced the downtown's infrastructure and public realm through cash contributions that form part of major developments. Additionally, there are many examples of PPPs in downtown Toronto – particularly along the waterfront – that have propelled downtown revitalization efforts.

Many stakeholders are contributing to the health and vitality of downtown Toronto. Yet it will be critical that these efforts are maximized, by increasing levels of coordination, applying high level strategic thinking and adopting a long term views to city building.



Ontario College of Art and Design – The Sharp Centre for Design



Artist impression of the exterior of Union Station on Front Street West

PROSPERITY

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Residential Development

The creation of St Lawrence Neighbourhood in the 1970s was seen by almost all of the interviewees as a turning point for downtown Toronto and a catalyst for residential growth in the core. This development was also credited as an exemplary model for residential growth, in terms of quality design, provision of diverse and affordable housing options, the innovative reuse of a former industrial site, public private partnerships and commitment to community engagement processes.⁵

Today Toronto is experiencing an unprecedented condominium boom and some of the largest residential projects in the City's history are underway in the downtown. For example, City Place is currently being developed at a value of \$2 billion and will include 22 towers across 18 hectares on the waterfront.⁶ The 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games will also contribute to this building boom with the "Athletes' Village" in the West Donlands comprising an additional 2,100 units. The city-owned development agency Build Toronto has recently announced the 10YORK project, which is a 75-storey \$295M downtown residential building in partnership with Tridel.⁷ Overall 34,500 units were proposed downtown between June 2006 and December 2010, almost one-third of the residential units proposed citywide.⁸

In 2011, the downtown attracted 20% of citywide residential development (\$195M). This equated to approximately 38% of high rise residential development citywide (please refer to graph on following page 'Portion of Downtown Development 2011 - % Construction Value') and 7% spent on renovations citywide. While this growth is encouraged and celebrated in the downtown core, it also places pressure on existing infrastructure, community services and finite land supply.



Residential Towers at City Place

A new residential community on former Railway Lands

The no. of dwellings grew

40%

from 1996-2006, compared to 8% more dwellings citywide.

\$918.6M

spent on residential and mixed use development downtown between 2001 and 2011

\$3.5B

on non-residential development between 2001 and 2011

15% growth in office space

between 2000-2010

(compared to 17% city wide)

Downtown has

78,707,717sf of office floor

space

⁵ Gordon, D. (n.d.). *Centre for Environmental Design and Outreach. Direction for New Urban Neighbourhoods: The City of Toronto*. Retrieved from http://www.ucalgary.ca/ev/designresearch/projects/2001/CEDRO/cedro/cip_acupp_css/pdf/st_lawrence.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁶ Halcrow (2011). *City Place Development, Toronto*. Retrieved from: <http://www.halcrow.com/Our-projects/Project-details/CityPlace-development-Canada/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

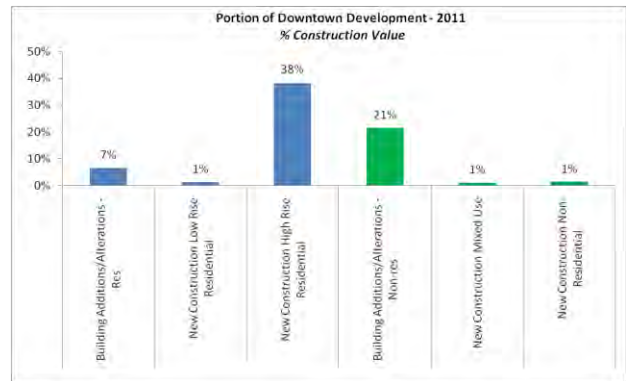
⁷ CTV News. (2011). *Build Toronto Announces 75-Storey Condominium*. Retrieved from: http://toronto.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20111122/build-toronto-tall-condominium-111122/20111122/?site_codename=Toronto. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁸ City of Toronto (2011). *Profile Toronto: How does the city grow?* Retrieved from http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/grow_jun2011.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Office Development

Downtown Toronto has had a stable portion of the City of Toronto's office space over the past decade at just over 50%. The 1995 decision to "deregulate" zoning in the industrial areas adjacent to the financial core ("The Kings") has had a dramatic impact, adding 18,000 square feet of office space. Moreover, the current office and commercial market in downtown Toronto has continued to be relatively strong with 977,000m² of non-residential development proposed between June 2006 and December 2010.⁹

More specifically, in 2011 the downtown attracted 18% of non - residential construction value across the City. While the core did not attract any significant non-residential projects during that year, it did receive significant investments in building additions and alterations (21% of construction value citywide) (refer to graph 'Portion of Downtown Development 2011 - % Construction Value'). This re-investment is critical, as it reflects commitment to upgrading existing office space downtown to increase availability of Class A or AAA stock.



Approximately ten office proposals for downtown Toronto are in the works. Interviewees linked this proposed surge in office growth to the talented labour force that is moving downtown (a young, multicultural and well educated demographic). Interviewees also discussed the benefits stemming from dramatic increase in 5 star hotels in the core, which was also seen as a very positive economic sign for downtown.

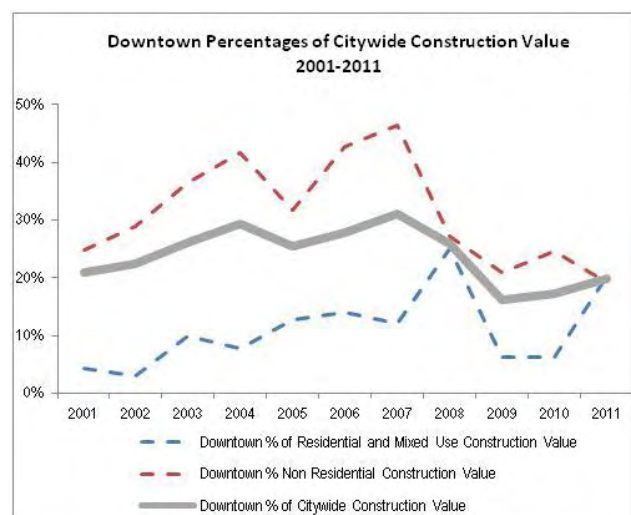
New Towers in Downtown Toronto – 2005-2010



Left: Downtown Toronto is attracting many new high rise towers, particularly in the south western quadrant of the core.

Data provided by David Topping from <http://www.thegridto.com/life/real-estate/toronto-highrise-construction-map/>

Right: Downtown Toronto is attracting a high portion of citywide growth. More specifically between 2001 and 2011 the core (on average) attracted a quarter (24%) of citywide construction value.



⁹ Ibid.

Retail Development

Downtown Toronto is re-establishing its retail strength and experiencing an influx of national retailers. National supermarket chains have opened several large format and smaller, urban format stores across downtown to meet the needs of a growing residential population. Urban format supermarkets are more compact and designed to meet the needs of a largely pedestrian customer base. The downtown is also attracting a growing number of big box retailers, innovatively adapting the large footprint to the urban form. Stores can be found in basements or upper levels of downtown buildings where street-level space is unavailable.

The creation of Yonge-Dundas Square also had a dramatic impact on downtown retailing. According to observers, prior to this investment, Yonge Street was in a state of decline, buildings were falling into disrepair, crime was rising and many high end retailers had moved into the Toronto Eaton Centre. In response to this, the City controversially expropriated 13 properties to build the Square and establish new commercial opportunities surrounding the Square. Over the past decade, this bold move has proven to be a major success with the Square enjoying 100,000 visitors every day and Yonge Street has re-established itself as a prized shopping destination.¹⁰

“Prior to Yonge-Dundas Square there were 25 ‘dollar stores’ between Queen and College, no one wants to come all the way Downtown to go to a ‘dollar store’”

Educational & Institutional Development

Institutions have been important city builders in downtown Toronto and have played a key role in revitalization efforts. For example, Ryerson University has championed many critical downtown projects. The Ted Rogers School of Management involved the

development of a campus above several ‘big box stores.’ To carry out this project, Ryerson created a partnership with Toronto Eaton Centre owner Cadillac Fairview. Ryerson’s new Student Learning Centre is being developed on the heritage-designated site of Sam the Record Man. The University has also redeveloped Maple Leaf Gardens for its new athletic facility, in partnership with Loblaws. Similarly George Brown College has been pioneering a new campus on the waterfront and the OCAD University built the iconic Sharp Centre beside the Art Gallery of Ontario. The MaRS Discovery District is also a point of interest; it is a significant example of creative partnerships involving the provincial government, private investment and the adjacent teaching hospital. The University of Toronto is spread throughout the downtown core. The impact of these and other institutional enhancements to the downtown cannot be underestimated for the vitality, energy and interest they bring to the core.



Waterfront campus for George Brown College

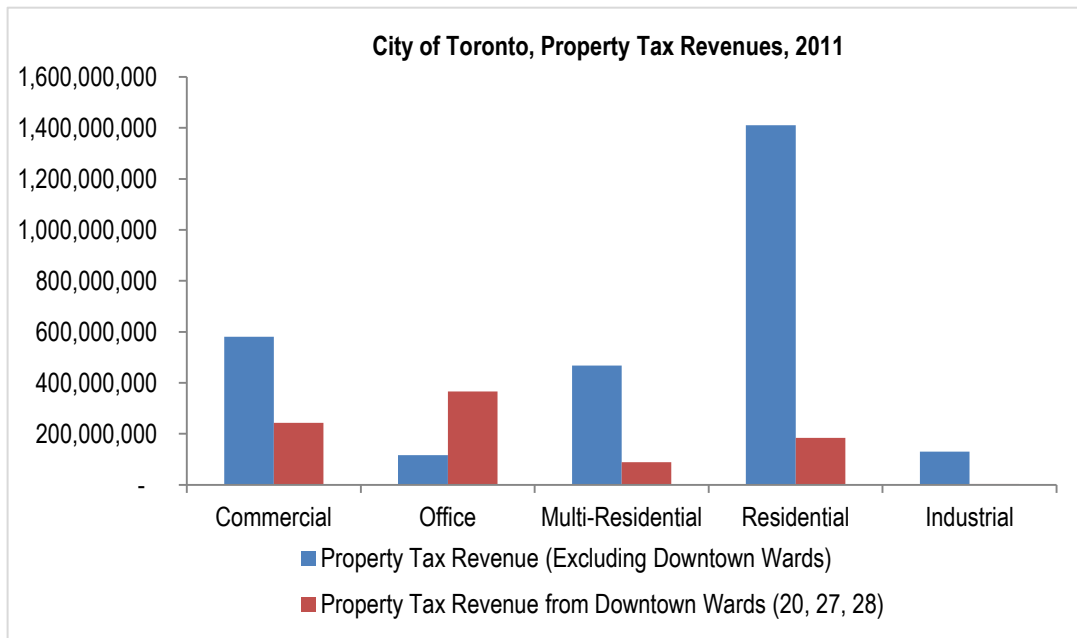


Maple Leaf Gardens was transformed by Ryerson University in partnership with Loblaws.

¹⁰Cullman, R. (2008). *Pedestrians Learn to Scramble at Yonge & Dundas*. Retrieved from http://www.blogto.com/city/2008/08/pedestrians_learn_to_scramble_at_yonge_dundas/. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Municipal Tax Base

The downtown makes a substantial contribution to the City of Toronto's bottom line, comprising a quarter of the City's property tax revenue base. The downtown provides three quarters of the revenue collected from office spaces across the City and a third of the revenue accrued from other commercial and retail properties. The downtown also provides 16% of revenue generated by multi residential properties and 12% from residential properties. These proportions have been relatively stable over the past five years.



Jobs

Downtown Toronto is the largest employment cluster in the GTA, with 420,500 jobs (one-third of the jobs found citywide). The employment profile of downtown Toronto is largely comprised of office jobs (65%); such as law firms, computer services, management consultants and investment services. The number of jobs downtown has grown three times faster than citywide, at 9% and 3% respectively between 2004 and 2009.¹¹

Downtown provides

25%

of the City's total property tax revenue (2011).

420,500

jobs

¹¹ Ibid.

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Downtown Toronto has experienced strong population growth in the recent decade. From 1996 to 2006, the downtown grew by 17% or by 24,575 people. Toronto's population is quite dense at 104 people per hectare. While growth in the downtown core is already strong, it will likely accelerate in the coming years as thousands of new condominiums enter the market.

Diversity

Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities on the planet, yet downtown Toronto has a lower portion of migrants than city wide (approximately, 39% to 49% of the population respectively.) Downtown Toronto also has a slightly younger population, with 35% of residents aged 20-34 compared to 23% citywide. The widely discussed trend of empty nesters moving into new downtown condominiums was not yet reflected in the age structure census data for 2006. Downtown residents also have a lower median income than residents across the City, however over the past decade this gap has been closing and the median downtown household income increased 40% compared to 31% citywide.

Housing

Downtown Toronto is home to many residents, who have traditionally lived in the historic, dense, but largely low-rise neighbourhoods that surround the financial core. These core neighbourhoods offer distinct designs and heritage qualities, ethnic diversity, a wide range of housing types, a wide range of housing prices (although prices are generally increasing) and a strong mix of land uses. However, new neighbourhoods are emerging that have departed from this traditional pattern of development and are characterized by high rise towers, midrise structures, small household sizes and young or empty nester populations. For example, a "doorman survey" conducted by Councillor Adam Vaughan's Office found only 128 children living in the nearly 5,000 units that have been completed in the new City Place.¹² As downtown Toronto continues to grow and increased pressure is placed on its housing supply, it will be critical that strategies are developed to achieve vibrant, diverse and multi-generational communities, able to meet the needs of their populations for an entire life span. A recent report by Demographia identified Toronto as "severely unaffordable"; the city has experienced a deterioration of 40% in housing affordability since 2004.¹³ This issue will need to be addressed in order for downtown Toronto to develop vibrant and accessible communities for diverse income levels.

Downtown has

168,604

residents

17%

**population growth downtown
between 1996-2006
(compared to 5% citywide)**

39%

**of the downtown population are migrants
(compared to 49% citywide)**

2

**average household size
downtown (compared to 3
citywide)**

10

**large format grocery stores
downtown**

¹² Keenan, E. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.thegridto.com/life/real-estate/is-cityplace-toronto%E2%80%99s-next-ghetto/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹³ Demographia (2012). *Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: 2012*. Retrieved From <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 30.

Safety

Crime indicators for the City of Toronto as a whole show a decline in crime.¹⁴ However, like many large cities, Toronto face challenges with safety and perceptions of safety across the core. In response to this challenge on a local scale, the Toronto Police Service added 20 additional foot patrol officers along the Yonge-Church-Bay corridors. This ongoing police presence has helped reduce street crime in the downtown core.¹⁵

Public Realm

The decisions to halt the Spadina and Scarborough Expressways had an indelible impact on downtown Toronto's public realm. The decision helped support neighbourhood preservation as the highest priority in downtown city building and maintained the historic, fine grained and human scale neighbourhoods on both the east and the west sides of core. Moreover the decision kept the downtown's network of 'main streets' intact, which allowed for community building and connectivity between neighbourhoods. For example, these shopping strips led to the 'BIA movement,' (beginning in Bloor West Village) and more recently have supported downtown intensification efforts by providing goods and services to the growing residential population.

The City, in partnership with downtown merchants and Ryerson University, also led the Yonge-Dundas Square revitalization in the late nineties. This project transformed the heart of the core and has emerged as a prominent landmark and destination for tourists of Toronto. Many people go to the Square to relax or spend time with friends.

Additionally, Waterfront Toronto (a tripartite organization) is undertaking major public realm upgrades along the shores of Lake Ontario. For example, Waterfront Toronto has invested in 17 public spaces across the City, including key downtown projects such as Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common, the water's edge promenade and the Wavedecks.¹⁶

Overall downtown Toronto's public realm is perceived to be a positive place where people enjoy spending time. However, in the opinion of those interviewed, the public realm is an area that would benefit from a stronger and more coherent vision to guide development.



Bustling Chinatown neighbourhood, Toronto



Map of violent crime across the Downtown
<http://www.thestar.com/staticcontent/793448>



Yonge-Dundas Square, before and after

¹⁴ Toronto Police Service. (2012). *TPS Crime Statistics*. Retrieved from: http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/statistics/crime_indicators.php. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁵ Downtown Yonge (2012). *Safety*. Retrieved from <http://www.downtownyonge.com/node/75>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁶ Waterfront Toronto. (2012). *Waterfront Toronto*. Retrieved from: <http://www.waterfronttoronto.ca/>. Accessed 2012 February 3.

Connectivity

Today there is constant frustration among Torontonians and a prevailing concern that the City, particularly the core, is grinding to a halt. Congestion on the City's roadways and transit system is growing every year and Toronto ranks as one of the most congested cities in North America. Despite the transportation system struggling to meet current demand, Toronto and the GTA continues to grow and an increasing number of commuters place even more pressure on the system. The City is working with the TTC and Metrolinx to address these mobility challenges, but an effective response is often limited by a lack of resources, coordination, and an inability to sustain sufficient momentum to realize these major infrastructure projects. Improvements to Union Station are cited as evidence of a commitment to upgrade the role the downtown plays as a transportation hub.

The City is investing in pedestrian accessibility and prioritizing above ground movement by developing wider and more attractive sidewalks that include gardens. Yet the City is also focused on improving the underground PATH system – the result of a planning department vision dating from the 1970s. This system is one of the largest pedestrian-only walkways and underground shopping complexes in the world. Consisting of close to 30kms of pedestrian tunnels, concourses, walkways, bridges and retail arcades, it contains over 1000 shops and is used by over 100,000 pedestrians every day, generating employment income, jobs and property tax.¹⁷ The PATH system combined with fine grained city blocks is needed to support the high density offices in the financial core.

The City has also made some effort to incorporate bicycles in the urban transportation system. The BIXI Bike share program (with 1,000 bicycles) has been a positive development. The program also reaches many lower income neighbourhoods, such as Regent Park, improving accessibility across the downtown core. However decisions to halt bicycle lanes along University Avenue or the removal of an existing bicycle lane on Jarvis Street cast doubt on the City's long term view and commitment to expanding the role of bicycle usage in the City.

Overall, connectivity will be one of downtown Toronto's most significant challenges in the coming decades. Yet if the City keeps continuing down the same path, the future is grim. It is estimated that the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area's population will increase by nearly 2.6 million by 2031. That will add nearly one million additional cars to the morning rush hour—all trying to access roads that are already at capacity.¹⁸ Downtown interests cannot work alone on managing this challenge, but they must play a key role in encouraging active transportation to limit the number of cars in the core to improve this situation in the future.



Typical morning rush along Toronto's Don Valley Parkway (eastern boundary of downtown study area)

¹⁷ City of Toronto (2011). *PATH Pedestrian Network: Master Plan*. Retrieved from: http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/path_draftmasterplan.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁸ Preville, P. (2008). *Toronto's Traffic Time Bomb*. Retrieved from: <http://www.torontolife.com/features/monster-jam/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

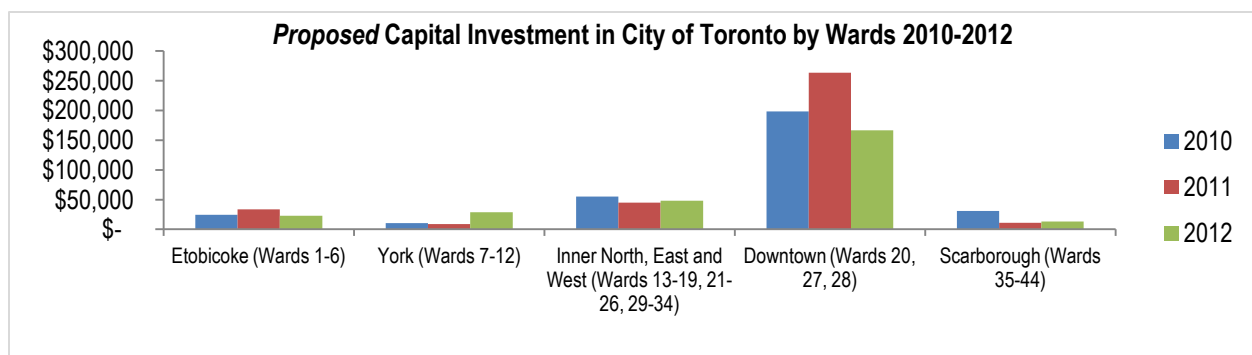
STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Municipal Investments

The City of Toronto has been moving forward on many capital projects in the downtown, yet the value of these projects can be difficult to quantify as over 90% of the City's **proposed** Capital Budget is assigned to citywide projects. Overwhelmingly these 'citywide projects' relate to broad investments such as technology upgrades, fleet upgrades, waste system improvements, sewers and investment in utilities. Yet some citywide investments do relate to the downtown study area, for example the 'Waterfront Revitalization Initiative' has been a key focus of City investment, as well as the Pan Am Games Athletes' Village.

The remainder of the proposed budget (around 10%) is classified by ward, allowing downtown investments to be viewed separately. In this context, the downtown fares well with relatively high levels of proposed investment in 2010 to 2012 compared to other parts of the City. Yet it should be noted that over 60% of this proposed investment is to be spent on Union Station, which will benefit the entire Toronto region. Other key investments downtown include the Regent Park redevelopment and the Nathan Phillips Square upgrade.



Data Collection Process

From the outset it is important to acknowledge that the project team faced significant challenges in the compilation of a complete set of Capital Projects Data for the City of Toronto. Therefore, the team utilized a methodology to present capital projects data that differs from the other case studies. To develop the capital projects map the team utilized building permit data for the past 10 years from the City's Open Data site (toronto.ca/open). The team then sorted downtown investments by postal code and identified the value of building permits issued for traditional public sector investments such as libraries, arenas, performing arts centres, sports complexes and facilities, as the basis of capital expenditure. This list of building permits included construction values and addresses but it did not include the name of the facility that received improvement, so the team searched through the addresses on Google Earth to identify name of the name of the facility where the investment was made (in a handful of instances this could not be determined). Additionally there are several investments located on the boundary of the downtown; these have been included as this has been the approach applied across the other case studies.

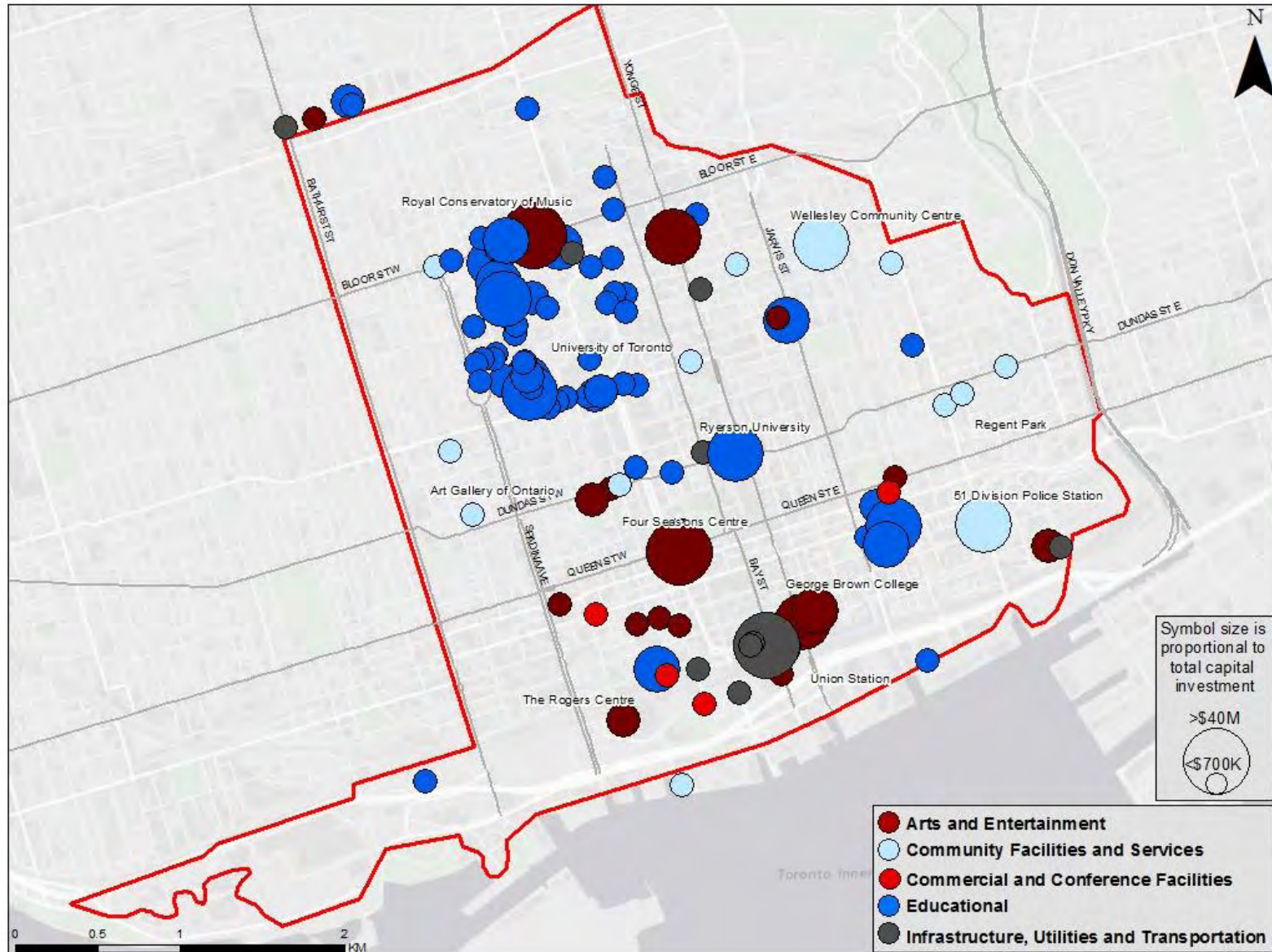
This data has some limitations as it fails to capture investments being made that do not trigger building permits such as social programs, small-scale public realm upgrades and/or undertaking a detailed planning process. Moreover, this approach fails to account for the municipal proportion of investment; rather it captures the total value of the capital investment. However given the data limitations faced, this approach is considered optimal for gaining a

preliminary spatial understanding of where, when and how much is being invested in public and quasi public facilities over the past decade in downtown Toronto.

Summary of Public Investments

Public Investments	Value of Investments	Public Investments	Value of Investments
University of Toronto	\$ 90,039,524	Toronto Mendelssohn Choir	\$652,100
Canadian Opera Company	\$ 82,050,000	Community Hall (St Lawrence Neighborhood)	\$410,000
Union Station	\$ 44,276,506	The Princess of Wales Theatre	\$400,000
Air Canada Centre	\$ 17,774,747	Community Hall (Regent Park Neighborhood)	\$250,000
George Brown College	\$ 14,168,265	YMCA of Greater Toronto	\$250,000
Police Stations (inc. 51 Division Police Station)	\$ 13,019,980	519 Church Street Community Centre	\$232,250
Sony Centre For The Performing Arts	\$ 11,650,011	Rail Improvement	\$155,800
Ryerson University	\$ 11,075,000	Toronto Convention Centre	\$151,980
Wellesley Community Centre (St Jamestown Neighborhood)	\$ 9,000,000	401 Richmond Street	\$75,000
Performing Arts Centres (<i>Several Unknown</i>)	\$ 7,030,000	Toronto Public Library	\$60,000
Ontario College of Art and Design	\$ 3,824,261	Community Hall (Bloor and Spadina)	\$51,355
Royal Ontario Museum	\$ 3,808,050	The Royal Alexander Theatre	\$50,840
College/Trade/Tech School/Training Cent (<i>Several Unknown</i>)	\$ 2,408,620	Fort York - Garrison Common	\$33,000
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Building Toronto	\$ 2,020,000	Tarragon Theatre	\$12,000
St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts	\$ 2,000,500	Cabbagetown Youth Centre	\$5,500
Hockey Hall of Fame	\$ 1,335,000	Museum Subway Station	\$5,003
Performing Arts Centre/Art Gallery (<i>Several Unknown</i>)	\$ 1,233,158	TAIE International Institute	\$3,000
Rogers Centre (Sky Dome)	\$ 1,115,010	Radio City	\$1,000
Art Gallery of Ontario	\$ 968,244		
Starz Animation	\$ 750,000	TOTAL	\$322,345,704

Public Investments in Downtown Toronto 2000-2010 (*Value of Institutional Building Permits Issued 2000-2010*)



Name: TorCapProj_022512

Date: 12/03/2012

Pattern of Investment

Downtown Toronto has seen significant public and quasi public investment in the past decade. These investments have predominantly been in 'education' and 'arts and culture' and tend to be clustered around existing institutions, the heart of downtown (Yonge-Dundas) and supported by access to the Yonge and University Subway lines. The other key cluster of investment is around Union Station and along the waterfront of Lake Ontario. It is also apparent that the stable neighbourhoods on the east and west side of the core, have undergone minimal change over the past decade.

1. The Heart of the City

There is a strong cluster of public and quasi public investments in the heart of downtown. These investments primarily include upgrades to Ryerson University, Ted Rogers School of Management and the proposed Student Learning Centre. Yet, investments have also been made in Nathan Phillips Square (at the front of City Hall). These investments have been dramatically increasing the vibrancy of the core and helped it emerge as a 24/7 place to live, work and play.

2. Downtown University Campuses

One interviewee commented: *'All the universities want to get into the downtown, there is huge demand.'* This trend is strongly reflected in the three nodes of Educational Investments on the Capital Projects Map. As one of the most significant institutional players in the downtown, the University of Toronto has invested around \$90 million into their downtown facilities over the past decade. Ryerson University has invested approximately \$11 million along Dundas Street, while George Brown College has also made significant investment in its campus and its satellite waterfront campus, to the tune of approximately \$14 million.

3. Arts and Entertainment Facilities

Downtown Toronto has also benefited from a strong investment in 'arts and entertainment' facilities. This investment has been concentrated in the south west quadrant of the downtown in facilities such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, The Rogers Centre, Air Canada Centre and several of the downtown theatres. Significant investment was also made in the Royal Ontario Museum. These investments provide the downtown with state of the art facilities to host all manner of artistic, sporting and cultural events.

4. Enhancing, Redeveloping and Connecting the Waterfront

The revitalization of Toronto's waterfront is the largest urban redevelopment project currently underway in North America, and it is one of the largest waterfront revitalization efforts ever undertaken in the world.¹⁹ Strategic public investments have been made to unlock the development potential of the waterfront area and attract private development. These have included investments in municipal utilities, flood protection, development approvals, master planning, and environmental approvals to spur private investment. Investment has also been made in parks and public spaces including building Canada's Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common, the water's edge promenade and the wave decks. Investments have also been made in the Pan Am Athletes Village at the eastern edge of the downtown core.

The map also reflects investment in 'infrastructure, utilities and transportation' to support the emerging neighbourhoods along the waterfront and south of the rail line. For example, many of these types of investments are clustered around City Place or the emerging Pan Am Games Athletes' Village. Investments in 'Community Facilities and Services' are also stronger in these new neighbourhoods.

¹⁹ Waterfront Toronto. (2012). *Waterfront Toronto*. Retrieved from: <http://www.waterfronttoronto.ca/>. Accessed 2012 February 3.

5. Strengthening Communities

Investment has also been made to strengthen several downtown communities. For example, Regent Park is currently being transformed and an important institutional investment to support this enhancement is new community hall. Similarly, the Wellesley Community Centre, a “priority centre” designed to service the needs of the residents of St. Jamestown, was opened in 2005.

6. Increasing Mobility – Revitalizing Union Station

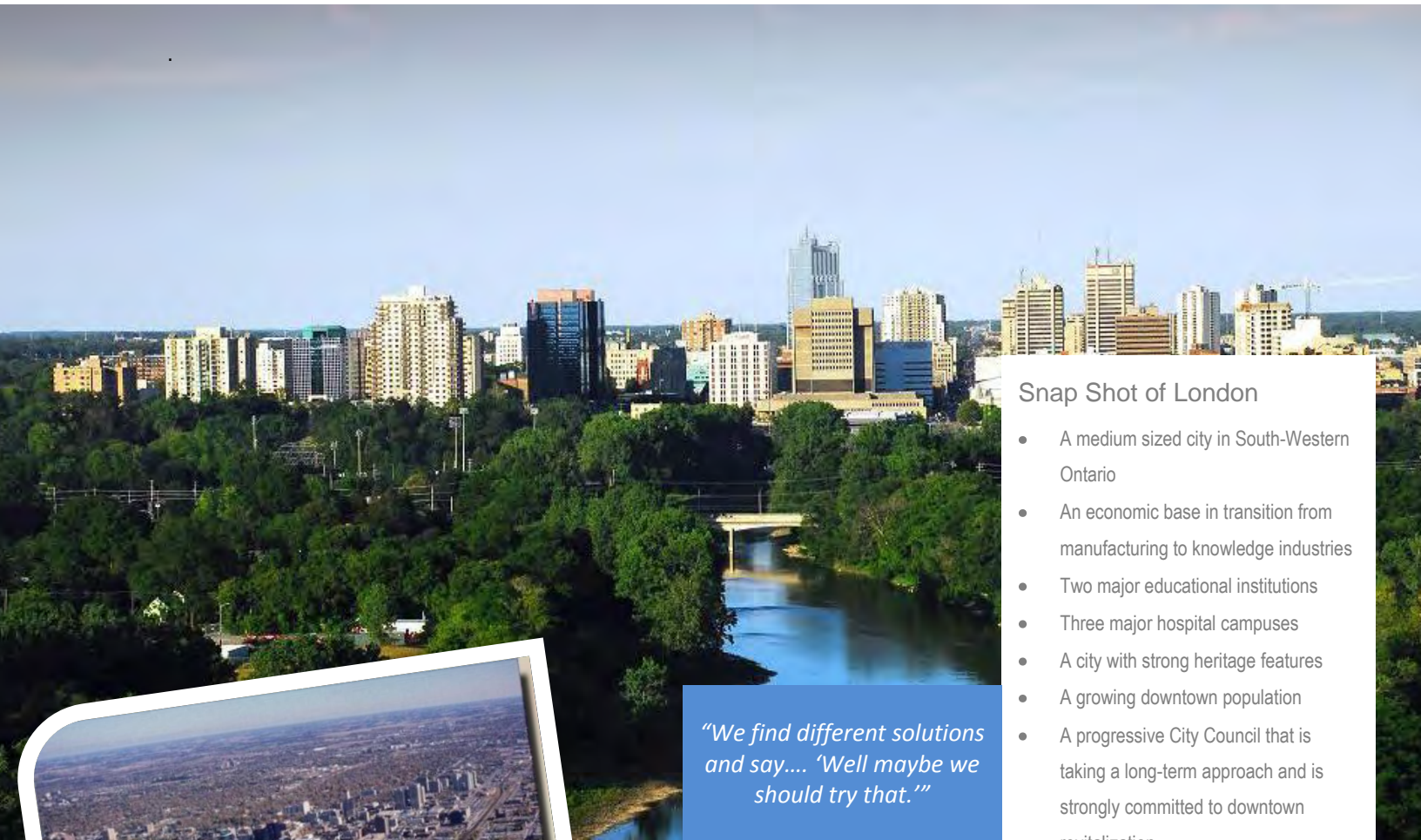
The City and the province have been investing heavily in Union Station (approximately \$44 million) over the past decade. This investment will be critical, given Union Station’s central and growing role in the regional transit network. The City has also invested in the PATH Master Plan to improve pedestrian flows around the downtown and connectivity with Union Station.

Left: The Toronto PATH
http://www.toronto.ca/path/pdf/path_brochure.pdf



LONDON

an independent downtown...



Snap Shot of London

- A medium sized city in South-Western Ontario
- An economic base in transition from manufacturing to knowledge industries
- Two major educational institutions
- Three major hospital campuses
- A city with strong heritage features
- A growing downtown population
- A progressive City Council that is taking a long-term approach and is strongly committed to downtown revitalization

"We find different solutions and say.... 'Well maybe we should try that.'"



London's resurgent downtown is blessed with strong heritage features, contains the vast majority of the City's office employment and has seen successive City Councils be a pioneering force in revitalization efforts. The City has also been highly progressive in tracking downtown performance and collecting data on a parcel level to help measure progress through its State of the Downtown Report. Yet, downtown London faces several challenges, such as the need for innovative methods to repurpose its heritage buildings, visible vacancies along its main shopping street, a perception of crime that deters some potential visitors, office vacancies, and few residents in the core. Downtown London continues to develop its own style, identity, and culture over a two decade period of revitalization.

Downtown London Timeline 1840 - 2011

1840 - 1967

1840 – London incorporated as a town

1853 – Railroad arrives in London, economic boom follows

1920 – Thomas Adams prepares the first official plan for the City of London

1956 – First major study focusing on downtown is prepared under the Federal Urban Renewal Program

1961 – City annexes 34 351 acres, growing from 8 019 acres to 42 550 acres, population 162 184

1878 – University of Western Ontario, now known simply as Western University, founded

1956 – Historic Market Hall is demolished and replaced by market on first floor of parking structure

1960 – Wellington Square opens downtown

1967 – City annexes 1 196 acres to the East. Water pipeline from Lake Huron is completed.



1971 - 2011

1981 – Downtown Official Plan policies revised to respond to ongoing suburban mall creation

1985 – Masonville Place, London's largest suburban shopping mall, opens

1993 – London-Middlesex Act 1992 imposes annexation of 64 000 acres around the city including the Town of Westminster

1995 – Downtown Community Improvement Plan adopted by Council

2000 – The Bay closes in Galleria Mall

2002 – John Labatt Centre and Central Library open

2009 – Downtown Master Plan, Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines preparation process begins

2011 – Mayor's Downtown Vision launched

1971 – First official plan created with specific downtown policies. Westmount Mall located southwest of the Downtown, London's first enclosed suburban mall, opens

1986 – Façade Improvement Loan Program first developed

1989 – Westmount Mall rebuilt. Galleria Mall (downtown shopping complex) opens. Wellington Square revitalization is completed

1994 – A "Summary of Potential Strategies for Revitalizing Downtown London" released

1998 – Downtown Millennium Plan adopted

1999 – Eaton's closes in Galleria Mall. Main Street Program launched. Rebuilt Covent Garden Market opens

2008 – "Blueprint for Action" – Report for the Downtown Task Force by Main Street LOBA

2009 – Galleria Mall becomes Citi Plaza



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



John Labatt Centre (1)

The John Labatt Centre is a catalytic piece of infrastructure to spur revitalization in the downtown. Construction of the facility began in 2001 and the new arena opened in 2002. The John Labatt Centre seats 9,000 people for hockey games and hosts approximately 150 sporting and non-sporting events a year. Through such events, the centre attracts approximately 500,000 visitors to the downtown every year.

Covent Garden Market (2)

The market was first established in 1845, and was rebuilt in 1999 with help from the City. The market has been a major draw for the downtown and sales have tripled since its reopening. Approximately 40,000 people visit the market each month and it offers them a wide variety of fresh food, restaurants and shops.

Central Library (3)

Central Library was developed in 2002 in the struggling Galleria Mall (now known as Citi Plaza). The Central Library brought a creative and exciting new use to a space left vacant by the Bay store. The library has been a huge success and now attracts 95,000 people monthly.

Fanshawe College Campus (4)

Fanshawe College has recently purchased a heritage building to develop a downtown arts campus. This development is the beginning of Fanshawe's 10 year multi-campus building project that will expand the student base downtown. It is planned that within 10 years, the school will have several downtown buildings with space for 1,000 students and 75 staff.

Citi Plaza (5)

After an extensive redevelopment of the Galleria Mall in 2009, the mall was transformed into a mixed-use complex and renamed Citi-Plaza. It contains a mix of retail, office, business and consumer services and three post secondary educational facilities. The Plaza also contains the Rainbow Cinemas which has attracted millions of visitors since opening in 2002.

City Hall (6)

City Hall is located at 300 Dufferin Avenue, and it is here that civic administrative staff and City Council consult with the public in order to set annual budgets, establish strategic priorities, and determine overall policies

Convention Centre (7)

The Convention Centre, open in 1993, held 28 conventions and 14 multi-day meetings in 2010 and since 2008, has held 1164 events comprising 380,000 people.



Source: Flash Earth
 Legend:
 - Green: Parks and Greenspace
 - Yellow dashed line: Future Fanshawe College District
 - Red outline: Downtown Boundary
 Scale: 200 m

Victoria Park (8)

This historic park (created in 1874) offers many opportunities for recreation and is home to festivals and special events and features an outdoor skating rink in the winter. This downtown park receives approximately one million visitors annually.

Labatt Park (9)

The historic Labatt Park (created in 1877) is a baseball stadium located near the forks of the Thames River in central London. It is the oldest continuously used baseball diamond in North America and was voted best baseball park in Canada, according to the Baseball Canada organization.

Forks of the Thames (10)

Located at the very west end of the Downtown, the Forks of the Thames consist of several interconnected parks including the Peace Garden, Ivey Park and Harris Park. An extensive pathway system (50km long) extends from Ivey Park along the Thames in three directions, connecting downtown London with city neighbourhoods some 12km away from the downtown.

Dundas Street (11)

Dundas Street is on the rise, with heritage buildings being restored and vacancies declining. Residents and workers are enjoying the experience of this "main street" with a growing number of independent retailers and nearby facilities such as the John Labatt Centre, Central Library and Covent Garden Market.

Transit Hub (12)

The hub of London's transit system is located downtown at Dundas and Richmond Streets and contains both VIA Rail and London Transit stations. The City has focused resources to develop its transit bus system and its London Transit buses service the City as a whole and all major streets of the Downtown.

London Train Station (13)

The London Train Station is the primary regional transportation hub within the City and considered Canada's fourth-busiest passenger terminal.

Residential Growth

Over the past 10 years, downtown London has experienced significant population growth and the construction of many new residential units. Since 1998, 1,731 units have been constructed in the downtown. These units enjoy close proximity to the Forks of the Thames and new public facilities Downtown.

Public Art

Downtown London has artistic and decorative metal trees which add interest and colour to the downtown and promote London as the "forest city".

Heritage Preservation

Downtown London has a strong heritage core, particularly along Dundas and Richmond Streets and around City Hall. A variety of incentive programs have been created to encourage property owners to restore and renovate heritage buildings; both their facades and interiors. A continuing challenge for downtown London will be to repurpose its heritage stock to meet the needs of modern life.



City of London

VISIBILITY

Does the Downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

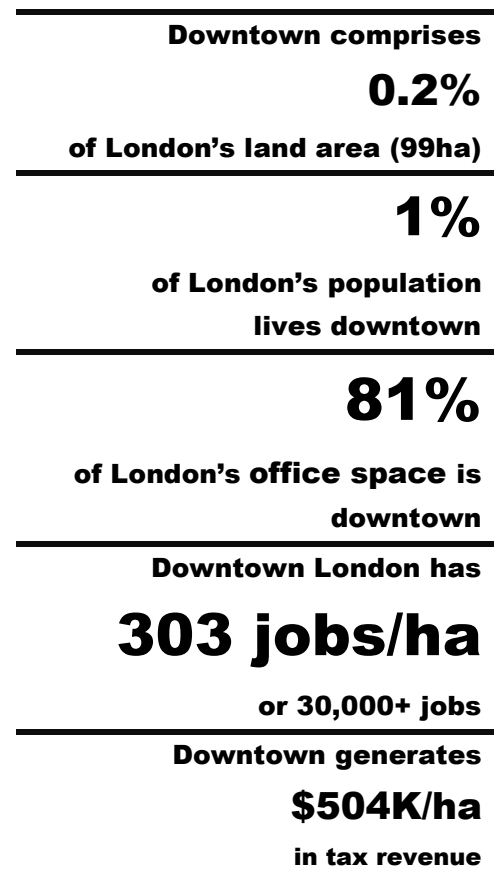
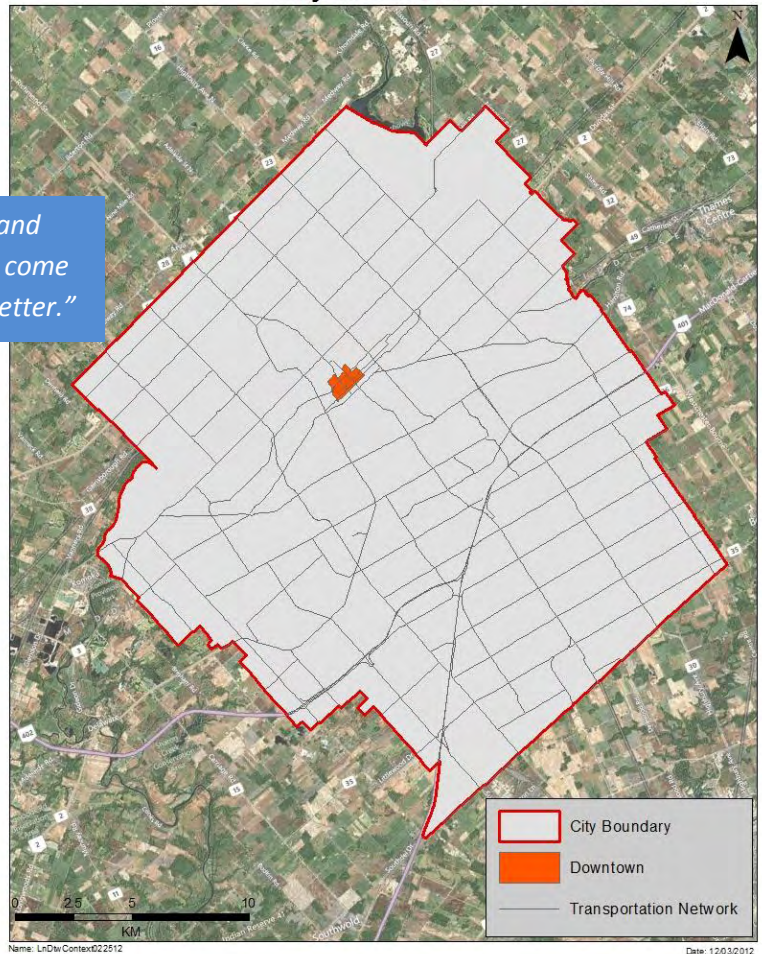
“(Downtown London) was hustling and bustling, then it declined, and now it’s come full circle... I like this side of the circle better.”

London is a medium sized city in south-western Ontario, located in the Quebec City - Windsor Corridor. The downtown occupies only 0.2% the City’s expansive land area but accounts for a substantial portion of the City’s commercial office space, employment and tax base. The downtown provides unique cultural facilities and is the focal point of government functions, London’s transit system and entertainment in the City.

Downtown London is currently rebounding from a downward spiral that began in the 1970s when suburban malls started to alter shopping habits and attract retailers and patrons away from the core. This decline arguably accelerated when a downtown mall (Galleria) was developed to rival these suburban malls, as it drew many of the remaining independent retailers off the main downtown streets. This mall folded and has since been repurposed for offices and the Central Library but street level vacancies on Dundas Street continue to remain a major challenge for downtown London.

The City is now making major inroads through revitalization. A key part of this success can be attributed to its strong employment base. Downtown London contains 80% of the City’s office space and over 30,000 jobs. This concentration of office space resulted from the City introducing policies into its Official Plan in the 1990s that direct all office spaces over 5,000sqm be located downtown. The effectiveness of this policy has been paramount to reversing the fortunes of downtown London.

Moreover the City of London has been bold and innovative in approaching revitalization and has strategically invested in many projects designed to attract new users and residents to the downtown. The John Labatt Centre, Central Library, Convent Garden Market, and improved City parks have all played an important role in making the downtown more attractive and enjoyable. These important assets have greatly increased the importance and prominence of downtown London both citywide and regionally.



VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared

Downtown London's shared vision for a thriving place of entertainment and culture with a growing residential base was set out in the Downtown Millennium Plan of 1998. This vision has been strongly pursued since the 1990s by committed elected officials, City staff and the Downtown London business improvement organization (formerly Mainstreet London). London's successful downtown revitalization has been described as "many people taking many small steps, rather than looking to a 'silver bullet' to solve all the problems in the downtown."

Vision

The implementation of the Downtown Millennium Plan (1998) was catalytic in spurring a significant resurgence in downtown London. The successor to the Millennium Plan, the Downtown Master Plan and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines will soon be released, which will continue to focus on attracting new visitors downtown and attempting to further increase the number of residents. One interviewee noted "we have done a pretty good job (with revitalizing downtown London)...I would say we have reached a mid point – now this new master plan will take us the rest of the way."

The City has also shown vision in publishing its "State of the Downtown Reports" that collect data to track downtown performance. In some instances, data is collected on a parcel level e.g. store front vacancies, to give detailed insight on what is happening 'on the ground' over time. This type of detailed data analysis is providing the City with the ability to quantify the success of its downtown revitalization programs.

Leadership and Collaboration

Municipal leadership has been instrumental in revitalization, developing progressive planning policies in collaboration with the business and institutional community and making use of innovative financing tools. The City has a number of downtown grant and incentive programs, as well as targeted



Creating Citi Plaza.

Readapting and repurposing the former Galleria Mall is a major achievement in

incentive programs (for the Dundas and Richmond Street corridors) to encourage the private sector. For example, since 2008 the City of London has issued a combined total of 104 grants and loans worth \$1.1 million, leveraging \$3.8 million in construction value.¹ This arrangement represents the collaboration between the public and private sector in revitalizing downtown London.

The City has also led the way by investing in major assets like the John Labatt Centre, Central Library, and Covent Garden Market to increase the vitality and attractiveness of downtown for new development and to bring more people to the downtown. These types of investments help make the downtown more liveable and attractive for residential development. This has also been met with private sector support and since 2000, 1135 building permits have been issued downtown with a reported value of \$352.7 million.

**London has policies in its
Official Plan that specifically
relate to its downtown**

**London has had a downtown
Strategy Plan for**

12 years

**and the City is undertaking a
comprehensive
master plan**

¹ City of London. (2011). *State of the Downtown Report 2011*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/SOTD_AnnualReport_09.pdf. Accessed 2011 October 20.

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

London has long been the regional centre of Southwestern Ontario, an economic engine for the Province with a strong agricultural base and a well established manufacturing sector. Yet a changing global economy has created a range of economic challenges for the region, such as growing unemployment, that have extended to the City of London. The City is overcoming these challenges by attracting new foreign direct investments in advanced manufacturing, food processing, IT, health and education², other knowledge-based industries and the growth of many existing businesses.³



View from Renaissance Tower during construction

Residential Development

Attracting residential development has been a key aim of planning efforts in downtown London, and the City has enjoyed success. Since 1997, approximately 1,440 apartment units have been built in the downtown with a total construction value of \$120.2M. Moreover significant new developments such as The Renaissance (71 King Street) that overlook downtown landmarks such as the Covent Garden Market are being absorbed, with a second tower currently under construction, ahead of schedule⁴. Notably, the first stage of this development provided downtown London with rental housing and the second stage is providing new condominiums.

Office Development

A remarkable 80% of London's office space is located in the downtown. A key reason for this is that policies contained in the Official Plan direct large office spaces (over 5,000sqm) to locate in downtown London. This policy has been strongly enforced and highly effective at concentrating office space and jobs downtown.

Downtown office growth in London has been slow in recent years, yet there has been a gradual downward trend in office vacancy rates. Since 2006 when Bell Canada left their offices at 100 Dundas Street, downtown has seen a consistent annual decline in vacancy rates. Currently (2010) there is an overall 14.9% vacancy, 9% for Class 'A' space. Overall, London's downtown office market appears stable despite the slightly elevated vacancy rates.

Retail Development

In the past, retailing in downtown London has been challenged by the emergence of the suburban mall. For example, in the 1960s downtown had a 70% share of retailing, yet today it is around 10%. While this trend is not unique to London, the downtown faced particularly negative experiences due to the creation of a downtown mall (Galleria Mall) that was intended to rival the suburban malls. This downtown mall attracted many of the retailers from the downtown's main streets (Dundas, Richmond and King Streets)

The no. of dwellings grew

39%

**from 1996-2006, compared to
12% more dwellings
citywide.**

\$120.2M

**on residential development
downtown**

Downtown has

81%

**of the city's office floor
space (4,394,017sf)**

² Good Move London (2010). *Working in London*. Retrieved from: http://www.goodmovelondon.com/index.php/gml/menu_link/working. Accessed 2012 January 17.

³ City of London. (2011). *Our Economy - Progress Report 2007-2011*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/Newsroom/PDFs/economic_report_Aug1710.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

⁴ London Ontario Real-Estate News (2011). *Local Real Estate Record: Second Renaissance Tower will offer \$1-million Pent-house*. Retrieved from: <http://brendaclark.clientcontactblog.com/?p=293>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

and left some significant street level vacancies. When the mall folded, the vacancies outside the mall continued to be a problem. The downtown is slowly overcoming this challenge and storefront vacancy rates have been consistently declining over time. Available space on King and Richmond Streets is now largely absorbed, which could be attributed to public investments such as the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. Yet there remain some vacancies on Dundas Street.

The types of retailers that now occupy downtown differ from those that lined the main streets in the 1970s. The downtown has been successful at attracting independent retailers, such as Kingsmills and Novacks & Nash Jewellers.⁵ Downtown London is not trying to recreate itself as it used to be, but rather establish itself as a vibrant downtown with unique retailing opportunities.

Educational & Institutional Development

The main campuses of London's two major post-secondary institutions—The University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College—are located outside downtown. These are key assets for the City, that have helped strengthen the City as a whole. Additionally, downtown London will soon receive increased benefits from these institutions with Fanshawe College securing a site for a new Applied School of Performing Arts. The College has purchased an 80,000 sqf building as a first phase of the project that will eventually host 1,000 new students and 75 staff. The College plans to expand this campus in the future by purchasing and renovating some of London's downtown heritage buildings. The City of London was a major supporter of this expansion, providing \$20M in funding. This new campus will strengthen Downtown London's local

⁵ Daniszewski, Hank. (2011). "Keeping Covent Garden Market 'mom and pop,'" in *London Free Press*. Retrieved from: <http://www.lfpress.com/money/businessmonday/2011/05/06/18115681.html>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

art scene and leverage existing arts and cultural facilities such as the Grand Theatre.⁶

Municipal Tax Base

Citing the major declines that occurred in the 1990s, a major goal of the Downtown Millennium Plan was to increase tax assessment in the downtown. Since 2002, the total current value assessment in the downtown has risen by 3.8% annually, combining for a total increase of 59% from \$567.6 million to \$902.0 million.⁷ Additionally, for 2009-2011, downtown's rate of assessment growth was 15%, exceeding the Citywide rate of 6%.

Jobs

There are approx 30,000 office workers in downtown London. These office workers are primarily employed in banks, trust companies and the national and regional head offices.⁸ Downtown London also has some large local companies, such as London Life Insurance Company.

Currently, downtown household income is generally lower than citywide, although the downtown population generally has attained higher levels of education. This can be explained by the increasing number of students living in the downtown, recent graduates, young professionals and retirees.

Downtown has
30,000+
jobs

⁶ Fanshawe College. (2011). *Fanshawe to Launch First Phase of Downtown Campus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.londoncommunitynews.com/2011/02/new-downtown-campus-for-fanshawe-college/>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

⁷ City of London. (2011). *State of the Downtown Report 2011*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/SOTD_AnnualReport_09.pdf. Accessed 2011 October 20.

⁸ City of London. (2010). *Downtown Master Plan Background Study*. Retrieved from: <http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/40TheImportanceoftheDowntown.pdf>. Accessed 2011 October 14.

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

London's downtown population growth has been relatively strong; from 2001 to 2006 the population increased by a quarter, and in the decade following 1996, it grew over a third. In 2006, downtown London's population was 3,430 and today it has reached approximately 5,000. Growth in the downtown outpaced that of the remainder of the Central London Planning District (includes downtown), which recorded a growth of 1% during this period. Downtown London still relies heavily on a day time population for vitality with a ratio of day time to night time population of 10:1.

Downtown London is adjacent to single family neighbourhoods on all four sides (North and East - Woodfield; South - SOHO; West - Petersville). These neighbourhoods are well connected by pedestrian and cycling trails so residents can easily access and support the downtown.

Diversity

Approximately 57% of the downtown population is single, versus 28% citywide. Downtown London has a slightly lower proportion of immigrants (18%) than the citywide population. Additionally, 10% of downtown residents identify themselves as a visible minority.

Housing

While the majority of London's housing stock is single family dwellings, almost all downtown residents live in apartments. There are also much higher levels of renting in the downtown; 71% of dwellings are rented downtown compared with 38% citywide. Housing prices have also been rising in the downtown and from 2001 to 2006, the average value of an owned unit downtown increased by 63%. In addition the downtown has an average household size of 1.6 compared to 2.4 citywide.

Downtown has

3,430

residents

37%

population growth
downtown between
1996-2006 (compared
to 8% citywide)

18%

of the downtown
population are
international migrants
(compared to 21%
citywide)

1.6

is the average household
size (compared to 2.4
citywide)

Downtown does not have any
large format grocery stores,
yet it does have a fresh
produce market (**Covent
Garden Market**)



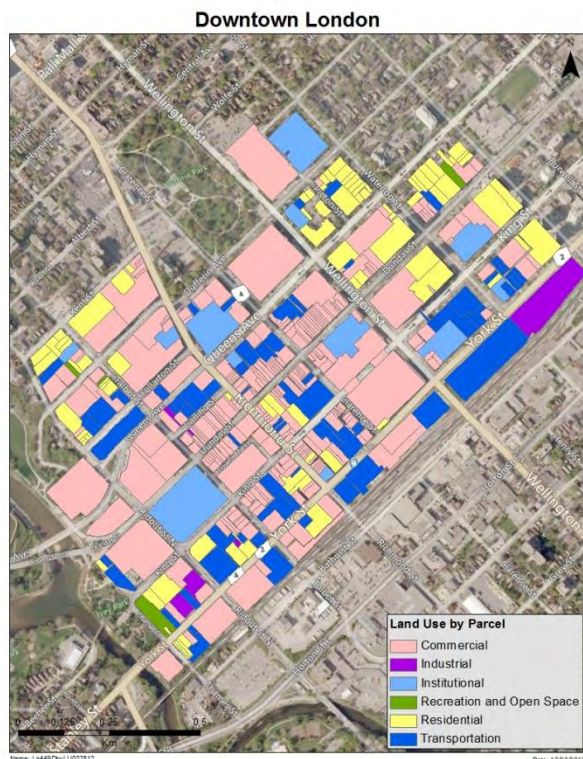
View of Downtown London from above

Safety

The reputation of downtown London is affected by negative perceptions concerning safety. Contributing to this ‘image problem’ is the location of the City’s social services located at London’s main downtown intersection (Richmond and Dundas Streets’), which brings vulnerable populations from the entire region to the downtown. There are advantages to this highly accessible cluster of services for the people that rely on them, yet these needs must also be balanced with those of other downtown user groups who are looking to grow the level of activity in the downtown. In managing this complex issue, it will be important to consider that as more people have positive experiences in downtown London, this perception of crime will likely diminish of its own accord.

Land Uses

Downtown London is dominated by office and retail uses and transportation. Residential uses occupy a sixth of all land uses. Many large City properties with public infrastructure are also located downtown (JLC, Convent Garden Market). On the boundaries of the downtown are two large parks.



Commercial	54%
Industrial	0%
Institutional	11%
Residential	16%
Open Space	1%
Transportation	18%
Vacant	0%

Public Realm

A decade ago, with downtown retail hollowed out and with few residents – the “spaces” in downtown London struggled to attract the people they needed to be vital. In response, the City has invested in the public realm, making it more attractive and drawing increased activity to the downtown, which in turn attracts even more activity and helps to accelerate the downtown revitalization process.

The City has focused on enhancing its public realm by restoring, repurposing and readapting its own heritage buildings. The public realm has also been enhanced through the introduction of new infrastructure, street trees, benches and other furniture, and more pedestrian-friendly streets. Secondly, the City has created financial incentives to support the private sector in upgrading their heritage building stock. These two processes are interconnected, because as the public leads the way on major new investments it can entice the private sector to upgrade their own sites to improve the attractiveness of the area. For example, the construction of the John Labatt Centre has stimulated the lease-up of storefronts along adjacent King Street.

London is known as “The Forest City” and downtown has green edges to the north and the west, with a number of large parks surrounding it – Victoria, Harris, Labatt, and Ivey Parks. However, the downtown itself contains minimal open spaces and the Downtown Master Plan Report 2010 identified the need for “smaller ‘pocket parks,’ small squares and seating areas.” The City has created public squares and spaces at Talbot and Dundas Street and John Labatt Center. Covent Garden Market has also developed a significant public space that features

picnic tables, cafe tables with umbrellas and street vendors at the front. The City is also looking to redevelop a pedestrian laneway linking Dundas Street to the Covent Garden Market.⁹

Connectivity

Downtown London is moving toward pedestrian and transit-oriented development. New residents are increasingly moving around on foot, with 42% of downtown residents walking or biking to work and 14% taking public transit. The downtown is connected to 70% of the City's 38 transit routes.

One challenge reported for downtown London is congestion around its transit hub at Richmond and Dundas Streets. While there are advantages to having commuters disembark at the main downtown intersection, sidewalks along Richmond and Dundas are narrow and increasingly congested with transit patrons waiting for transfers. Improved design may help increase the efficiency of transferring at this station and allow for more movement in and around this intersection. Regional transport also originates from downtown London. The Greyhound bus station and Via Rail terminal are conveniently located on the south side of the downtown.

However, the downtown has a strong presence of vehicles with the current mode split for commuters accessing downtown by transit at 7%.¹⁰ In our interviews, parking shortages were frequently raised as a challenge for downtown, particularly shortages of long term parking. In 2008 the parking supply in downtown was 14,268 spaces.



Dundas St., looking west from Wellington St.

Downtown has
14,268
parking stalls

5 **designated and**
32 **listed heritage**
properties

Downtown's building
footprint in 33ha.

Therefore 70%
of London's downtown
area is not covered
by a building

⁹ City of London (2012). *Market Lane Design Competition*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Planning_and_Development/Land_Use_Planning/Parks_Planning/MarketLane.htm. Accessed 2012 January 17.

¹⁰ City of London. (2010). *Downtown Master Plan - New Ideas, Options, Recommendations and Implementation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/newideasoptionsimplementationreport.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

The City of London has taken progressive approaches to reviving its once struggling downtown. Major investments in strategically located buildings and facilities, as well as the public realm have brought increased activity and new residents to the downtown. Yet the City has been patient with the revitalization process, taking many small steps over the past two decades.

The City has been committed to leading by example and showing the private sector that the municipality is confident enough to make major investments in the downtown. The City has invested heavily in cultural and entertainment facilities that bring new uses and functions that are capable of drawing people to the downtown. These include: the John Labatt Centre, Covent Garden Market and the transformation of Galleria Mall to Central Library and Citi Plaza. Each of these investments has been a fundamental building block for downtown transformation, attracting new users to the downtown outside the work day rush.

Additionally, the City has been committed to protecting its unique heritage features and is encouraging innovative, new uses and ways to adapt these buildings to meet the requirements of modern life. To support this, the City developed loans and grant programs for façade improvements, and upgrading and renovating heritage buildings. The City has also facilitated major renovations of heritage buildings downtown. It is also currently preparing a Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan, a Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

Overall, the City's efforts to revitalize downtown London have been paying off. Since 2000, 1135 building permits have been issued in the downtown with a reported value of \$352.7 million.

Collection of Capital Projects Data:

Capital projects data for downtown London was compiled with input from all City departments. A list of major projects and the total municipal investment associated with each of these projects was compiled. This list was then circulated and tested to ensure that all investments were included. It is noted that this approach may not capture all municipal capital investments in the downtown. Additionally, some investments were made on the boundary of downtown study area which have been included, as this is the approach adopted in other cities.

Summary of Capital Projects: 1998-2010

Municipal Project	Amount Invested	Municipal Project	Amount Invested
John Labatt Centre (2002)	\$52,800,000	Museum of London	\$3,300,000
London Convention Centre	\$40,500,000	London Central Library	\$25,600,000
Covent Garden Market	\$16,900,000	Victoria Park	\$3,500,000
J Allyn Taylor Building	\$3,600,000	Forks of Thames	\$6,100,000
Affordable Housing - 129 Dundas St/34 Covent Market Place	\$1,800,000	Fanshawe College	\$20,000,000
		TOTAL	\$174,100,000

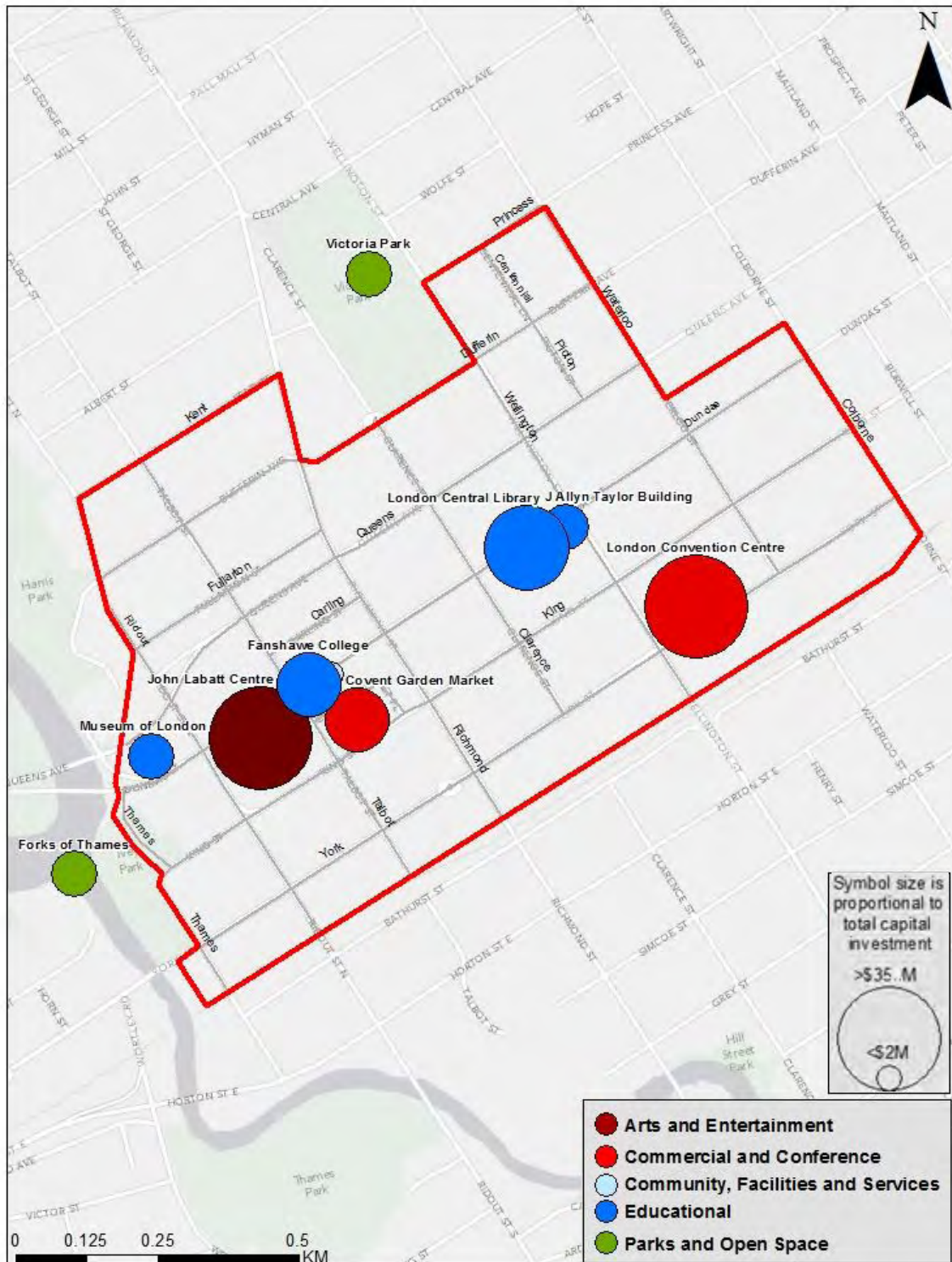


View of Covent Garden Market and Square



Richmond Streetscape of Heritage Buildings

Major Capital Investments in Downtown London – 1998-2010



Key Patterns of Investment:

The City has been investing heavily in key cultural, educational and entertainment facilities in downtown London. These new buildings and the related activity have then helped stimulate growth in the surrounding areas. The City has also invested in upgrading the heritage assets of the City, through interest-free loans and grants to improve facades. The City has been very strategic in its approach, tracking (on a parcel level) the success of its investments and being able to understand how these investments are helping revitalize the downtown.

1. Investing in key cultural, entertainment and educational facilities to bring new functions to the downtown

The City of London has invested heavily in key facilities that offer important cultural, entertainment, and educational functions. The main driver behind the development of these new facilities is that they are able to bring new people to downtown and are able to attract a diverse range of users throughout the day and night. These include:

- **The John Labatt Centre** – A 9000 seat sports and entertainment complex built in 2002. The venue is home of the London Knights Ice Hockey Team and hosts a range of world class entertainment events. The centre has over half a million visitors per year and is active about 200 days a year.
- **Covent Garden Market**– Covent Garden Market is opposite the John Labatt Centre. The market offers downtown residents, visitors and workers with access to a wide variety of fresh food, restaurants and shops.
- **J Allyn Taylor Building** – The City purchased the J Allyn Taylor Building from TD Bank for \$1 and restored this building to be used for the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, City offices and the Tourism London offices.
- **The Convention Centre** – The centre hosts conventions, galas, events and concerts.
- **Central Library** – Central Library was relocated in 2002 into the struggling Galleria Mall (now known as Citi Plaza). The Central Library brought a creative and exciting new use to a space left vacant by the Bay store. The library has been a huge success and now attracts 95,000 people monthly.

These new investments are interconnected yet they are not clustered together, rather spread across the downtown. The thinking behind this distribution was to minimize any potential scheduling conflicts and allow for broader areas in the downtown to be revitalized and receive investment.

This approach seems to have been successful. One interviewee described the impact of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market on the surrounding area – *‘the area once had large amounts of surface parking lots, rundown heritage buildings and more pigeons than people....the area has now been transformed.’* This transformation has involved the major improvements to the heritage streetscape along the south side of King Street, a 28 storey rental apartment building, and a new high-end condo building that together represents over \$100M of private sector investment. These investments have resulted in increased vitality with many visitors frequenting the market and John Labatt Centre.

2. Incentives to enhance heritage buildings and revitalize the downtown

London has a significant number of heritage buildings in its downtown, with Dundas and Richmond Streets’ streetscapes largely intact. Façade upgrades and repurposing and readapting heritage buildings to modern uses have been a key focus of City investments. More specifically, the City has offered a wide range of incentives downtown since the 1980s that have resulted in significant enhancement of its heritage features. This has had major benefits for the public realm and allowed London to develop its own unique and distinct downtown.

The City has been working to restore and repurpose heritage buildings, wherever possible. For example, the J Allyn Taylor Building was restored to accommodate the Medical Hall of Fame, City offices, and offices of Tourism London. Moreover the City is supporting Fanshawe College in its multi-phase plans that aim to develop a satellite campus in several downtown buildings.

On a more micro scale, the City has heavily invested in incentives and loans as a way to encourage the improvement of building façades and existing buildings. The City first developed this program in 1988 - the Facade Improvement Loan Program. It was expanded in 1998 when Council adopted the Downtown Millennium Plan, which included two new incentive programs – the Upgrade to Building Code Loan Program and the Redevelopment Grant Program. These three incentive programs helped drastically improve the state of London's downtown with noticeable increases in the assessment base, private sector investment, and residential development.¹¹

While these programs were positive, the City recognized that the main commercial corridors along Dundas and Richmond Streets were still in a state of decline. In 2008 Council adopted a second set of incentive programs that were aimed at downtown property owners located along these corridors through the creation of a Targeted Incentive Zone that included seven new incentive programs.

Since 2008, the City of London has issued a combined total of 104 grants and loans worth \$1.1 million, leveraging a remarkable \$3.8 million in construction value. This means that the downtown receives \$2.44 of investment for every \$1.00 given out in loans and grants by the City of London. The popularity of these grants continues to rise and applications from 2008 to 2010 increased steadily from 16 to 33 to 49 applications respectively.

3. Green edges for the downtown

The City has also invested in parks outside the downtown boundaries – the Forks of the Thames to the west and Victoria Park to the north. While outside the downtown boundary, these parks are a major asset for drawing people to the downtown and strengthening connections between the downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Future Investments

Downtown Vision: Started in 2008, London's Downtown Master Plan will be the first comprehensive review and plan for Downtown London and is expected to be completed in early 2012. A component and extension of this Plan is London's Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan, a draft of which was recently released for public review. To support these policy documents, the City is preparing Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, to be completed in early 2012, which will replace the existing guidelines created in 1991. Finally, started in late 2011, London's Downtown Investment Strategy/Downtown "Vision" continues to help determine priority projects to direct future investment.

Downtown Investment Projects: Several projects are underway or expected in the City's downtown, which aim to increase productivity, activity and the pedestrian experience in downtown London, which include the following:

- The City of London is currently installing WIFI technology throughout its entire downtown area;
- Fanshawe College will be introducing 1000 new students and 75 staff over the next 5 years;
- The University of Western Ontario has interest in locating a new campus in London's downtown; and
- Pedestrian enhancements are planned in anticipation of the 2013 World Figure Skating Championships to be held at the John Labatt Centre.

¹¹ City of London. (2011). *State of the Downtown Report 2011*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/SOTD_AnnualReport_09.pdf. Accessed 2011 October 20.

WINNIPEG

Growing in strength and confidence



Snap Shot of Winnipeg

- Provincial capital of Manitoba
- Approximate geographical centre of North America
- Fork of Assiniboine and Red Rivers
- Quality heritage features
- Growing downtown core with strong concentration of commerce
- Home of the Winnipeg Jets

"We're extremely confident, the plans laid out will dramatically change how people think about downtown Winnipeg."

At the turn of the 20th century, Winnipeg was a major centre for trade and the city was fortunate enough to have its core built by some of the world's best architects from this period. The downtown is also blessed with the Assiniboine and Red Rivers' that intersect on the east side of the core. These prized assets have greatly contributed to the strong resurgence that downtown Winnipeg has been experiencing over the past few decades. Confidence in the downtown has been recently bolstered by the return of the Winnipeg Jets and major public projects, such as the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. However downtown Winnipeg continues to face a range of challenges, such as retaining momentum, relatively slow population growth, managing social problems in the core, perceptions of crime, as well as maintaining and enhancing some older infrastructure and heritage buildings.

Downtown Winnipeg Timeline 1738-2012

1738 - 1950



1738 – French fur trading post Fort Rouge established at present day Winnipeg

1822 – English post Fort Garry erected on the site

1873 – City of Winnipeg incorporated

1876 – First City Hall erected

1877 – *Countess of Dufferin*, the first steam locomotive to operate in the Canadian Prairies, arrives in Winnipeg

1881 – Canadian Pacific Railway completed the first direct rail link from eastern Canada, precipitating mass immigration and settlement of Winnipeg as the "gateway to the west"

1881 – First street railway system inaugurated (horse drawn cars)

1886 – Second City Hall erected

1892 – First electric streetcar system

1893 – Creation and first meeting of Winnipeg Public Parks Board

1911 – Union Station opens, built by Warren & Wetmore



1919 – Winnipeg General Strike occurs

1914 – Immigration and railway traffic begins to decline with opening of the Panama Canal



1950 - 2012

1960 – Last scheduled run of a steam locomotive on Canadian National between the Pas and Winnipeg

1950 – Red River Valley flood incurs millions of dollars in damage to the city

1972 – Inaugural meeting of first council of new unified City of Winnipeg

1964 – Civic Centre opens

1975 – Convention Centre opens

1968 – Opening of Red River Floodway

1979 – Eaton Place, Winnipeg's first downtown mall, is completed

1961 – Launching of Winnipeg Core Area Initiative: five-year, \$96 million tripartite governmental endeavour to revitalize Winnipeg's economic, social, and physical core



2001 – Construction of Provencher Bridge, connecting downtown Winnipeg with St. Boniface, completed. Esplanade Riel, an accompanying pedestrian bridge, is completed in 2003



2002 – Red River College's phase one downtown redevelopment on Princess Street opens

2005 – Millennium Library opens after an \$18 million revitalization; Creation of newest Downtown neighbourhood, Waterfront Drive; Expansion of University of Winnipeg campus



2010 – Completion of the greenest tall tower in Canada, Manitoba Hydro Head Office

2011 – Winnipeg Jets return to the city after a 15 year absence

2012 – Anticipated completion date of the \$311 million Canadian Museum of Human Rights at the Forks



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Canadian Museum for Human Rights (1)

With construction set to be completed for 2013, the museum will become an international landmark meant to enhance the public understanding of human rights, promote respect for others and inspire learning and research about Canadian Heritage. The \$310 million project was funded by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments as well as The Forks North Portage Partnership and private sector investments.



The Forks (2)

Winnipeg's meeting place located on the banks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, provides a wide range of dining, shopping, entertainment and attractions. The 56 acre site, which draws four million visitors annually has received international awards and attention for design and is a model for urban renewal and waterfront development.



MTS Centre (3)

The \$133.5 million MTS Centre is one of North America's newest state-of-the-art sports and entertainment complex located on Portage Avenue in the heart of downtown. It is the new home of the Winnipeg Jets and their return to the city has helped stimulate interest and economic development and activity within the downtown.



Union Station (4)

Opened in 1912, it still serves a passenger railway station, and is now the only one remaining in Winnipeg. Located at Main and Broadway, the station now also serves as a mixed-use commercial space as well as class 1 government office space.



Manitoba Hydro (5)

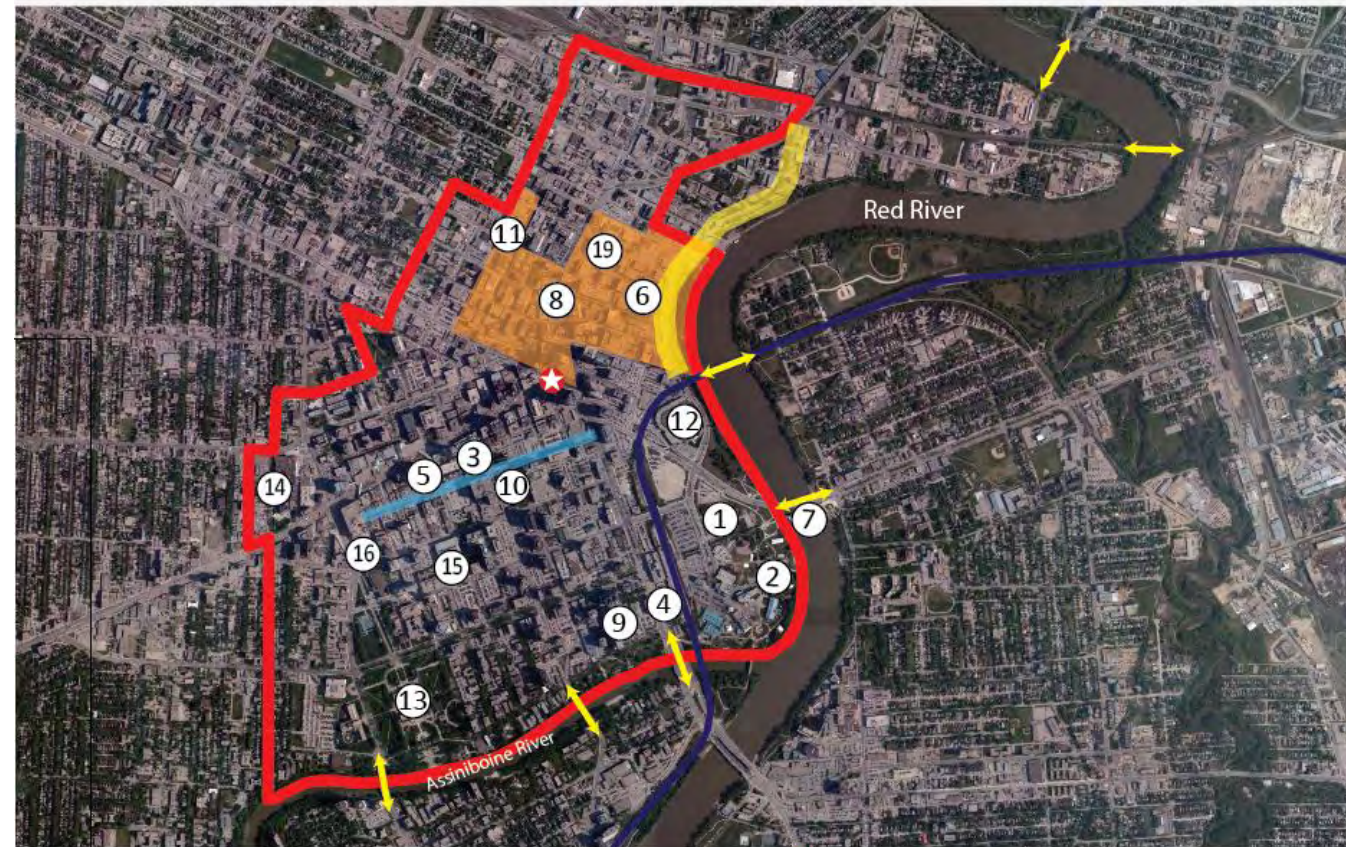
The new headquarters of Manitoba Hydro opened in 2009 at a cost of \$283 million. The 22 storey building along with its retail component has brought more than 1,000 people into the downtown to work.

Waterfront Drive (6)

The development of Waterfront Drive has had a positive impact on downtown Winnipeg. It is now home to several hundred new residents due to recent condominium developments targeted towards young professionals. The development in the area has been a huge catalyst for housing and other developments as well as increasing the population in the downtown.

Esplanade Riel Pedestrian Bridge (7)

This pedestrian bridge connects downtown Winnipeg to St. Boniface. The bridge itself has a restaurant on it which provides exceptional views of the river as well as the shoreline. It has become a landmark in the City because of its unique design and is a first for bridges in North America.



Source: Flash Earth



Graham Mall (Refer to Legend)

Completed in 1995, it is a 9-block street in the downtown that provides priority for transit, cyclists, and pedestrians where automobile use is restricted.

Exchange District (8)

The Exchange District is Winnipeg's historic district that has maintained its heritage warehouse buildings. Many of these warehouses have now been converted into businesses, arts facilities, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Recent residential conversions have made the neighbourhood increasingly vibrant.

Fort Garry Hotel (9)

Built in 1913, Fort Garry Hotel is a historic hotel in the downtown, was the tallest structure in the city when it was completed, and it is located one block from Union station

Millennium Library (10)

After being renovated in 2005, the library attracted 1.5 million visitors per year. It is the single most used facility in the Downtown as the library provides space for cultural and education activities. The Library Park Project will provide outdoor space for residents, shoppers, and visitors and space for large events and public lectures.

Red River College (11)

At a cost of \$31 million, the new 220,000 square foot downtown campus home to 2,200 students and faculty has combined historic heritage buildings with modern design to create a state of the art facility.

Shaw Baseball Park (12)

Opened in 1999, and recently expanded in 2010, it is the home of the Winnipeg Goldeyes Baseball Club. It is located within view of Portage and Main streets as well as the Winnipeg skyline.

Manitoba Legislature (13)

Completed in 1915, the building is home to the Provincial Government of Manitoba. It was designed by English architects Simon and Boddington in the Beaux-Arts Classical style.

University of Winnipeg (14)

The University of Winnipeg dates back more than 130 years. It was back in 1938 that the founding colleges Manitoba College (1871) and Wesley College (1888) merged. Later in 1967, the University received its charter. The University of Winnipeg is one of Canada's leading post-secondary institutions.

Winnipeg Convention Centre (15)

Built in 1975, the convention centre was one of the first facilities of its kind. It includes: a main exhibit hall with 7,200 m² of open space (pillerless), a theatre, various convention and meeting rooms, a restaurant, and five levels including indoor parking for 560 vehicles. Tentative plans to expand the facility have been announced.

Winnipeg Art Gallery (16)

Founded in 1912, the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) is a public art gallery (6th largest in the country) which is considered to be Western's Canada's oldest civic gallery. The gallery is located in the heart of the city; relatively equal distance from both the University of Winnipeg and the Manitoba's provincial Legislature (about two blocks).

Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation (19)

Opening in 1968, the Manitoba Centennial Centre includes: the Manitoba Museum, Manitoba Theatre Center, Centennial Concert Hall, and the Planetarium. It started out as an urban renewal program in 1960, the venue has a seating capacity of 2,305, and the concert hall cost about \$8 million to complete.

VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

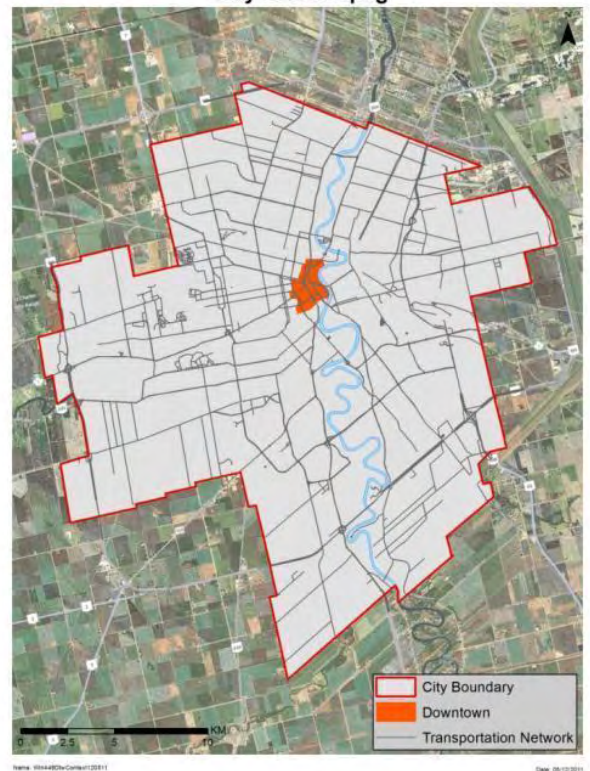
Winnipeg is the provincial capital of Manitoba and home to a majority of Manitoba's residents. The downtown is 1% of Winnipeg's total area, yet it is relatively large compared to many other downtowns at 359ha. The downtown has several distinctive neighbourhoods such as the Exchange District, Chinatown, the Forks, and the Central Business District.

Downtown Winnipeg possesses a substantial concentration of cultural, entertainment and recreational facilities. The return of the Winnipeg Jets to the downtown's MTC Centre has been a major windfall and has cultivated renewed pride and confidence in downtown Winnipeg. Moreover, sources of new investments in the Forks and Waterfront Drive, as well as the ongoing development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (to be completed in 2012) are accelerating interest in the downtown. The core also has 77% of the City's office space, which has allowed Winnipeg to maintain its dominance as the centre for employment and commerce in the City.

Winnipeg's history left an indelible imprint on the fabric, form, and structure of the downtown today. In 1911, Winnipeg was Canada's the third largest city, 24 rail lines converged on the core, and the city was known as the "Chicago of the North." Development from this time can still be seen in the Exchange District – one of the most historically intact turn-of-the-century commercial districts on the continent.¹ Both rail and heritage continue to play a dominant role in the downtown and Winnipeg is increasingly re-embracing this proud past. Efforts to reclaim and restore the downtown's heritage features will bolster the downtown's increasing prominence.

While downtown Winnipeg is growing its strength and reputation, it still faces a range of challenges. In particular, many Winnipeg residents associate the area with poverty, homelessness, and crime. Efforts such as the redevelopment of the Bell Hotel (historically one of the City's finer small hotels) led by CentreVenture to provide supportive housing to chronically homeless is an excellent example of how these types of challenges can be addressed.

Overall, downtown Winnipeg is making impressive progress in revitalization. The presence of CentreVenture – an entity created during the tenure of former mayor Glen Murray - has been significant in driving projects, building relationships and boosting morale in the core. In recent years, downtown Winnipeg has attracted over \$600M of new investment.²



Downtown comprises
1%

of total city area (360ha)

2%

of the population lives
downtown (13,470)

77%

of Winnipeg's office
space is downtown
(7,158,818sf)

Downtown has

159 jobs/ha

or ~57,000 jobs

¹ Heritage Winnipeg (2010). *The Exchange District*. Retrieved from <http://www.heritagewinnipeg.com/blog.html?item=26>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

² Centre Venture (n.d.). *Success Stories*. Retrieved from <http://www.centreventure.com/news/category/success-stories/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Winnipeg is striving to become an increasingly vibrant place to live, work and play. Since the 1980s investments from all levels of government and the private sector have worked to support this vision and contributed to a significant resurgence of the downtown, attracting significant new investment and many more visitors. While the core is starting to gain momentum, it will be important that planning efforts are increasingly focused on growing the residential population to create a strong community downtown that can continue to support and propel downtown revitalization.

Vision

Downtown Winnipeg is the focus of significant planning effort. The 'Our Winnipeg - Complete Communities Direction Strategy' prioritizes the downtown, with the mindset that the downtown is Winnipeg's 'window to the world'.³ The City is working hard to achieve a more vibrant core by encouraging increased investment, growing the residential population, addressing safety concerns, and achieving quality design.

The City has had a downtown-specific plan since 1969, which was replaced 20 years later with 'Centre Plan'.⁴ This Plan laid the foundations for a collaborative approach to downtown revitalization through strong partnerships and participation from all three levels of government, numerous downtown organizations, non-profit agencies, interest groups, and residents.

Today, there is a lot of optimism and momentum driving downtown Winnipeg. Confidence to invest downtown is both building and reflected by high levels



MTS Centre

A successful public private partnership

<http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/blog/index.cfm/2011/6/13/Downtown->

of investment and the number of new developments. These investments are supporting the downtown in improving its image as a destination in its own right and attract a growing residential population. Housing incentives are also increasing the attractiveness of investing in residential development.

Leadership and Collaboration

There is a strong sense that the success being realized in downtown Winnipeg can be attributed to the efforts of many – all levels of government, the private sector, and the community.

A major champion for the downtown has been Centre Venture. This is an arms-length agency of City of Winnipeg and administers many of its programs. The organization does not take direction from City Hall, rather it reports to its board comprised of a diverse range of city leaders.⁵ This approach has been highly successful and provides a lighter touch when working across levels of government and with the private sector to build the relationships and the conditions needed to support downtown revitalization.

The private sector was also recognized for their efforts, optimism, and commitment to the downtown.

³City of Winnipeg (2011). *Our Winnipeg. Complete Communities*. Retrieved from

http://speakupwinnipeg.com/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/CompleteCommunitiesJul_12.2011.WEB_RGB_.pdf. Accessed 2012 March 6.

⁴City of Winnipeg (n.d.). *Centre Plan*. Retrieved from

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/1vis_strat.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁵Centre Venture. (n.d.) *Our Board*. Retrieved from

http://www.centreventure.com/our_board.php. Accessed 2012 January 17.

The downtown business community, the Winnipeg Downtown BIZ and the Chamber of Commerce were identified as key leaders, while individuals like Mark Chipman were applauded for bringing back the Winnipeg Jets to the city.

In Winnipeg the federal, provincial, and municipal governments have a strong tradition of successful tripartite cooperation to address the economic and social development issues facing downtown Winnipeg. This relationship and collaborative approach was cemented during the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative that was launched in the 1980s through to the conclusion of the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement in 2009. These development agreements provided millions in funding for a range of downtown projects. One of the key successes from these agreements was revitalization of the Forks and Waterfront Drive – Winnipeg’s most popular tourist destination with more than four million visitors annually⁶ and a rapidly growing new residential neighbourhood.

Overall, downtown Winnipeg is benefitting from the many leaders who are all taking small steps towards the continued revitalization of downtown. Together all the different stakeholders that comprise the downtown are achieving positive results and making contributions towards transforming the downtown.

Public Private Partnerships

There have and continue to be many examples of public private partnerships (PPPs) in downtown Winnipeg. The MTS Centre and the Canadian Human Rights Museum both represent successful PPPs that have made a significant contribution to downtown revitalization efforts.

For example the MTS Centre costs approximately \$133.5M to build. The MTS Centre Project group contributed about 70% of this or \$93 million. The Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg will contribute about 30% or \$40.5 million. Therefore, for every dollar of public-

⁶ The Forks (2012). *The Forks*. Retrieved from <http://www.theforks.com/about/the-forks>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

sector investment, over two dollars were invested by the private-sector.⁷

Additionally, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is a \$310M project created in partnership between the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, the Forks North Portage Partnership, and the private sector.⁸ More specifically, public agencies have provided \$160M in capital funds but the private sector has donated up to \$130M to support the museum.⁹ Again, this project represents the highly collaborative approach to city building that is being achieved in downtown.

Overall, downtown Winnipeg seems to have no shortage of champions are believers who are willing to work together to strengthen the core.

“Out of our challenges has come a renewed effort over the past decade to get everyone going forward in a sustainable way.”

**Winnipeg has policies in its
Official Plan that relate
specifically to its downtown**

**Winnipeg has had a downtown
master plan for
42 years**

⁷ MTS Centre (n.d.). *Project Vision*. Retrieved from <http://www.mtscentre.ca/overview/funding.php>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁸ Canadian Museum for Human Rights (n.d.). *Building the Museum*. Retrieved from <http://humanrightsmuseum.ca/building-museum>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

⁹Canadian Museum for Human Rights (2008). *The Campaign*. Retrieved from: http://www.friendsofcmhr.com/the_campaign. Accessed 2012 January 17.

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Winnipeg has a highly diverse and stable urban economy. In recent studies by Moody's Investor Service and the Conference Board of Canada, Winnipeg was been viewed to have one of the most diverse economies of any major city in Canada.¹⁰ This diverse economy provides a stable workforce, low unemployment rates, and a cushion against major fluctuations resulting from downturns in the economy.

Residential Development

Residential development in downtown Winnipeg shows promise. In more recent years, high levels of residential development followed investment in Waterfront Drive on the east edge of the Exchange District in the creation of a new mixed use community. The area is now home to four high quality, mixed-use condominium developments with over 200 units, representing a projected \$48 million in private sector investment.¹¹

Moreover to support further residential development, the City and the Province have recently developed a grant program that provides up to \$40,000 per residential unit using tax incremental financing. This program is being delivered through the CentreVenture Development Corporation.¹²

Office Development

Office space in downtown Winnipeg has grown by 3% since 2002, to a total of 7,158,820sf. Vacancy rates throughout this time have also been relatively stable, varying between 6-9%. Downtown Winnipeg has a major concentration of office space, comprising about three quarters of office space inventory in the City

(76% in 2010). This concentration has remained relatively stable over the past decade.

A \$188M office investment was made in downtown Winnipeg by Manitoba Hydro in 2009. The organization constructed a 22 storey office tower that is one of the most energy efficient in North America.¹³ The development consolidated ~2,000 employees from across 15 suburban operations.¹⁴ This building also set an example architecturally, with the form and massing directly responding to the local climate and reviving the city's former 'Chicago-scale' urban spirit.¹⁵ Consistent with the intent to use the project to benefit the downtown economy, there was intentionally no cafeteria located inside the building in order to encourage staff to go outside for lunch and experience the downtown.

Overall, there is much optimism that the commercial sector in downtown Winnipeg will continue to develop into the future with many new proposals on the horizon.¹⁶ The MTS Centre, the Longboat project is expected to include an office/retail complex, a boutique hotel, and a 400- to 450-stall parkade.¹⁷

Retail Development

Downtown Winnipeg has a modest supply of commercial amenities including mall spaces, street front retail and attractive retail and restaurant clusters such as the Exchange District.¹⁸ One of the

¹⁰ City of Winnipeg (2012). *Winnipeg Economic Overview*. Retrieved from: <http://www.economicdevelopmentwinnipeg.com/winnipeg-economy/winnipeg-economy>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

¹¹ CentreVenture. (2004). *Developers to invest \$48 million in Waterfront Drive projects*. Retrieved from: <http://www.economicdevelopmentwinnipeg.com/winnipeg-economy/winnipeg-economy/major-developments>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹² City of Winnipeg (2011). *Downtown Residential Development Program*. Retrieved from: http://winnipeg.ca/ppd/programs_drdg.stm. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹³ Design and Building Network (2011). *Manitoba Hydro Place, Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.designbuild-network.com/projects/manitobahydroplace>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁴ American Institute of Architects (2010). *Manitoba Hydro Place*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aiaopten.org/hpb/overview.cfm?ProjectID=1712>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁵ American Institute of Architects (2010). *Manitoba Hydro Place*. Retrieved from <http://www.aiaopten.org/hpb/overview.cfm?ProjectID=1712>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

¹⁶ Kives, B. (2009). *18 New Towers for Downtown?* Retrieved from <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/18-new-towers-for-downtown-40839857.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

¹⁷ Cash, M., McNeil, M. (2011). *Boutique Hotel Part of Development*. Retrieved from http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/news_details/index.cfm?recid=259. Accessed 2012 January 17.

¹⁸ City of Winnipeg (2009). *Downtown Winnipeg Employment Study*. Retrieved from http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/pdf_folder/DwntnEmploymentStudy.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

downtowns key retail anchors is the Bay department store. Overall interviews discussed growing confidence in downtown retailing with the emergence of the Mountain Equipment Co-op and other national retailers. The downtown sports, hospitality and entertainment district is also forming around the MTS Centre, with 'new restaurant chains clamouring to set up shop and eateries already there reporting a surge in business tied to the Winnipeg Jets.'¹⁹

Downtown Winnipeg also accommodates Portage Place. This Mall was developed as part of a major urban renewal project in the 1980s. This project was driven by the three levels of government, spending millions assembling the land. Yet one interviewee commented that the mall has faced a range of economic challenges since opening, and continues to be challenged with attracting tenants. Currently there is a focus on finding innovative new uses to strengthen this mall into the future.²⁰

Educational & Institutional Development

Downtown Winnipeg benefits from the University of Winnipeg campus, located on its western edge. This campus strengthens the downtown by serving more than 9,340 undergraduate students and offering a strong continuing education division. In 2008, the University of Manitoba also opened the Asper School of Business in a 7,000 square foot downtown office tower. This is an excellent example of growing confidence in the downtown.²¹

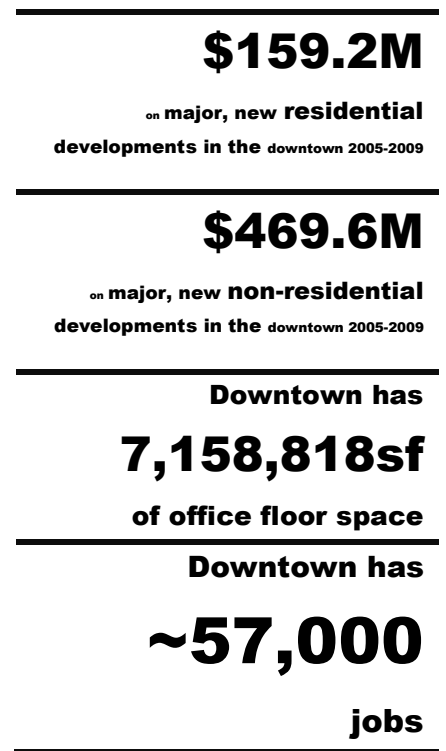
The Red River College development has also proved to be a major windfall for the downtown. This unique, \$35M construction and reclamation project incorporated the existing facades of six historic

buildings in the Exchange District into the finished product. It is now home to some 2,200 students.²² A cornerstone of this development is a new culinary school, the Paterson GlobalFoods Institute.

Additionally, the downtown has a high concentration of not-for profit arts organizations and many of these are located in the Exchange District. These organizations complement and add vibrancy to other activities in the downtown.²³

Jobs

Downtown Winnipeg has a large share of the City's employment. The downtown supported some 57,000 jobs in 2001 – 40% of these were located in major office buildings and a further 29% were part of the broad public sector (public administration, health and education). The downtown supports about 25% of the metropolitan workforce.²⁴



¹⁹McNiel, M. (2011). *New Restaurant Chains Rushing to Feed Fans Downtown*. Retrieved from: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/jets-setting-pace-134813298.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

²⁰Turenne, Paul. (2011). "Mall of misfortune" in *The Winnipeg Sun*. Retrieved from: <http://www.winnipegnews.com/news/winnipeg/2011/04/05/17889636.html>. Accessed 2012 January 24.

²¹City of Winnipeg (2009). *Downtown Winnipeg Employment Study*. Retrieved from

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/pdf_folder/DwntnEmploymentStudy.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

²² CentreVenture Website (n.d.). *Red River College Downtown Campus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.centreventure.com/news/2002/09/30/red-river-college-downtown-campus/>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

²³ City of Winnipeg (n.d.). *Centre Plan*. Retrieved from: http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/1vis_strat.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

²⁴ City of Winnipeg (2009). *Downtown Winnipeg Employment Study*. Retrieved from

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/pdf_folder/DwntnEmploymentStudy.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Between 1996 and 2006 the population of downtown grew by just under 2% and the City of Winnipeg grew by a similarly modest amount of just over 2%. The most significant rise in population in downtown Winnipeg was between 1986 and 1991 when the population grew by one-fifth. This growth appears to coincide with the establishment of Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative, which involved development of some new social housing. Downtown Winnipeg still relies heavily on its daytime population for vitality, as well as visitors to the city's arts, cultural and entertainment facilities.

Diversity

Downtown Winnipeg has a diverse population. In 2006, the downtown had a higher proportion of people that identify as aboriginal (16%) compared to citywide (10%). Additionally a third of the population identify as a visible minority, 7% of the population identifies as Filipino, 10% identifies as Black, and 7% identifies as Chinese. Downtown Winnipeg also has a younger population profile with a third of the population (34%) aged between 20-34 compared to under a quarter City wide (21%). Additionally over half the population (55%) is single, compared to 35% citywide.

Housing

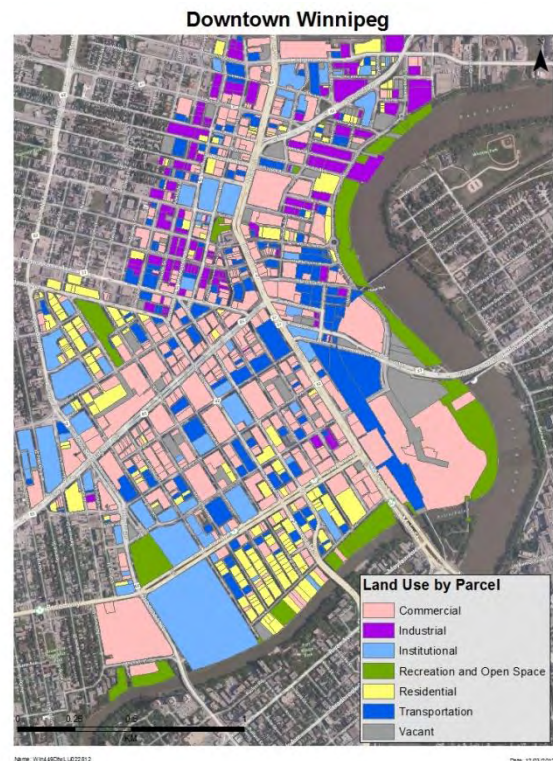
Housing in downtown Winnipeg is comprised almost entirely of apartments (99%) compared to 31% city wide. Downtown Winnipeg also has smaller household sizes than the rest of the City, 1.6 compared to 2.4, which indicates that attracting families to downtown remains a challenge.

Safety

Winnipeg Police Service crime statistics since 2001 have shown a downward trend in crimes against people and property in downtown. Less than 10% of assaults in Winnipeg occur downtown. Across the

city, WPS stats from 2011 show a 26% decrease in crime, downtown experienced a decrease of 44%. However, downtown Winnipeg struggles with some image problems in relation to crime, particularly along parts of Portage Avenue. Increasing efforts by the Winnipeg BIZ and the Centre Venture will likely help address these issues. Moreover, as more people come back and revisit the downtown they will likely get to experience and enjoy all the positive changes that have occurred and be able to reevaluate past views.

Land Uses



Commercial	37%
Industrial	8%
Institutional	16%
Residential	8%
Open Space	4%
Transportation	13%
Vacant	14%

Downtown Winnipeg has a diverse mix of land uses. Commercial and institutional uses make up over half of the downtown land area, while an industrial legacy persists in downtown Winnipeg's warehousing district. Residential parcels occupy almost a tenth of land area. The downtown is fortunate to have open space extending around its eastern boundary.

Public Realm

There has been significant effort to enhance the public realm in downtown Winnipeg. This effort has been particularly strong in areas where residential growth is being encouraged, such as along Waterfront Drive (site of the downtown's newest residential community), and in the Exchange District. Effort has also been made to upgrade one of the downtown's established neighbourhoods, Central Park, to make the park safer and more attractive as a destination. These areas provide excellent examples of quality design and investment in spaces that many more people now gravitate toward.

Yet, the downtown still has some ways to go, as one interviewee explained that downtown Winnipeg (with the exception of The Forks) has not yet emerged as a destination people to go – *'to just hang out.'* Continued effort to enhance the public realm will likely contribute to the attractiveness of downtown Winnipeg as a place to simply relax and spend time.

Connectivity

Two rivers and two transcontinental railway lines dominate Winnipeg's geography. While they are clearly assets, both rivers and rail lines can be barriers to connectivity. The downtown has six bridges to cross to the opposite sides banks for the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Moreover, the rail lines and yards continue to have a large presence in the downtown, with the yards occupying a significant portion of the total downtown area. The rail line can create connectivity challenges between the Forks, (one of downtown's main draws) and the downtown core.

As a matter of policy, no freeways have been built as part of the urban transportation system in downtown Winnipeg. Yet, there are some very wide roads that extend through downtown Winnipeg that inhibit pedestrian movement around the downtown. For example, Portage Avenue and Main Street are six to eight lane roads (in part), detracting from the pedestrian experience. Large surface parking lots can also lessen from the pedestrian experience. The downtown has 35,000 off street parking spaces, comprising an estimated 20% of downtown real estate. The municipal, provincial or federal governments own about 20% of the surface lots in downtown, offering a significant redevelopment opportunity.²⁵

Given Winnipeg's extremely cold climate, an extensive underground and above ground pedestrian system exists. This may be important to allow for movement in the colder months (five months of the year average below zero temperatures)²⁶, yet it creates challenges for activating street life year round and fails to take advantage of Winnipeg being one of the sunniest cities in Canada.²⁷

Downtown has

13,470

residents

1.9%

**population growth
downtown between
1996-2006 (compared to
2.4% citywide)**

66%

**of the downtown population
identify as a visible minority**

1.6

**is the average household size
(compared to 2.4 citywide)**

²⁵ Winnipeg City Council. (2011). *Council Minutes – December 14, 2011: Downtown Parking Strategy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.winnipeg.ca/clkdmis/DocExt/ViewDoc.asp?DocumentTypeld=2&DocId=5476>. Accessed 2012 January 31.

²⁶ Living in Canada (n.d.). *The Climate and Weather of Winnipeg Manitoba*. Retrieved from <http://www.livingin-canada.com/climate-winnipeg.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

²⁷ Current Results (2012). *Sunniest Cities in Canada*. Retrieved from: <http://www.currentresults.com/Weather-Extremes/Canada/sunniest-cities.php>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

Downtown Winnipeg has benefited from many investments made by all three levels of government, and the support of the private sector. These have been in all manner of investments in public facilities to draw new users to the core and promote the downtown as a more attractive place to visit, work and invest. More recently, public investments are being specifically targeted to attract new residents to the downtown.

Downtown Winnipeg has benefited from a range of public investment since 1981, when the tri-level Core Area Initiative was established to revitalize the inner city. One of the key achievements of this Initiative was that it spurred the creation of The Forks National Historic Site (opened in 1989).²⁸ This park is now one of the downtown's most treasured assets and has also been a critical piece in attracting other investments, such as the Shaw Park, the new Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel, and the new walkway/bicycle path that links The Forks site with Stephen Juba Park. Perhaps one of the most significant recent developments is the construction of Waterfront Drive, which links the River and the Forks to the Exchange District. Soon the Canadian Human Rights Museum will complement this vital area.

The public sector has also been investing heavily in the core itself and consequently a wide range of cultural, educational and entertainment facilities now exist. Major investments have been made in key infrastructure elements such as the MTS Centre (which eventually helped attract the Jets back to Winnipeg), the Millennium Library, and Red River College. The University of Winnipeg has also played a pivotal role in renewing confidence in downtown. In the last year alone, the University has expanded significantly, opening three new buildings and is planning on building a field house in fall of 2013.

Overall, downtown Winnipeg is making impressive progress towards revitalizing its core. The presence of CentreVenture has been significant in driving projects, building relationships, and lifting morale in the core and reports that downtown Winnipeg has attracted over \$600 million of new investment in recent years. *'The magnitude of this new investment - representing projects committed, underway or completed - is unprecedented in recent memory.'*²⁹ In November 2011, plans were announced regarding CentreVenture's SHED project - the downtown's new Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District, located south of Portage Avenue. It will be a *"vibrant, active, urban and entertainment-focused downtown destination and meeting place" which will help convince more companies to move into the central business district.*³⁰ Downtown stakeholders are increasingly concentrating on making Winnipeg's downtown a more attractive space for visitors and residents, by attracting new residential development, higher end retail stores and creating a more vibrant and mixed use community.

²⁸City of Winnipeg (2004). *Pioneer and Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines*. Retrieved from: http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/pdf_folder/Pioneer-Waterfront.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 17.

²⁹ Centre Venture (n.d.). *Success Stories*. Retrieved from: <http://www.centreventure.com/news/category/success-stories/>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

³⁰Dobson, Ross. (2012). "A downtown for transients doesn't work" in *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/westview/a-downtown-for-transients-doesnt-work-136796613.html?device=mobile>. Accessed 2012 January 17.

Data Collection Process

From the outset it is critical to acknowledge that the project team faced significant challenges in the compilation of a complete set of capital projects data for the City of Winnipeg. Therefore the team utilized a methodology to present capital projects data that differs from the other case studies. More specifically the capital projects map is based on lists of major capital investments that were compiled by Economic Development Winnipeg Inc (2001-2009) and the Downtown Trends, Downtown Winnipeg Market Research³¹ (2005-2009). The team identified downtown projects from both lists that were institutional and/or public projects. Additionally, the team included a couple of significant projects from 2011 that they were made aware of through the the interview process. This data has some limitations as it fails to capture smaller scale investments i.e. social programs, small scale public realm upgrades and/or undertaking a detailed planning process etc. In addition, there were often discrepancies between the two sets of data, in which case the project team utilized the Economic Development Winnipeg Inc data.

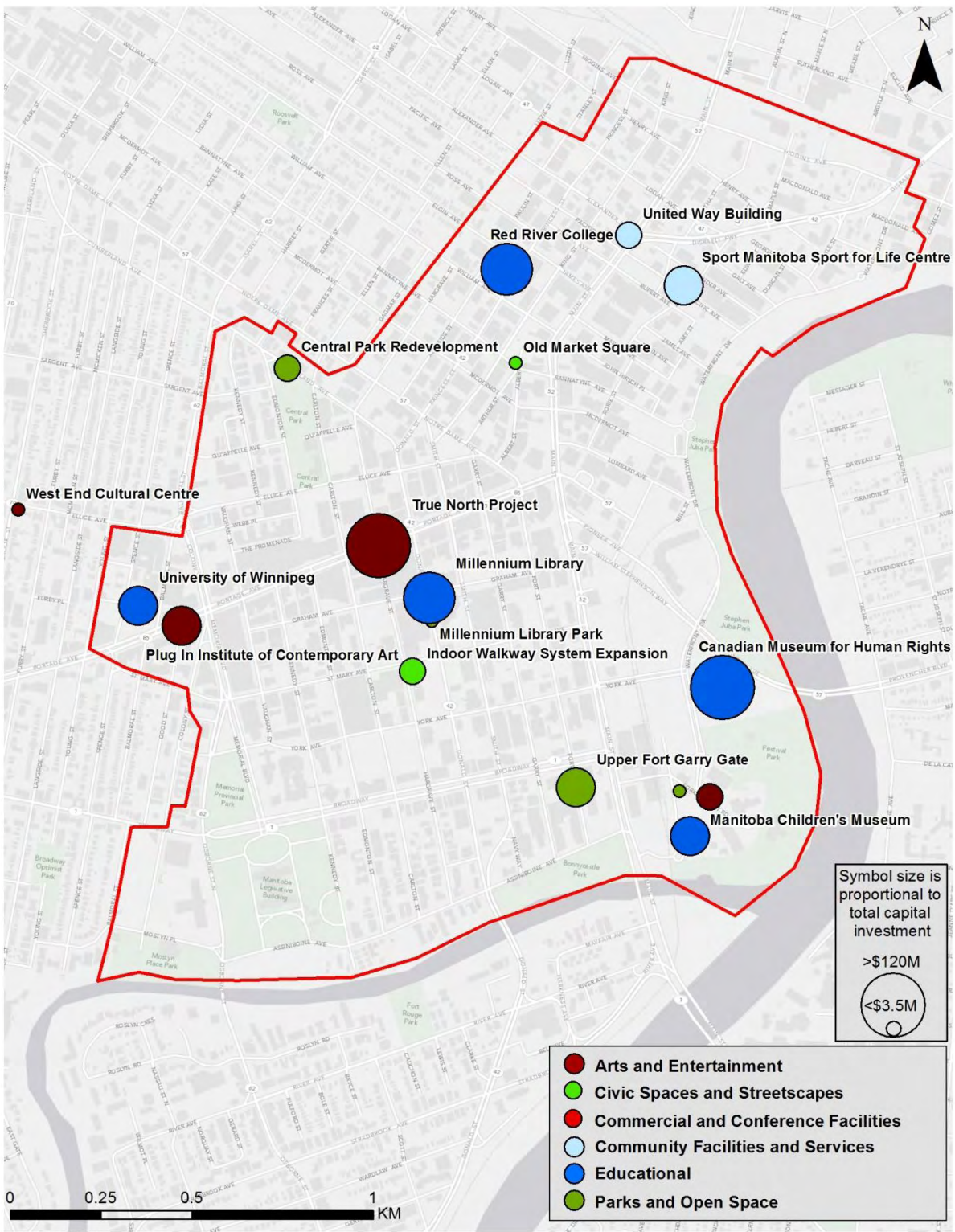
Moreover this approach fails to account for the municipal proportion of investment; rather it captures the total value of public capital investments. However, given the data limitations faced, this approach is considered optimal for gaining a preliminary spatial understanding of where, when and how much is being invested in public and quasi public facilities over the past decade in downtown Winnipeg.

Summary of Public Investments

Project	Year	Total Investment	Project	Year	Total Investment
Canadian Museum for Human Rights	2009	\$180,000,000	Indoor Walkway System Expansion	2009	\$8,700,000
True North Project	2002	\$125,000,000	Central Park Redevelopment	2009	\$5,600,000
Red River College – Culinary Institute	2011	\$27,000,000	Manitoba Children’s Museum	2011	\$10,000,000
United Way Building	2009	\$9,500,000	CanWest Centre for Theatre and Film	2009	\$5,500,000
Millennium Library	2005	\$20,700,000	West End Cultural Centre	2009	\$3,500,000
Sport Manitoba Sport for Life Centre	2009	\$15,000,000	Millennium Library Park	2008	\$2,100,000
University of Winnipeg	2003-09	\$13,000,000	The Forks Skate Park Plaza	2006	\$1,800,000
Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art	2009	\$12,000,000	Old Market Square	2009	\$1,750,000
Upper Fort Garry Gate	2009	\$10,300,000		TOTAL	\$451,450,000

³¹ Downtown Winnipeg Biz. (2011). *BIZ Trends 2010-2012*. Retrieved from: http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/resource/file/DBIZ_Trends_2010.pdf. Accessed 2011 November 29.

Major Public Investments in Downtown Winnipeg (2001-2011)



Key Patterns of Investment

1. Investment in Entertainment, Cultural and Educational Facilities

Central Business District: In the past decade the City has been investing in many public entertainment and cultural facilities in its central business district. The City contributed to one of the most significant investments made in the core – the True North Project in 2002 (\$125M), which primarily included development of the MTS Centre. The MTS Centre was a critical piece to bringing back the Winnipeg Jets, which has created a massive surge of momentum in downtown. This project has also been linked to a major new development – ‘The Long Boat Project’, which will bring a new office, boutique hotel, and new restaurants to adjacent parcels. The City has also contributed to the development of the very popular Millennium Library and Park (\$22.8M). These facilities are very well utilized and attract many visitors to the downtown every year.

The creation of Red River College’s downtown campus represents a major achievement that was supported by both the province and the City. This project created a new educational facility on Princess Street in multiple heritage buildings (\$27M) and led to the restoration of six heritage facades on a brownfield site. The College now brings many students to the downtown core every day. The University of Winnipeg is also a major player in the core, investing \$13M in the downtown in the past decade.

Waterfront: The waterfront has also been a major area for new public investments, facilitated by the redevelopment of several large brownfield sites that were formerly rail yards. These major parcels have allowed for the creation of Shaw Park (the baseball field), the Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel, and the new walkway/bicycle path that links The Forks site with Stephen Juba Park. Soon, the Canadian Human Rights Museum will complement this vital area. Moreover lands along the River have led to the creation of Waterfront Drive, a new mixed use neighbourhood that links the River to the Exchange District and the central business district strengthening the connections between these two vital areas.



Red River College, was an exciting new program downtown that led to the restoration of 6 heritage facades

2. Investment in Social Infrastructure

Downtown Winnipeg is navigating significant social challenges associated with poverty, health, wellbeing, and homelessness within its core population. These issues have spurred some significant public investments that have been progressively and proactively addressing some of these challenges, such as Thunderbird House and Aboriginal Centre. This was an investment made with funding from all three levels of government. Moreover the Bell Hotel (historically one of the City’s finer small hotels) was redeveloped in 2011 to provide supportive housing to the chronically homeless. This facility now houses 42 people and provides a range of services to vulnerable populations in the downtown. This project offers an excellent example of how a downtown redevelopment can simultaneously meet the needs of vulnerable populations and enhance and repurpose a heritage building suffering from decline.

3. Increasing Emphasis on Growing Residential Population

Downtown Winnipeg has been increasingly focused on attracting residential growth through the creation of high quality residential neighbourhoods. For example the development of Waterfront Drive represents a major investment to support residential development. The area now contains four major condominium developments, the Excelsior,

Ship Street, Sky, and The Strand. The derelict site was a former railway transfer track property and was a classic brownfield.³²

CentreVenture championed the Waterfront Drive project by bringing together all levels of government and the private sector.³³ Waterfront Drive was opened in August 2004, thanks in large part to \$9.1M in funding from the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. To date this initial investment has leveraged over \$50 million in investments from the private sector with over 200 residential units built and more than 36,000 square feet of commercial space developed.³⁴ Development of this site provides a quality example of a high density, and mixed use community. Yet it is also strategically located on the eastern edge of the historic Exchange District to connect the river with this neighbourhood that also strives to grow its residential base.

A major investment (\$5.6M) was also made in Winnipeg's historic Central Park to restore the park's Waddell Fountain and bring about site improvements.³⁵ The area is home to a diverse population and about 70% of all refugees who migrate to Winnipeg live in and around the Central Park area.³⁶ Therefore the investment aims to strengthen the existing communities around central park and attract new residential development.

To further support these efforts the City and provincial government recently doubled the size of their tax-incentive program. In 2010 the City and Province launched a tax-incentive program that offered \$20 million worth of municipal property-tax and provincial education-tax credits to developers who build new housing units in downtown Winnipeg. The program was intended to last five years but was fully subscribed within six months. It is a form of tax-incentive financing that stimulates housing in areas where the cost of renovations — and the additional property-tax uptick flowing from the resulting property reassessments — would otherwise make the developments in question unprofitable. The City and Province then doubled the size of the funding for the program to \$40M; which continued to help support residential expansion within the core.³⁷



Waterfront Drive Neighborhood



View of Central Park

³² Centre Venture (2009). *Waterfront Drive Development*. Retrieved from <http://umanitoba.ca/architecture/cp/Media/CiP2009/SakiyamaCIP.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

³³ Centre Venture (2009). *Waterfront Drive Development*. Retrieved from <http://umanitoba.ca/architecture/cp/Media/CiP2009/SakiyamaCIP.pdf>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

³⁴ Western Economic Diversification Canada (2007). *\$1.1 million Investment to reclaim Waterfront Drive property*. Retrieved from: http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77_9878.asp. Accessed 2012 January 24.

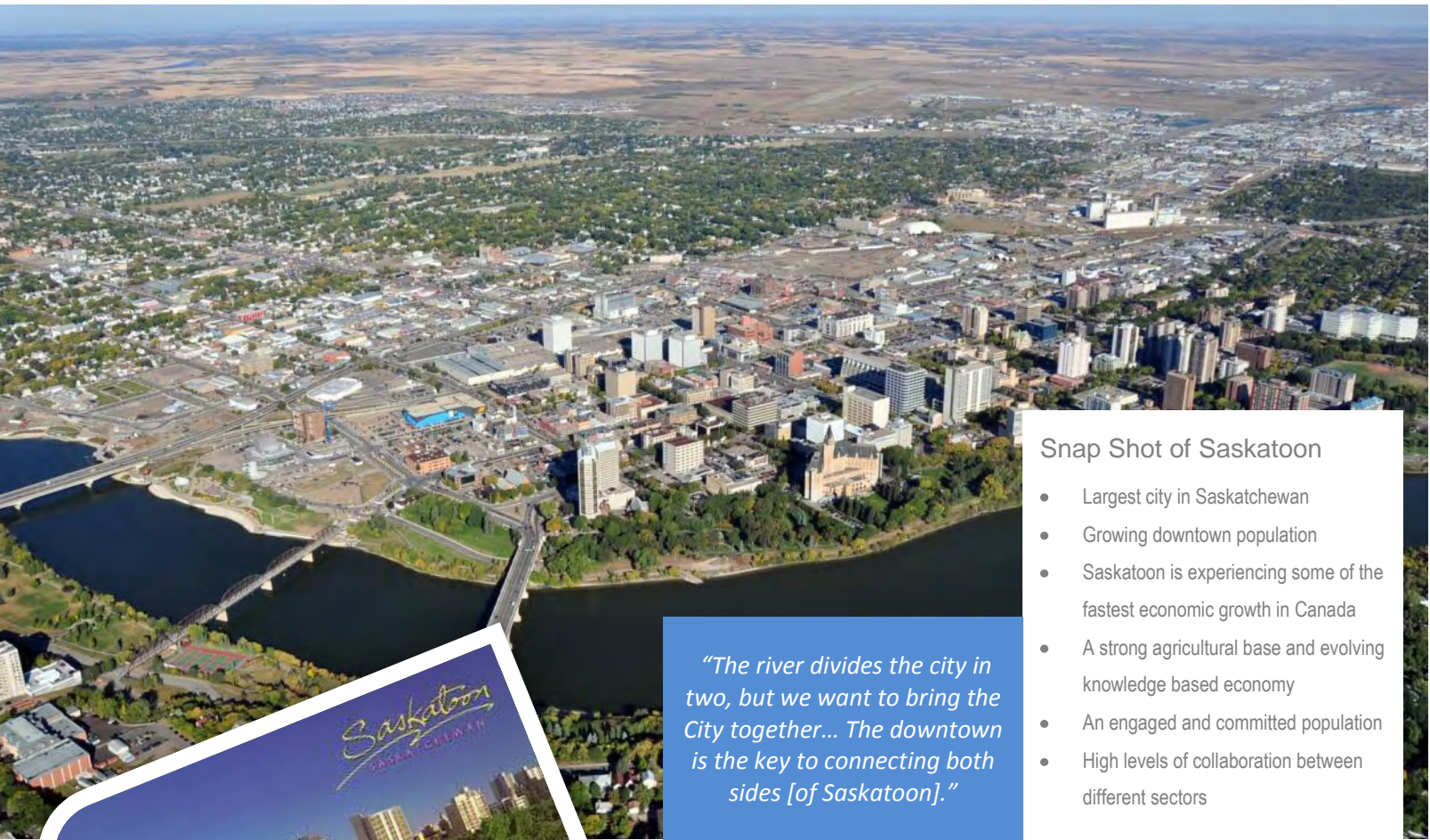
³⁵ Western Economic Diversification Canada (2007). *\$1.1 million Investment to reclaim Waterfront Drive property*. Retrieved from: http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77_9878.asp. Accessed 2012 January 24.

³⁶ Author Unknown.(2010). *Central Park's New and Improved Look On Display*. Retrieved from <http://www.chrisd.ca/blog/27647/central-park-winnipeg-rejuvenated-grand-opening-waddell-fountain/>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

³⁷ Winnipeg Free Press (2011). *Downtown Housing Incentive to Double to \$40million*. Retrieved from: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/Downtown-housing-incentive-to-double-to-40-million-119919549.html?device=mobile&c=y>. Accessed 2012 January 23.

SASKATOON

small town values meet big aspirations.....



Snap Shot of Saskatoon

- Largest city in Saskatchewan
- Growing downtown population
- Saskatoon is experiencing some of the fastest economic growth in Canada
- A strong agricultural base and evolving knowledge based economy
- An engaged and committed population
- High levels of collaboration between different sectors

“The river divides the city in two, but we want to bring the City together... The downtown is the key to connecting both sides [of Saskatoon].”

In Saskatoon, the downtown is a primary location for employment, shopping, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism. The City of Saskatoon and the private sector have reinforced this role by championing revitalization efforts such as inclusive and progressive planning processes; investments in the public realm and key pieces of infrastructure; and initiatives to increase the residential population. These efforts have put downtown Saskatoon in an excellent position to act as a focal point for the entire City and absorb future growth. Despite this, the downtown faces a range of challenges, such as realizing intensification aims in the face of strong outward growth pressures, developing ‘complete communities’ in the core’s two emerging neighbourhoods - River Landing and the Warehouse District, and increasing downtown’s vitality, particularly outside of office hours.

Downtown Saskatoon Timeline 1903 - 2012

1903 - 1966

1903 - First civic offices built on 21st Street

1906 - Saskatoon becomes a city

1912 - Saskatoon's first City Hall opens at the current City Hall Civic Square location

1916 - University Bridge completed

1932 - Broadway Bridge completed

1937 - Saskatoon Arena Rink Completed

1956 - New City Hall completed

1964 - Downtown rail yards and railway station removed. Frances Morrison Library opened

1904 - The Canadian Northern (later Canadian National) Bridge is completed. It replaced Saskatoon's very first railway bridge built at this location in 1890.

1907 - Traffic Bridge completed

1909-1912 - Saskatoon's first big boom

1913 - Street Railway opens

1935 - Bessborough Hotel Completed



1967 - 2012

1968 - Centennial Auditorium/TCU Place opened

1970 - Midtown Mall Opened downtown on the former downtown rail yards.

2004 - River Landing construction begins

2011 - 25th Street extension project

2012 - Circle Drive South Bridge to be completed

1966 - Idylwyld Freeway opened

1983 - City Hall expansion completed

2006 - Centennial Auditorium/TCU Place, expansion begins

2009 - Discovery Plaza was built



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Warehouse District (refer to legend)

The north-west corner of downtown has many underutilized sites, with several empty parcels that were formerly associated with railway functions. The City is removing its maintenance facilities from the area and constructing an extension of 25th Street through the site. It has implemented a very permissive zoning bylaw in the area to encourage private development.



Heritage Preservation

Saskatoon's built heritage will be an important feature to strengthen. Laudably, some private developers have taken the lead in converting old buildings to modern uses. The King George Hotel, for example, was given new life as a mixed-use building, while the Rumley Building (1), a former showroom and warehouse for agricultural machinery, has been converted into loft condominiums.



City Hall (2)

The Saskatoon City Hall is surrounded by gardens, public open space and several important civic functions.



TCU Place (3)

The convention centre was expanded in 2006 in order to hold multiple conferences simultaneously, and attracts thousands of people at a time to the downtown. The Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra also frequently performs at this venue.



Midtown Plaza (4)

Saskatchewan's largest mall is Midtown Plaza, located on the west edge of downtown Saskatoon. The mall was constructed in the 1960's on land that was formerly used as rail yards. It is widely credited with sustaining the retail prominence of the downtown over the intervening decades, unlike many other mid-sized cities in Canada.



The Delta Bessborough Hotel (5)

"The Bess" is one of downtown Saskatoon's historical landmarks. It was built by CN Rail in 1932 and anchors the east end of 21st Street opposite Midtown Plaza.



Adapted from Saskatoon's Community Official Plan (May 9, 2011)

- River Landing
- Warehouse District
- South Saskatchewan River
- Parks and Squares

500 m

South Saskatchewan River (refer to legend)

The river defines the city's topography and is one of its most popular recreational spaces. It is also one of Downtown's greatest assets because it is easily accessible on foot from most points Downtown.

Galaxy Theatre (6)

The downtown's multi-screen cinema was recently built thanks to the City's leadership and supportive zoning bylaws. It is an important hub of after-hours activity.



Post-Secondary Education

University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology campuses are near the downtown. The University's business school opened a satellite campus (7) in a renovated building downtown in 2009. The University is working towards the creation of an architecture school and hopes to locate in the downtown.



Frank & Ellen Remail Arts Centre (8)

One of the first pieces of the River Landing project to be completed; the Arts Centre and its theatres were constructed in 2007 at a cost of \$11 million. It is intended to crystallize an arts cluster, with the Remail Art Gallery of Saskatchewan to follow.



Focal Point

Downtown is very much the centre of the city. All river crossings but one provide access to the downtown, and make it the largest transportation hub in the city. A revitalized downtown would, ideally, also help bridge the psychological barrier between the east and west sides of the river.



River Landing (refer to legend)

Led by the City with private-sector participation, this major redevelopment project is intended to mix residential, commercial office and retail development. The City, with assistance from the provincial and federal governments, has invested relatively large amounts of capital and effort in making River Landing a reality.



The Partnership

The Downtown Business Improvement District, The Partnership, has been in existence for 25 years and played an important role in downtown development for more than two decades. Including the initiation of downtown studies, the drafting of downtown policy, and sitting on a committee that administers the Streetscape Reserve for improved urban design.



VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

"We always say to look inside [to the core] before you look outside [to the edges of the City]."

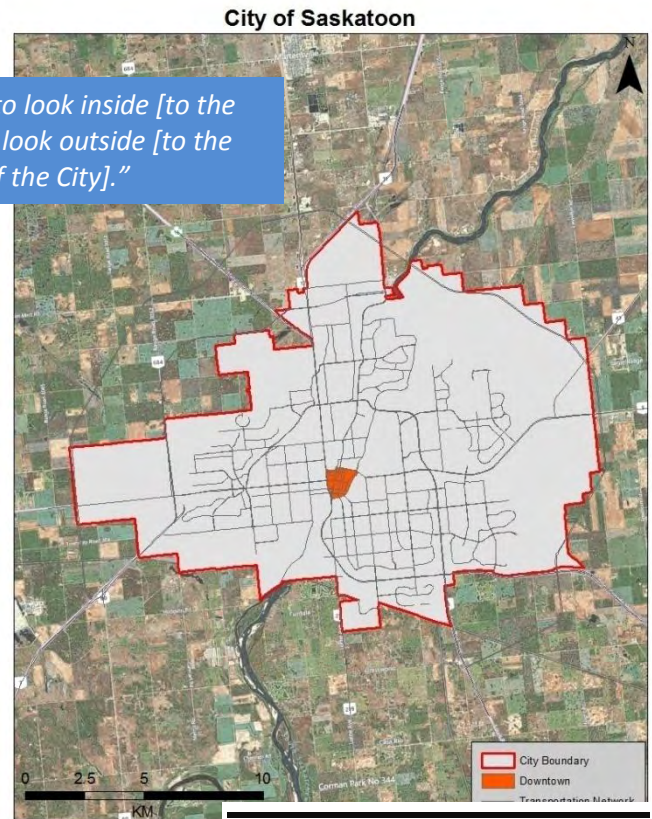
Saskatoon is located in central Saskatchewan, on the South Saskatchewan River. Saskatoon is the most populous city in the province, and has been since the mid-1980s when it surpassed the provincial capital of Regina. The City had an estimated population of 234,200 in late 2011.¹

Saskatoon is presently experiencing some of the fastest economic growth in Canada, thanks to a roaring Saskatchewan economy.² This growth represents new and exciting opportunities for Saskatoon and its downtown. However, this growth also poses new challenges for the downtown to maintain its prominent position as an employment, retailing, and cultural hub in an expanding city.

The City has been proactive in managing this challenge and efforts have been made to leverage the downtown's key assets, its waterfront, boulevards and heritage features. Moreover, the City has been heavily investing in entertainment and cultural facilities downtown, such as the Remai Arts Centre, expansion of TCU Place, the Galaxy Theatre and a large public art program. These combined efforts have spurred a strong and renewed interest in the downtown.

Yet for the downtown to fully leverage these initiatives, it will be important that other decisions strengthen the goal to intensify the core. For example, while the decision to complete the Perimeter Highway around Saskatoon will help ease congestion, it could also pose real threats to the downtown with commuters bypassing the core and new growth gravitating outward, facilitated by this major new asset. To remain successful it will be important that downtown Saskatoon is able to experience similar levels of development to the rest of the City, and that development efforts remain focused on strengthening the downtown.

In the coming decades, downtown Saskatoon faces a very exciting period of growth and prosperity, yet it will also be important for the downtown to consolidate its role and emerge as a strong and vibrant urban centre, where people not only want to work and play – but also live.



Downtown comprises
0.7%
of Saskatoon's land area (117ha)

2,625
people live in downtown
Saskatoon (1.3% of City's
population)

Downtown Saskatoon has
~22,452
jobs
or 192 jobs per hectare

Downtown generates 6.5%
of the City's total
property tax revenue

¹ City of Saskatoon. (2011). *Population Estimate and Projection*. Retrieved from: <http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/FutureGrowth/DemographicAndHousingData/Pages/PopulationEstimateProjection.aspx>. Accessed 2011 August 16.

² The Star Phoenix Website. (2011). Saskatoon home to Canada's fastest growing economy. Retrieved from: <http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/Saskatoon+home+Canada+fastest+growing+economy/5590933/story.html>. Accessed 2011 August 23.

UNITY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

In general, the shared vision for downtown Saskatoon is of an intensified urban core that is able to attract a diverse mix of land uses. However, this vision is in many ways still evolving and will be more clearly articulated through current downtown planning initiatives. A key part of the vision is the redevelopment of the City Yards at the north end of downtown and the River Landing at the south end of downtown, with the aim that growth will be spurred in between these strategic parcels. Additionally, the City envisages the downtown as the key to unlocking and connecting the entire City of Saskatoon, which is divided by the South Saskatchewan River.

Vision

The first comprehensive plan for downtown Saskatoon was adopted in 1989 and updated in 2000. The City is in the process of producing the successor to this plan. The new City Centre Plan will focus on the central business district as well as adjacent areas situated along key corridors. This document is expected to be completed in 2013. As one of the first steps in the City Centre Plan process, a study on public spaces has been completed, which comprehensively measures the level of activity in Saskatoon's urban core, and how people are using the downtown. This study also identifies opportunities to intensify and diversify uses within the core. There are also City policies within its Official Plan that aim to strengthen the downtown along with attracting commercial, residential and mixed use development. These progressive downtown-focused planning initiatives are prioritizing the downtown in a new way and starting to clearly articulate a bold and more urban vision for downtown Saskatoon.

Saskatoon's vision extends into the future as a new master plan to develop a new civic plaza will be developed in 2013-14. The plan will include a new library, gathering space, retail and transit terminal.



Above: Frank & Ellen Remail Arts Centre



Above: River Landing

Leadership and Collaboration

The City has been a strong champion in the downtown, undertaking a range of planning processes in the core to encourage growth and increase vitality. The City has also made use of innovative planning and financial tools, working closely with the private sector to encourage increased levels of investment in the core.

Interviewees also identified the private sector as being key players in the revitalization of Saskatoon's downtown. Private developers were seen to have led the way in adaptive reuse and heritage preservation in the core. Several interviewees also commented that there is an emerging 'young population of committed Saskatonians' who have been bringing new ideas and expectations to the downtown. The municipality, working with the downtown business improvement district, has also been increasingly recognized for its efforts to improve the downtown.

Large philanthropic gifts have also left an important mark on downtown Saskatoon. Not least among these was a \$30M donation from the Frank and Ellen Remai Foundation for the Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan,³ conditional on a move to a downtown site. The new building for the Art Gallery will also be partly financed with a loan from the City to be repaid by capturing increased local property values. Additionally, the Nasser family donated \$2M to open a downtown campus for the University of Saskatchewan's School of Business.

Another notable example of public-private collaboration is the funding arrangement between the City and the downtown BID (The Partnership) using revenues from downtown parking meters to finance streetscape improvements. This best practice approach has been in place since the mid-1980s and has been highly successful at enhancing the public realm in downtown Saskatoon.

The River Landing development on the south side of downtown also represents a significant capital project for the city. The future of this project has been uncertain for some time, but seems to be gaining momentum and could potentially transform the downtown. This will also help unlock the value of the river and reconnect the City from the opposite sides of the river.

Overall, the approach to downtown revitalization in Saskatoon has been highly collaborative between the public and private sectors, yet it will benefit greatly from the creation of stronger vision through the downtown planning processes that are currently underway.

**Saskatoon has policies in its
Official Plan that relate to
its downtown**

**Saskatoon has had a
downtown plan for**

22 years

³ CBC News. (2011). *Family donates \$30 million to Saskatoon art gallery*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/story/2011/06/03/sk-art-gallery-donation-1106.html>. Accessed 2011 August 23.

PROSPERITY

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Saskatoon's economy has been booming, thanks in large part to the strong performance of the natural resource sector. These high levels of growth are forecasted to continue in the coming years, and are allowing the City to diversify its economy and create exciting plans for long term growth.

Residential Development

The most significant challenge facing downtown Saskatoon is increasing its residential population. In an effort to more than triple the population to 10,000 residents, the City has implemented incentive programs (loans, grants and tax relief programs) to encourage projects that support intensification, setting aside \$5.1M between 2002-2009.⁴ Despite these incentives, residential growth has been slow and sporadic. Since 2003, the proportion of city-wide residential development occurring downtown has fluctuated, reaching a peak of 15% in 2006. Unfortunately the downtown actually lost six housing units in 2010. Despite this setback, there is optimism about future residential growth and a sense that downtown Saskatoon is teetering on the edge of a significant increase in population.

This optimism stems in large part from the emerging neighbourhoods in the north end of the downtown - the Warehouse District and the south end – River Landing. Redevelopment of the Warehouse District was launched in 2002 when City Council approved the Warehouse District Local Area Plan. The City made several investments to facilitate this redevelopment, such as relocating the City Yards waste disposal site, rezoning of the downtown core to encourage private sector investment, creating the Downtown Warehouse Development Incentives Program and the ongoing project to extend 25th Street. The area today has become a hub for medical offices, restaurants, art co-ops, and specialty shops, while retaining its original historical character.⁵ River Landing is also an emerging neighbourhood, and to date many of the recreational components have been completed. The next stage will include considerable mixed use and residential development that will contribute to a growing downtown population. Both the Warehouse District and River Landing present major development opportunities for downtown and have the potential to transform the core and strengthen the connection between the downtown and the River.

⁴ City of Saskatoon. (2010). *Downtown Housing Incentives Annual Report, 2009*. Retrieved from: <http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/Documents/Neighbourhood%20Planning/Housing/Downtown%20Housing%20Incentives%20Annual%20Report.pdf>. Accessed 2011 September 13.

⁵ City of Saskatoon (2002). *Local Area Plan: Final Report*. Retrieved From http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/Documents/Neighbourhood%20Planning/Downtown%20Warehouse%20District%20LAP/warehouse_district_final.pdf. Accessed 2012 January 16.

1,885

dwelling downtown

Number of dwellings in downtown has increased by

2%

between 1996-2006 compared to an 11% increase city wide.

429

New dwellings between 2003-2010

\$58M

on residential development downtown between 2003-2010

\$164M

on non-residential development downtown between 2003-2010

Office Development

Private office space downtown has grown 6% (121,273 sf) between 2005 and 2010. The Discovery Plaza (2009) development reportedly sparked renewed interest in building office space downtown,⁶ with several office buildings proposed.

Downtown Saskatoon also benefits from accommodating the head offices for some large mining and engineering companies. For example, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan has its Canadian Headquarters in downtown Saskatoon, and in May 2011 BHP Billiton announced that they are moving their Canadian headquarters to downtown Saskatoon. It is important that the downtown be able to benefit from these major new investments from the natural resource sector.

**Private office space has increased
by 121,473 sf or**

6%

51%

**of downtown office space is
occupied by the public sector and
NGOs**

Retail Development

Since 2005, retail growth in the downtown has been proportionally slower than growth in the suburban areas of the city. Changing vacancy rates suggest downtown retail growth has been accommodated by existing spaces. According to one interviewee, the less expensive retail space offered by the downtown was a key factor to increased absorption and investment in the core over the past decade, as retailers have moved back to the downtown from suburban locations to minimize rental expenses. Yet it appears the downtown has been so successful at attracting new retail growth, that demand is exceeding availability. In 2010, retail vacancy was 2.2%, but in 2008 vacancies dropped to a low of 0.2%.



Left: Side Walk Sale, Downtown Saskatoon

Below: 21st Street Cross Walk (Midtown Plaza in background)



⁶ Colliers International (2011). *Marketing Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.collierscanada.com/en/~media/Files/Research/2011/Saskatoon%20Office%20Real%20Estate%20Report%202011%20Q2.ashx>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

Educational & Institutional Development

The presence of post-secondary institutions within the immediate downtown is minimal. The University of Saskatchewan recently opened a small downtown campus for its business school (KW Nasser Centre), attracting about 35 (range: 30-75) students on an average weekday. The University is also investigating the possibility of establishing a new school of architecture in a former warehouse offered by the City for that purpose. However post-secondary institutions have a significant impact on the downtown, as the University of Saskatchewan is located directly across the South Saskatchewan River and can easily be accessed by foot or transit, helping vitalize the downtown throughout the week.

Municipal Tax Base

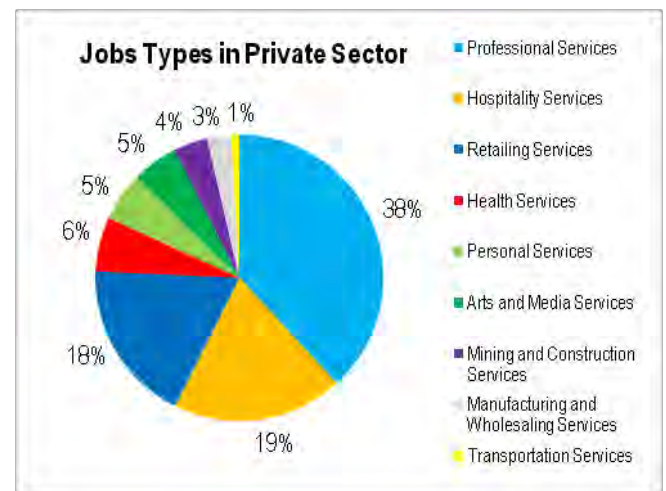
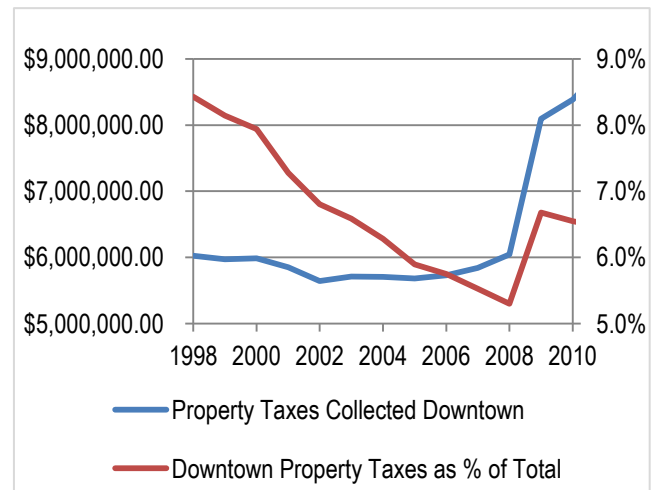
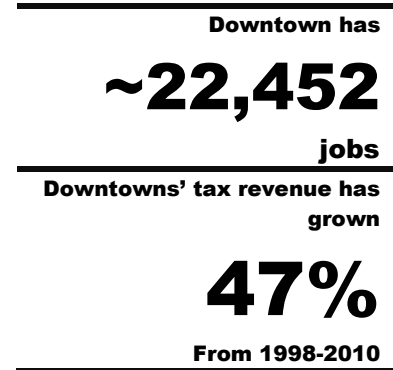
Downtown property tax revenues have been increasing for more than a decade, yet their share, relative to the rest of the city, is declining. It is noted that this trend could be linked to the taxation reassessment undertaken 15 years ago. Prior to this, the downtown was carrying, in one interviewee's opinion, *'far too heavy a load'*; but the *'reassessment has made the downtown viable again for business.'* It will be important that the downtown is able to maintain a strong and stable role in supporting the City's tax base and that negative trends are carefully considered and understood by city builders. Future trends appear promising with reports demonstrating a rebound to about 6.5% since 2008, from a decline – reaching a low of 5.5% in 2008.

Jobs

Downtown Saskatoon offers a wide range of job opportunities. More specifically, over one third of total

jobs in the private sector are in professional services (legal and financial services etc), followed by workers in the hospitality and retailing industries.

Five percent of downtown jobs are also in creative arts and media positions. The downtown also has a large proportion of jobs in the public and not-for-profit sectors that are not captured in, but are primarily office-based positions.



LIVEABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Historically Saskatoon's downtown had a strong residential population; yet slow downtown population growth in the post-war period eroded the downtown's dominance. Between 2001 and 2006, the downtown population jumped 6%, approximately twice as quickly as the rest of the city. The proportion of retirees is very high downtown, while there are very few families with children. Overall, Saskatoon relies more heavily on external residents with jobs in the downtown core, rather than solely relying on downtown residents for activity.

Diversity

Downtown Saskatoon is home to a slightly higher proportion of immigrants compared to the rest of the city. Moreover, the downtown is home to a slightly higher proportion of interprovincial migrants. Saskatoon's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) also has the highest proportion of Aboriginal population in Canada; 9.7% of residents within the city boundaries self-identify as Aboriginal. In 2001, Aboriginal residents made up 7% of the downtown population, a small increase from the previous census but far less than many other neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. Saskatoon's highly visible urban aboriginal population has established two urban reserves downtown: the Avord Tower and Canterbury Tower office buildings. An urban reserve is land within a city which has been purchased by a First Nation and granted reserve status by the Federal Government.

Housing

A major challenge for the downtown is to grow its residential population and provide a diverse range of housing stock to support it. Currently, downtown Saskatoon's housing is almost entirely comprised of rented apartments and condo developments. This lack of choice may be a barrier to attracting diverse household types to the downtown. The City also made a significant investment (\$12M) in an affordable housing project downtown in 2011.

Land Uses

Saskatoon has a high proportion of commercial space in its downtown; however, residential land uses comprise a small portion. Increasing the residential population will be critical for downtown Saskatoon to have a 24 hour life.

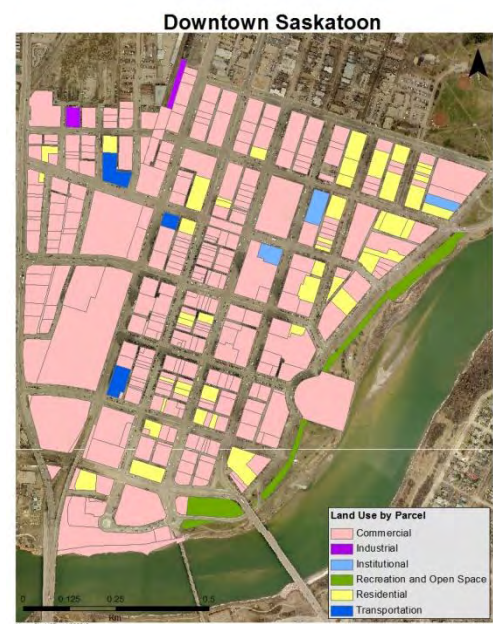
7%

**of population self identify
as Aboriginal (compared to
9.7% citywide)**

1.3

**is the average household size
(compared to 2.4 citywide)**

**Downtown does not have a
large format grocery store**



Commercial	82%
Industrial	1%
Institutional	1%
Residential	3%
Open Space	11%
Transportation	1%
Vacant	0%

Public Realm

Downtown Saskatoon's main streets are some of its most important strengths. It hosts a number of attractive, pedestrian friendly blocks with ample tree cover, interesting and active building frontages, and street furniture. The downtown streetscape has received dramatic, ongoing improvements thanks to a progressive financing arrangement between the City and the downtown Business Improvement District, whereby a substantial portion of downtown parking meter revenues are earmarked for targeted street improvements. The first of such improvements were directed to 21st Street, connecting the landmark Bessborough Hotel and the Midtown Plaza shopping centre, in 1989, with wider sidewalks, improved street furniture, pedestrian-friendly lighting, and new greenery. Improvements to 3rd Avenue and 25th Street are underway, featuring high quality design elements intended to enhance heritage character, as well as works of public art. The entire downtown has benefited from Saskatoon's designation, in 2006, as one of the cultural capitals of Canada, with new works of public art like the Prairie Wind landmark at the foot of 2nd Avenue near the river.

The green ribbon of park along the riverbank is also one of the downtown's most critical assets. Many Saskatonians enjoy the downtown waterfront, even if they are otherwise disinclined to go downtown. The Meewasin Valley Trail hugs the green space between the riverbank and the edge of the downtown and connects to Kinsmen Park (just north of the core). Improvements and extensions of the Spadina Promenade have also greatly increased the accessibility to the Meewasin Valley Trail and the riverbank park system. Moreover, a wide range of recreational facilities are being developed at River Landing.

Connectivity

While the public realm is becoming increasingly attractive and legible for pedestrians, the downtown remains automobile dependent. Registered motor vehicles outnumber people in Saskatoon.⁷ Interviewees also commented on increasing levels of congestion in the downtown, given the ongoing expansion of the City as well as through traffic from outside the City. While increased commuting times are frustrating, it may be more and more a fact of life in Saskatoon, as the population continues to grow. In the coming years, it will be important that in addition to the proposed Perimeter Highway, the City considers alternative modes of transportation to shoulder the increasing number of new residents and commuters that are attracted to the prosperity, opportunities and lifestyle that Saskatoon is offering.



Above: Prairie Wind Landmark



Above: Exercising class at River Landing

⁷ Hutton, D. (2010). *More Cars Than People In Saskatoon*. Retrieved from <http://www.globalsaskatoon.com/More+cars+than+people+Saskatoon/3562271/story.html>. Accessed 2012 January 16.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Capital Investments

The City is investing in the two ends of its downtown: the Warehouse District in the north and the River Landing project in the south. The City is connecting these areas through investment in the downtown's main axes, such as 3rd Avenue. The City has been proactive and appears to be relatively strategic in its investments downtown; however, these investments are not underpinned by a detailed master plan with a clear vision for the interconnections between these investments. The downtown plan that is currently underway will no doubt further articulate how each of these investments are contributing to the future vision for the downtown core.

Data Collection Process

Capital projects data for downtown Saskatoon was compiled with input from all City departments. A list of major projects and the total municipal investment associated with each of these projects was compiled. This list was then circulated and tested to ensure that all investments were included. It is noted that this approach to collection of capital project data may not capture all municipal capital investments in the downtown.

Summary of Capital Projects

Municipal Project	Amount Invested	Municipal Project	Amount Invested
River Landing District (2004-ongoing)	\$49,890,696	22 nd Street (1999-2004)	\$1,717,560
25 th Street (2002-2012)	\$21,500,000	Galaxy Cinema (2006-2007)	\$1,698,886
TCU Place (2005-2006)	\$11,161,056	Spadina Promenade (1998-2000)	\$610,901
3 rd Avenue (2009-2016)	\$5,392,271	Arts and Culture Grants	\$2,429,217
		TOTAL ON MAP	\$94,400,588
		Other (Unmapped) Residential Incentives	\$12,430,980
		TOTAL	\$106,831,568

**This data may not be complete.*

Key Patterns of Investment:

1. Connect the City to the river

The South Saskatchewan River is the defining topographical feature of the City and downtown. Its pristine riverbank is a ribbon of green space along the edge of downtown and one of the best-known and loved downtown attractions. Improvements and extensions of the Spadina Promenade have greatly increased the accessibility of the riverbank.

Ongoing public investment in River Landing is also strengthening this connection to the river and bringing the downtown's urban character into direct contact with the water's edge. To date, River Landing has received the greatest investment of civic attention and resources, totalling at least \$50M in streetscape and open space improvements, site remediation, and the Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan in 2012. This investment forms the beginning of a major public-private collaboration that has the potential to transform the downtown through the creation of a new mixed use precinct that can be enjoyed by the entire city and visitors to Saskatoon.

Additionally, Kinsmen Park that borders the north end of the downtown is undergoing a significant redesign in the coming year. PotashCorp and Canpotex are sponsors for the implementation of the first phase of the Kinsmen Park and Area Master Plan, with construction to commence in 2012/2013.



2. Redevelop underutilized spaces

Approximately 25% of downtown Saskatoon is covered by empty lots, surface parking lots, and low-rise buildings, which present exciting development opportunities. The City has strongly pushed for both public and private developments in these spaces.

For example, the City encouraged the Galaxy Cinema to open downtown, rather than in a suburban location, and provided \$1.7M in financial assistance. The cinema is widely viewed as a major success for the downtown, with people going out for dinner or cocktails before and after shows.

The City has also made a large public investment in the convention centre, TCU Place. This facility is a significant asset for the downtown and has attracted major national events, such as the smaller surrounding events for the Juno Awards. This state-of-the-art facility provides a forum for large events and contributes to raising the profile and the image of downtown Saskatoon.

Significant public investment in the Warehouse District is also being planned; construction of the 25th Street extension through the City Yards site began in 2011. The City has recently seen two private residential developments in this district. These developments were supported by the City's residential incentive scheme.

3. Build on a strong framework of Main Streets

There are some vibrant and interesting retail streets in downtown Saskatoon that anchor the City's efforts to stitch together the core. These streets have been enhanced thanks to a joint arrangement between the City and the downtown business improvement district – The Partnership. This arrangement involves reinvesting a portion of downtown parking revenues in downtown streetscape improvements and has produced outstanding results. These investments coincide with a private development response (although there are certainly additional factors). For

example, upgrades to Spadina Crescent preceded two significant condo developments.

The renovation of 3rd Avenue is currently underway, and will include sidewalk remediation, relocation of utility lines underground, installation of street trees, irrigation and custom street furniture. These improvements should bring more downtown attractions and assets within comfortable reach for people on foot while encouraging people to spend more time downtown. These improvements also coincide with private commercial developments along 3rd Avenue.

Improvements to the public realm along downtown Saskatoon's streets, however, have not been matched by large park or public square investments in the heart of the downtown. This could be an exciting new consideration for downtown Saskatoon.

Future Investments

There are many future investments being made to the City of Saskatoon's downtown. In the south end, the previously mentioned River Landing project is set to enter a major phase of development. This will include an increase in the amount of residential units, office and retail space in the immediate vicinity. While in the north end of the downtown, a new police headquarters is undergoing construction in conjunction with streetscape redevelopment of 25th Street. Overall, the combination of these investments has the potential to transform the core and be the start of a new era in downtown Saskatoon.



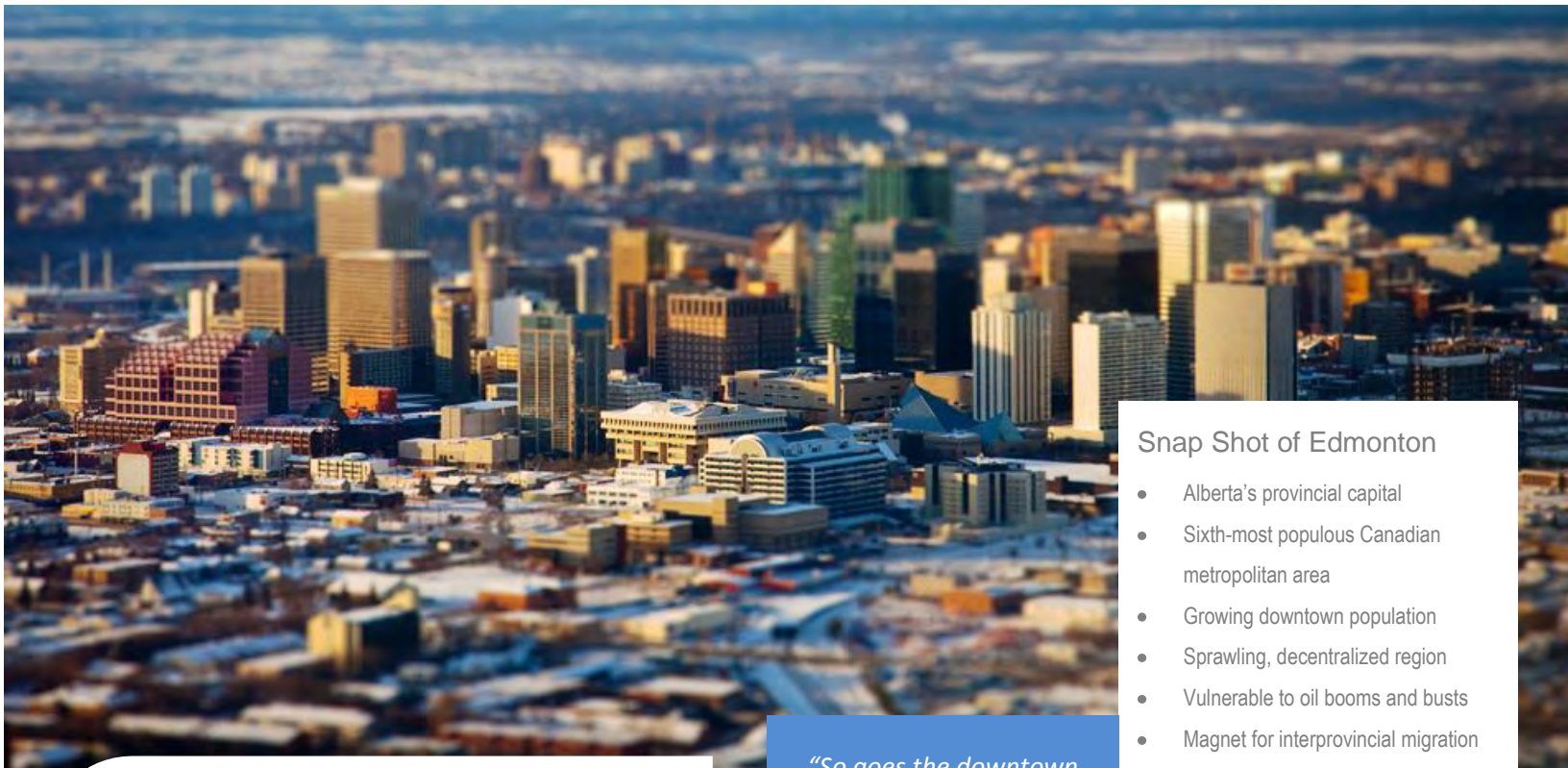
The upcoming stages of River Landing have the potential to transform downtown Saskatoon.

http://www.riverlanding.ca/project_update/phase1/index.html



EDMONTON

a downtown filled with momentum and opportunity

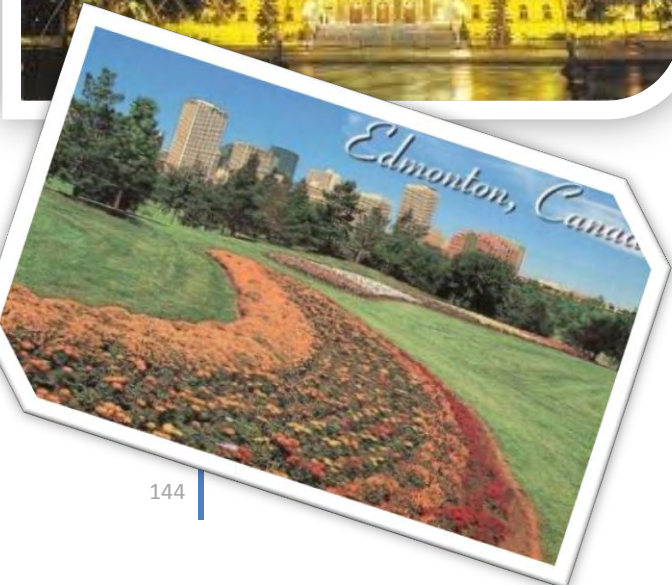


Snap Shot of Edmonton

- Alberta's provincial capital
- Sixth-most populous Canadian metropolitan area
- Growing downtown population
- Sprawling, decentralized region
- Vulnerable to oil booms and busts
- Magnet for interprovincial migration

*"So goes the downtown,
so goes the City"*

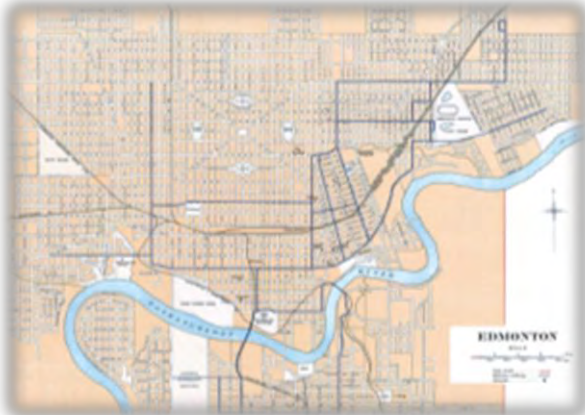
Downtown Edmonton has overcome a period of economic decline and is back on the path to growth and prosperity. This is thanks in large part to strong leadership, thoughtful long-term plans, significant public investments and some economic good fortune. Today downtown Edmonton offers an excellent example of a City proactively using an innovative range of tools to strengthen its downtown. Nevertheless, the resurgent downtown faces a number of challenges, including a development community and property market inexperienced with downtown growth and the ongoing decentralizing sprawl of the metropolitan area. Edmonton is a city laudably committed to the principles of a strong downtown, but its urbanism is still young and not yet fully differentiated from suburban modes of thinking and doing.



Downtown Edmonton Timeline 1912 - 2011

1912 - 1981

1912 - Amalgamation with Strathcona & North Edmonton



1931 - Real Estate Crash

1949 - Oil Discovery at Leduc

1950 - Edmonton District Planning Commission established (1st regional planning body)

1966 - CN Tower, Edmonton's 1st skyscraper, is built

1978 - Commonwealth Games occur; LRT opens

1981 - West Edmonton Mall opens



1984 - 2011

1990 - New City Hall opens

1997 - Downtown Plan targets residential growth

2006 - Metropolitan population exceeds 1 million



1984 - 1st of 5 Stanley Cup championships

1995 - Edmonton Metropolitan Planning Commission replaced by voluntary Alberta Capital Region Alliance

2003 - CBC television and radio studios move downtown

2007 - University of Alberta moves into Enterprise Sq.

2008 - Capital Region Board established

2010 - Alberta Art Gallery Opens



2011 - EPCOR Tower is the first new office tower in nearly two decades

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Churchill Square (1)

This recently renovated public square hosts many of Edmonton's largest and most well attended public events and festivals year-round. It is Edmonton's civic and cultural heart, surrounded by such institutions as City Hall (2), the Art Gallery of Alberta (3), the Citadel Theatre (4), the Winspear Centre for the Performing Arts (5), the central library (6), and the CBC broadcasting centre.



The Alberta Legislature (7)

Edmonton is the capital city of Alberta. The legislature anchors one end of the "Capital Boulevard" (108 Street) which is currently undergoing a major renovation and renewal. The provincial public service accounts for a significant proportion of downtown employment.



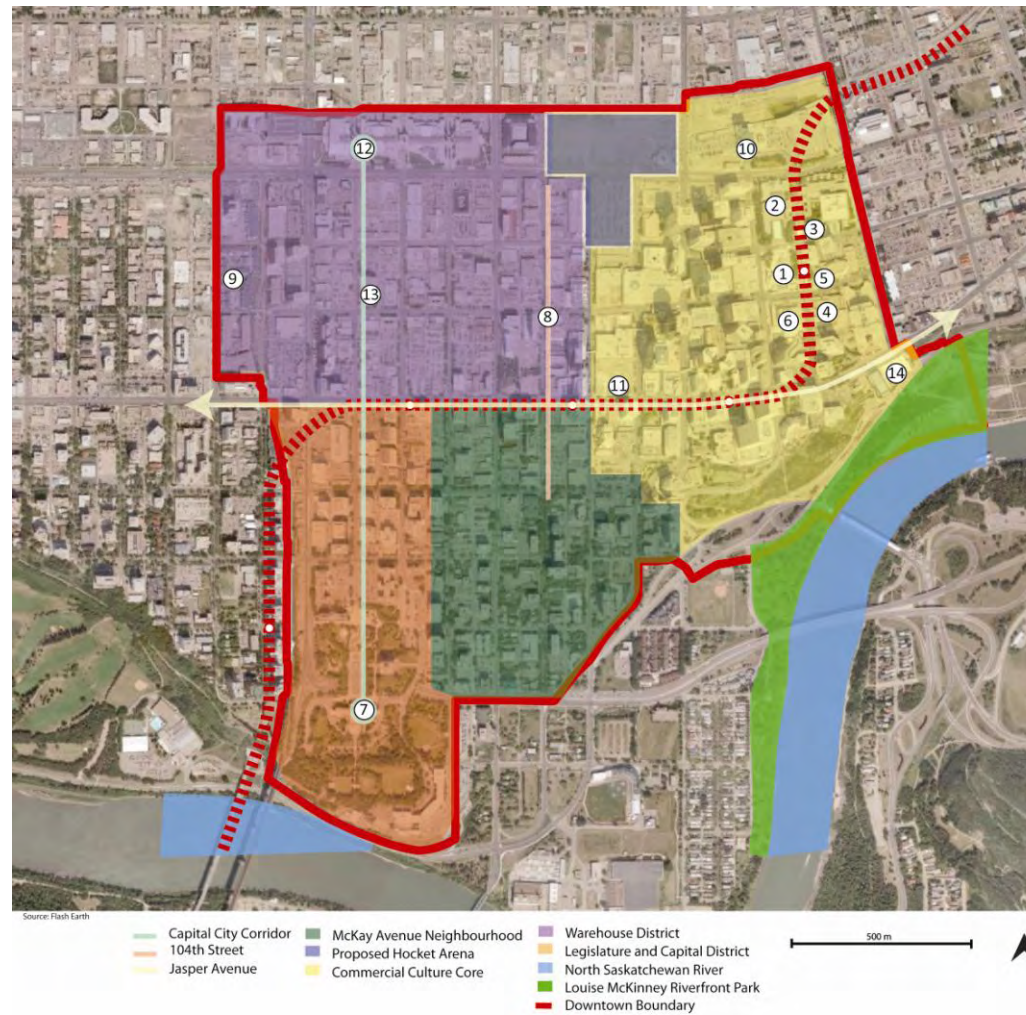
Jasper Avenue

Edmonton's main street is on the upswing, as retailers and consumers learn to appreciate and capitalize on the unique possibilities for consumption in the downtown that cannot be duplicated by suburban malls. This new retail philosophy is exemplified by the walkable, sidewalk-oriented growth centred on the intersection with the refurbished 104 Street. The 104 Street Promenade (8) is home to the popular downtown farmer's market and other regularly scheduled programming.



Residential Growth

The population of downtown Edmonton has grown rapidly and is achieving the critical mass needed to sustain active streets and a sense of community. The McKay Avenue Neighbourhood is a longstanding concentration of downtown residents, and Railtown (9) was developed early in the recent downtown growth spurt. New condominium towers and the conversion of old offices and warehouses have been scattered around the downtown. A notable cluster has sprung up along the 104 Street Promenade (8).



The EPCOR Building (10)

Only one new office tower has been built downtown since the early 1990s, although more are now being planned. Nearly two-thirds of Edmonton's office space is located downtown.



Heritage Preservation

The large stock of old buildings downtown, particularly in the warehouse campus district, is a terrific opportunity for reuse. Many of these buildings have already been converted to residential dwellings.



Parking Lots

There are about 45,000 public parking stalls in downtown. These provide major opportunities for future downtown revitalization



Post-Secondary Education

With assistance from all three levels of government, the University of Alberta (11) renovated and expanded the former Hudson's Bay department store to open its first downtown campus in 2008. Grant MacEwan University (12) is in the process of consolidating its operations at its downtown campus. Along with NorQuest College (13), these campuses make downtown an important hub of activity for both young people and knowledge workers.



Light Rail Transit (LRT)

The downtown is highly accessible by LRT, bus, and car. A northward extension of the LRT is underway, with ambitious additional expansions to the south, east, and west on the books.

Louise McKinney Park (14)

Downtown Edmonton has an extensive network of parks and green spaces that connect it to the river valley. One of its greatest strengths is the ease with which people can move between the vibrant urban core and the tranquil river valley.



VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

“Urban and suburban thinking in Edmonton have not yet been stitched together.”

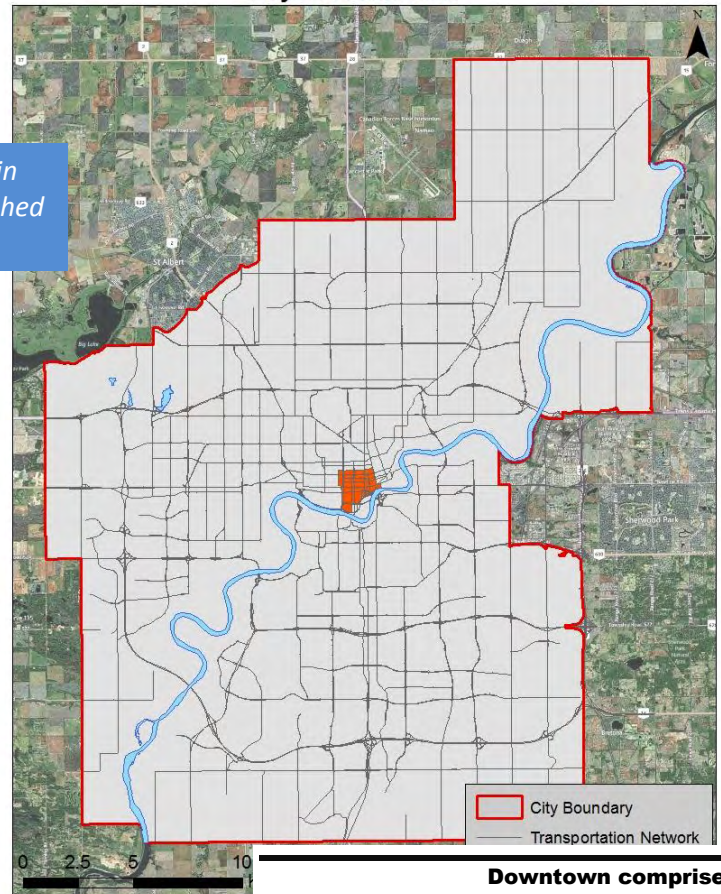
Edmonton is the capital of Alberta and is the province's second-largest city. It is located on the North Saskatchewan River. Edmonton annexed significant amounts of land up until the early 1980's and the downtown only occupies a small portion (1%) of the city's land area yet it accounts for a substantial portion of the city's commercial office market, employment and tax base.

Downtown Edmonton is currently rebounding after decades of decline. Several powerful factors coincided in the 1980s and 1990s to hollow out the downtown. Many of these factors came from outside the city, including cuts to the provincial public service and falling oil prices; however, there were serious impacts on the downtown stemming from suburban investment and development—in particular, the West Edmonton Mall.

In the past decade, downtown Edmonton has experienced a rapid resurgence and strong growth, particularly in its residential population. The City, supported by other levels of government, has made significant investments in its downtown institutions, amenities and services that have both strengthened the core and allowed it to re-emerge as the heart of the city. Downtown Edmonton provides unique cultural offerings that are unavailable anywhere else in the City and are a magnet to the broader population.



City of Edmonton



Downtown comprises

1%

of Edmonton's land area (242ha)

1%

**of the people live in downtown
Edmonton (9,330 or 21 people per
hectare)**

65%

**of Edmonton's office space is
downtown**

4%

**of the City's retail space is
downtown**

Downtown Edmonton has

63,232

jobs or 261 jobs per hectare.

UNITY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

The shared vision for downtown Edmonton's future is of a liveable, prosperous and intensified urban core. This vision has been pursued across multiple political cycles, business cycles, and official plans. The patient and committed approach to achieving this vision by the City deserves praise. According to interviewees, this collaborative approach stems, in part, from the collapse of downtown property values in the 1990s and the steep increase in suburban property tax rates that followed, which underscored the importance of a healthy downtown for a healthy city.

Vision

The 2010 Capital City Downtown Plan charts a course to achieve the vision in the Strategic Plan, identifying specific policies to guide future decisions and, most importantly, coordinates public and private "catalyst projects" that are planned or proposed for downtown⁸. These plans follow in the footsteps of the 1997 Capital City Downtown Plan which spurred a significant increase in the downtown residential population, relaxed minimum parking requirements, and directed investments in both the public realm and downtown institutions. Earlier still, in the mid-1980s, the Mayor's Taskforce for the Heart of the City identified five "catalyst projects" that were ultimately realised in the core.

Leadership

No particular leader or interest group stands out in Edmonton because efforts have generally been seen as collaborative. Yet support from elected officials and the City has been widely acknowledged. Advocacy for the downtown has also been voiced by the Downtown Business Association, a partnership between local businesses and the City, since 1985, as well as the rapidly growing Downtown Edmonton



Condominium tower under construction in downtown Edmonton. Sustained leadership and vision for downtown have created the conditions for a dramatic increase in the downtown population.

Community League. In addition, the Edmonton Economic Development Authority has created the Downtown Vibrancy Task Force whose aim is to further the revitalization of Edmonton's downtown core. Membership in the task force consists of 20 'blue ribbon' business, community, and social agencies⁹.

Collaboration

There have not yet been any formal public-private partnerships in downtown Edmonton; however, the City's overall approach to downtown revitalization is, in a sense, a partnership between the public and private sectors. Based on discussions with the private sector, the City makes targeted investments and regulatory changes with the intent to make the business case for downtown investment much stronger.

**Edmonton has had a
downtown master plan for**

26 years

⁸City of Edmonton. (2010). *Capital City Downtown Plan*. Retrieved from: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/projects_redevelopment/capital-city-downtown-plan.aspx. Accessed 2012 May 14.

⁹Ibid.

PROSPERITY

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Edmonton's economy is closely tied to commodities, particularly oil, which lends it a 'boom-bust' character. Over the previous decade, however, Edmonton has been fortunate to experience more moderate growth, partly sheltered from the recent recession by strong energy prices. Edmonton's strong economic growth attracts international and interprovincial migrants, driving some of the fastest population growth in Canada and pushing down the median age of Edmonton's residents. The downtown real estate market grew rapidly before the most recent recession, as one-third of all construction in the city occurred downtown. For example, the assessed value of downtown more than doubled between 2007 and 2009.

Residential Development

From the late 1990s, the City has successfully pursued downtown residential growth through grants for residential construction and conversion, coupled with streetscape improvements. This appears highly successful with the downtown being one of the strongest areas for residential construction, with almost 20% of total residential construction value in mature (non-greenfield) neighbourhoods across the city. Between 1996 and 2006, the housing stock downtown increased by more than three-quarters. Growth has been similarly strong in other central neighbourhoods near the downtown, including Oliver and Queen Mary Park.

Office Development

The office market in Edmonton is overshadowed by Calgary and has struggled for the past two decades, although the presence of the provincial government lends it some stability. A promising sign was the development of the \$250 million EPCOR Tower in the heart of downtown.

Over the last decade the inventory of office space in Edmonton has increased an average of 2% per year city-wide. During this same time the downtown office inventory grew by an average of 1% per year. This relatively slower growth rate resulted in downtown losing some of its dominance, providing 65% of citywide office space in 2010 compared to 70% at the beginning of the 2000s. These trends are illustrated in the "Edmonton Office Inventory" graph.

Recent reports of additional new office buildings in the planning stages are cause for optimism, but there is a risk that the market will not be able to absorb all this new space, leaving older buildings underused.

Downtown has
75%
more dwellings from 1996-2006.
(City-wide - 24% more dwellings).

\$362.5M
on residential
development downtown
between 2001-2009

Downtown has
65%
of office floor space (16,090,114 sf)

Downtown has
11% more office space
from 1999-2000

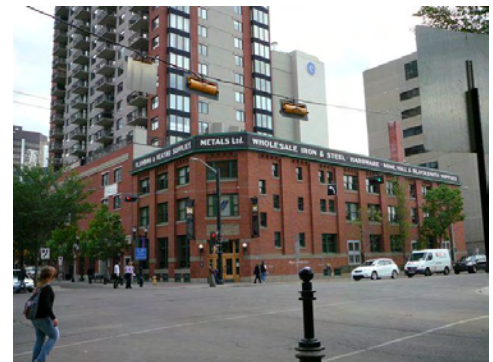
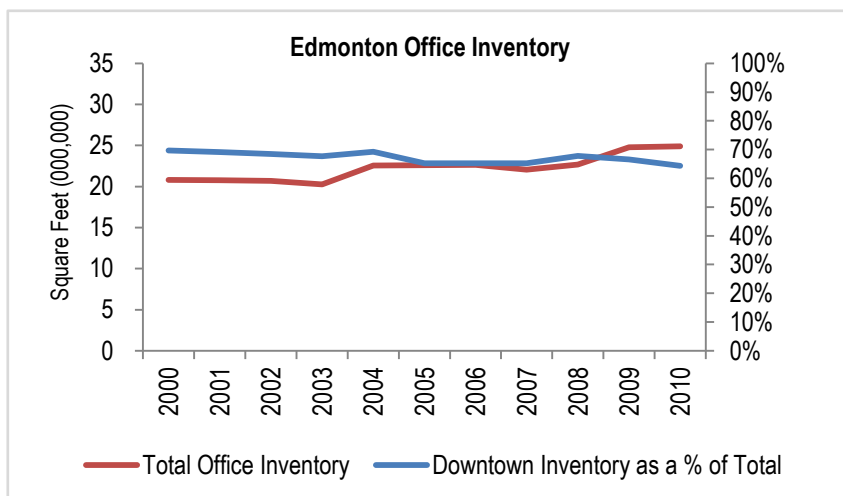
12,000
students downtown at 3 university
campuses downtown

Retail Development

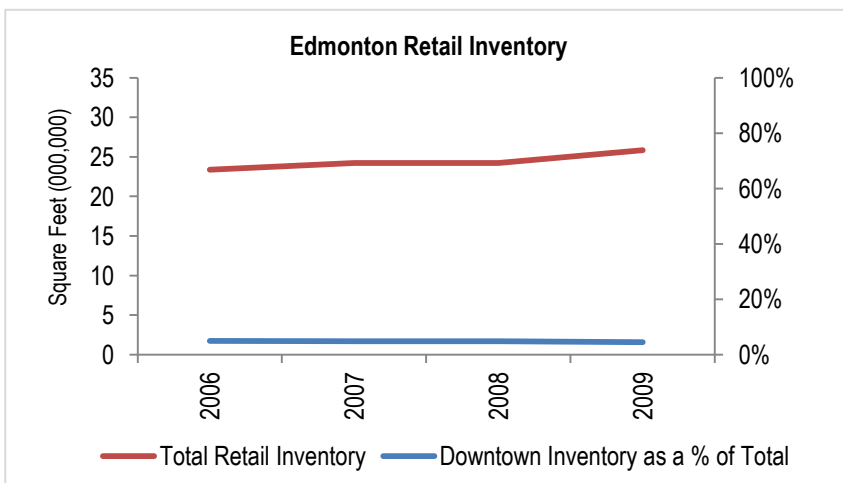
It has been observed that Edmonton is a city of malls. Built in the 1980s, the West Edmonton Mall is largest and most famous and its construction dealt a serious blow to downtown retailing.

As of 2009, retailing downtown made up 5% of the city's total retail space. This number has decreased slightly between 2006 and 2009 as retail space in the downtown experienced no growth while retail space expanded modestly in other parts of the city. These trends are illustrated in Figure "Edmonton Retail Inventory".

For years, it was reported that the downtown tried to compete for retailing by becoming more suburban, but today there is a growing awareness that the downtown will be best served to leverage its unique characteristics to become a vibrant retailing destination. This is exemplified by the walkable, sidewalk-oriented 104 Street Promenade.



Historic warehouse surrounded by new residential development



Educational & Institutional Development

Three large post-secondary institutions have a significant presence downtown. The largest, MacEwan University, is currently in the process of centralizing its city-wide operations at its downtown campus. To make the most of its limited campus space, the university is growing in a compact fashion; its most recent addition was built on top of an existing parking structure. In two to three decades, it is expected that the campus could bring a total of 40,000-60,000 students downtown each year.

The University of Alberta recently opened a downtown campus in the former Hudson's Bay department store. It houses the business incubator TEC Edmonton, a partnership between the University and the City which provides space for young innovators and entrepreneurs, helping to make connections among ventures and with investors.

Municipal Tax Base

Following a reported collapse of property values in the downtown, the proportion of municipal taxes paid by downtown property owners stabilized at about 5% between 1998 and 2005. This was reportedly a shock to suburban property owners who had to shoulder a greater property tax burden to maintain city services. The City learned a harsh lesson in the value of a prosperous downtown as a generator of wealth. Thanks to years of reinvestment and a booming economy, the proportion of downtown's assessment base nearly doubled between 2005 and 2010, reaching 7% of the City's total assessment base and contributing 10% of the City's property tax revenue.

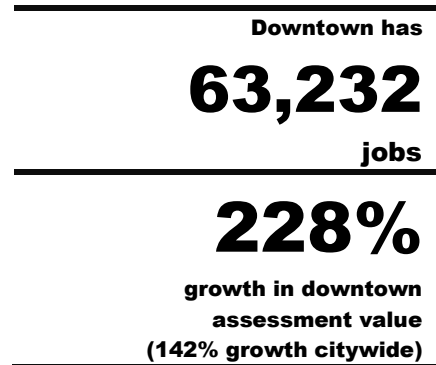
Jobs

Edmonton is a provincial capital and one third of downtown office space accommodates public sector functions. The downtown therefore benefits from a large number of government jobs. Downtown Edmonton also offers a wide range of opportunities to work in the educational, natural resource, health, professional and service sectors.



Left: Grant MacEwan University's City Centre Campus is the largest educational destination downtown and a significant presence along 104 Avenue. It has long-term plans to consolidate all operations, currently spread across the city, at the City Centre Campus.

Right: The EPCOR Building was the first major office building, built in the downtown in almost 20 years



LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Between the 1996 and 2006 federal censuses, the population of downtown Edmonton nearly doubled to 9,330. According to the 2009 municipal census, there are now 11,600 downtown residents. Although the daytime working population still far outnumbers the residential population, certain areas of the downtown are becoming vibrant after-hours. The downtown is also supported by nearby inner-core neighbourhoods that house more than 63,000 people. These neighbourhoods are a major source of housing for downtown employees, as well as customers for downtown businesses. An additional 30,000 people are expected to live on the redeveloped City Centre Airport lands, which are only about 2 km from downtown and on track to be served by a funded LRT extension. It will be important that this exciting new project can build a strong relationship with the downtown and not draw population growth away.

Diversity

Edmonton is home to many immigrants and a proportionate share settles downtown. The downtown is notably a magnet for interprovincial migrants, and many bring urban experiences, expectations, and values to the city. The downtown tends to be home to students, young professionals, and older 'empty-nesters,' which is reflected in the average household size of 1.5 persons. Downtown residents are twice as likely to hold a university degree, as well as work in arts and culture, than the city population as a whole. A higher portion of downtown residents identify themselves as a visible minority.

Housing

While the majority of Edmonton's housing stock is single- and semi-detached homes, three quarters of downtown dwellings are in apartment buildings over five storeys tall. It was reported that dwellings suitable for young or large families are scarce, remaining a barrier to creating a complete community downtown.

Safety

As in many cities, downtown Edmonton remains challenged by the perception that it is an unsafe, family-unfriendly place¹⁰. Livability is a subjective quality, so perception can be as much an ally as an enemy.

"The downtown has become more comprehensively livable in the last ten years."



Downtown has

9,330

residents

45%

population growth
downtown between 1996-2006
(compared to 8% citywide)

24%

of the downtown population are
migrants (compared to 23%
citywide)

1.5

is the average household
size (compared to 2.4 citywide)

Downtown has

2

large format grocery stores

¹⁰ Downtown Edmonton BIA. (2011). *Security and Safety*. Retrieved from: <http://www.edmontondowntown.com/about.php?sid=84>. Accessed 2012 May 14.

Land Uses

Downtown Edmonton is dominated by office and commercial uses. Transportation uses, which are largely, surface parking lots, also comprise 13% of land area and offer important redevelopment opportunities. The downtown also has an increasing amount of residential development; presently this is focused in the south portions of the downtown around Louise McKinney Park and the legislature building. However, efforts are in place to strengthen residential development in the north-west portion of the City, where residential growth is already beginning to develop at a faster pace.

Public Realm

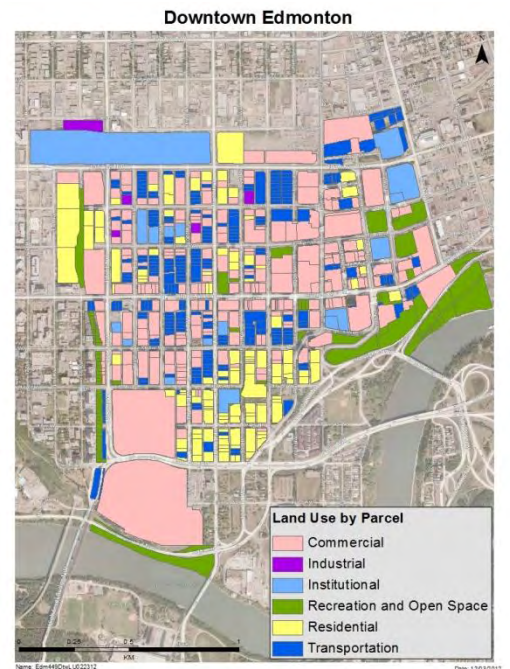
It was expressed that the quality of life in downtown Edmonton has improved considerably in the past decade. For example, urban-format supermarkets have opened to serve the downtown market while street-oriented retail and restaurants have proliferated.

Significant efforts have also been made to increase pedestrian activity. Recent concentrated investments in the public realm have created a number of high quality human scale spaces in downtown Edmonton. The Railtown housing development on the west side of the Warehouse Campus neighbourhood, for example, was integrated with a new multi-use trail system. Wider sidewalks, new street furniture, and “heritage” styling have transformed a long stretch of 104 Street centred on Jasper Avenue into a promenade. Churchill Square, in the heart of downtown, was expanded by narrowing the surrounding roads, and transformed into a more ‘urban’ and less ceremonial form to support the daily crowds who use it.

Connectivity

Notwithstanding improvements to the pedestrian realm, downtown Edmonton is automobile-oriented. While this is convenient for drivers to access the downtown, it means that the downtown is not yet supporting the intensity or density within its potential. There has, however, been a renewed focus on investment in LRT. One of the strategies of the *Capital City Downtown Plan* is to use improved transit to facilitate an increase in densities and enable place-making. At the same time, the City continues to invest in an expanded expressway and ring-road system that potentially undermines the positive impact of concurrent investments in downtown and public transit.

Additionally, there are 45,000 public parking stalls downtown. This abundance of parking is not just a transportation challenge; it is a challenge for downtown’s urban design and quality of public spaces. The City has loosened parking requirements and is considering implementing a residential grant program to encourage redevelopment of large surface parking lots. This program is predicted to have some success and the City estimates that for every \$1 invested in this program it could attract \$11 in private investment. The downtown’s population has also grown dramatically as a result of investment in these new residential opportunities.



Commercial	45%
Industrial	1%
Institutional	12%
Residential	15%
Open Space	12%
Transportation	13%
Vacant	3%

Downtown has

45,000

parking stalls for the public

59

heritage properties

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

The City of Edmonton has taken a remarkably long-term, strategic approach to investing in the downtown since at least the 1980s. The downtown's rebound in terms of both economics and liveability can be credited, in no small part, to the public investments made by the City and its partners.

As a general pattern, the City has been targeting its investments at a limited number of locations at a time, using "catalyst" projects to attract residents, street-level activity and private investment¹¹. This has set in motion the renewal of a range of downtown neighbourhoods. The City continues to build on an engaged and growing residential population to achieve a self-sustaining downtown.

In the mid-1980s, the first five catalyst projects were targeted by the City to encourage downtown reinvestment. All of these, including a new City Hall and the revitalization of Churchill Square, were eventually completed. A new downtown plan in 1997 identified residential growth as the next goal and led to a very successful incentive program for new residential construction downtown. The current Capital City Downtown Plan identifies an additional nine city-led projects.

The City has been patient with its investments, understanding that the core will not transform over night following a signature investment or the implementation of a new policy or program, but rather through many smaller improvements over decades. The City has also shown willingness to invest in the downtown differently than the rest of the city; for example traditional greenfield investments usually follow population growth, while in the downtown the City has often invested in anticipation of growth. This bold approach shows the priority and confidence that has been given to the downtown.

Data Collection Process

The data collected for downtown Edmonton provides an excellent example of how powerful a detailed set of capital projects data can be in supporting decision making and the implementation of development plans. The data collected in the City of Edmonton is comprehensive, and was developed from a full list of capital investments made by the municipality over the past decade. A representative from the City of Edmonton then sorted through this list to separate out the municipal capital investments in the downtown. This level of detail provides many insights into the proportion of investment occurring in the downtown core and how this is changing overtime. It is the hope of the project team that in due course, this type of detailed data could be collected for all of the downtowns studied in this project.

Summary of Capital Investments

Capital projects in downtown Edmonton have declined in recent years, in both number and value. The number of capital projects funded in downtown Edmonton was relatively consistent between 2002 and 2008, but fell by half from 2008 to 2010. The value of capital projects downtown has varied, yet overall there has been a downward trend. For example in 2002, the City spent \$17.4M of its capital budget in the downtown core; this number dropped by 39% to \$10.6M in 2010. Comparatively, in 2002 the citywide investment in capital projects was \$447.9M; this number grew by 227% to \$1.5B in 2010. If Edmonton hopes to achieve the projects targeted in the Capital City Downtown Plan, it will be important that the City starts to understand and work at reversing this trend.

¹¹City of Edmonton. (2011). *Capital City Downtown Plan*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ida-downtown.org/eweb/docs/2011%20Awards/PPs/Planning/City%20of%20Edmonton%20Planning%20and%20Development,%20Capital%20City%20Downtown%20Plan.pdf>. Accessed 2012 May 14.

Municipal Project	Amount Invested
Century Place	\$4,941,000
Churchill Square	\$1,665,000
Citadel Theatre	\$761,000
Heritage Trail Promenade	\$298,000
Jasper Avenue	\$1,705,000
Louise McKinney Riverfront Park	\$36,685,000
Milner Library	\$20,170,000
Railtown	\$579,000
Rice Howard Way	\$579,000
Shaw Conference Centre	\$47,303,000
Art Gallery of Alberta	~\$22,000,000
TOTAL ON MAP	\$ 136,686,000
OTHER (Unmapped)	\$177,000
TOTAL	\$144,427,000

Downtown has

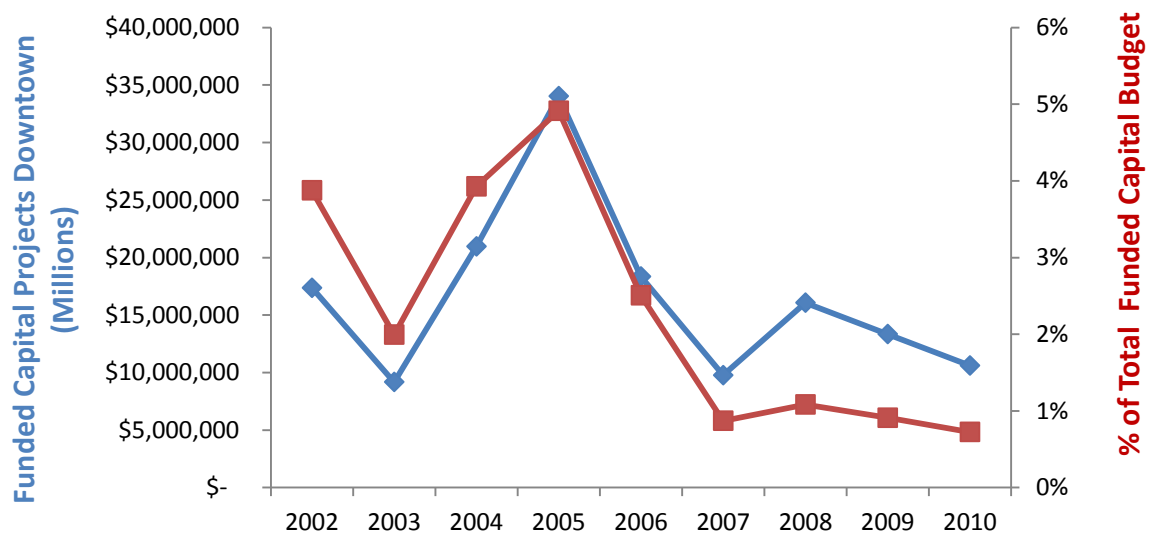
\$144M

in municipal capital Investments

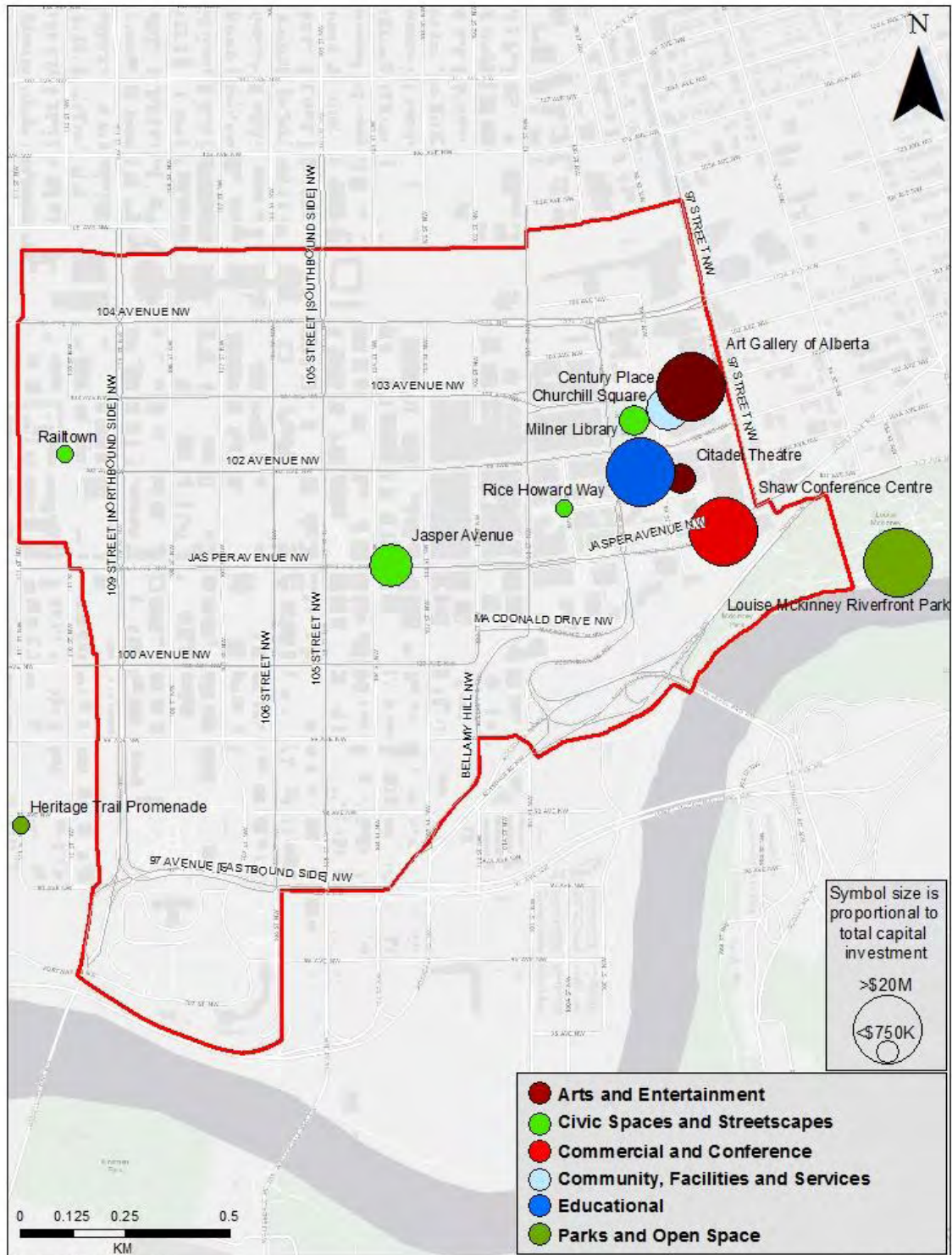
11

major new investments

Value of Downtown Capital Projects and % of Annual Capital Budget, 2002-2010



Municipal Investments in Downtown Edmonton 2002-2011



Key Patterns of Investment

The City has been systematically building up neighbourhoods in its downtown. There appear to have been three key directions in which they are investing most heavily:

1. Building up the cultural heart of the Downtown

Over the past 30 years, the City has been establishing a regionally unique civic arts and culture district around Winston Churchill Square. The new city hall, with its 'front yard' public space and outdoor ice rink, opened in the early 1980s. The square itself was refurbished to better tie it into the urban fabric and to support larger crowds in the past decade. Surrounding the square are civic amenities including the Stanley Milner Library, the Winspear Centre for Music, the Citadel Theatre and the Art Gallery of Alberta. The provincial and federal governments have been supportive of the city's place-making efforts through grants and decisions to locate institutions near the cluster; for example, the Art Gallery of Alberta, formerly The Art Gallery of Edmonton, re-opened in early 2010 following an \$88M renovation (\$22M was provided by the City of Edmonton). The provincial government has recently announced funding to relocate the Royal Alberta Museum to a site just north of the city hall.

These public investments have been attracting attention from the private sector. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, for example, has moved its local operations downtown to a site with a view of Churchill Square, which is seen in its live television broadcasts. Similarly, private developers have been converting buildings overlooking the square into condominiums and lofts to leverage the increased amenity offered by the City's investments. The first of these residential conversions was made in the McLeod Building, resulting in the restoration and redevelopment of an underused heritage structure. Today residential units overlooking the upgraded Sir Winston Churchill Square reportedly command a premium on the market.

2. Renewing neighbourhoods – the Warehouse District

The Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood is characterized by underused heritage buildings in a sea of surface parking lots. Since 1997, the City has made a priority of filling in these gaps in the urban fabric and making better use of the existing built resources downtown¹². The approach the City has taken, in essence, has been to invest in a high quality public realm while providing financial incentives for residential conversion or construction until the neighbourhood reaches a critical mass of activity that attracts further private investments.

The private sector has shown enthusiasm for the residential grant program. Initially, the grant program had funding for 1,000 residential dwellings across the downtown, and funds were exhausted more quickly than the City expected. While the City was assembling an extension of the grant program, the development industry demonstrated the dramatic improvement in the downtown property market by building another 1,000 dwellings without grants. The City has refocused the program on the Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood in an effort to increase residential growth there.

The other half of that strategy—the deployment of improved urban design to attract private investment—is best illustrated by the case of the 104 Street Promenade. During scheduled roadwork, the City narrowed the roadway and widened the sidewalk, implementing high quality urban design to upgrade the public realm. Additional streetscape improvements, such as heritage street lamps, were financed by a local improvement levy on adjacent properties. New residents and businesses quickly moved to line 104 Street, including several hundred condominium units, sidewalk-oriented retail and restaurants, and an urban-format supermarket. Design guidelines incorporated into the

¹² City of Edmonton. (2010). *Capital City Downtown Plan: The Way We Grow*. Retrieved from: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/Downtown_Plan_DRAFT_Feb_10.pdf. Accessed 2012 May 14.

downtown zoning bylaws ensure that new development further complements the streetscape¹³. A new tall building, for example, must be constructed with a podium that is well articulated with its neighbours and the street. To the same end, existing buildings throughout the downtown are eligible for grants that supplement private investment in facade and storefront improvements.

3. Building up the water front and green spaces

Edmonton has been investing in Louise McKinney Riverfront Park, which connects the river to the downtown, to create one of the City's most attractive green spaces. The City has also invested in upgrading the urban edge of the park at the Shaw Centre, a conference centre on the lip of the valley, which brings many visitors to the river.

These investments have also attracted interest from the private sector. The Old Alberta Hotel is being reconstructed using saved elements from the original, demolished structure, on a site across from the convention centre. The new Hotel building will be home to a radio station, which could lead to a new media centre.

Future Investment

The arena district is a proposed public private partnership. It involves the development of a new arena and mixed use community downtown. The arena district is still being discussed, yet this major new project has the potential to transform the northern end of the downtown.

The City has also been increasingly focusing investment in the Jasper Avenue precinct. This will also support and link to proposed investments in LRT and provincial investments that have been proposed in the government district around the provincial legislature.



Proposed arena

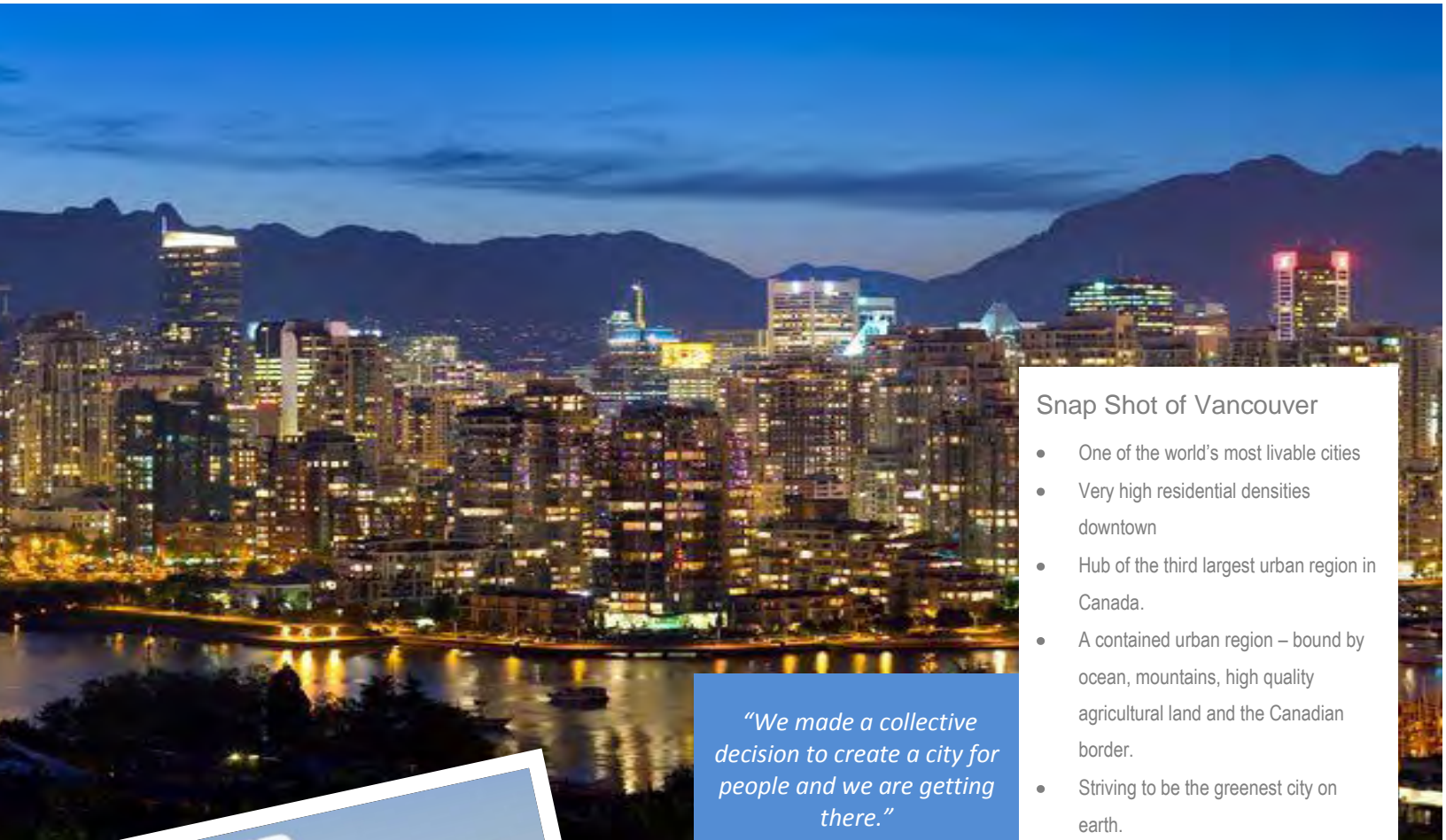


Louise McKinney Park

¹³City of Edmonton. (2010). *West Rosedale Urban Design Plan*. Retrieved from: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/West_Rosedale_UDP_CA.pdf. Accessed 2012 May 14.

VANCOUVER

a downtown for people.....



Snap Shot of Vancouver

- One of the world's most livable cities
- Very high residential densities downtown
- Hub of the third largest urban region in Canada.
- A contained urban region – bound by ocean, mountains, high quality agricultural land and the Canadian border.
- Striving to be the greenest city on earth.

"We made a collective decision to create a city for people and we are getting there."



Vancouver is the “cosmopolitan capital” of British Columbia. It is frequently nominated as one of the most livable cities in the world in international indices. Downtown Vancouver is the heart of both the City of Vancouver and the Metro Vancouver Region. It is the central hub of the regional transit network and has the highest concentration of entertainment, cultural, and tourism facilities. Downtown Vancouver has been experiencing strong levels of growth and has achieved a very high population density. However, the downtown faces challenges moving forward, such as limited land supply for development, housing affordability, providing amenities and services in an intensifying urban environment, as well as addressing systemic homelessness and protecting vulnerable populations.

Downtown Vancouver Timeline 1859 - 2010

1859 - 1938

1859 - New Westminster Established as the capital of new BC colony



1871 - The planned extension of the CPR to British Columbia was the primary factor joining Confederation



1887 - CPR opens new Pacific terminus in Vancouver, a 20 km extension from the former terminus in Port Moody; significantly decreasing Port Moody's (economic decline) geographical significance and increasing Vancouver's

1886 - The town of Granville is incorporated as the City of Vancouver
- Large areas of land around Vancouver are granted to Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR)
- Fire destroys most of city

1891 - First interurban line opens, connecting Vancouver with New Westminster



1938 - Lions Gate Bridge Completed



1966 - 1983

1967 - Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is established to provide regional governance and services

1966 - First collaborative inter-municipal Official Regional Plan adopted



1968 - Beginning of "Freeway Revolts"

1972 - Anti-freeway activists win control of the city council



1975 - Downtown Official Plan and Character Zones developed to manage redevelopment of industrial and railway lands.

1973 - Land Commission Act 1973, begins process of establishing Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), complete by 1976

1983 - Responsibility for local transit systems in Greater Vancouver is transferred to a regional commission GVRD. Regional planning powers are suspended and replaced by voluntary inter-municipal cooperation

1980 - Plans for first rapid transit line announced

1986 - 2011

1995 - West Coast Express commuter rail line begins operation. GVRD regional planning powers are returned

1986 - First SkyTrain line opens, connecting Vancouver with New Westminster and Expo 86



2004 - TransLink approves rapid transit line to airport and project begins the following year

2008 - GVRD adopts name "Metro Vancouver"



2010 - XXI Olympic Winter Games



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Vancouver Art Gallery (1)
The Vancouver Art Gallery is the largest art gallery in western Canada. It was established in 1931 but moved operations to the neoclassical provincial courthouse in 1983. The Vancouver Art gallery boasts 41,400 sf of space and has 10,000 permanent collection pieces.



Waterfront Station (2)
Waterfront Station is Vancouver's most prominent transit hub. This was originally a Canadian Pacific Railway property but it was transformed into an intermodal transportation station in 1979 for the SeaBus, SkyTrain Canada Line, SkyTrain Millennium Line, SkyTrain Expo Line, West Coast Express and other commuter transport systems.



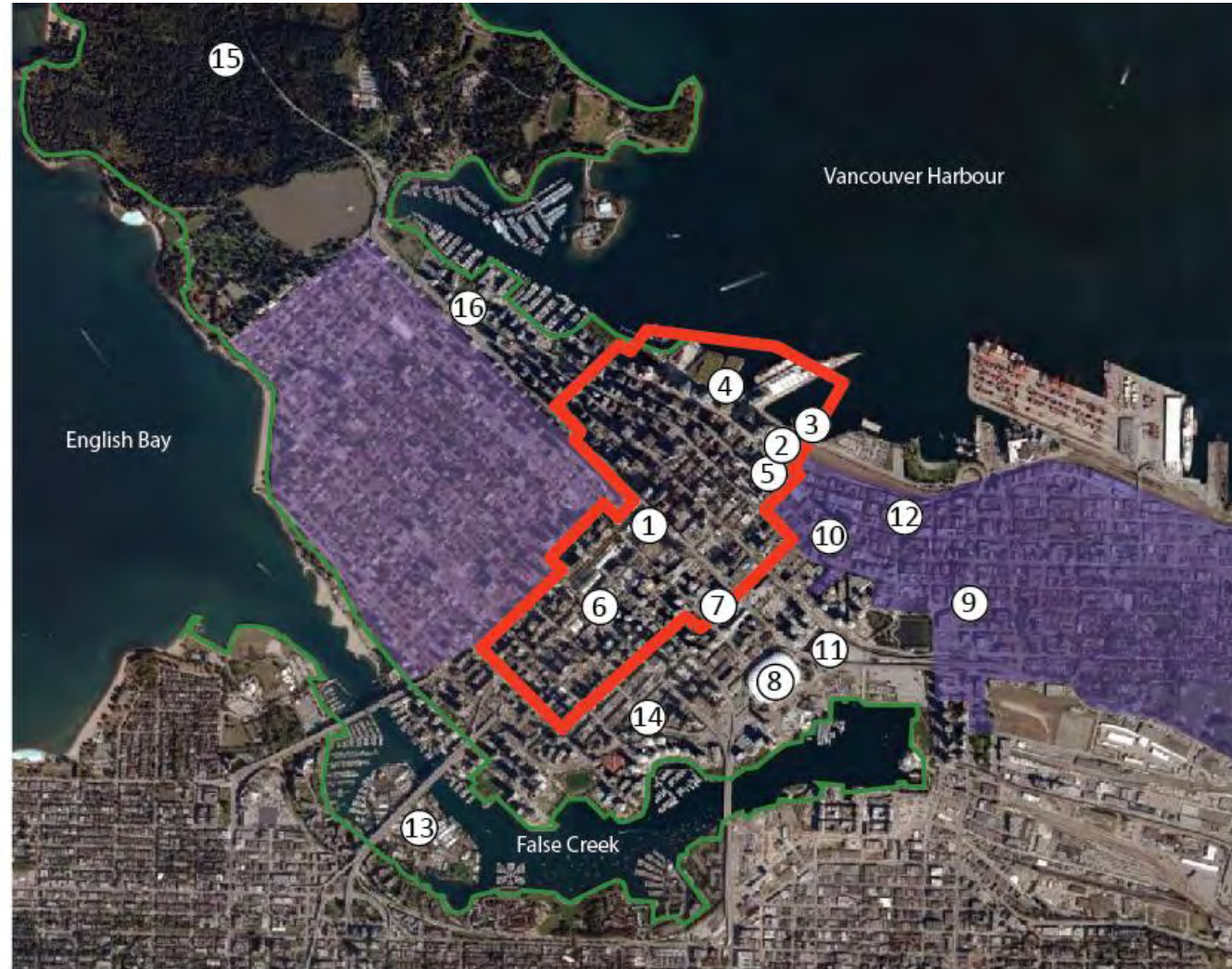
SeaBus (3)
SeaBus is a ferry that crosses the Burrard Inlet. This passenger ferry carries approximately 400 passengers with every trip and connects the Lonsdale Quay terminal in North Vancouver with the Waterfront terminal in downtown Vancouver.



Canada Place (4)
Canada Place is located on the Northern border of downtown along the waterfront. This multipurpose facility serves as the home to Vancouver Convention Centre East, VINCI parking facility, Port Metro Vancouver Corporate Offices and Cruise Ship Terminal, Pan Pacific Hotel and the World Trade Centre office complex. More than 3 million people visit Canada Place annually.



Harbour Centre and the Vancouver Lookout (5)
The Vancouver Lookout opened on August 13, 1977 and stands 168.8m high, providing panoramic views of the city and the surrounding landscape. The Lookout is on top of the Harbour Centre that provides 28 floors of office space, a satellite SFU campus and other commercial activities.



Source: Flash Earth

— The Seawall
— Downtown Boundary (Downtown Vancouver BIA)
— West End Neighbourhood
— Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood

1 km



Granville Entertainment District (6)
Inheriting its name in 1998 by the City of Vancouver, this strip of Granville St. was designed to be a one-stop-shop for bars, clubs and assorted nightlife. Between 2002 and 2010, the area underwent a significant streetscape project to enhance the vitality of the street.

Vancouver Central Library (7)
Located in Liberty Square, the library is part of a large mixed-use development that includes a government office tower, retail stores and below grade parking. This development occupies an entire city block and represents one of the largest capital investments by the City of Vancouver.

Important Assets just outside of the Downtown

BC Place (8)
Opened in 1983, this huge multi-purpose arena seats 55,000 and has hosted major events such as the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Approximately, 28 million people have utilized the BC Place since 1983. An investment of \$400-\$500M was made for the refurbishment of the Provincially-owned stadium downtown (completed in 2011)

Chinatown (9)
Chinatown remains a popular tourist attraction at the north east end of the downtown east side. It is one of the largest historic Chinatowns in North America.

Woodward's Building (10)
The old Woodward's Department Store in the lower East-side was readapted and repurposed in 2006. The site was redeveloped and includes the new mixed-use W43 building.

Rogers Arena (11)
The Rogers Arena opened in 1995. The arena can hold 19,000 people for hockey, basketball and other similar indoor events. Office and residential towers will be built adjacent to the arena. The new buildings will provide more than 1 million sf of space.



Gastown (12)
Gastown is a national historic site in British Columbia, at the northeast end of Downtown. It was the City's first downtown core.



Granville Island (13)
Granville Island is a gateway into the downtown district. Various vibrant activities occur on the island including galleries, performances, restaurants, shops and a market.



Yaletown (14)
Formerly a heavy industrial area dominated by warehouses and rail yards, since the Expo 86 it has been transformed into one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in the city with marinas, parks, high rise apartment blocks and converted heritage buildings.

Stanley Park (15)
Stanley Park is Vancouver's largest and oldest park, attached to the north end of the downtown. The seawall extends the circumference of the park, accommodating numerous modes of transportation from the downtown core.



Coal Harbour Waterfront (16)
The Coal Harbour Waterfront is the portion of the waterfront and harbour between Stanley Park and Downtown Vancouver's financial district. The adjacent land is home to many luxurious high rises, restaurants, retailers, boat docks and the extension of the sea wall. The waterfront is notable for its highly walkable public realm. It has undergone extensive redevelopment and has been transformed into a mixed-use, high density residential community now known for its livability and amenities.



VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

Downtown Vancouver is the heart of both the City of Vancouver and a large urban region, comprised of some 2.3M people and 21 municipalities, known as Metro Vancouver. The downtown is the central hub of Metro Vancouver's transit network and holds a strong mix of commercial, cultural and entertainment functions utilized by residents of the broader region. The downtown is also a magnet for tourists and visitors to both Vancouver and British Columbia.

The downtown makes a major contribution to the health of the City of Vancouver, providing almost one fifth of the City's tax base. It contains three quarters of the City's office space and some 50,000 jobs. The downtown is also home to 4.6% of the City's population or some 26,590 residents.

The downtown is located on a small peninsula that is bounded by ocean on three of its sides, which inherently limits availability of development sites. This has led to intensive, high-rise, high-density development and 'some liken it to the form of a medieval walled city.'¹ Similar land constraints are experienced in Metro Vancouver, which is bounded by ocean, mountains, farmland and the national border. This containment has helped provide the impetus for sustainable development patterns across the region that have intensified development rather than expanded the boundaries. It has also resulted in regional planning efforts and the creation of a regional transportation system, which has helped reinforce the prominence of downtown. Almost uniquely in North America, a large percentage of recent residential development has occurred on former brownfield lands, transforming "the postcard view" of the City.

However, this urban containment does present challenges for the downtown and the City of Vancouver in the longer term. More specifically, the downtown is already densely developed and to grow, it can only intensify – but building 'up' becomes more expensive and makes the provision of services more complex. Limited space can also make addressing complex social issues, like housing affordability and homelessness, more challenging. The lack of land can also make neighbouring cities more attractive to developers. Furthermore, if this new development occurs beyond the transit lines, it may represent a potential threat to the prominence of downtown. Therefore, the downtown must continue to innovate to attract new development in the future.



The downtown area selected for this project reflects the boundary of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association

Downtown comprises

1%

**of Vancouver's land area
(151ha)**

4.6%

**of the City's population live in
downtown Vancouver (26,590
residents)**

Downtown Vancouver has

290 jobs per ha

**Downtown generates 19% of
citywide property tax revenue or**

\$1.2M/ha

¹ Beasley Larry. (2005). *Living First in Downtown Vancouver*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/living.htm>. Accessed 2012 September 26.

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Vancouver envisions itself as a “city for people” and this vision underlies the downtown’s dramatic transformation over the past few decades. This vision was epitomized by the City’s decision in the 1960s not to build freeways through the heart of its downtown and continues to be reflected in the City’s unwavering commitment to achieving mixed-use, well designed and sustainable urban communities that are safe and accessible for workers and residents.

Vision

Downtown Vancouver has had a strong vision for growth. The City officials and staff have been leaders in creating a mixed-use downtown, supporting quality urban design, integrating transportation and land use planning, and encouraging green building practices. The City has created a range of planning documents and policies that have helped propel the downtown forward and allow it to emerge as a vibrant and liveable city.

For example, bringing all of these ideas together was the City’s “Living First” strategy beginning in the 1980s and the preceding Central Area Plan that resulted in rezoning 8Msf from commercial to residential land and transforming railway lands and other industrial properties along the waterfront for housing. Essentially, downtown growth had slowed and this “Living First” strategy² pushed for housing intensification, housing diversity, identifiable neighbourhoods and fostering quality architecture by strengthening traditional relationships between the street, sidewalk, building wall and among buildings to make high densities work.

In the decades that followed, the downtown was so successful at attracting residential growth that the City was concerned future land supply for jobs and commercial growth was being absorbed. The City

responded by undertaking the Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan and implementing a range of policies to help protect this land for commercial uses.³ Again, strong foresight allowed the City to stay the course for achieving its vision of a diverse, mixed-use downtown.

The City of Vancouver also aspires to be the world’s Greenest City by 2020 and the downtown will play a major role in achieving this goal. Many projects to intensify green sectors, establish energy saving efficiencies and increase green buildings are located in the downtown. Moreover, the land use and density in the downtown support compact and walkable communities that will be critical to reducing emissions and energy use.



Vancouver Convention Centre is home to a 6 acre living roof containing 400,000 individual indigenous plants

Leadership and Collaboration

Vancouver has had a wide range of leaders that have propelled both the downtown and City forward. These are drawn from the public and private sector and across the community. The City’s planning processes, such as Discretionary Zoning and the Development Permit Board (handling major development applications) are designed to be highly collaborative, requiring input from both public and private sectors to achieve desirable planning outcomes for the downtown and the entire City.

In 1973, the City was also one of the first municipalities in Canada to introduce an Urban Design Review Panel.

²Beasley Larry. (2005). *Living First in Downtown Vancouver*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/living.htm>. Accessed 2012 September 26.

³City of Vancouver. (2009). *Metropolitan Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/corejobs/index.htm>. Accessed 2011 September 30.

PROSPERITY

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Vancouver is the gateway to the Asian Pacific Region and has an economy supported by a diverse range of economic sectors including trade, digital media, film, natural resources, technology and tourism. Vancouver's economy has been strengthened in the past by worldwide events such as Expo 86 and the Winter Olympics in 2010.

Residential Development

Significant investment has been made in downtown Vancouver's residential market in the past decade. In particular, between 2001 and 2006 there was a 42% increase in the number of dwellings (representing an additional 4,487 dwellings). The value of this investment has been in the billions, with strong demand for residential development continuing and a limited land supply.

A future challenge for residential development is that the downtown has largely reached its development capacity. Beyond the study area for this project, the Olympic Village was built on the last remaining large tract of undeveloped waterfront land in the central area - Southeast False Creek. The absorption of these major redevelopment opportunities in the downtown and core area is resulting in the need for downtown Vancouver to be increasingly innovative and adopt new development forms that will be able to make use of smaller infill opportunities.

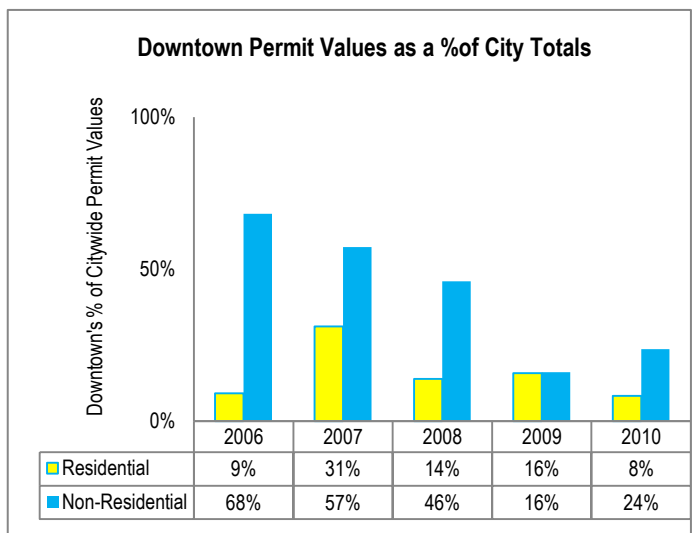
Office Development

Downtown Vancouver's non-residential sector has also been growing rapidly, particularly in the past decade, with investment in the billions. Between 2003 and 2010, office space grew by half a million square feet, and the vacancy rate dropped from 13% to 5%.⁴ Moreover, the downtown is currently experiencing an upswing in its office market and there are several new towers proposed. More specifically, Oxford Properties has gained approval for a 35 storey tower (approximately 250,000 sf of office space) and

Westbank Projects has gained approval for an office building double this size (500,000 sf of office space) as part of the Telus Garden Project.⁵

Retail Development

Downtown Vancouver has 1,234 retail businesses, which make up 15% of the downtown's business mix. Of these retail businesses 40% are 'eating and drinking places' that support residents, workers and tourists enjoying the downtown. Downtown Vancouver's retailing sector has seen record low vacancies and escalating rents.⁶



"Our biggest challenge is where do we go from here? I mean that geographically....where do we grow?"

Cranes building Olympic Village



⁴Canadian Real Estate Editorial Board (2011). "Tightening Vancouver office market spurring more downtown development" in *Canadian Real Estate*. Retrieved from: <http://dev.canadianrealestatemagazine.ca/newversion/index.php/news/item/705-tightening-vancouver-office-market-spurring-more-downtown-development>. Accessed 2011 September 29.

⁶ Biz Map (2009). *Downtown Vancouver Commercial Profile*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/userfiles/downtown-commercial.pdf>. Accessed 2011 September 26.

⁴ Data provided directly by CBRE

Educational Development

Downtown contains satellite campuses for both Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of British Columbia (UBC). SFU Vancouver was launched in the 1980s with a store-front classroom; however, the campus has grown significantly to include four buildings concentrated in close proximity to the downtown that serve 10,000 students. The most recent addition is the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts (2010), which is located just east of downtown in the former Woodward's department store in the Downtown East Side neighbourhood. This campus is now part of a major mixed-use redevelopment that includes 200 units of affordable housing and a daycare facility. UBC's Robson Square is also located downtown and offers primarily general interest and professional development programs for the public, as well as several postgraduate courses. The downtown also contains the Vancouver Film School, British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and numerous English language schools. Two elementary schools and one high school – adjacent to the downtown – service its youth residents.

Municipal Tax Base

The total 2010 assessed value of downtown Vancouver was \$19.1B. Of this total, about a third was from residential properties and two thirds was from non-residential properties. The assessed value of downtown Vancouver makes up 10% of the City's total assessment base, which has been consistent since 2006. More specifically, downtown Vancouver's non-residential assessment base is 25% of all non-residential properties in the City of Vancouver and 5% of the residential properties.

15,222

dwellings downtown

Downtown has

42%

more dwellings from 2001-2006.

(Citywide 7% more dwellings).

\$1.4B

on residential development

downtown between 2001-2010

\$2.3B

on non-residential development

downtown between 2001-2010

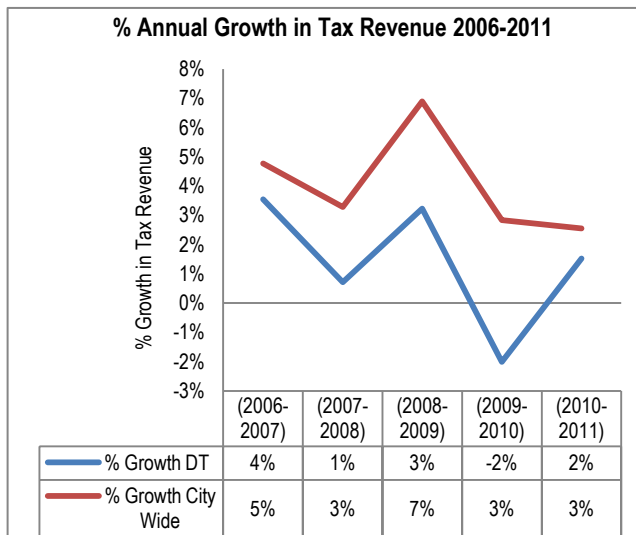
Downtown has

73%

of citywide office floor space

(20,405,527sf)

The downtown also generates a fifth of all tax revenues collected by the City of Vancouver, a percentage that has remained relatively steady since 2006. While this is a major contribution to the City's tax base, growth in downtown tax revenues has not been as substantial as the citywide growth. Between 2006 and 2011 the downtown's contribution to the City's tax revenue increased by 5%, compared to 19% citywide. The annual increases in tax revenue are depicted on the following below.



Jobs

Downtown Vancouver accommodates approximately 50,000 jobs, and is supported by a strong inner core that has three times this employment base. Despite housing multiple office towers, the downtown is comprised primarily of businesses with less than five employees (55%), followed by small-sized businesses with 5-20 employees (33%). Approximately 5% of businesses have more than 50 employees, and approximately 20 businesses have more than 500 employees. There are both positive and negative implications of having an economy comprised mainly of smaller companies. On the positive side, having many smaller businesses helps contribute to a more resilient market place with some independence from rising and falling global markets, and opportunities for local businesses to flourish. However, it can also mean limited jobs at large multinational head quarters - jobs that are associated with the ability to attract global talent and offer higher wages, particularly important in the face of housing affordability challenges.

Downtown has

~50,000

jobs



LIVEABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Vancouver's downtown population growth has been rapid and between 2001 and 2006 it grew by 61% to 26,590 residents (from 16,545). Downtown Vancouver is constrained, so the population is living at very high densities, 176 per hectare, which infuses the city with high levels of vibrancy throughout the day and into the evening. It is noted, that the study area adopted is smaller than the municipal definition of downtown Vancouver,⁷ which covers much of the peninsula and accomodates 54,690 residents (2006).

Diversity

In downtown Vancouver, the city and the region the top five ethnic origins are English, Scottish, Irish, Chinese and Canadian. In terms of visible minorities, downtown Vancouver is home to many more residents who identify themselves as Korean, Japanese or West Asian than the average for the city or region. For example, downtown Vancouver has four times as many residents (12%) who identify themselves as Japanese origin as compared to Vancouver overall (3%). However, the downtown has significantly fewer residents who identify themselves as Chinese or South Asian than the City of Vancouver.⁸

Just beyond the boundaries of this study area is Vancouver's highly diverse Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. For many years this neighbourhood has accommodated some of Vancouver's most vulnerable residents and has been linked with a range of social challenges. As land constraints increase in the core of Vancouver, there is mounting pressure to expand and intensify development into the Downtown

"The reason people want to live in the suburbs is because it is clean and green – if the core can't compete with that no one will want to live there."

Downtown has

26,590

residents

61%

**population growth downtown
between 2001-2006
(compared to 6% citywide)**

16%

**of the downtown population are
international migrants
(compared to 12% citywide)**

1.8

**is the average household size
(compared to 2.2 citywide)**

Downtown has

3

large format grocery stores

⁷ City of Vancouver. (2011). *Community web pages – Downtown Vancouver*. Retrieved from: http://vancouver.ca/community_profiles/downtown/index.htm. Accessed 2011 September 16.

⁸ Biz Map (2009). *Downtown Vancouver Commercial Profile*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/userfiles/downtown-commercial.pdf>. Accessed 2011 September 26.

Eastside community, which could potentially displace current residents. The City has been undertaking a range of initiatives and planning processes to help balance these competing demands, yet it will be important that these efforts can continue in the future so growth can occur without displacing existing populations. Additionally some observers also suggested that there is a positive correlation between the success – and continuance – of the safe injection site with the Eastside and recent resurgence in the fortunes of Gastown. This is an example of balancing the needs and personal safety of both existing and incoming residents and it could be an interesting topic for research in the future.

Housing

Downtown Vancouver has experienced rapid population growth with 15,222 dwellings in 2006 (representing an additional 4,487 dwellings from 2001).

The average household size in downtown Vancouver is 1.8 persons (compared to 2.2 citywide). The City of Vancouver has been strongly committed to providing a diverse housing stock in the downtown, particularly housing stock that is able to support families. To this end, innovative housing styles unique to Vancouver have emerged, such as 2 to 3-storey rowhouses facing the street, with slim, widely spaced apartment towers and landscaped private courtyards and gardens. These are viable alternatives to the single family house, accommodating families with children and/or pets.⁹

A key housing challenge for downtown Vancouver (and the region) is housing affordability. A recent study identified Vancouver as being one of the world's least unaffordable cities,¹⁰ and a RBC research report into housing affordability noted that a lack of

affordability in Vancouver is skewing the national average and '*Vancouver really stands alone in its extreme unaffordability across all housing types.*'¹¹ This will be a major challenge for the entire City in the future, yet it is a complex challenge to address as it relates to a wide range of factors such as: land constraints, limited supply of housing, high demand for all types of housing and lower wages in Vancouver than some other cities with similar housing prices. Yet many housing affordability discussions fail to recognize quality of life factors in Vancouver, such as high levels of accessibility in Vancouver by either transit or foot, availability of schools and parks and the high quality public realm. It will be important that the costs of achieving these quality of life factors are balanced against their impact on affordability to ensure that Vancouver can maintain a socially and economically diverse population.

Safety

Vancouver prides itself on having a safe downtown core. One interviewee observed that this was a critical element for the downtown to grow its residential population, commenting that if the '*downtown core wants to compete with the suburbs, it has to be as safe, as clean and as green as suburbia.*' Downtown Vancouver's incidents of crime have generally experienced a downward trend from 2002 to 2012 in both violent crime and property crime. These same trends have been experienced in the City overall. Recent negative publicity related to post-sport riots (especially during the 2011 Stanley Cup Playoffs) have led to a sharper focus on safety.

Public Realm

The City of Vancouver has a strong focus on urban design and creating quality, dense, distinct and mixed-use urban neighbourhoods. The City has reflected these principles in its own sculpted development forms. High-rise towers with a mid-rise podium at its base have been used to activate the street level and reduce bulk at the upper levels. The

⁹City of Vancouver. (No Date). *Vancouver's New Neighborhoods: Achievements in Planning and Urban Design*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/urbandesign/br2pdf/intro.pdf>. Accessed 2011 October 3.

¹⁰ CBC News. (2010). *Vancouver has world's least affordable housing: report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2010/01/26/consumer-home-affordability.html>. Accessed 2011 October 5.

¹¹ Royal Bank of Commerce. (2011). *Housing Trends and Affordability*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/pdf/HA-1125-2011.pdf>. Accessed 2011 October 17.

City has also worked on defining public spaces through consistent street tree planting and furnishings that are both inviting and clearly identifiable as public spaces.

The City has also taken on major public realm initiatives, such as the \$24.5M redesign of Granville Street. This investment has dramatically revitalized downtown’s main spine that had received minimal public investment and attention since the 1970s. This major streetscape improvement has propelled Granville Street to prominence as the main entertainment strip in Vancouver. Another recent commitment along these lines is the decision by council to create a Greenway corridor from Stanley Park to South East False Creek. The City will be partnering with UBC-led researchers to ensure that the corridor is accessible for all ages.

Land Uses

Commercial	49%
Residential	29%
Institutional	10%
Open Space/ Recreation	6%
Transportation	6%

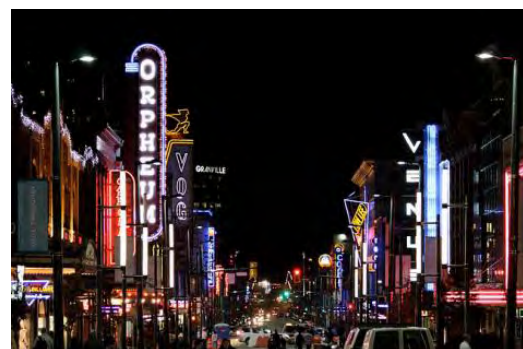


Downtown Vancouver has prided itself as being mixed-use with distinctive city neighbourhoods. Almost half of the land uses in downtown Vancouver are commercial and a quarter are residential. Approximately 10% of land uses in the downtown are institutional while 6% are open space. Additionally about 6% of space is used for transportation purposes, largely represented by the transit hub, rather than surface parking lots which a common feature in other cities.

Connectivity

The City of Vancouver set out a hierarchy of transportation priorities in the 1997 Transportation Plan and the 2002 Downtown Transportation Plan as follows: pedestrian, bicycle, transit, movement of goods, and private automobile.¹² The City has been praised for its progressive approach to implementing these priorities and realizing dramatic increases in walking, cycling and transit use. The City is also seeing the economic and environmental benefits of encouraging alternative transportation. For example, more than 3,500 cyclists commute to work in the downtown peninsula each morning, which is the equivalent to 65-75 full transit buses - saving money, limiting congestion and reducing emissions in downtown Vancouver.¹³

Prioritizing transit and alternative modes of transportation in Vancouver can be traced back to the landmark decision made in the early 1970s to not



Granville Street enjoyed a major redesign in time for the Winter Olympics and the Canada Line

¹² City of Vancouver. (2007). *Transportation Plan Update*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/plan/>. Accessed 2011 October 15.

¹³ City of Vancouver. (2009). *Cycling Statistics*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/stats.htm>. Accessed 2011 September 16.

build freeways into downtown Vancouver.¹⁴ Since then, Vancouver's land use and transportation planning has upheld and reconfirmed this direction and the City, the region, the provincial and federal governments have invested heavily in rapid transit - the Expo SkyTrain line in 1985, the Millennium Line in 2002 (both connecting Surrey), the Canada Line in 2009 (connecting the airport and Richmond) and the West Coast Express commuter train in 1995 (connecting to Coquitlam). All of these trains service the downtown. The City has also invested heavily in alternative modes of transportation, with more than 400 kilometres of bicycle routes¹⁵ and through the creation of a high quality pedestrian environment.

Transit and alternative modes of transportation have been so successful in Vancouver that it is transforming travel patterns, leading to a surplus of parking spaces. An article in the Vancouver Observer (March 2011) reported that there are 7,000 surplus parking spaces in downtown Vancouver. Moreover, the article noted that Easypark, the city-owned parking management company, has seen a dramatic (20%) decrease in revenues since the Canada Line was built.¹⁶

Downtown Vancouver has also inherited some features that make it very walkable; for example, its compact grid has an average block sizes of 1 hectare. This makes the downtown enjoyable and easy to move around.

Downtown has

19,119

**parking stalls for the
public**

~100 structures

**are listed on the
Vancouver Heritage
Register**

40.5ha

**building footprint (approx one
quarter of downtown land area
contains a building)**

Average block size

1ha

¹⁴ City of Vancouver. (2011). *History of Granville Street*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/granvilleredesign/history.htm>. Accessed 2011 September 15.

¹⁵ City of Vancouver. (2009). *Cycling Statistics*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/stats.htm>. Accessed 2011 September 16.

¹⁶ Anderson, Graham. (2011) "New Life for unused parking lots" in *Vancouver Observer*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/city/2011/03/12/new-life-unused-parking-lots>. Accessed 2012 October 4.

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

The City of Vancouver is investing strongly in its downtown in three key ways. The City is working to improve mobility, through investment in its transit infrastructure and the design of its streets and sidewalks. For example, the City has championed the redesign of Granville Street and is developing bicycle lanes. The City is also focused on strengthening community facilities and neighbourhoods in the downtown through non-market housing. This is particularly important given the housing affordability challenges associated with living in Vancouver – especially in the downtown. In addition, the City has been investing in arts and culture, through theatres, art spaces, and public art projects. Overall, investments in the City of Vancouver seem to be influenced by an underlying philosophy to make downtown Vancouver a more accessible and equitable place for residents, workers and visitors.

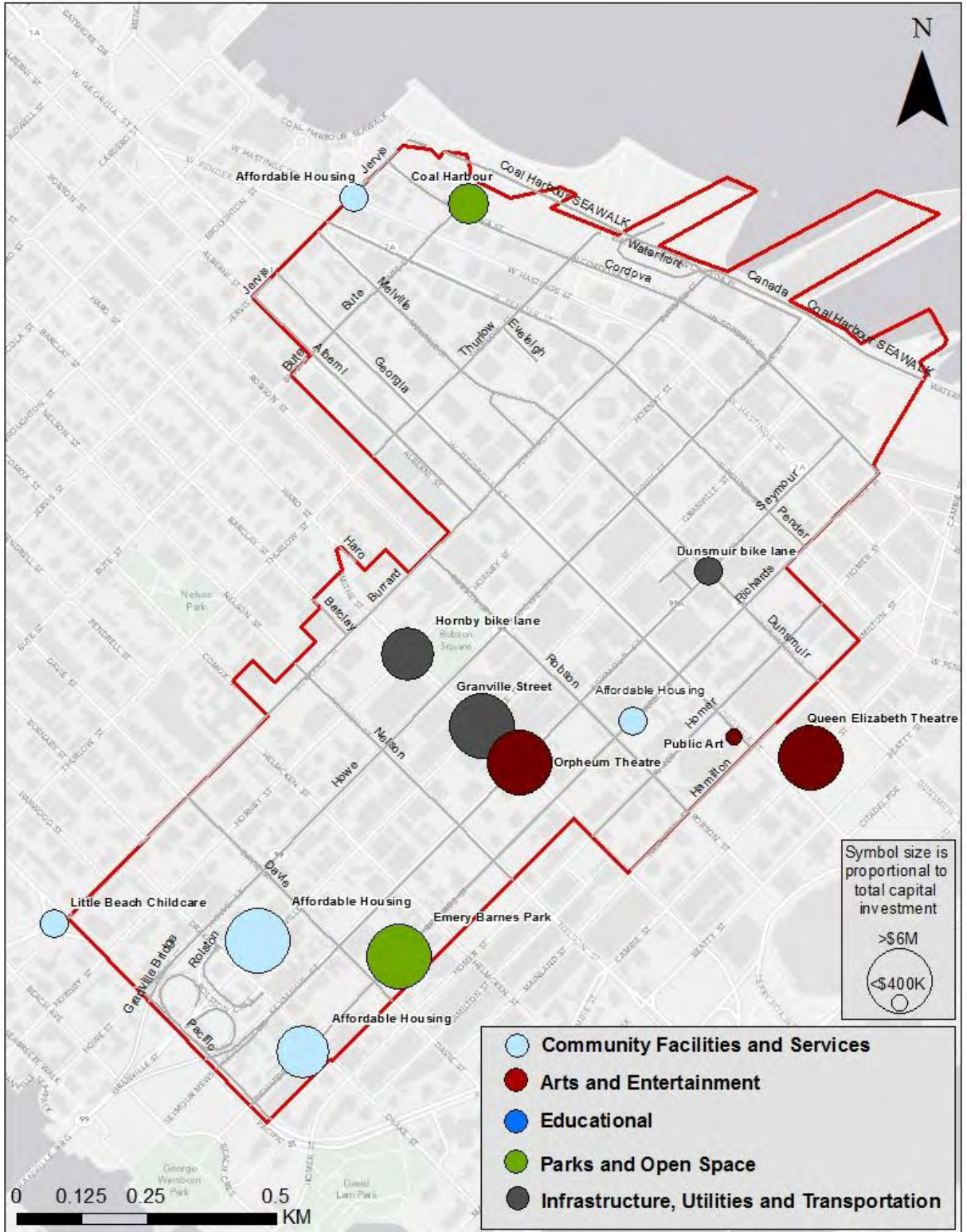
Collection of Municipal Capital Projects Data

Capital projects data for downtown Vancouver was compiled with input from all departments across the City of Vancouver. A more specific list of all downtown projects and the total municipal investment associated with each project was provided by each City department. Additionally some investments were made on the boundary of the downtown study area. These have been included in both in the wider map and the calculations of total municipal investment, as this approach has been consistently adopted for the other case studies.

Summary of Municipal Capital Projects

Municipal Project	Municipal Investment	Municipal Project	Municipal Investment
Hornby Bike Lane (2010)	\$3,200,000	Public Art – 350 W Georgia St. (2009)	\$250,000
Dunsmuir Bike Lane (2010)	\$900,000	Public Art – 350 W Georgia St. (2005)	\$210,000
Granville St. Reconstruction (2009)	\$24,500,000	Public Art – Harbour Green Park Seawall (2004)	\$200,000
Little Beach Childcare (2003)	\$1,100,000	Affordable Housing – 1265 Granville St.	\$1,200,000
Central Library (Renovations and Upgrades) (2004-2010)	\$400,000	Affordable Housing – 1299 W Hastings St.	\$1,800,000
Orpheum Theatre (Renovations) (2009)	\$6,300,000	Affordable Housing – 768 Richards St.	\$700,000
Playhouse (Renovations) (2009)	\$6,000,000	Affordable Housing – 1261 Granville St.	\$6,900,000
Queen Elizabeth Theatre (Renovations) (2010)	\$60,700,000	Affordable Housing – 1321 Richard St.	\$5,000,000
Emery Barnes Park – Phases 1-3 (2003-3001)	\$27,000,000		
Coal Harbour (Thurlow to Jervis) (2002)	\$2,500,000	TOTAL	148,860,000

Downtown Vancouver Capital Projects Map 2000-2010



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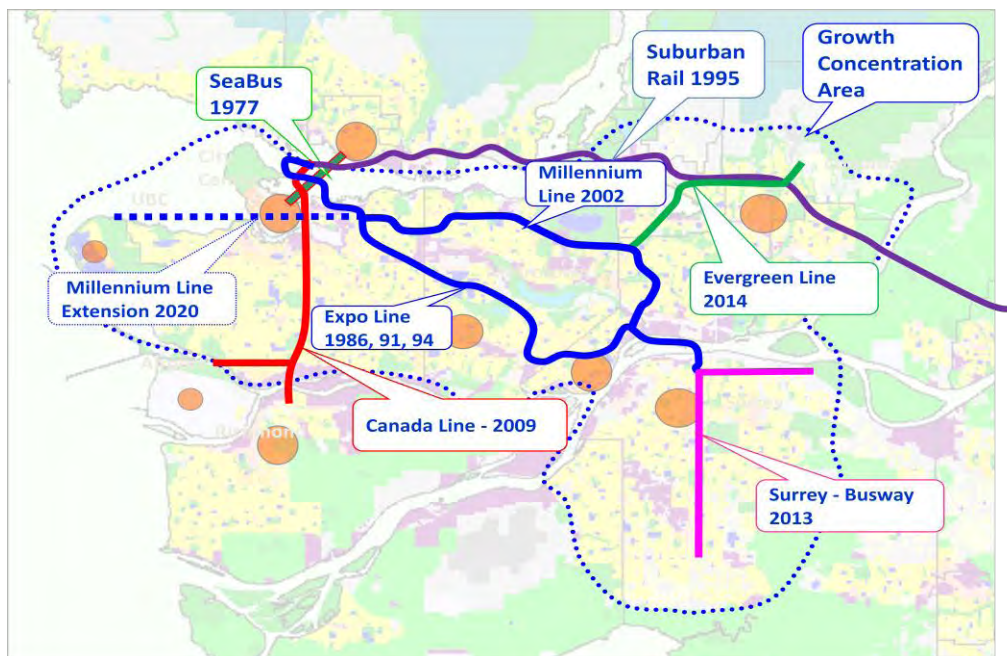
Pattern of Investment:

The City of Vancouver is investing strongly in its downtown to improve transit infrastructure, strengthen its community facilities and neighbourhoods through non-market housing, and invest in arts, culture, and public art.

1. Transit and connecting the downtown core

The downtown and the City of Vancouver benefit from a regional approach to transit planning (Metro Vancouver Transit), as well as the regional momentum and support to realize these major transportation projects. Since the 1970s, investments have consistently been made to improve the regional transit network. More specifically the \$2B extension of the Canada Line (20km) has had immeasurable benefits for the downtown, the city and region as a whole. As part of this project, the portion of rapid transit line developed in the downtown study area (under Granville & Davie Streets) cost in the order of \$150-\$200M. To further support these efforts, the Province of British Columbia has approved legislation to support funding for future capital investments in Metro Vancouver Transit, by increasing the fuel tax by two cents per litre.¹⁷

The City has also worked hard to encourage personal mobility. In 2009, the Granville Street reconstruction was completed, with a \$24.5M investment by the City of Vancouver. This represents a major investment to both enhance the public realm and increase the ease of access to transit. The redevelopment of Granville Street has also created a new hub for entertainment and tourist functions in the core. Additionally, in 2010, investments of \$3.2M and \$0.9M were made to create the Hornby and Dunsmuir separated bikes lanes, respectively. These investments have encouraged cycling to and from the downtown core.



Investment in Vancouver's Regional Transportation System Overtime

Source: Presentation by Paul Bedford, Why a National Transit Strategy Matters, Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

¹⁷ Government of British Columbia . (2011). *Legislation introduced to support Metro Vancouver's transit*. Retrieved from: http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011TRAN0089-001314.htm. Accessed 2011 October 14.

2. Building complete communities

Interviewees all commented on the City of Vancouver's commitment to building stronger and more inclusive communities. This commitment is reflected in the growing number of community facilities in the downtown, such as new childcare facilities, non-rental housing, and upgrades to the Central Library.

Over the past decade, five new Childcare Centres have been established in the downtown. The \$5.6M in capital investment that was required to develop these facilities came from the private sector or other agencies, but these facilities are now owned and operated by the City of Vancouver. This helps demonstrate the City's innovative approaches to funding community facilities, its commitment to promote downtown's liveability and that living downtown is a feasible residential option for families.

The City has also invested heavily in non-market rental housing in the downtown core. The City has invested \$15.6M in five new developments throughout the past decade. This investment is crucial given the housing affordability challenges experienced in downtown Vancouver to allow the City to achieve more diverse and complete communities.

Additionally, the city has invested approximately \$0.7M in street tree planting over the past decade. This is a critical investment as it creates a more beautiful, greener and more sustainable downtown. Street tree plantings have also been consistent across the core, to tie neighbourhoods together and create a more cohesive public realm.

The City has also been engaged in many planning and community building efforts downtown, such as in the Downtown Eastside (just outside the boundaries of the study area). The Woodward's Project represents an excellent example of the City of Vancouver's commitment to creating pedestrian-scaled, mixed-use communities. This development combines market and non-market housing, commercial/retail, and institutional arts space, and champions social, environmental, and economic sustainability. The Woodward's Building is now an important rallying point for the Downtown Eastside community and a place where many relationships are being built to strengthen the downtown and inner core of the City.

3. Investing in Arts, Culture and Entertainment

The City has invested in cultural facilities, such as ArtStarts in schools, film centre, Orpheum redevelopment, Symphony Orchestra Music School, playhouse, Queen Elizabeth Theatre and the Granville Street Redesign. These investments are helping to strengthen Vancouver's identity as a cultural hub. Moreover, diversity of investment in cultural infrastructure ensures these projects are accessible to both Vancouver's high and low income residents.

The City has also invested heavily in public art and street projects. In the past 10 years, twelve public art projects have been commissioned. These reach a total of \$3.5M. These have been funded by the private sector or other agencies, but are now owned and managed by the City.

The downtown has also benefited from the redevelopment of the Vancouver Convention Centre. The final cost of this project was in the order of \$800M. This project was driven by the Province of British Columbia.¹⁸

Also, just beyond the boundaries of the downtown, a large investment was made in BC Place. This investment was in the order of \$400-\$500M and involved the refurbishment to the Provincially-owned stadium downtown (completed in 2011).

Overall, significant investments have been made in downtown Vancouver that are strengthening the downtown and making it a more enjoyable place to live, work and spend time.

¹⁸ Dembicki, Geoff. (2009). *Over-budget convention centre an 'economic powerhouse': Premier*. Retrieved from: <http://theyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/Olympics2010/2009/04/03/convention-centre-expansion>. Accessed 2011 October 15.

VICTORIA

A high quality of life



Snap Shot of Victoria

- Provincial capital of British Columbia
- Tourist hub and known as the 'City of Gardens'
- Enjoys one of the mildest climates in Canada
- The focal point of 13 municipalities comprising the Capital Region District; 15th most populous metro region in Canada
- Downtown has a growing residential population
- On the southern tip of Vancouver Island

"There is a culture of support for local business [in downtown Victoria]...I have never seen anything like it..."



Downtown Victoria is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The downtown is both picturesque and historic, located on the Victoria Harbour. The core is a hub for tourists, highly walkable, and accommodates many provincial government buildings and functions. Confidence in the downtown has been growing with many new residential and commercial investments that have contributed to increased vitality. However downtown Victoria faces a number of challenges, such as attaining the funding to support its role as the centre of the Capital Regional District (CRD) that is comprised of 13 municipalities; upgrading aging infrastructure; homelessness and housing affordability; and growing its tourism base. Overall, downtown Victoria is moving forward and is set apart by its many unique historical and cultural attributes.

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Chinatown (1)

Victoria's Chinatown is the oldest in Canada. Chinatown offers an array of colorful shops, restaurants, side walk stands and a museum. It is also recognized for Fan Tan Alley, which has the prestige of being the narrowest street in Canada.



Old Town Victoria (refer to legend)

This is the largest historic district in British Columbia and one of the most well preserved historic districts in North America. "Old Town" is the umbrella term used to describe 3 historic areas of Victoria which includes Chinatown, the commercial district located on the Douglas/Blanchard and Yates corridor, and the waterfront. A plethora of shops, restaurants and activities are found in Old Town, which creates a cultural hub for the region.



Royal British Columbia Museum (Royal BC Museum) (2)

The Royal BC Museum is one of the premier repositories for cultural and natural specimens in the world. The institution was established in 1886 and it began collecting artifacts of human and natural history in British Columbia. The RBCM's collections contain more than 7.5 million objects.



British Columbia Legislature (3)

Victoria is the capital of British Columbia and the neo-baroque buildings completed in 1896 serve as the site of the province's Legislative Assembly.



Maritime Museum of British Columbia (4)

This naval museum was established in 1955 and houses maritime artifacts and historical photographs, and has an internationally renowned chart collection. This museum is located in one of BC's oldest provincial court buildings, sited on Bastion Square. The building contains the oldest operational birdcage elevator in North America.



Market Square (5)

The buildings comprising Market Square date from Victoria's unprecedented growth and prosperity in the late 19th century. It is now the site of a weekly farmers' market, restaurants, and a variety of local boutiques.



The Bay Centre (6)

This shopping mall provides visitors with more than 90 interior and store front shops. The four floors of the Centre cover 2 city blocks. The Bay Centre has 410,264 square feet of retail space.



Johnson Street Bridge (13)

The iconic 86-year-old Johnson Street Bridge will be replaced by 2016. At an estimated \$77 million, the three-lane bridge with a dedicated sidewalk, multi-use path and bike lanes, will be the city's largest capital project.

Craigdarroch Castle (14)

This National Historic Site of Canada has 39 rooms and 20,000 square feet of space. It was constructed by Robert Dunsmuir in 1887 and it is currently a museum that has 140,000 visitors annually.

Transit

The main transportation system is the B.C. Regional Transit System, which serves the city of Victoria and its different communities as well as the Greater Victoria, Sidney and Sooke. The main regional transit depot is located at the intersection of Douglas and Belleville.

Inner Harbour (7)

Victoria's Inner Harbour is an iconic landmark and a vibrant centre of activity. Extending from Laurel Point to the Johnson Street Bridge, the Empress Hotel and the British Columbia Legislature provide an exquisite backdrop to the marina, and variety of restaurants, hotels, and boutique shops. Street vendors and entertainers also line the walkways. The Inner Harbour is the departure point for whale watching excursions, considered one of Victoria's top attractions.



Empress Hotel (8)

The Empress is the most iconic landmark in Victoria's Inner Harbour. The hotel, which is a designated National Historic Site of Canada, has 477 rooms and 4 restaurants. The Empress is recognized for its Victorian afternoon tea, which can attract 800 people per day during the summer months.



Victoria Conference Centre (8)

This 73,000 square foot facility was built in 1989 and is connected to the Empress Hotel. In 2007, the Conference Centre expanded to occupy the Empress' Crystal Garden building, which achieved international reverence as the largest salt water swimming pool in the British Empire when it opened in 1925.



Centennial Square (9)

Known as Victoria's "Spirit Square" for the two Spirit Poles known as the "Two Brothers" that watch over the entrance to this space, Centennial Square is the year-round location of festivals and concerts.



Ferry Terminal (10)

Several companies provide transportation or tourist activities using the harbor, such as the Clipper that connects Victoria with Seattle and the Coho which crosses the waters between Port Angeles, Washington and Victoria.

Beacon Hill Park (11)

This beautifully landscaped 200-acre park is located on the southern shore of Victoria. It is the site of many activities and natural species. One of the world's largest totem poles was constructed at Beacon Hill Park and is currently in restoration.



Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre (12)

SOFMC, which opened in 2005, is a state-of-the-art indoor arena that hosts concerts, special events, business and trade shows and sporting events. The 7,000 seat facility is also the home ice of the Victoria Royals.



Downtown Victoria Timeline 1843 - 2012

1843 - 1920

1858 – Cariboo gold rush hit, population boom from 300 to 5000.



1862 – Incorporated as a City.

1868 – Becomes the capital of British Columbia.

1886 – Industrial and shipping investment moves to Vancouver. Victoria no longer center of investment in BC.

1896 – Consolidated Railway Company manages 3 streetcar lines.

1908 – Empress hotel constructed by Canadian Pacific Railway.



1920 – CPR stops shipping grain to Victoria. Fishing becomes major component of Victoria's economy.

1843 – Settled by Hudson Bay Company as trading post.



1865 – Chosen as the Pacific Naval base for the Royal Navy. Still serves as Canada's west coast naval base.

1871 – BC joins Confederation, Victoria remains capital of province.

1890 – Craigdarroch Castle completed.

1904 – Butchart Gardens completed. Victoria gains nickname as the 'Garden City.'



1939 - 2012

1940 – Floathomes supported by large rafts were constructed as a response to the need for affordable housing.



1959-62 – Centennial Square is redeveloped incorporating the renovation of the historic City Hall and police station.

1966 – Capital Region District formed to coordinate regional issues and local government in the Greater Victoria Region.

1974 – Market Square opened after creative revitalization of more than half a block of historic buildings and development of a vibrant central courtyard.

1975 – Fishing wharves demolished to make way for Coast Guard marine base.

1990 – The Bay Centre opens in the Old Town area occupying two city blocks.

2011 – Downtown Core Area Plan adopted.



1939 – 1945 - Ship yards active and produce 25 warships for the Royal Canadian Navy.

1948 – Victoria's streetcar system dismantled in favour of new buses. Government rebuilds dock yards to accommodate growing fishing industry.



1963 – University of Victoria opens.

1965 – Bastion Square upgrade with agreement between City and federal government.

1980's – Chinatown revitalization at a cost of \$1.5 million. Now designated a National Historic District.

1986 – Clipper Navigation Inc. begins high speed ferry service between Seattle and Victoria.



2007 – Mayor appoints new task force to reduce and prevent homelessness.

First stage of Dockside Green completed, targeted to be to be 1st LEED™ Platinum sustainable community in North America

VISIBILITY

Does the downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

Victoria is the capital city of British Columbia and is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island off Canada's Pacific coast. In 2006 the city's population was 78,057. Victoria is also part of the Capital Region District (CRD) which has a population of 345,164 and is comprised of 13 municipalities.¹

Downtown Victoria is strong and visible in the context of the CRD and is the heart of the region. It stands out because of its unique heritage, particularly its two most famous landmarks, the British Columbia Parliament Buildings and the Empress Hotel, adjacent to its spectacular harbour. Downtown has a strong concentration of office space (58% of the City's inventory) and employment (24,000 jobs). The downtown also has a growing residential population that is helping to increase vitality in the core outside of business hours. This activity is complemented by a strong tourism sector, which attracts 3.65 million visitors a year, including 200+ cruise ships and 450,000 passengers.

Downtown Victoria has experienced some challenges as it serves as the 'downtown' core for the 13 municipalities that comprise the region. This can place a lot of pressure on downtown facilities and services. Furthermore, given that most aspects of public administration are managed separately by these municipalities, efforts to increase and coordinate investment downtown are often undermined. Growth happening across the region is under the leadership of many planning authorities and this division of power can create challenges for the provision of large scale infrastructure. Regional cooperation will be critical to manage this challenge, as all of these municipalities are interdependent and rely on each other's strengths to draw economic growth to the region.

Overall, downtown Victoria is striving to be unique and attract a diverse range of new residents, businesses and tourists. This will assuredly create a sustainable base for the future.

"Victoria doesn't feel like a small version of Vancouver, it feels totally different. It feels like its own thing. We are trying to cultivate our own unique, niche here."

Downtown comprises
5%
of total city area (98.3ha)

2%
of the population lives
downtown (1,485)

58%
of Victoria's office
space is downtown
(4,910,075sf)

Downtown has
244 jobs/ha
or ~24,000 jobs



¹ Capital Region District. (No Date). *Statistics*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/sustainability-census-population.pdf>. Accessed 2012 May 14.

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

Victoria experienced a strong building boom between the 1890s and 1912. This boom led to the historic fabric that has continued to define downtown to this day. While Victoria's historic building stock is a critical asset for downtown, it is also important that the core can support new growth. Striking the balance between development and preservation has been a key challenge facing downtown Victoria for decades, but one that seems to be increasingly overcome through detailed and community-driven planning processes, the use of innovative planning tools and building partnerships between the public and private sector.

Vision

From 1990, downtown Victoria was guided by the Downtown Victoria Plan (1990).² This Plan was developed during a time of modest population and economic growth in the core and was aimed at enhancing heritage features and the public realm, as well as growing interest in downtown redevelopment opportunities. Yet today, 20 years later, downtown Victoria is experiencing strong and positive growth and the downtown Core Area Plan (2011) was recently developed to respond these positive new circumstances.³

The Downtown Core Area Plan was developed in partnership with the community and aims to accommodate new development while maintaining heritage buildings. The Plan calls for the preservation and enhancement of iconic areas, such as Chinatown and Government Street, clear sight lines to the harbour and several historic districts throughout the downtown, protection of heritage features in the Inner Harbour (the historic western wide of the core), and

higher density development in the commercial districts on the eastern side of the core.⁴

The City's vision for downtown upholds and complements the regional vision. In particular, CRD's Regional Growth Strategy for the Metropolitan Core also aims to enhance downtown Victoria as the CRD's primary business and cultural centre.



Leadership and Collaboration

Downtown Victoria has seen steady investment over the past few decades, maintaining its character and vibrancy, but has continually been experiencing transformation.

The City has been a key leader for the downtown, facilitating new developments and intensification by changing height and density controls, to allow for new developments in the core. These efforts will be further guided by the new Downtown Core Area Plan.

**Victoria has policies in its
Official Plan that relate
specifically to its downtown**

**Victoria has had a downtown
master plan for**

21 years

² City of Victoria (1990). *Downtown Victoria Plan 1990*. Retrieved from: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/departments_pln/pub_dvpln2.pdf. Accessed 2012 February 17.

³ Holmen, R. (2011). "Micro planning throws away neighbourhood boundaries" in *Victoria News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vicnews.com/news/125574928.html>. Accessed 2012 February 16.

⁴ Downtown Victoria 2020. (2003). *Conference One: The Successful Downtown*. Retrieved from: <http://dv2020.ca/conference1.html>. Accessed 2012 February 10.

The City has also taken strong leadership in addressing social challenges that impact the core. For example, the Mayor's Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness was set up in 2007. One of the key targets of this group was creating 1,550 net new supportive housing units in Victoria.⁵

The Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA), the city's business improvement district, has also been a key player in the evolution of the downtown. The DVBA worked with the City to create the "Corridors of Light" program and invested over \$600,000 over a five-year period in improving lighting levels in strategic locations throughout the downtown. Additionally, the DVBA and the Victoria Police Department worked together in 2008 to create CONAIR, a program that saw individuals wanted for serious, indictable crimes in other parts in Canada returned to face those charges; as well as, RETAIL C.O.P., a web-based, interactive program that permits business owners to share information relating to known and unknown retail criminals in the community. Overall, the DVBA has established dozen programs that have helped make downtown safer and more visually appealing for visitors and residents.

Members from the private sector have also been major champions in the downtown. Private developers have championed many major downtown residential and non-residential projects and have been building employment and a critical mass of residents in the core. The private sector has also taken advantage of heritage incentives in the downtown core and been responsible for upgrading their properties and improving the qualities of the downtown.

Downtown Victoria is widely viewed as the heart of the CRD. Yet leadership issues can stem from having 13 different municipalities comprise the region. Interviewees noted it can be a challenge to consolidate and integrate the varied goals that each

municipality has for itself. More specifically, having so many planning authorities can reduce the momentum behind intensification efforts, as municipalities are generally looking to attract growth within their own boundaries. This will be an important challenge for downtown Victoria into the future.

Overall, interviewees expressed the importance of collaboration between the City of Victoria, the CRD, and both the private and nonprofit sectors. There was a sense that the Downtown Core Area Plan will help motivate increased collaboration and positively guide growth into the future.



Symphony Splash, Victoria Harbour

⁵ City of Victoria (2007) *Mayor's Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness – A Victoria Model*. Retrieved from: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/tskfrc_brcycl.shtml. Accessed 2012 February 6.

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Victoria's chief industries are technology, tourism, education, food products, federal and provincial government administration and services. Victoria's economic success and future is also seen to be strongly rooted in protecting the natural environment, valuing culture and heritage, and providing a high quality of life and social wellbeing for its residents.

Residential Development

Victoria has experienced strong residential growth, reflected in the many new condominium developments emerging in the downtown. These include Corazon, Juliet, Aria, The Falls, 601 Herald, and The Hudson.⁶ Interviewees commented that Victoria has traditionally attracted retirees from across Canada, and a key trend identified is that condominiums target a broad cross section of prospective purchasers, including both young couples and singles. It is worth noting that a higher end market is emerging along the waterfront, while a more affordable housing market is emerging through the core by way of loft conversions and smaller condominiums. In addition, new projects have offered a wide range of unit sizes to appeal to a cross section of buyers.

Office Development

Downtown Victoria provides over half of the City of Victoria's office inventory (58%). One of the most important players in Victoria's office market is the Provincial government. More specifically, the Province occupies (as of fall 2006) about 3.4Msf of office space across Greater Victoria, or about 45% of the total regional office inventory. This concentration is even more significant in the downtown with the Province occupying approximately 2.6Msf of office

space, which accounts for about 60% of downtown office space.⁷

Recently a large scale office building was built in the downtown – The Atrium. This award winning, \$100M building provides 200,000sf of office space and is recognized for its quality design, particularly its enclosed atrium that can be enjoyed by the public. This atrium space is energized by restaurants that are open late, and it hosts cultural events and concerts. This project not only contributes important space for employment but provides a new focal point to the community and adds 24/7 life in the downtown.



The Atrium, Downtown Victoria

Retail Development

Downtown Victoria's retail and service commercial floor space inventory is approximately 2Msf. The downtown is supported by an inner city retailers comprising 300,000sf of retail and service commercial floor space. Together these two areas represent approximately 14% of the total inventory within the CRD.⁸

Many interviewees noted that Victoria is experiencing a shifting pattern of retail activity. Suburban expansion has led to the development of large scale retail spaces on the fringes of the CRD that compete directly with the downtown retail core. In response the

⁶ Condos Victoria BC. (2011). *The Atrium raises the Bar for future developments*. Retrieved from: <http://www.condosvictoriabc.com/the-atrium-raises-the-bar-for-future-developments-in-the-downtown-core/>. Accessed 2012 February 15.

⁷ Coriolis Consulting Corp. (2007). *Downtown Victoria Office Demand Projections: 2006 to 2026*. Retrieved from: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/plnpln_downtown_anlyss_appb2.pdf. Accessed 2012 February 17.

⁸ Ibid.

downtown is striving to offer a unique and vibrant retail experience and interviewees overwhelmingly commented on the excellent mix of independent boutique retailers' downtown. Interviewees also confirmed that there is a strong base of local support for downtown retailers.



Bay Centre, Victoria

Educational & Institutional Development

Victoria benefits from the presence of several major post-secondary institutions. The University of Victoria is the largest post-secondary institution in the region with 22,000 students and is located in the nearby suburbs of Oak Bay and Sannich, approximately 8 km north east of downtown. Royal Roads University and Camosun College attract approximately 2,700 and 8,400 students, respectively, to their suburban campuses. Currently the downtown accommodates a handful of private colleges (largely language and business schools), yet as the downtown continues to grow there could be opportunities to encourage the expansion of post secondary institutions.

Tourism

Downtown Victoria is also the centre of the region's tourism trade, featuring a number of hotels, attractions and other businesses catering to more than 3.65 million tourists who visit the area annually.⁹

⁹ Harris Consulting (2007). *City of Victoria: Downtown and Downtown Fringe Retail Commercial and Hotel Demand Forecast*. Retrieved from: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/plnpln_downtown_anlyss_appc2.pdf. Accessed 2012 February 16.

A report prepared in 2007 indicated that the downtown provided 80% of the CRD's hotel inventory.¹⁰ Moreover, a key element of tourism is the cruise ship industry. In 2010, Victoria welcomed 224 ships with approximately 441,550 passengers. This visitation yields major economic benefits for the downtown and also contributes to its 24/7 vitality. However, Victoria has been facing growing competition from other destinations for tourism dollars and must renew its destination marketing efforts to sustain its appeal.¹¹

Municipal Tax Base

In 2011, the assessment base generated by downtown Victoria (the business improvement area) is \$1.6B. This represents 8% of the City's assessment base.

Jobs

Downtown Victoria accommodates approximately 24,000 jobs, with many of the office-based employment in government functions.

The no. of dwellings grew by 10% from 2001-2006, compared to 5% more dwellings citywide.

Downtown has
4,910,075 sf
of office floor space

Downtown contributes
8%
of the municipal assessment base

Downtown has
~24,000
jobs

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ City of Victoria (2011). *Economic Strategy Plan 2011-2012: Growing Businesses in BC's Capital City*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/business/pdfs/economic-development-strategy.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 15.

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

Downtown Victoria accommodates 1,485 residents and has experienced strong population growth in recent years. Notably, of all the neighbourhoods in Victoria, the downtown experienced the highest growth rate between 2001 and 2006, at 17%.¹² Downtown Victoria has a population density of 15 people per hectare and this will likely increase with the City's encouragement of higher density residential development in the core¹³. The downtown currently remains heavily reliant on its employment base for vitality, with 244 jobs per hectare.

Diversity

Victoria is a retirement destination, known for its small town character and mild climate. The median age of the CMA, 43.1 in 2006, is higher than the nation as a whole and significantly higher than many other Canadian cities.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the downtown is increasingly seeking to attract a younger demographic to achieve a balanced population and create a stronger local labour force.

Housing

Between 2001 and 2006, the City's housing stock increased by 5%, while downtown Victoria saw an increase of 10% of its housing stock.¹⁵ Almost all of this housing (98%) is in the form of apartment buildings, with the remaining units in the form of duplexes.¹⁶

¹² City of Victoria. (2009). *City of Victoria Census Information*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/sustainability-census-population.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 13.

¹³ Statistics Canada. (2006). *Community Profile – Victoria*. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5917034&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=victoria&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=59&B1=All&Custom>. Accessed 2012 February 13.

¹⁴ City of Victoria. (2011). *Economic Development Strategy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/business/pdfs/economic-development-strategy.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 16.

¹⁵ City of Victoria. (2009). *Victoria Housing Characteristics*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/sustainability-census-housing.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 16.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Downtown has

1,485

residents

17%

**population growth
downtown between
2001-2006 (compared
to 2% citywide)**

1.7

**is the average household
size (compared 1.9
citywide)**

The downtown also saw an increase of ownership of 11% between 1996 and 2006.¹⁷ The City suggests that this may be partially attributable to the increased number of multiple dwellings being constructed, which typically cost less than single detached or townhouse units in the City. Despite the increase in home ownership rental rates downtown remain high at 78%.¹⁸

A key housing challenge for Victoria and the downtown is housing affordability. According to the 8th annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey, Victoria is classified as a city that is 'severely unaffordable.' Out of the 325 cities surveyed throughout the world, Victoria ranked 309 out of 325 in terms of affordability, one spot behind London, UK. Victoria was also ranked 33 out of 35 among Canadian cities in terms of affordability. The median house price in Victoria was found to be \$417,300, which is higher than Toronto.¹⁹ The City of Victoria and the private sector have been working to address this issue by trying to create more diverse and affordable housing stock in the downtown and the City.

¹⁷ Ibid.

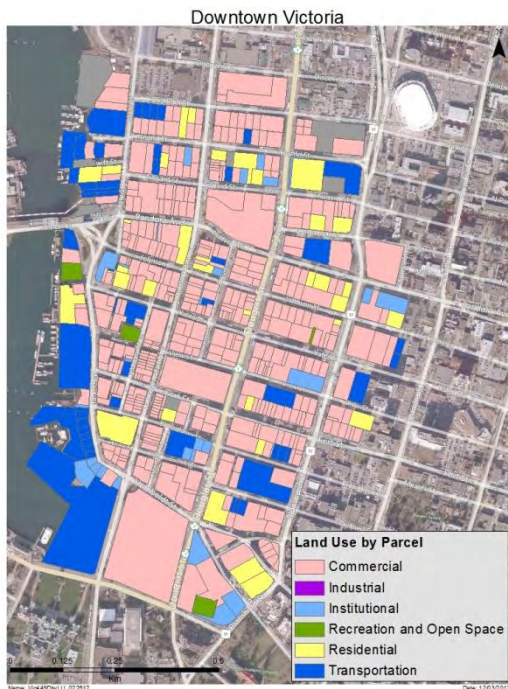
¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Demographia. (2012). *8th Annual International Housing Affordability Survey*. Retrieved from: <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 8.

Safety

Downtown Victoria has faced many challenges related to crime, homelessness, and drug activities. In response to these challenges the City of Victoria has embarked on the ‘Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness,’ which involves many community organizations and various levels of government working together to end homelessness by 2018. The City of Victoria also has several other initiatives to help curb safety issues, such as the “Downtown Late Night Task Force” and “The Mayor’s Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness” to help those in need, while creating a safer downtown.

Land Uses



Commercial	63%
Transportation	19%
Residential	9%
Institutional	4%
Vacant	3%
Open Space	1%
Industrial	0%

Land use in Victoria is predominantly commercial (63% of land area). Transportation (often surface parking lots) also comprises 19% of land uses,

representing significant redevelopment opportunities in downtown Victoria.

Public Realm

Victoria is located on a picturesque harbour, with waterfront paths, a compact and historical downtown and spectacular mountain vistas. Combined, these assets create a very special experience when moving through downtown Victoria’s public realm.

More specifically, Victoria has approximately 65% of the designated heritage sites in British Columbia with a concentration of 240 buildings in the downtown. These heritage features set the downtown apart and give it a distinctive character. Old Town, Chinatown and the Design District serve to draw many residents and visitors to the core and offer a very attractive public realm.²⁰ Investment in the upkeep of these buildings has been leveraged through a highly successful heritage grants program.

The City of Victoria has also revitalized Centennial Square, designating part of the square as “Spirit Square.” An ice skating rink was also developed and has become an important wintertime focal point.

It will be important that the City of Victoria continues to invest and encourage investment in quality public spaces. For example, one interviewee highlighted that there is a large, provincially owned and underutilized parcel along the waterfront. Redevelopment of this space could make a substantial contribution to the public realm.



Spirit Square, downtown Victoria

²⁰ City of Victoria (2011). *Downtown Area Core Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning-Development/Community-Planning/Documents/Downtown-Core-Area-Plan/downtown-core-area-plan-executive-summary.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 23.

Connectivity

Greater Victoria has one of the highest mode splits, favouring transit, cycling, and walking in Canada. The downtown is well connected, tightly knit and visually appealing, making walking or cycling a very attractive option. The City has been investing in bicycle lanes to further increase the attractiveness of cycling. Additionally, the bus service in Victoria has some of the highest rates of ridership in the country. Alternative modes of transportation contribute to mobility and help limit congestion in the core.

A connectivity challenge for the downtown is that its main bridge (known as the Johnson Street Bridge) is starting to decay and needs replacing. This bridge was built almost a century ago (1924) and is the only connection across the harbour to the downtown core. Plans are in motion to upgrade this bridge, which will be important for downtown to maintain its strength into the future.

It is also important to highlight that Victoria is on an island and, thus, interregional connectivity is critical to future success. There are many flights, float planes, helicopters and ferries that connect Victoria on a daily basis to Vancouver and Seattle (both about a 100km away) and Port Angeles, Washington. More specifically, a 2006 study identified that the Victoria to Port Angeles ferry, the Coho, contributed \$124 million to the Victoria economy annually. In addition water taxis operate along Victoria Harbour, with seventeen pickup and drop off points.²¹



Johnson Street Bridge, 2010



Sea Planes



'H2O' Water Taxi

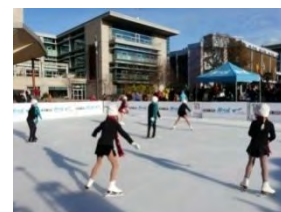
²¹ H2O Taxi (2012). Victoria Harbour is your Shortcut. <http://www.h2otaxi.com/>

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

Downtown Victoria's key strength is also one of its biggest challenges, in that the downtown operates as the social, cultural and economic hub of the Capital Regional District. The City of Victoria has to provide support for the downtown as well as meet the needs of the residents spanning the 13 surrounding municipalities that utilize the downtown (i.e. provide transit, infrastructure, policing and services). The small size of the City of Victoria and its limited resources make it a real challenge to fill this very large role. Consequently, the City has been limited in the number of major downtown investments it has been able to make in recent years, yet it has been incrementally investing in enhancing the downtown streets, public spaces and heritage features; replacing critical infrastructure, such as the Johnston Street Bridge; and implementing social programs to support those experiencing marginalization or homelessness in the core. As the downtown population grows the need to leverage additional funds for revitalization projects will be of importance to ensure the core can thrive in the coming decades.



Collection of Municipal Capital Projects Data

Capital projects data for downtown Victoria was compiled by a staff member from the City of Victoria, who confirmed the list with the representatives of each City department and with the Downtown Victoria Business Association. This data should be viewed with some caution, as there could be additional downtown projects that have not been included.

Summary of Investments

Municipal Investment	Year	Value	Municipal Investment	Year	Value
McPherson Theatre	2001-2010	\$3,000,000	Spirit Square	2009	\$500,000
Save on Food Arena	2005	\$28,120,000	Sewer/Drain Work (Government St)	2011	\$10,000
Watermain Work (Kingston St)	2005	\$150,000	Sewer/Drain Work (Waddington Alley, South of Bastion Square)	2011	\$10,000
Watermain Work (Burdett Ave)	2008	\$275,000	Sewer/Drain Work (Government/Humboldt)	2004	\$160,000
Watermain Work (Belleville St)	2008	\$100,000	Streetscape Upgrades and Paving		\$1,200,000
Watermain Work (Discovery St)	2008	\$235,000	Pedestrian Improvements		\$85,000
Sewer/Drain Work (Fisgard St)	2008	\$50,000	Douglas Street Bike Lane		\$40,000
Sewer/Drain Work (Blanshard St)	2010	\$25,000	TOTAL ON MAP		\$33,960,000
			Unmapped		\$600,000
				TOTAL	\$34,560,000

**Pattern of Investment:
Investing in Safety, Social and Cultural Programs**

Downtown Victoria has been responding to many social issues around homelessness and drug abuse. For example, the Mayor’s Task Force to break the “Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness” was established in 2007, and has worked to address these critical issues. The City of Victoria along with the Province of British Columbia has also invested in “The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness”. The City of Victoria and the coalition have two very admirable goals in mind. Firstly the coalition aims to create 1,233 new housing units for the Region’s homeless and at-risk by 2018. Secondly, the coalition intends to end homelessness in Victoria by 2018. These laudable ideas will need significant investment to be realized in the coming years.

Additionally, the City has invested in creating a safer downtown core. This started with the “Downtown Late Night Task Force,” which aimed to keep the streets safe for residents and retailers at night. The City of Victoria hopes to create a safe, friendly and beautiful downtown for residents, retailers and office workers.²² An example of this commitment is the “Corridors of Light” initiative, where from 2005 to 2010 the City of Victoria and the Downtown Victoria Business Association invested just over \$600,000 to improve lighting levels in strategic locations throughout the downtown.

The City of Victoria has also invested approximately \$3 million in capital improvements to the McPherson Playhouse between 2001 and 2010. This is an important cultural facility for downtown and the wider region.

Improving the public realm

The City has also been making strategic investments to enhance both its heritage values and natural features. These investments have helped enhance

the City’s public realm and draw increased residential growth into the core.

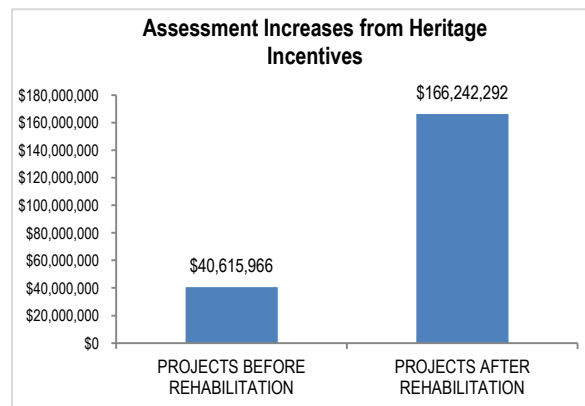
The City of Victoria has invested \$500,000 (matched by the provincial government) in Spirit Square, as part of its revitalization of Centennial Square. Spirit Square makes Centennial Square more inviting to the general public and increases opportunities for celebrations and concert events.

The City also established the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust in 1989 with the mandate to develop, administer and financially support programs that preserve and promote cultural heritage. Today this group continues to administer three key heritage incentive and loan programs that have been highly successful. These incentives have been heavily leveraged by the private sector and led to significant investment in the downtown. In turn, this has led to dramatic increases in downtown assessment values that in effect pay back these grants over time.



550 Yates Street - The Oriental Hotel

The City invested \$100,000 dollars in this approx \$5M re-development of one of Victoria’s prized heritage buildings.



One of downtown Victoria’s greatest assets is its proximity to the harbour. Each year, thousands of people attend events on the Inner Harbour, including Symphony Splash, Canada Day, Swiftsure, Victoria

²² City of Victoria. (2012). *Downtown Beautification*. Retrieved from: <http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/budget.shtml>. Accessed 2012 May 14.

International Cycling Festival, the Classic Boat Festival, and the International Buskers Festival. The City has been investing in the harbour, particularly by improving the paths that extend along the waterfront, known as the Greenway.²³ The City is strengthening this investment by creating a new section of the path, connecting Victoria's commercial wharf to Dallas and St. Lawrence roads. One interviewee also noted that a major opportunity for the waterfront was in the potential to transform the large parking lots that occupy key parcels along the waterfront. Also just beyond the boundaries of the downtown, the City has invested \$510,000 on the iconic Pandora Green Boulevard. The street will benefit from a new sidewalk, new trees and the building of a lit plaza in front of the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Overall, these investments are helping create a more attractive, appealing and interesting downtown for living, working and recreating in downtown Victoria.

Future Investments

Supporting critical infrastructure – The Johnston Street Bridge

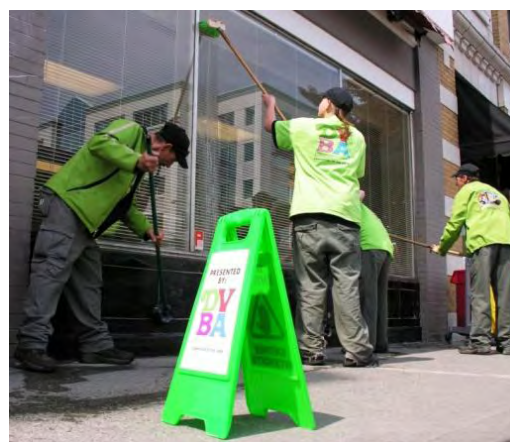
A key issue facing Victoria is the need to upgrade aging infrastructure. More specifically, the Johnston Street Bridge, connecting the downtown with Victoria West, is being replaced due to structural and mechanical issues and its seismic vulnerability.²⁴ On November 20, 2010 Victoria voters gave the City permission to borrow \$49.2M to replace the bridge. Given the size of the investment, the Council only decided to replace the bridge after considering safety, accessibility, improved pedestrian and cycling amenities, heritage values, sustainability, traffic and business disruption. Overall, this major investment is critical for the future of downtown Victoria, yet it will

also limit funding available to support other potential capital projects in Victoria in the coming years.

Similarly, the City of Victoria has been facing issues around the need to support a sewage treatment plant to service the entire CRD. This project has an estimated cost of approximately \$1.2 billion. While this would represent a partnership between the CRD and higher levels of government, it marks another major long-term capital investment for the City.²⁵



Live Flag Event, 2011



Clean Team, at work in downtown Victoria

²³ City of Victoria. (2003). *Greenways Plan*. Retrieved from: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/plnsrv_green_hrbr_panel3.pdf. Accessed 2012 February 25.

²⁴ City of Victoria. (2009). *Johnson Street Bridge Condition Assessment Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.johnsonstreetbridge.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/johnson-street-bridge-condition-assessment-delcan-engineering.pdf>. Accessed 2012 February 15.

²⁵ Harnett, Cindy E. (2007). "Victoria can be a sewage leader" in *Times Columnist Victoria*. Retrieved from: <http://www2.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/features/sewage/story.html?id=c56da1f3-1ed2-439f-83f7-22801c5f8eea>. Accessed 2012 February 22.

QUICK WINS FOR CANADIAN DOWNTOWNS

Over the course of CUI's research it was apparent that many cities in Canada – both large and small – have come up with all manner of great ideas to strengthen their downtown cores. Moreover, CUI learned of other best practices from around the world that have also been highly successful at contributing to downtown revitalization. This section is by no means a comprehensive review of best practice approaches to downtown revitalization, rather it intends to share some of the best ideas or the quick wins that the study team came across throughout its research. These ideas are all about making better use of what is on the ground and achieve increased vitality without spending a lot of money. This section is aimed to **spark ideas** that could be tailored and applied to meet the needs of any downtown across Canada, as well as provide **an evolving base of knowledge** that can be built on and strengthened for years to come.

Making Use of Underutilized Sites and Spaces

Almost all of the downtown case studies had many vacant sites and/or surface parking lots. In the long term, these sites offer immense opportunity for redevelopment. Yet in the short term, these vacant sites can be detrimental to downtown density, the pedestrian experience and people's overall impressions of the core. Around the world cities are beginning to temporarily transform vacant lots into more humanized spaces that can both revitalize and differentiate the downtown core, until the market conditions are in place to achieve a major redevelopment.

Street food programs are growing in popularity as both a means to expand the cultural offerings of a city and to grow the local economy of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Portland has had high-profile success with its city-wide **food cart program**, including a downtown cluster of about 20 vendors that form an interesting, attractive envelope around a large surface parking lot. Parking lots can be used for programmed events, such as the **farmers markets** at Square One in Mississauga or an **outdoor cinema**. Similar initiatives are already underway in Edmonton and Saskatoon, yet these programmed events could be expanded to make use of publically owned parking lots, particularly on weekends. Fun events like **PARKing day**, born out of DIY urbanism, where citizens build



Activating parking lots can add vitality and functionality to an otherwise vacant strip. Portland, Oregon, USA



New York City, USA, has been reclaiming many small spaces for pedestrians to enjoy



Outdoor Cinema in St John's, Newfoundland, makes use of a blank wall and a parking lot



A space for pedestrians in a revitalized city laneway, Melbourne, Australia

small parks on to parking lots, are now worldwide and were successfully undertaken in downtown Victoria.

On larger sites there are also opportunities to increase their value in the shorter term until the market conditions are in place for a large scale redevelopment, such as **energy generation** or **urban farming**. Copenhagen is a good example of the former, developing waste incineration plants in the city to solve the problem of the lack of space for waste whilst generating more energy for the city, and putting inner city spaces to good use. The BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group Waste-to-Energy Plant furthers this effective use of underutilized space by aiming to create this 95,000 square meter development, also Denmark's largest environmental initiative, along with creating a 31,000 square meter **ski slope on the roof**, made up largely of recycled material. This ensures effective pedestrian connection in readdressing the relationship between waste management and the public. Barcelona is a further example, requiring solar energy sources on new builds, and with its creation of Europe's largest **sculptural solar panel** (10,500m² surface area) in the Forum Esplanade's promenade. Additionally out of adversity, the **world's largest urban farm** (Hantz Farms) is being developed in Detroit by turning abandoned properties into agricultural fields. Many large and underutilized sites could lend themselves to this type of use.

Maximizing Use of Downtown Facilities

A mix of uses increases downtown vitality. Yet this concentration of activity can be even further strengthened by encouraging downtown facilities to have multiple uses at all times of the day and night. Some examples of this were 'The Atrium' in Victoria. This office development includes a large atrium that hosts performances and has late night restaurants around its edges bringing people to the building well beyond 9-5. Similarly, some Toronto dance troupes have been finding rehearsal space in the the lobbies of large buildings. Another interesting arrangement is between Ryerson University and AMC Theatre, where the movie theatres are used for both university lectures and to screen films. These types of opportunities and partnerships could be more commonly considered to make better use of infrastructure, as well as add colour, interest and activity to the core.



PARK(ing) Day in Munich, Germany



Urban Farms in Chicago, Illinois (USA)



Forum Esplanade promenade, Barcelona, Spain

Connecting the Downtown with Natural Features

Vibrant **waterfronts**, view planes to **mountain ranges** or natural features and **natural corridors** are just some of the ways that downtowns are trying to ensure that their cities feel a connection with the natural world. Some downtowns have been highly successful with this. For example Ottawa, Fredericton and London have extensive **trail systems** radiating outward from the downtown core along their waterfronts, while other downtowns such as Edmonton, Toronto and Saskatoon have gone to significant effort to connect city dwellers with the waterfront through the creation of **new parks** and **public amenities**. A stand out is Vancouver's Stanley Park, connected to waterfront trails, that brings the beauty of nature to the centre of the city and provides spectacular mountain vistas. Both Vancouver and Halifax have developed strong design policies to protect view corridors.

Embracing the Winter

Many downtowns in North America and Europe have embraced winter and are busy, interesting places year-round. Perhaps the most famous example is Copenhagen, where **sidewalk cafes** remain open throughout the winter due to efficient heating, partial enclosure, free blankets provided by cafe owners, and vibrant street life that is worth sitting out in the cold to watch. In Canadian cities, on the other hand, sidewalk cafes are generally dismantled in November (if not earlier).

Skating is an accessible and popular winter activity that brings people outdoors. Downtown **skating rinks** are often iconic landmarks in their cities, like those at Rockefeller Center in New York City, or in front of the city hall in Toronto, or at Fountain Square in Cincinnati. A length of the Rideau Canal, running through central Ottawa, is turned into a popular linear skating rink every winter and attracts skaters both locally and from across the country.

Programming public spaces is also a critical element of any downtown's efforts to draw people out of their homes and cars in the winter. Large winter festivals like **Quebec City's Winter Carnival** or **Ottawa's Winterlude** are effective ways to draw huge crowds downtown and make lots of people more comfortable with the downtown in winter, but such massive efforts are not necessary. **Holiday-themed markets**, for example,



Fredericton's North Riverfront Trail

"It's like any other time of the year. If there are people out, other people will come out too to see what's going on. But there has to be a reason to be outside—a market, ice skating, music, decorative lighting or just a good place to hang out when it's cold. No one will stay outdoors to stare at an empty plaza." - Cynthia Nikitin, Project for Public Spaces VP for civic centres and downtowns

http://www.pps.org/articles/winter_cities/



Ottawa's Rideau Canal; Quebec City Winter Carnival; and, getting bundled up to enjoy a sidewalk café in winter, Copenhagen, Denmark

require only a small investment to operate in downtowns that already have regular outdoor farmer's markets in the summer, and are often very well patronized. As at all times of the year, having **good seating**, interesting activities like **musicians** or buskers, lots of (warm) **food and drink**, welcoming **lighting**, and **clear sidewalks** are essential to making downtown hospitable.

Building Strong Partnerships

Building great relationships and strong partnerships is easier said than done, but collaboration is critical to achieving an exciting, diverse and prosperous core. Several interesting partnership models have been identified in the downtown case studies, which have helped generate increased investment and vitality. In Downtown Halifax the Strategic Urban Partnership provides a forum for stakeholders to meet and discuss new developments and partnerships opportunities. This forum has been successful at connecting key stakeholders from different sectors and company backgrounds. Similarly Edmonton created the Downtown Vibrancy Taskforce comprised of 'blue ribbon' businesses, community and social agencies that work together to prioritize and implement catalytic projects identified in the downtown master plan. Winnipeg established the arms-length agency Centre Venture, which has had tremendous success at forming the partnerships and conditions needed to realize major investments and redevelopment projects. Waterfront Toronto is another example of an arms-length agency that has brought more agility, flexibility and responsiveness than a larger government agency. Waterfront Toronto has brought together three levels of government, quasi public and private interests to begin the transformation of the shores of Lake Ontario. Partnerships are also important for realizing the full potential of individual redevelopments, and the Woodward's Building in Downtown Vancouver demonstrates a successful partnership between Simon Fraser University, the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, the City of Vancouver and the wider community. Business improvement organizations can offer municipalities with a strong partner with high levels of commitment to downtown revitalization efforts.

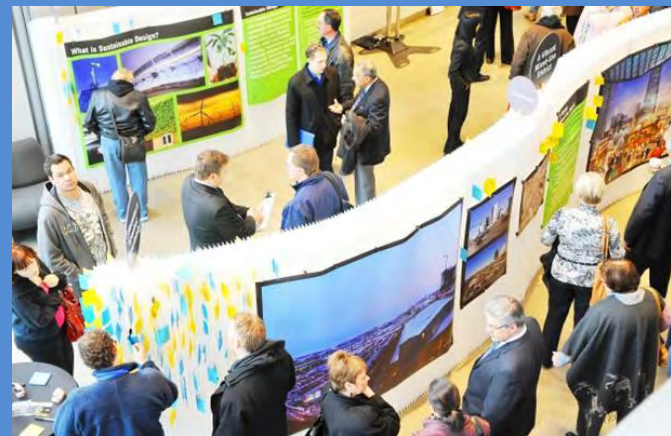
Quality Planning Processes and Community Engagement

In recent years, the downtown case studies have increasingly been the subject of downtown specific **master plans**. Halifax, Victoria and Edmonton have recently undergone

"When you glass in the city, you eliminate the bad days but also all the good days. That is too much of a price to pay. You miss the fresh air, the flowers. You may have 20 bad days a year when you want to stay indoors, but 200 good ones you miss." - Jan Gehl, architect



http://www.pps.org/articles/winter_cities/



Meeting with the community on the transformation Katz Development



Toronto's Waterfront Vision is Powering Ahead

comprehensive planning processes to bring together and unify downtown stakeholders. Moreover London, Saskatoon, Ottawa and Fredericton are in the process of developing and/or releasing a new downtown specific master plan. There was a general impression from interviewees that these planning processes were highly beneficial and were able to unify stakeholders, particularly the private sector with the public sector. Yet it was also emphasized that it is critical these downtown plans are underpinned by an investment strategy to make sure they can be implemented on the ground.

Zoning and regulatory tools can also offer municipalities with a strong tool to realize its plans. For example Downtown Edmonton addressed its large supply of parking by creating an innovative by-law package that limits additional downtown parking from being built. Similar moves have been made by other cities in North America and Australia. These tools also influence the type of use that can be developed on site. For example, the City of Vancouver undertook its Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan and implemented a series of policies to help protect land for commercial uses into the future.

Planning processes can also deal with issues of contention in a community. One issue that was frequently raised was the height of new developments in the downtown. This issue seems to routinely aggravate the relationship between the public and private spheres and imposing building height regulations is a common response. Vancouver and Toronto have both addressed this issue through the Downtown Vancouver Skyline Study¹ and Toronto's Tall Buildings Plan,² respectively. These planning processes have helped bring together the community and the private sector to ensure that the new development does not come at the cost of what the community most strongly values.

Creating Complete Communities

There is a trend in North America for young people, professionals, and older couples to move to the city centre to experience an urban lifestyle. Cities are generally trying to capitalize on this trend and going to great lengths to attract the lucrative young-professional demographic. Yet sometimes downtowns may be

¹ City of Vancouver. (2007). *Downtown Vancouver Skyline Study*. Retrieved from: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/archives/skylinestudy/>. Accessed 2012 March 18.

² Urban Strategies, Inc. (n.d.) City of Toronto: Tall Buildings Bibliography. Retrieved from: <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/Tall-buildings-Final-a4.pdf>. Accessed 2012 March 16.



Affordable housing with protected open spaces can help attract families to the city centre. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



New development goes ahead in downtown Halifax



Halifax's side walk cafes offer an exciting point of interest for new residents of visitors to the core

“getting too much of a good thing”. If the downtown does succeed at attracting more residents it is also important that it can attract a wide range of household types from a wide range of backgrounds, age groups and income brackets. The City of Vancouver has made some strides here, pioneering designs that **provide 2-3 bedroom units** in the **lower floors** of residential buildings that look out over communal space where children can play. Additionally, high levels of **safety** and good **schools** are important to attracting families to life in a downtown core.

Reaching the Balance with Heritage

Balancing heritage preservation and new development is a major challenge for many cities. Moreover, communities can quite quickly become polarized around these issues and discussion can rapidly degrade to either “development equals destruction of heritage”; or “protecting heritage equals economic decline”. Yet cities can have the best of both worlds and simultaneously achieve heritage protection and economic growth. When Halifax found itself locked in a stalemate over heritage and development, it reversed the situation through an inclusive planning process that aimed to achieve a more positive dialogue with a focus on good design outcomes. This process has delivered design guidelines that have built trust, certainty, contributed to new development and encouraged significant re-investment in the Downtown’s treasured heritage buildings.

Some cities are also managing challenges associated with past decisions to demolish heritage buildings. More specifically, many downtowns across Canada were the subject of major provincial or national urban renewal programs that left the super blocks (large scale retail or housing developments that are invariably inward looking). In London the Galleria Mall opened in the 1960s, occupying one major street block and providing high, blank walls along each elevation. This mall has since folded and the City should be applauded for its efforts to revitalize the



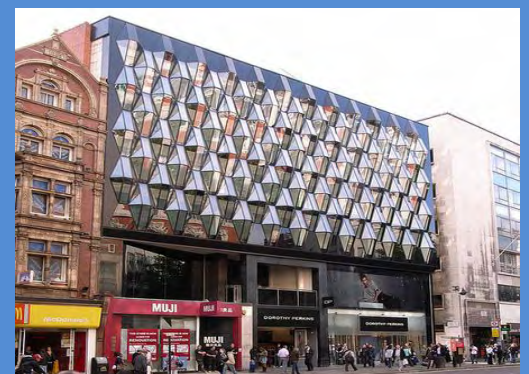
Fenwick Tower Revitalization and Preservation, Halifax



CitiPlaza (formerly Galleria Mall) London, ON



Example of building redevelopment, while preserving structural heritage. Oxford St, London, UK



Inclusionary new development, London UK

building and reconnect it with surrounding streets by attracting the new central library, office space, a post secondary institution and a smaller retail component (i.e. Goodlife Fitness with direct street access). The Toronto Eaton Centre also sets a great example and has attempted to activate almost all of its edges to the street allowing for traffic to move seamlessly between the mall and the streets outside.

Encouraging Alternative Modes of Transportation

A highly visible and irritating quality of any successful downtown is congestion. Yet a certain amount of congestion contributes to the “buzz” associated with vibrant downtowns. The greatest asset of any downtown is its density of people and jobs, and its intensity of activity. The challenge for cities is to accommodate as much density and intensity as possible without grinding to a halt. The key is to find the balance. In contemporary Canadian cities, this generally involves getting people out of their cars, because automobiles are inefficient users of land and incompatible, in great numbers, with vibrant, prosperous downtowns. While transit undoubtedly plays a key role here, there are other less costly options that could be considered to help move people away from private vehicles.

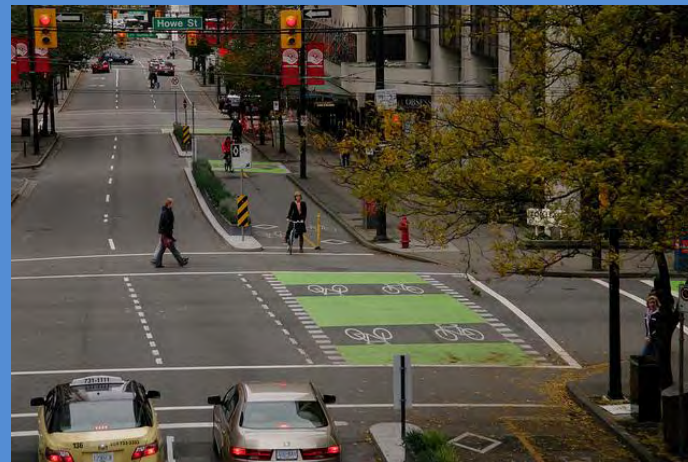
Residents of several Canadian cities have access to **car sharing programs** which offer residents short-term rentals at an affordable cost. Car sharing programs allow downtown residents to live without the high costs of maintaining or parking a car, while still having a convenient option to drive when necessary. Many municipal planning departments are requiring condominium developments to provide car shares in parking lots. Similarly, **bicycle sharing programs** have recently been established in a number of North American cities. As well as serving local residents they have the added attraction of being accessible to tourists and non-drivers. In combination with **safe cycling infrastructure**, bicycle sharing can make short trips around the downtown faster and more reliable than by car or public transit. Today, these programs tend to be unprofitable in Canada, but they are still young; the oldest, Montreal's **Bixi**, has only been in operation since the fall of 2008. Downtown Toronto and Ottawa also have Bixi programs.



AutoShare, Toronto



Bixi bike share, Montreal



Bike lanes in Vancouver



'Smart Parking' in San Francisco, California

The availability of car parking also significantly influences car usage. If there is ample and cheap supply of parking in a downtown, it will be incredibly difficult to encourage people to consider other modes of transit to access the Downtown. Yet **pricing parking effectively** can act as a deterrent and also help reflect the real cost of parking on a downtown core. In San Francisco, a new system of 'smart parking' has been implemented, whereby sensors monitor spaces and determine prices based on parking data. The cost varies by time, day and block, and the price is adjusted every six weeks or so based on supply and demand. This scheme was set up as an attempt to reduce car use and congestion in the city centre, and also allows online checking of parking space availability.

Innovative Approaches to Financing

Cities have a number of incentives they can deploy to promote new development. The permits for proposals, for example, can be moved to the front of the queue, receiving **quicker approvals**. Application fees, development charges, and parking requirements can also be reduced or waived. For example, the City of Ottawa **waived development charges** for many years, which coincided with a major influx of new residents to the core.

Some cities are experimenting with **tax increment equivalent grants** or **loans**, which essentially delay property tax increases on properties that are developed in ways that support city policy. More specifically, the City of London has established a suite of downtown grant and incentive programs, as well as targeted incentive programs for its 'main street' that have been highly successful at attracting private sector investment. Since 2008 the City of London has issued a combined total of 104 grants and loans worth \$1.1 million, leveraging \$3.8 million in construction value from the private sector.³

Toronto has also leverage high levels of private investment in the public realm through Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act. This arrangement has allowed the developer to gain increased density and height in exchange for investment in various types of social facilities that will provide a public good.

Another highly innovative approach to funding was established in Saskatoon by **The Partnership**. This collaboration between the City and the business improvement district sees money collected from parking meters being spent on upkeep and improvements of infrastructure. This has been successfully implemented since the 1980's and has resulted in major streetscape upgrades through the downtown.

³ City of London. (2011). *State of the Downtown Report 2011*. Retrieved from: http://www.london.ca/Planning/PDFs/SOTD_AnnualReport_09.pdf. Accessed 2011 October 20.



The private sector is making a significant contribution to redeveloping Saskatoon's Kinsmen Park



The Woodwards Building in Downtown Vancouver

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - PROJECT DESIGN

This study has been designed to have two key components:

- Firstly, it aims to provide an in-depth analysis on the performance of 10 downtowns. It brings together a wide range of data on how a particular downtown has been performing overtime and how it is performing relative to the rest of the city.
- Secondly, this report aims to compare the results from these in-depth case studies to see how downtowns are performing across Canada.

To achieve these aims we have developed a consistent approach to defining the downtown boundaries, collecting data and measuring and benchmarking performance. These components of the project and approach to achieving these are described below.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

In-depth Analysis of 10 Downtowns

CUI designed the study to include an in-depth analysis for ten downtown case studies to date. This analysis provides an overview of how the downtown case studies have evolved overtime and important lessons that the downtowns have learned throughout their development.

To inform this analysis, the project team researched each downtown case study (within a **defined downtown boundary**) by collecting **quantitative data**; **Geographic Information Systems data (GIS)**; and **interviews** with key stakeholders. The study team then used this data to measure and provide an assessment on how well the downtown had performed.

Each step of this detailed analysis is described in the following section.

Comparisons between 10 Downtowns

CUI studied 10 unique downtowns that stretch from east to west across Canada. These downtowns range in population from the thousands to the millions and serve many distinct roles and functions. This diversity creates many challenges for a benchmarking study. The in-depth analysis is intended to maximize opportunities for comparison between the downtown case studies.

More specifically, to achieve comparability, every downtown was assessed against the same five **principles** and **indicators** that were developed to consistently present data collected from each city.

Key indicators were also selected based on some of the more interesting results of this study to allow for a quick overview of key findings and an easy way to compare the varying cities to each other.

DEFINING DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES

The first challenge for almost every project partner was defining the boundary for the downtown case studies. Every single person living in a city will likely have a different understanding of what constitutes their “Downtown” based on their personal frame of reference – are they a resident, a worker, how do they utilize the downtown and how often? - and the project partners had to balance these various expectations and other key considerations in selecting this boundary.

CUI provided support to each project partner to create a boundary that made sense for each city. The preferred approach was adopting the working definition of “Downtown” used by the relevant municipality in plans and policies.

Yet, where the municipality had not created a definition of the “Downtown,” CUI developed general criteria and considerations to help guide the creation of these boundaries.

There were four key criteria/considerations for defining the downtown:

- **Financial core:** Firstly, the downtown study area should function as the central business district for the wider city and/or include the city’s historic financial core.
- **Diverse ‘urban’ elements:** Secondly, the downtown study area should include diverse urban elements such as the City’s main “high street”; a concentration of commercial and mixed use buildings; major civic buildings, such as the City’s Town Hall; major public spaces, such as a city square or plaza; religious or ceremonial spaces. Other features include high density residential housing well served by public transportation. This should ideally also generate high volumes of pedestrian traffic.
- **Hard edged boundary:** Thirdly, the study area would ideally be bound by a hard edge, from manmade features such as major streets or train tracks, or a natural feature such as a body of water. Hard edges provide a clear justification for the location of the boundary.
- **Workable for data collection:** Lastly, an overarching consideration is that the data being compiled must align with the selected downtown study areas. Therefore project partners had to consider Census Tracts and other important data collection boundaries that would make the study area workable and logical for the purposes of the project.

The study has been designed to balance challenges that come with each city determining their own boundaries. For example, some cities have decided on more generous boundaries than others. This could mean that when collecting raw data, the population of residents or jobs etc may appear to be larger than if a smaller area was selected. To balance this, CUI measures many intensity factors (for example population and jobs per hectare) and trends over time (% growth), alongside raw numbers to allow for a clearer picture of downtown activity. Moreover, this study provides significant commentary about key assets or pieces of infrastructure just beyond downtown boundaries, as well as the inner core suburbs that support each of the downtown case studies.

Overall, endless debate could be had around the exact boundaries of a downtown, what constitutes a downtown and what elements should be ‘in and out.’ Yet it is the hope of this study that anyone picking up this report and flicking to their home city will generally think *“yes give or take a little, this downtown boundary makes sense to me for my own home city.”*

DATA COLLECTION

To gain a clear picture of what is happening in each of the 10 downtown case studies the project began with an extensive data collection phase. This stage was guided by CUI but was undertaken by the project partners. It is important to emphasize that this is just the first step toward building a body of data that specifically relates to Canadian downtowns. CUI would encourage that this project is regularly updated and refined to ensure that a body of data relating to Canadian downtowns will grow into the future.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected to develop a specific set of data that could help identify key trends occurring in the downtown overtime. The collection of quantitative data was generally undertaken by the municipal project partners with the support of their downtown BIDs. CUI guided this process through a standard Data Request List. To collect the diverse range of data requested, the project partners needed to facilitate conversations between their City’s Planning, GIS and Finance Departments.

Data requested covers the following four key areas:

- **Census Data (1996, 2001, 2006):** Data collected has covered three national census periods – 1996, 2001 and 2006. Data requested relates to population, age structure, dwellings, labour force, ethnicity, incomes, employment, housing tenure, transportation and crime rates.
- **Downtown Economy Data:** Economic data was collected to determine the economic health of the downtown and the wider city. This data was generally collected for the past decade and included: building permit activity and investment, commercial floor space, rents, vacancy rates, business growth, tourism and jobs.
- **Municipal Finance Data:** Municipal financial data was collected to derive the revenue generated by downtowns across Canada. This data was generally collected for the past decade and included taxable assessment data, tax revenue and non-tax revenue data for both the city and the downtown.
- **Capital Projects Data:** Understanding the types and impacts of capital investments was a key part of this project. Therefore, the project partners compiled downtown capital budget and city wide capital budget information. This data has created many challenges for those responsible for data collection as it is often not collected on a downtown basis.

This data provided a detailed picture of the downtown and its health overtime.

GIS Data

The CUI developed an extensive GIS platform through this project to spatially represent the characteristics of each downtown. The CUI was provided with GIS data that included: downtown and citywide boundaries, land uses, zoning, roads and transit routes, parcels fabric, heritage properties and building footprints. This data allowed for the development of all the mapping components included in this project: a context map, a land use map and a capital projects map.

Interviews

Interviews were undertaken with a wide range of downtown stakeholders to develop local insights and knowledge into downtown growth and development. Questions asked during the interviews captured a range of perceptions, impressions, experiences, and opinions. They covered themes such as: changes experienced in the downtown over time; perceptions on the downtown as a place to live/work/invest; aspirations for downtown future growth; leadership and partnerships; public and private investments, what drove these and their impact on the life of downtown; incentives and tools that have been adopted to strengthen and attract private investment in the downtown. CUI spoke with all types of downtown stakeholders, such as politicians, planners, developers, downtown residents, business people, artists, architects and advocates to gain a diverse range of views. These interviews helped to augment data gaps and provide context for the data being reviewed. A minimum of five interviews was undertaken for each downtown. A full list of people interviewed is included in the “acknowledgements section.”

DATA LIMITATIONS

This project is the first of its kind, and to date no body of data specifically relating to “downtowns” exists in Canada. This project is a first attempt to compile downtown StatsCan Census data (1996, 2001, 2006), downtown economy data, municipal finance data, capital projects data and GIS data. As a result, the project team faced some significant challenges with managing data gaps: such as accessing the data we required to undertake our analysis; to access data in a usable and understandable format; and to access consistent sets of data so we could compare City performance. The partner cities also faced some challenges with having the time and resources available to support this very large data request.

Data Gaps

From the outset of this project, it was clear that very few of our participating cities have organized data that distinguishes the performance of their downtown from the rest of the city. There are some notable exceptions, the City of London has been tracking the performance of their downtown in great detail for more than a decade; the City of Edmonton have recently undertaken a detailed downtown master planning process where significant data was compiled and the City of Saskatoon have also recently completed a very exciting inventory project in their downtown to map and count downtown activity. However, generally the data sets requested were being developed for the first time, which resulted in some cities not being able to fill the data requests or not being able to fill the entire request. As a result we have some of the following data gaps.

StatsCan Census Data (1996, 2001, 2006): The only challenge faced with Census data resulted from boundaries being redrawn between census periods. For example, this occurred in the City of Vancouver, so only two census periods are available (2001, 2006). The project team have identified all places in the report, where this limitation has arisen. It is also worth noting, that many downtowns have experienced strong growth in the last few years, which will not be reflected until 2011 census is incorporated into the report in due course.

Downtown Economy Data: Generally, downtown economy data was available to the project study team. Yet, many cities did struggle to access information relating the number of jobs in their downtown, as well as office space inventories and data on construction values and building permits that specifically related to downtown activity. Less than a handful of cities had access to a retail inventory downtown. The project team was also unable to gain any data relating to retail sales downtown. It should also be noted that CB Richard Ellis provided support to the project team by generously providing office data for the majority of downtown case studies. Overall, if the project team exhausted all options to fill these data gaps, then the partner city has been simply left out of the comparative analysis.

Municipal Finance Data: The project study team found that municipal finance data, tax revenue and assessment is generally not collected on a downtown and city wide basis, so collecting this data involved significant effort from the finance departments of our partner cities. With limited resources, some cities were only able to provide information on assessment base or tax revenue generated downtown and not both. Moreover, for the partner cities where a business improvement association was driving this study and not the municipality, such as in the case of Downtown Yonge for the City of Toronto, it was a significantly greater challenge to gain access to this type of sensitive data. As a result, some cities do not have complete sets of data for the municipal finance indicators. Again, if the project team exhausted all options to fill these data gaps, then the partner city has been simply left out of the comparative analysis.

Capital Projects Data: The biggest challenge for the project team was gaining an understanding of the portion of the capital budget being spent on the downtown. It is clear that almost every city organizes their budgeting process differently, each City includes different elements in capital and operating budgets. The vast majority of cities do not track capital investments geographically, they track investments by departments so it is incredibly challenging to separate out downtown investments from city wide investments. Moreover, an additional challenge is that cities develop a budget (forecasting) and then an actual budget (the money spent), and the actual budget (which the study team was interested in) can be very difficult to gain access to. To manage this gap, we have not been able to compare number of capital projects and portion spent on capital projects between cities overtime. Yet, this is some of the most interesting data collected, and is incredibly valuable for individual cities to review what is happening

within their own boundaries. As this project evolves into the future it is the hope of the project team that detailed capital projects data can start to be collected for every downtown case study.

Therefore, given these limitations to compare the level of investment for all our partner cities, the study team have developed a “Capital Projects Map.” This map depicts municipal expenditure and develops a category to see the type of investment. The study team have included all major projects and enhancements to the downtown that have been designed to grow interest in the downtown as a place to live, work and invest.

GIS Data: The project team faced few limitations collecting GIS data. Generally, developing a quality GIS base seems to be a growing priority for all cities in Canada. Moreover, open data sites (such as in the City of Fredericton and the City of Vancouver) seem to be a growing trend.

Resources

Collecting this data, was a significant commitment for all partner cities. Many cities simply did not have the resources to commit to delivering this complete data request. As a result cities that did commit a high level of resources have much more complete data sets than cities that were challenged by a lack of resources.

Overall, this is a dynamic document and it is the hope of the study team that the importance of collecting data on downtowns will become a growing priority for cities across Canada. In time, it is hoped that data will continue to be collected for downtowns and eventually data will be fully available so every partner city can have a complete data set.

MEASURING AND COMPARING DOWNTOWN PERFORMANCE

Once this data was compiled and provided to the CUI, the study team organizes, synthesizes, and assesses the data against the five principles required for a successful downtown. CUI developed these principles following an extensive literature review and research into what factors contribute to a strong, vibrant and liveable downtown.

Principles

The CUI developed a set of principles to explain and measure what makes a successful downtown in Canada. The principles had to be sufficiently broad and robust to account for the fact that each downtown is unique, with different characteristics, attributes and conditions that have shaped their evolution. Yet the principles must also be specific enough to allow for comparisons between the various downtown case studies to determine how they are performing over time and into the future.

Developing the Principles

The CUI developed these principles using a three-pronged approach. Through stakeholder surveys, extensive literature review and the lessons from the successes in the downtowns studied, CUI determined five key principles against which the 10 downtown case studies (and subsequent case studies in Phase Two) will be assessed.

The foundation of the five principles was the survey distributed to the Institute's Board and network of practitioners to answer the question – WHAT MAKES A DOWNTOWN GREAT? Based on the feedback received, the team developed the preliminary principles for analysis.

The following reflects the outcome of this enquiry:

Architecture and Design: landmark projects, heritage protection, development at the human scale

Connectivity: appropriate forms of public transit, walking, cycling, marine, design for all ages

Culture: vibe, values, virtuosity

Innovation: education and research, partnerships and networks, venture capital, universities and colleges, educated and skilled labour force.

Employment: a variety of and medium sized enterprises, creative industries, diverse economic base

Public Realm: quality streets and streetscape, plazas and squares, parks and other gathering places, destinations, private space that enhances the public realm (e.g. sidewalk cafes)

Sustainability: sustainable development, good air and water quality, community energy projects

Diversity: open fluid society that facilitates participation and opportunities for new immigrants

Venture capital: availability of venture capital and management of research market

.....and "it's all these things at all times of all fronts" supporting each other through infrastructure investments, guided by a clear vision and leadership willing to take risks.

Following this, a literature review was conducted and Michael A. Burayidi's (2001) text, *Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities*, served as the primary foundation for the research. From this text, passages from Kent Roberston of Saint Cloud State University were used to help further articulate and define the principles. Finally, the information gathered from the 10 downtown case studies was synthesized in accordance with the principles and specific examples were discovered which further reinforced the principles we established from the outset.

The five principles are as follows:

VISIBILITY	Does the downtown have an integral and central role in the life of the wider city?
VISIONARY	Does the downtown benefit from a multiplicity of strong, bold leaders who collaborate to achieve and sustain a shared vision?
PROSPERITY	Does the downtown have a robust and innovative economy?
LIVEABILITY	Is the downtown vibrant, liveable and connected?
STRATEGY	Is the city investing strategically in its future?

The next step was to develop methods of assessment to determine if the downtown case studies are evolving in a way consistent with the five principles. In other words, are these downtowns evolving into *great downtowns*? To this

end, the team utilized a range of qualitative and quantitative measures and indicators. In collecting qualitative data, the CUI undertook surveys and interviews to learn about the history of each of the downtowns, gain perspectives and insights concerning the drivers of growth and change, as well as to learn about each city's leaders and how they have approached and prioritized downtown development. The team also analyzed quantitative data and developed indicators to baseline the downtown performance relative to the wider city. The goal is to ensure that quantitative data is consistently available across Canada for each of the 10 downtown case studies.

Indicators and Benchmarking

The team then analyzed quantitative data and developed indicators to baseline the downtown performance relative to the wider city. The goal is to ensure that quantitative data is consistently available across Canada for each of the 10 downtown case studies.

VISIBILITY Does the downtown have an integral and central role in the life of the wider city?

A downtown can have a complex relationship within a large, sprawling city. In the context of ongoing expansion, a downtown can suffer declining interest from the public and private sector, as well as the general community. Strong public and political support is necessary if downtowns are to remain prominent, strong in the hearts and minds of citizens, and able to grow seamlessly with the city as a whole. To measure how well a downtown is performing against this principle the CUI team has been undertaking interviews to learn about the history and understand the make-up of each downtown, as well as surveying stakeholders to gain their perceptions on the downtown -- its role, function and vitality. Quantitative and GIS data is also being assembled on the contribution that the downtown makes to the entire city and how the relationship between the downtown and the city as a whole is changing over time.

Indicators to measure performance against principle:

- Downtown proportion of land area
- City Typology
- Downtown proportion of population
- Downtown proportion of office, housing, retail and open space
- Downtown proportion of jobs
- Downtown proportion of tax revenue
- Downtown proportion of assessment value

VISIONARY Does the downtown benefit from a multiplicity of strong, bold leaders who collaborate to achieve and sustain a shared vision?

Strong leaders, a bold vision and a high degree of collaboration are critical ingredients for a downtown to achieve its potential. A clearly articulated vision can unite a city's public and private stakeholders, align their interests and lead to more strategic growth and investment. To measure the strength of the vision in each downtown, the team analyzed the perceived effectiveness of downtown plans and policies, as well as attitudes towards collaboration and the ways that the public and private sector are working together to achieve the shared vision for the downtown.

Indicators to measure performance against principle:

- Years that a plan specific to the downtown has been in effect.

PROSPERITY Does the downtown have a robust and innovative economy?

A cornerstone of a strong downtown is a prosperous and diverse economy. A strong economy generates jobs and leads to economic opportunity. A strong downtown with vibrant businesses and growth also provides a city with a strong tax base and a major source of revenue. To measure the strength of a downtown's economy, the team tracked assessment value for downtown and city-wide revenue and analyzed how this has changed over time. Data

was also collected that examines property market i.e. the types, values and styles of new development for residential, commercial and institutional sectors. Finally, jobs and household incomes were examined across each city to measure opportunities for wealth generation.

Indicators to measure performance against principle:

- Commercial office, retail, residential and institutional development (value and changes to inventory overtime)
- Municipal tax base (changes overtime)
- Educational Institutions and Students
- Household income

LIVEABILITY Is the downtown vibrant, liveable and connected?

Presently, downtowns across North America are adopting all manner of tools and policies to stimulate the growth of residential populations in downtown. This growth is seen as critical to downtown vitality and facilitates activity beyond the working day. This vibrancy allows the downtown to become more attractive to existing residents, visitors and newcomers alike, and cement its place as the literal and symbolic heart of the city as a whole. One measure of liveability is the strength of residential growth in downtown; another is whether there is sufficient infrastructure available to support a downtown population. A third indicator is the nature of urban form and quality of the urban fabric to determine if the downtown is offering an interesting urban experience for current and future residents.

Indicators to measure performance against principle:

- Population over time (1996-2006)
- Population growth (changes overtime)
- Migration (domestic and international migration)
- Housing (types and household sizes)
- Safety (crime counts)
- Land use downtown on per capita basis
- Car parking spaces (particularly surface parking)
- Average parcel size, block size and road width
- Transportation mode split

STRATEGY

Is the city investing strategically in its future?

Public investments should be strategic and maximize opportunities for revitalization in the downtown. Ideally, they will leverage existing investments and infrastructure and be able to support the investments from the private sector. This allows for the city and the wider community to gain maximum returns on their investments. To measure the degree to which investments have been made strategically, the CUI examined the type, value and location of public investment. It has also been important to learn about the rationale behind these investments, as well as how various investments fit together to complement and support each other in terms of the vision for the downtown. A key goal is to determine the extent to which private investments can be said to have emerged in response to public investments.

Indicators to measure performance against principle:

- Number of capital projects (overtime) and proportion of total capital budget
- Dollar value spent on municipal capital projects and proportion of total capital budget

APPENDIX 2 - PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover

- Halifax: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/halifax/visit/visit2.aspx>
- Fredericton: <http://www.unbf.ca/clubs/indasso/unbfredPhotos.htm>
- Ottawa: <http://www.vagabondquest.com/asia/indonesia/how-well-traveled-are-you-in-your-home-country/>
- Toronto: <http://debracanada.org/archives/978>
- London: from CUI image
- Winnipeg: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/hackundertaker/4513497997/>
- Saskatoon: <http://wanderingcarol.com/?tag=saskatchewan>
- Edmonton: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/4457247>
- Vancouver: <http://www.bclimo.ca/vancouver-limo/>
- Victoria: <http://victoriaconcierge.com/services/tour-packages/>

Comparison Section

- Downtowns are iconic:
 - Halifax: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/halifax/visit/visit2.aspx>
 - Fredericton: <http://www.unbf.ca/clubs/indasso/unbfredPhotos.htm>
 - Ottawa: <http://www.vagabondquest.com/asia/indonesia/how-well-traveled-are-you-in-your-home-country/>
 - Toronto: <http://debracanada.org/archives/978>
 - London: from images file
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- Meeting with the community on the transformation Katz Development <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/sports/stories+Downtown+arena+moves+closer+reality/5920746/story.html>
- Toronto's Waterfront Vision is Powering Ahead <http://blog.mycondomylife.com/cityzen-developments/downtown-toronto/>
- Unknown source. Vision for Downtown London? Saskatoon River Landing?
- Downtown Edmonton experienced the greatest residential growth, proportionately, from 2001-2006. <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/27059080>
- Even 'big box' stores will follow downtown population growth <http://www.cooltownstudios.com/site/living-above-the-big-box>
- Many cities work very hard to attract a supermarket downtown when are still too few people to support one. <http://www.lfpress.com/news/whoslondon/2011/05/12/18137781.html>
- More than three-quarters of Winnipeg's office space is located downtown, among the highest proportions in Canada. <http://www.mbchamber.mb.ca/2009/09/manitoba-hydro-place-officially-opened/>

- Successfully attracting new residents to the downtown raises new issues and problems for cities.
<http://torontocondos.wordpress.com/2009/11/01/maple-leaf-square-condos-towering-skyward-in-toronto/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/17/business/worldbusiness/17vancouver.html>
- OCAD Sharpe Centre <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/19886675>
- The University of Alberta's downtown campus in Edmonton occupies the renovated Hudson's Bay building, constructed in 1894. <http://www.studyincanada.ualberta.ca/en/LifeAtUALberta/Location/Campuses.aspx>
- One of the benefits of new jobs and homes in the downtown is that they often require a smaller municipal investment in infrastructure than comparable growth on the edge of the city.
<http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Infrastructure%20Services/Construction%20and%20Design/Construction%20Services/Project%20Management%20Group/Major%20Projects/Pages/default.aspx>
- Downtown Edmonton http://www.edmontonrealestateweb.com/page_content-4.html
- Downtown Victoria has experienced incredible population growth in recent years.
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- City place Toronto http://www.blogto.com/city/2011/11/a_visual_history_of_the_toronto_railway_lands/
- Vancouver downtown <http://martinbrownphotography.com/blog/?p=1362>
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<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Child+care+playgrounds+larger+condo+units+diversify+downtown/5667529/story.html>
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Halifax

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- Heritage postcard: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28601488@N05/5033527701/>
- Skyline Postcard: <http://www.destructor.de/postcardware.htm>

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- 1749 permanent European presence: <http://www.blupete.com/Hist/NovaScotiaBk1/Part5/Ch04.htm>
- Siege of Louisbourg: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Louisbourg_\(1758\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Louisbourg_(1758))
- Halifax Harbour (bottom left): <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/halifax/images/harbour-3-l.jpg>
- 1917: <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-most-famous-fires-in-history.php/halifax-nova-scotia-1917>
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- 1935-
- 1945: http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/bkhan/global_history_12/Activities/canada_and_the_second_world_war.htm

Context Map

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- The Citadel: <http://lindenshorribletripacrosscanada.blogspot.com/>
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- Province House: http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g154976-d155417-Reviews-Province_House-Halifax_Halifax_Regional_Municipality_Nova_Scotia.html
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- Side walk cafes: <http://pricetags.wordpress.com/2007/10/04/fine-dining-in-halifax/>
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Strategy

- Library under construction: <http://www.mbchamber.mb.ca/2010/12/another-8-million-raised-for-canadian-museum-for-human-rights/>
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Fredericton

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- Postcards: <http://www.weselfredericton.com/PicturesofFredericton.ubr>

Downtown Timeline

- 1878 Land Map of Fredericton:
<http://www.familyheritage.ca/Images/Atlas%20of%20York%20County/p09%20Fredericton%20town%20plat%20right.jpg>
- City Hall, originally built in 1876: <http://www.unbf.ca/clubs/indasso/Photos/Fredericton/FredCityHall.jpg>
- Gothic Cathedral completed 1854:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Christ_Church_Cathedral,_Fredericton,_New_Brunswick_\(2005\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Christ_Church_Cathedral,_Fredericton,_New_Brunswick_(2005).jpg)
- UNB Fredericton Campus
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/48176040@N07/4427406922/>

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- Historic Garrison District: http://www.galenfrysinger.com/new_brunswick_fredericton.htm

Liveability

- Boyce Farmers Market: <http://www.unbf.ca/clubs/indasso/unbfredPhotos.htm>
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Strategy

- Downtown Convention: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/24609104@N06/5864373844/>
- Historic Garrison District: http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/North_America/Canada/Province_of_New_Brunswick/Fredericton-908963/TravelGuide-Fredericton.html

Ottawa

Cover page

- Large Photo - http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Ottawa_Elgin_Street_at_Queen.jpg
- Top Postcard – http://www.stpixels.com/oldblogs/view_blog_67050.html
- Bottom Postcard - <http://www.zazzle.ca/ottawa+postcards?pg=2>

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- 1842 Bytown Plan: <http://web.ncf.ca/es568/mapbytown1842.jpg>
- Rideau Canal: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d6/Rideau_Canal.jpg/800px-Rideau_Canal.jpg
- First City Hall: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:First_City_Hall,_Ottawa.jpg
- Black & White Parliament Buildings 1866: http://popartmachine.com/item/pop_art/LOC+1115193/PARLIAMENT-BUILDINGS,-OTTAWA,-CANADA,-BEFORE-1927-LOT-11454
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- Victoria Island Aboriginal: <http://www.aboriginalexperiences.com/>
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- Bank St.: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b0/Bank_Street_Ottawa.jpg
- Canadian War Museum: <http://www.planetware.com/i/photo/canadian-war-museum-ottawa-cdn1119.jpg>
- National War Memorial: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/88/Confederation_Square_Ottawa.JPG

Toronto

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- Big Picture http://www.blogto.com/city/2010/11/a_visual_history_of_yonge_and_dundas/
- Post Cards 1: <http://thewholeworldatyourhands.blogspot.com/2008/04/toronto-canada.html>
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- Historical pictures: <http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/gallery/ch6/regent.htm>
- After the 'Great Fire': <http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/gallery/ch5/toronto-fire.htm>
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Context Map: Key Assets and Features in Downtown

- Yonge and dundas: <http://digitaljournal.com/blog/1257>
- Queens Park: <http://www.boldts.net/TorA.shtml>
- Metro Toronto Convention Centre: <http://www.boldts.net/TorA.shtml>

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- Yorkville: <http://www.condoquicksearch.com/Yorkville-Bloor-Street-Toronto-condos-lofts-luxury-million-buying-selling-.html>
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Visibility

- Famous view of Toronto Skyline: <http://www.downtowntoronto.ca/>

Maps

- City of Toronto Official Plan Map: http://www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/pdf_chapter1-5/6_downtown_oct2009.pdf

Visionary

- Ontario College of Arts and Design: http://www.architravel.com/architravel/building/The_Sharp_Centre_for_Design
- Artist impression of the exterior of Union Station on Front Street West: <http://dcnonl.com/article/id39272>

Prosperity

- Residential Towers at City place: <http://www.halcrow.com/Our-projects/Project-details/CityPlace-development-Canada/>

Retail Development

- Ryerson's university student centre: http://www.ryerson.ca/news/media/General_Public/20111124_MR_EllisDon_SLC.html

Livability

- Chinatown neighborhood downtown: <http://www.catcancook.com/visiting-toronto/>
- Downtown Yonge Website: <http://www.downtownyonge.com/node/75>

London

Cover Page

- Dundas Street: <http://www.nuwomb.com/car-free-day-dundas-street-closed-in-black-white/>
- Upper post card and lower post card: <http://minnesotamailings.blogspot.com/>

Downtown Timeline

- City of London 19th Century: <http://theabstractionist.wordpress.com/2010/09/page/7/>
- Wellington Square: <http://www.citiplazalondon.com/abo-his.cfm>
- John Labatt Center: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Labatt_Centre
- Central Library: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/7119320@N05/5575524363/>
- City Plaza: <http://www.urbanhdr.com/hdr/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/citiplaza-london-hdr-920.jpg>

- Rebuilt Covent Garden Market: <http://www.cvent.com/en/destination-guide/london-ontario/images-places-of-interest-01.shtml>

Context Map

- John Labatt Center: <http://www.ellisdon.com/what-we-build/culture-and-recreation/?i=6112>
- Covent Garden Market: NOT FOUND
- Central Library: Produced by CUI
- Dundas Street: Produced by CUI
- Citi Plaza: <http://londondailyphoto1.blogspot.com/2009/07/city-fields-citi-plaza.html>
- Metal trees: Produced by CUI
- Victoria Park: <http://stevebaarda.com/london.php?East-London-Downtown-41>

Visionary

- Citi Plaza: Produced by CUI

Prosperity

- View from a top of Residential tower: <http://forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?t=84378&page=66>

Livability

- Outdoor skating rink: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ice_skating_London_Ontario_2010.jpg
- Downtown London: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/compmouse/1815288271/lightbox/>

Strategy

- Covent Market and Square: Produced by CUI

Winnipeg

Cover page

- Large photo: <http://www.vitaminwatercanada.ca/blog/tag/winnipeg>
- Top post card:
- Bottom post card: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2009/apr/28/winnipeg-andrew-lloyd-webber-ben-elton>

Downtown Timeline

- http://www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/image-406-eng.asp?page_id=466
- <http://yourrailwaypictures.com/CPRsteamengines/>
- <http://www.cnpensioners.ca/>
- <http://www.manitoba.ca/iem/mrd/geo/pflood/photo2.html>
- <http://www.manitobaphotos.com/winnipegarea.htm>
- http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3634/3342186623_95db9f14aa.jpg
- http://www.halcrow.com/PageFiles/3941/Canadian-Museum-for-Human-Rights_512.jpg
- <http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20110531/manitoba-moose-future-110531/>

Housing

Bryan Scott: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bryanscott/2635909620/sizes//in/photostream/>

Context Map

- Canadian Museum for Human Rights <http://bahbs.wordpress.com/tag/canadian-museum-for-human-rights/>
- Union station: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Union_Station_Winnipeg.jpg
- Manitoba Hydro: <http://www.journalofcommerce.com/article/id34844>
- Millennium Library: <http://www.lm-architects.com/2008/>
- Red River College: <http://www.chrisd.ca/blog/14666/red-river-college-fall-2009-enrolment/>

Visionary

- MTS centre <http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/blog/index.cfm/2011/6/13/Downtown-Welcomes-NHL-a-new-era>.
- Future Canadian Museum for Human Rights <http://www.mbchamber.mb.ca/2010/12/another-8-million-raised-for-canadian-museum-for-human-rights/>

Strategy

- Red river College <http://www.mbchamber.mb.ca/2010/12/another-8-million-raised-for-canadian-museum-for-human-rights/>
- Central Park <http://www.chrisd.ca/blog/27647/central-park-winnipeg-rejuvenated-grand-opening-waddell-fountain/>

Saskatoon

The majority of photos used in this section were provided by The Partnership and the City of Saskatoon.

Cover Page

- http://www.ibblackstates.com/Saskatoon_condominiums_location.html
- Upper postcard: http://trevorherriot.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html
- Lower postcard: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/9teen87/3163514410/>

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown

- Warehouse district: <http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Infrastructure%20Services/Transportation/TransportationPlanning/Pages/25th%20Street%20Extension.aspx>
- Heritage preservation: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Business_District,_Saskatoon
- TCU Place: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usask/3522866945/>
- Midtown Plaza: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midtown_Plaza_%28Saskatoon%29
- Remain Arts Centre: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:EH2009_Persephone_Theatre.jpg

Edmonton

Cover Page

- Top postcard: <http://aileengratitudejournal.blogspot.com/2011/05/my-postcards-collection.html>
- Bottom postcard:

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown

- Heritage Preservation: <http://ca.epodunk.com/profiles/alberta/edmonton/2000685.html>

- Parking lots:
- The Alberta Legislature: http://www.davetaylormla.com/whats_new.html
- Jasper Avenue:
 - (Sobey's Picture) <http://www.foodnetwork.ca/Pages/Community/BlogPost.aspx?id=22544>
 - Red car 104th Street Promenade <http://www.onlyherethereforthefood.ca/2011/08/09/why-we-love-living-downtown/>
 - Market crowd 104th Street Promenade <http://www.onlyherethereforthefood.ca/2010/09/25/city-market-report-week-20/>
- West Edmonton Mall Postcard: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/striderv/2740022319/>
- EPCOR Building: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=b0601ec1-6379-4e9a-bea1-92e5a717d3a1&k=35247>
- City Hall: <http://www.jasonblower.com/>
- Art Gallery of Alberta: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mastermaq/3846731788/>
- U of A Enterprise Square: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=9a57698c-ea66-4f74-9e60-58da2511447a&k=50073>
- Potential LRT: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/local/story.html?id=f4c54414-8867-46ed-9caa-4f9ebc4ec663&k=71080>
- Louise McKinney Park: http://photos.edmonton.ca/Parks/Louise-McKinney-Park/10705263_5B9npb/1/760152391_rfZjz#760152391_rfZjz

Visibility

- Top picture: http://www.edmonton.ca/attractions_recreation/attractions/sir-winston-churchill-square.aspx
- Smaller picture: <http://eventful.com/edmonton/events/edmonton-latin-festival-/E0-001-031548311-9@2010081411>

Unity

- <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/27059080>

Prosperity

- Educational development: <http://inhabitat.com/grant-macewan-university-science-center/>
- Epcor tower: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=b0601ec1-6379-4e9a-bea1-92e5a717d3a1&k=35247>

Livability

- Left picture: <http://www.edmontondowntown.com/content.asp?ID=23>
- Right picture: http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/cycling_walking/walking-in-edmonton.aspx

Vancouver

Cover Page

- Large Photo: <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/city-guides/vancouver-canada/>
- Top Postcard: <http://vancouvervancouvervancouver.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Vancouver-Vancouver-Postcard.jpg>
- Bottom Post Card: <http://www.ehabweb.net/images/DSC00786pc.jpg>

Downtown Timeline

- New Westminster: <http://thependent.ca/news-and-opinion/this-day-in-vancouver/this-day-in-vancouver-feb-14th/>
- Lions Gate Bridge: http://www.bphod.com/2009_09_01_archive.html
- First inter urban rail line opens in Vancouver: <http://regardingplace.com/?p=1957>
- Recommended Freeway Plan: <http://voony.wordpress.com/2010/03/21/the-case-for-rapid-transit-in-1970/>
- Town of Granville: http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/heritage/walks/w_gt_in.htm
- Aerial View of Down Town Vancouver:
<http://www.probertencyclopaedia.com/photolib/maps/Map%20of%20Vancouver%20Harbour%201966.htm>
- View of Vancouver Harbor: <http://blog.adhack.com/2010/01/07/vancouver-2010-winter-olympics-watch-and-adhack/>
- First Sky Train 1986: <http://www.art.com/products/p14396152-sa-i2972581/doug-mckinlay-the-vancouver-skytrain-vancouver-british-columbia-canada.htm>
- Sky Train Connecting Airport to downtown: <http://vibrantvictoria.ca/local-news/translink-offers-victorias-ferry-foot-passengers-little-time-savings-with-new-skytrain/>
- West Coast Express: http://trainoftheweek.blogspot.com/2010_01_01_archive.html

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown

- Vancouver Art Gallery: <http://www.clubvibes.com/vancouver/other/vancouver-art-gallery.html>
- Waterfront Station: <http://wetravelworld.com/2009/09/06/historic-gastown-p26039/>
- Sea bus: <http://www.viator.com/photos/Vancouver/Grouse-Mountain/d616-937/998759>
- Canada Place: <http://gcaptain.com/ships-in-concrete-best-maritime-inspired-architecture?983>
- Harbour Centre and the Vancouver Lookout: <http://www.1st-vancouver.com/Harbour-Centre-Tower.html>
- Vancouver Central Library: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ecstaticist/2690791720/> (ecstaticist)
- Granville Entertainment District: http://www.worldofstock.com/stock_photos/TAW4956.php
- Rogers Arena:
<http://rogersarena.rockandbus.com/content/images/rockandbus/Venues/RogersArena/primary.jpg>
- Granville Island: <http://www.seegranvilleisland.com/sm1971-02a.jpg>
- Stanley Park: http://vancouver.ca/parks/news/download/images/stanley/stanley_park_entrance_sign.jpg
- Yaletown: <http://vinceklassen.com/files/2011/06/yaletown1.jpg>

Visionary

- Vancouver's Downtown Convention Center: <http://superforest.org/tag/6-acre-living-roof/>

Prosperity

- Construction of the Olympic Village: <http://www.canadianrealestatemagazine.ca/news/item/705-tightening-vancouver-office-market-spurring-more-downtown-development>
- Vancouver's Cruise Ship Facilities:
http://images.businessweek.com/ss/07/04/0406_liveable_cities/source/4.htm

Livability

- Granville Entertainment District: <http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2010/01/first-look-the-new-granville-street/>

Victoria

Cover Page

- Red Second postcard: <http://www.canadiandesignresource.ca/officialgallery/category/souvenirs/page/11/>

Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown

- Chinatown: <http://www.victoriabcca.com/travel/page4.php>
- Royal British Columbia Museum: http://www.victoriabcca.com/reviews/victoria_inner_harbour_causway/inner_harbour_review.php
- British Columbia Legislature: provided by Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Maritime Museum of BC: <http://mmbc.bc.ca/about-2/>
- Market Square BC: http://www.infovictoria.com/victoria_hotels.php
- Victoria Conference Centre: <http://www.ifco2011.com/>
- Old Town Victoria: <http://www.picable.com/Architecture/Buildings/Old-Town-Victoria.59323>
- Inner Harbour Victoria: <http://kait-richardson.blogspot.com/>
- Empress Hotel: <http://www.rawdonsbar.com/charliegalleries/PAC%20NW%202003/pages/Empress%20Hotel%20Victoria%20BC.htm>
- Centennial Square: http://www.exploreancouverisland.com/China_Town_Victoria_BC_Canada.htm
- Beacon Hill Park: http://www.royaltowers.com/victoria/attractions/beacon_hill_park.htm
- Bay Centre: provided by Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Bastion Square: <http://www.eatdrinkvictoria.com/2968/darcys-pub/>
- Craigdarroch Castle: http://www.eaglewingtours.com/014_Planyourtript/073_Attractionsin.html

Downtown Timeline

- Craigdarroch castle http://www.oaklanevictoria.com/images/craigdarroch_castle.jpg
- Butchart Gardens <http://www.destination360.com/north-america/canada/british-columbia/victoria/butchart-gardens>
- Image of the city 1862 <http://www.cariboogoldrush.com/intro2.htm>
- Miners lining up for licenses in Victoria <http://www.cariboogoldrush.com/intro1.htm>
- Floating homes: <http://en.bestpicturesof.com/victoria%20float%20homes>
- Bay Centre: http://cache.virtualtourist.com/15/2714733-Bay_Centre_Victoria.jpg
- University of Victoria: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-r1Jmy0FWaco/TZ9yH0PFK8I/AAAAAAAAA8/czDYaTX-giU/s1600/university-of-victoria.jpg>
- Clipper Ferry: http://www.photo-transport.co.uk/ferries/canada/Victoria_Clipper.jpg
- Last Streetcar: http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/cgi-bin/www2i/visual/img_med/dir_70/a_08833.gif
- Downtown Core Area Plan: <http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/graphics/downtown-core-area-plan-urban-structure.jpg>

Visibility

- Victoria Harbour: provided by Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Racket Club Ice Skating: provided by Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Clean team: provided by Downtown Victoria Business Association

Visionary

- Downtown Victoria: http://www.flickrriver.com/groups/vic_buildingboom/pool/interesting/
- Via line, Old Town Victoria: http://www.flickrriver.com/groups/vic_buildingboom/pool/interesting/

Prosperity

- The Atrium Downtown Victoria: http://www.timescolonist.com/business/Commercial+Building+Awards+recognize+design+function/5794920/story.html?cid=megadrop_story
- J Street Bridge: <http://vibrantvictoria.ca/articles/johnson-street-bridge-project-retrospective-part-1-of-2/>
- Water taxi: <http://victoriaharbourferry.com/2011/05/h2o-taxi-victoria-harbour/>
- V Harbour ferry: <http://www.ddtvl.com/Victoria.htm>

Best Practice

- 1st Chicago Urban Farm image: <http://inhabitat.com/detroits-urban-agriculture-movement-could-help-green-the-city/>
- 2nd Chicago Urban Farm image: <http://www.cityfarmer.info/category/urban-farm/>
- Barcelona solar panel image and info: <http://sustainablecities.dk/en/city-projects/cases/barcelona-leader-in-solar-energy>
- Fredericton riverfront trail: <http://www.fredericton.ca/en/recreation/TrailNorthRiverfront.asp>
- Rideau Canal image: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2010/02/27/ottawa-rideau.html>
- Quebec City winter carnival: <http://www.cjad.com/Contests/Register.aspx?ContestID=122641>
- Jan Gehl quote image: <http://livetwincities.blogspot.com/2008/01/cultivating-cold.html>
- Toronto waterfront vision: <http://blog.mycondomylife.com/cityzen-developments/2011/11/pier-27-latest-update-from-torontos-waterfront.html>
- Affordable housing in Amsterdam image: Saskatoon Public Spaces Report
- New Development in Downtown Halifax image: <http://spacingatlantic.ca/2009/12/08/hrmbydesign-part-ii-revitalising-downtown/>
- Halifax's sidewalk cafes image: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-utsp-sidewalkcafes-254.htm>
- Fenwick Tower revitalization: <http://www.metronews.ca/ArticlePrint/374338?language=en>
- Citi Plaza: <http://allthingsarcheng.blogspot.com/2011/06/ldn.html>
- Zipcar image: <http://www.dailydealtips.com/toronto/30-for-a-one-year-car-sharing-membership-to-zipcar-125-value/>
- Bixi image: <http://www.tourisme-montreal.org/blog/gay-life/bixi-montreals-public-bike-system/>
- Vancouver bike lanes image: <http://planningpool.com/2011/01/transportation/bike-bike-revolution/>
- San Fran SP image: <http://www.engadget.com/2010/08/07/san-francisco-rolls-out-new-smart-parking-meters-with-demand-re/>
- Woodward's Building image: <http://citifund.com/recent-projects/condo-construction>

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