

South Downtown revitalization in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: A review and reconsideration

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ABSTRACT

The physical redevelopment of Canadian downtown cores has been seen as a primary issue in economically and socially revitalizing urban areas. In the case of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the City's South Downtown area is in need of such rejuvenation. In 2004 redevelopment plans for the area are underway; Saskatoon has set out a proposal to redevelop both its riverfront area and adjacent South Downtown. In order to accomplish the goal of a revitalized South Downtown, the authors of a successful redevelopment proposal must first identify a suitable user population for the area, namely the population of Saskatoon in its entirety, including the City's disadvantaged central neighbourhood residents. The purpose of this thesis is to define the socio-economic traits of this potential user population for Saskatoon's South Downtown in order to recommend facilities and services that should be included in the redevelopment effort.

Census data for the fifty-one census tracts that comprise the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon are used to define the social and economic characteristics of this user population. After reviewing the population's socio-economic situations, as well as the social and business organizations that are currently located in the area, recommendations regarding appropriate, requisite facilities and services can be ascertained. These recommendations could then be implemented in the undertakings currently transpiring in Saskatoon's South Downtown.

Along with defining the socio-economic character of the user population, this study also examines past redevelopment proposals for Saskatoon's South Downtown area in an attempt to understand the historical context of the area. The three main past plans for the South Downtown area include: The Meewasin Valley Project (also known as Moriyama's 100 Year Plan), the Mayor's Task Force Report, and Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan. All of these failed attempts share many common design traits, culminating in the general goal to develop the area into a commercial, residential and recreational area that would cater to the upper-class residents of the city as well as higher-income tourists and visitors to the area. While it must not be assumed that plans which exclude lower-income populations are inherently wrong and destined to be unsuccessful, by targeting such an exclusive population as the primary users of a South Downtown redevelopment, the authors of the previous plans had inadvertently sought to develop an elite district of Saskatoon, financially inaccessible to a vast majority of the city's population.

Defining the socio-economic traits of a user population that is comprised of all Saskatonians, and implementing facilities and services that cater to them, would result in an area that is not discriminating; all peoples regardless of life situation or neighbourhood of residence would be able to enjoy an interesting and revitalized South Downtown area of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE	i	
ABSTRACT	ii	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii	
LIST OF FIGURES	vi	
LIST OF TABLES	vii	
CHAPTER ONE	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Background: The growth and decline of the Canadian city	1
1.2	The revitalization of urban areas	4
1.3	Saskatoon's South Downtown: Past and present	5
1.4	Statement of problem	8
1.5	Research question and study objectives	10
1.6	Thesis structure	11
1.7	Note to the reader	12
CHAPTER TWO	A LITERATURE REVIEW OF PAST AND PRESENT ISSUES IN CANADIAN PLANNING	
2.1	Urban renewal	14
2.2	Gentrification	17
2.3	Urban renewal and gentrification in current planning practice	18
2.4	City size and potential for redevelopment	20
2.5	The urban revitalization experience in Winnipeg	23
2.5.1	Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative	23
2.5.2	Criticisms of the Core Area Initiative	29
2.5.3	Conclusions of the Core Area Initiative	32
2.6	Criticisms of Winnipeg's CAI based on urban change theory	34
2.7	Chapter summation	36
CHAPTER THREE	THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF SASKATOON	
3.1	Age demographics for the central neighbourhoods and the City of Saskatoon	39
3.2	The economic composition of Saskatoon's central neighbourhoods	42
3.3	Educational attainment and employment/unemployment rates	44
3.4	Households in the central neighbourhoods and City of Saskatoon	48
3.5	Aboriginal and visible minority populations residing in the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon	50
3.6	Assessing central neighbourhood need: Facilities and services located in Riversdale	53

CHAPTER FOUR REVITALIZATION ATTEMPTS IN SASKATOON'S SOUTH DOWNTOWN

4.1 The history of Saskatoon and its South Downtown	60
4.2 Riversdale and Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods	62
4.3 Past attempts at South Downtown revitalization	66
4.3.1 The Meewasin Valley Project	66
4.3.2 The Mayor's Task Force Report	72
4.3.3 Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan	77
4.4 Criticisms of the past failed South Downtown proposals	82
4.5 The Expression of Interest Submissions	85
4.6 Chapter summation	86

CHAPTER FIVE THE CURRENT REVITALIZATION PROPOSAL FOR THE RIVERBANK AND SASKATOON'S SOUTH DOWNTOWN

5.1 The riverbank development project in the South Downtown area	88
5.2 Criticisms of the riverbank development project	91
5.3 The future of the Gathercole Centre is decided	92
5.4 The redevelopment plan for the remainder of the South Downtown	94
5.4.1 Planning principles and key concepts guiding the South Downtown redevelopment	100
5.4.2 Public opinion of the South Downtown concept plan	103
5.5 Urban renewal and gentrification issues in the context of the South Downtown revitalization proposal	104
5.6 Chapter summation	106

CHAPTER SIX RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings	107
6.2 Recommendations for a Saskatonian-friendly South Downtown area	109
6.3 Furthering the theoretical discussion	113
6.3.1 Urban renewal and gentrification	113
6.3.2 Harvey's Circuits of Capital	116
6.3.3 Furthering the theoretical discussion: Conclusion	117
6.4 Conceptual and methodological implications of the study	117
6.5 Limitations of the study	118
6.6 Conclusion	120

REFERENCES	123
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LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1	Blocks 145 & 146 within the context of the Central Business District of Saskatoon	6
FIGURE 2	The physical concept plan for Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative	24
FIGURE 3	The central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown	40
FIGURE 4	Organizations located in the census tract of Riversdale by type	55
FIGURE 5	Residential development precincts in Saskatoon	59
FIGURE 6	Original core neighbourhoods and corresponding census tracts	65
FIGURE 7	The Meewasin Valley Project's Links and Nodes	68
FIGURE 8	The Winter Garden concept of the Meewasin Valley Project	70
FIGURE 9	Princeton Development's Master Plan for the South Downtown	78
FIGURE 10	Conceptual plan of the riverbank development in the South Downtown	90
FIGURE 11	Proposed road extensions – Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent	93
FIGURE 12	Modified conceptual drawing showing Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent road extensions curving around the Gathercole Centre	95
FIGURE 13A	Western portion of the current South Downtown redevelopment	97
FIGURE 13B	Eastern portion of the current South Downtown redevelopment Proposal	98

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1	Population characteristics for the census metropolitan area and the central neighbourhoods	41
TABLE 2	Income characteristics for Saskatoon, the central neighbourhoods and the remaining census tracts	43
TABLE 3	Educational attainment for persons aged twenty and older for the CMA of Saskatoon, the central neighbourhoods and the remaining census tracts	45
TABLE 4	Labour force activity by age groups and gender for the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon and the central neighbourhoods	47
TABLE 5	Household characteristics for the central neighbourhoods, remaining census tracts and the CMA of Saskatoon	49
TABLE 6	Aboriginal and visible minority populations in the central neighbourhoods and the CMA of Saskatoon	51

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The redevelopment and revitalization of downtown urban areas in Canada's largest cities is an issue that has been at the forefront of the country's planning concerns during the last two decades. Revitalization plans to improve unsightly areas in and around urban downtowns stimulates and improves economic activity, and creates a safer and more vibrant environment; the general goal is the creation of lively areas of mixed-use development, combining retail/commercial activities with residential, entertainment and green space elements. Already, Canadian cities such as Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver have implemented revitalization attempts in their downtown and inner city areas with varying degrees of success. Saskatoon has not been as fortunate; its South Downtown has been a derelict area for the past eighty years, and despite numerous efforts at its revitalization, no plan has made the transition from drawing board to implementation.

1.1 Background: The growth and decline of the Canadian City

The central business district of the Canadian city is the result of a dynamic continuum of development stretching over the course of several decades. This growth, relatively constant aside from two stagnant periods, 1929-33 and 1940-45, has seen the full life cycle of the city — the establishment of the early industrial city at the turn of the

twentieth century, expansion of the city's boundaries, and transformation into the post World War II industrial city (Hodge 1998: 52). Most central cities in Canada were built-up by the mid-twentieth century leading to a refocusing of new development in the suburbs, the only areas where large tracts of land were still available for growth. The 1950s witnessed rapid expansion away from the city centre and into suburbia; nearly all governmental and private sector investments made at this time were focused on the burgeoning suburbs. Urban areas became the less attractive alternative, resulting in substantial out-migration of residents and job opportunities to the suburban areas (Beauregard 1990). The neglect experienced by Canadian urban centres produced negative outcomes in those areas; urban residential neighbourhoods that had been established at the first half of the twentieth century experienced a demographic, as well as economic shift as middle-class populations left the ageing built environment for the more affluent suburbs (Ley 1993: 228). Vast neighbourhoods consisting of low-density suburban housing were constructed, and public expenditures were made in order to implement necessary infrastructure requirements such as roads, utility services, and schools in these new areas (Kiernan 1990: 68). Expansion to the suburbs in Winnipeg began in the 1960s with unparalleled development of low-density dwellings; for two decades the majority of the city's growth occurred in the suburbs, while the percentage of population living in the inner city remained at a constant twenty percent over the same period (Distacio 2003; The Canadian Architect 1995). The middle-class retreat to the suburbs resulted in increasing concentrations of the less fortunate in urban areas — the poor, the elderly, aboriginals and other disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, as well as single-parent families, those addicted to drugs and/or alcohol, and lone-person

households. The remaining population also had fewer marketable skills, were less educated and earned lower incomes than the previous inhabitants (Ley 1988). These trends are evidenced in western Canadian cities; Distacio (2003) states that suburbanization brought about a major shift in the demographic profile of the Winnipeg's inner city — “deepening” the concentration of lone-person households, single-parent families, senior citizens and aboriginals. Along with the out-migration of residents, Canadian cities also lost thousands of white- and blue-collar jobs as offices, plants and factories moved to the suburbs where there was inexpensive and abundant property for the construction of new, modern facilities. Urban areas lost much of their retail market share to the new suburban shopping centres and big box chain stores that were located on the periphery of the city. Economic activities that had resisted migration to the suburbs and remained in the inner city were a small number of retail stores and manufacturing plants, however, they “were neither the scale nor type to...bring about economic growth” (Beauregard 1990). These economic losses were disastrous to urban areas; they eroded the city's economic base, and this, coupled with the enormous costs of replacing aged and obsolete infrastructure, as well as the costs associated with providing for the remaining dependant population, had obvious negative affects on the physical environment (Kiernan 1990: 69; Levy 1988: 97). The twentieth century had started with the birth of the Canadian city; it ended with the large-scale deterioration of the city's heart — the downtown core.

1.2 The revitalization of urban areas

Revitalization of inner cities and downtown areas is a dominant urban planning issue in all major Canadian cities in recent years; the impetus for this redevelopment trend stems from the above-mentioned decline experienced by urban areas and the shift to suburban development in the mid-twentieth century. The late 1970s witnessed the convergence of the problems faced by the city and the substantial opportunities they presented for urban revitalization. The push for regeneration of the derelict urban environment was further encouraged by the changing attitudes and demographics of individuals in the middle- and upper-income groups. Earning double salaries, postponing parenthood, and wanting fewer children, these groups were also frustrated with increased commuting times and concerned about the sustainability and environmental impacts of suburban sprawl (Kiernan 1990: 69). By the early 1980s certain segments of the middle- and upper-income groups, namely childless professional couples, as well as some elderly singles and couples, once again began to regard the downtown as a viable residential option.

This 'return-to-the-city' trend was accompanied by a growing market demand for urban housing, as well as a demand for associated mixed-use developments as economic activities also began moving back to the city. This was a cause for concern for planners and politicians; there was a lack of feasible urban space needed to complete the projects. Inner-city residential neighbourhoods were not an option for redevelopment; citizen-run neighbourhood preservation campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s still resonated a decade or so later; these neighbourhoods staunchly resisted redevelopment plans. As such, the first major redevelopments in Canadian urban areas

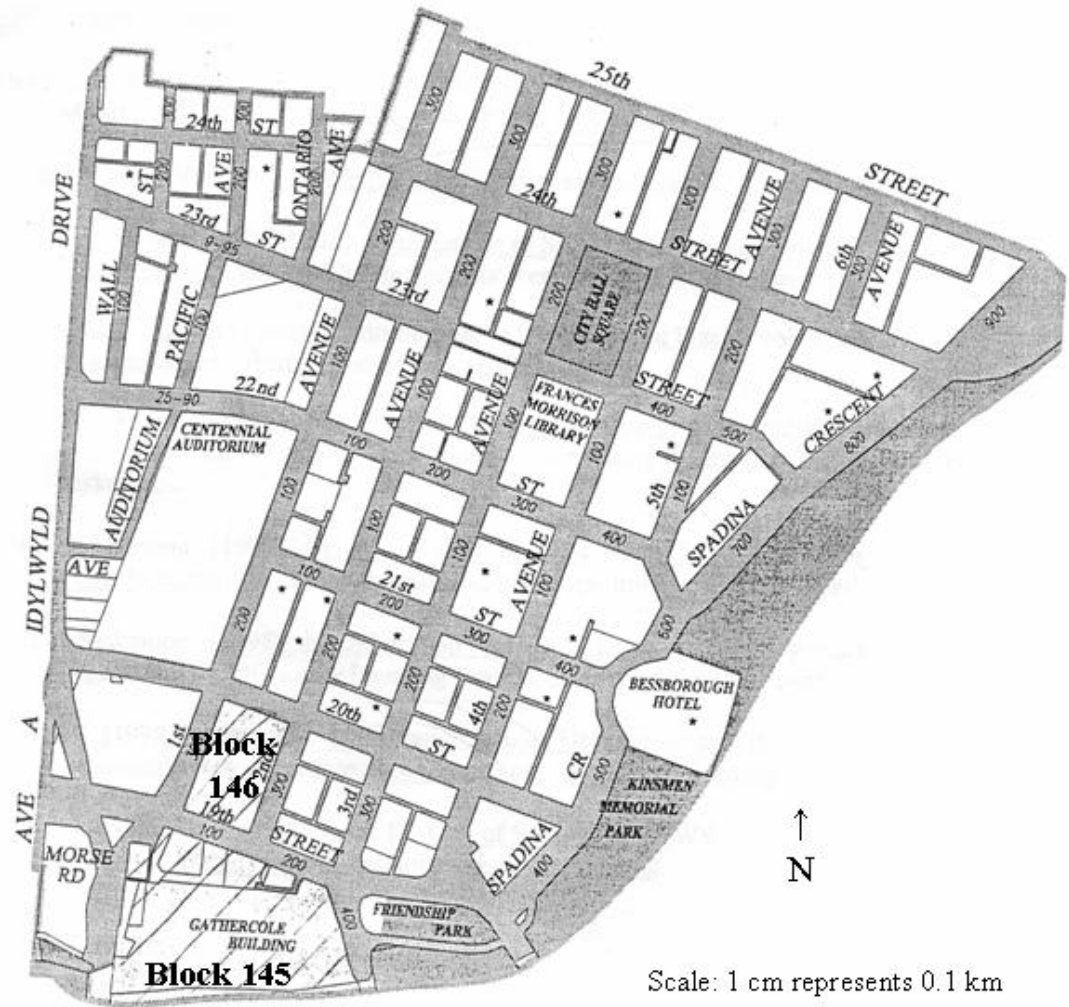
transpired on obsolete industrial land (Kiernan 1990: 71). Situated in the dilapidated ‘zone of discard’ on the periphery of the central business district along urban waterfronts, this land was largely comprised of sizeable abandoned warehouses and closed manufacturing facilities. The urban waterfront areas, located on the coasts of both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, as well as the waterways of inland rivers and lakes, were ripe for redevelopment (Tunbridge 1986). These lands had once been crucial to the transportation of goods during the industrial age but had since been abandoned when the technology of the port facilities became obsolete; any industries that had remained soon left with the decentralization trend of the 1950s (Sieber 1991). By redeveloping these waterfront areas two goals were accomplished with one action – derelict, unsightly industrial buildings were removed and a more vital urban environment was created.

With the waterfront development trend occurring in the early 1980s, inner city areas were once again the *en vogue* place to be; “[t]he going out of the city in the 1960s and 1970s has turned into the outgoing city of the 1980s and 1990s” (Burgers 1995: 147). This swing of interest and investment away from suburbia to urban matters and development was the beginning of contemporary revitalization strategies (Reid 1991: 11).

1.3 Saskatoon’s South Downtown: Past and present

Undoubtedly, Blocks 145 and 146 (Figure 1) of Saskatoon’s South Downtown are prime candidates for urban revitalization strategies. As early as the 1930s the need to revitalize the area was recognized; the Saskatoon Technical Collegiate (later known

Figure 1: Blocks 145 & 146 within the context of the Central Business District of Saskatoon



Source: City of Saskatoon 1998

as the Gathercole Centre), the Broadway Bridge and the Saskatoon Arena were all constructed as a means to revive the area. The projects, however, did not achieve the goal. It was another fifty years before the location again saw new construction; a seniors' apartment complex, Clinkskill Manor, was built on the corner of the property in the 1980s. During that same time, some structures such as Clinkskill House (the home of Saskatoon's first mayor) and the Saskatoon Arena were torn down, resulting in a gravel parking lot; more recently, the Gathercole Centre that stood on the site has also been demolished.

A successful revitalization plan for the South Downtown must first define a suitable user population for the redeveloped area. It is this author's belief that an appropriate user population would be all residents of Saskatoon, including a subset of the population frequently forgotten, the residents of lower-income neighbourhoods in close proximity to the location in question. Low incomes, high unemployment rates, high proportions of single mothers and female-headed households, and low educational attainment are the social and economic attributes of the residential population in the central neighbourhoods that surround the South Downtown; these neighbourhoods also have a high percentage of aboriginal population and visible minority immigrants. Data gathered by Statistics Canada for the 2001 Census can aid in understanding the social and economic compositions of these six central neighbourhoods as well as Saskatoon's forty-five other census tracts. Awareness of the economic and social characteristics of all neighbourhoods, and an appropriate revitalization proposal complete with facilities and services designed to fit the needs of the residents of Saskatoon as a whole, will

result in a redevelopment scheme that is suitable and appropriate, transforming the South Downtown into a vibrant and liveable area of Saskatoon.

Saskatoon's City Council has recognized the importance of the South Downtown and the tremendous opportunity that it presents: due to its location between the city centre and the South Saskatchewan River, the South Downtown has the potential to strengthen the image of Saskatoon by becoming a strong link between the commercial core and the river (City of Saskatoon 1997). As such, the City began a revitalization attempt in early 2003; the project is simply called *South Downtown*. It includes a riverbank development component as well as a comprehensive concept plan for the South Downtown. The plan encompasses a larger area than the previous plans; while all past proposals had included only Blocks 145 and 146, the *South Downtown* plan includes Block 145 and several blocks in neighbouring Riversdale. The new plan details specific residential, commercial and recreational land uses, and dictates their locations and boundaries within the redevelopment site. As it is still in its infancy stage, the success or failure of the *South Downtown* plan in revitalizing the area remains to be seen.

1.4 Statement of problem

It should be recognized that revitalization is not only limited to improvement of the physical built environment, it has social implications as well. The revitalization of an inner city area produces social status upgrading as the redevelopment site is inhabited by residents of higher income groups. Davies and Murdie (1993: 74) have recognized this increase in the economic status of an inner city neighbourhood as a

direct result of revitalization; Ley (1988) has studied social status change in Canadian inner cities. The influx of higher-income groups then leads to the transformation of local retailing; for example, the infiltration of the Kitsilano area of Vancouver by higher income households significantly transformed the retail character along the area's principle shopping street, Fourth Avenue (Ley 1993: 231). Previously, the neighbourhoods surrounding Fourth Avenue had been predominantly lower-income and, as such, the local vendors offered goods and services (mainly groceries and household items) that corresponded to the needs of the population. The higher rents to be gleaned after the revitalization of the area forced out the previous retail tenants and attracted high-end clothing stores, specialty shops and expensive restaurants; in essence, commercial venues that were non-existent, and inappropriate, in the area before the social status upgrading had occurred. Regardless of the care taken to include residents of inner city neighbourhoods in close proximity to a downtown redevelopment project, the influx of higher-income groups into the revitalized area will have an impact on lower-income residents due to the above-mentioned transformation of residential and retail elements.

There has been much research conducted with regards to urban revitalization issues in general (Beauregard 1990; Bourne and Ley 1993; Bunting and Filion 1988, 2001; Hodge 1998; Ley 1996; Tunbridge 1986, 1992), as well as specific examples of completed revitalization projects (often of a judgemental nature) (Cameron 2003; Distacio 2003; Dobson 1989; Everitt and Ramsey 2002; Gerecke 1990, 1991; Gerecke and Reid 1990; Kiernan 1987, 1990; Park 1999; Riehl 2003). And while O'Hara (2001) has noted that studies should take into consideration an area's social and

physical context, no studies specifically customizing a redevelopment proposal based on potential user population have been conducted. In light of this gap, the aims of this study are two-fold. The first aim is to determine the socio-economic characteristics of an appropriate potential user population for the City of Saskatoon's South Downtown redevelopment proposal. The second aim is to recommend facilities and services that must be included in the revitalization project in order for the revitalizing area to be accessible and appropriate for every member of the user population.

1.5 Research question and study objectives

The research question in this study is: **What facilities and services should be included in a redevelopment proposal for Saskatoon's South Downtown based on the socio-economic traits of its user population?** The guiding hypothesis is that past failed proposals for the South Downtown targeted an unsuitable user population and overlooked the lower income residents of nearby central neighbourhoods. It is assumed that an appropriate user population of Saskatoon's South Downtown is comprised of all residents of Saskatoon.

To answer the research question, the research objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the socio-economic characteristics of all Saskatoon residents as they comprise the South Downtown's user population,
2. To determine facilities and services that must be included in the South Downtown's current revitalization proposal, given the socio-economic characteristics of the user population.

In order to answer the research question, these objectives are undertaken by reviewing and analyzing socio-economic data for the fifty-one census tracts of Saskatoon, and compiling a list of business and social organizations currently located in the Riversdale neighbourhood. The past failed proposals are reviewed in order to learn from their mistakes, and finally, the present proposal for the area is examined and compared against the results of the facilities and services recommendations based on the user population's socio-economic characteristics.

1.6 Thesis structure

In essence, this thesis defines the socio-economic traits of an appropriate user population for Saskatoon's South Downtown redevelopment site in an attempt to recommend appropriate facilities and services so as to create a Saskatonian-friendly South Downtown area. Chapter Two of the thesis contains a literature review of major issues in urban geography, the potential for revitalization given city population size, a specific case of urban revitalization in another mid-sized western Canadian city, and the theoretical underpinnings of urban change. Chapter Three is the basis for defining traits of the user population of Saskatoon's South Downtown. Census data provided by Statistics Canada is analyzed to determine the socio-economic characteristics of the population in the City's fifty-one census tracts. As well, business and social organizations that are presently located in the central neighbourhood of Riversdale are studied so as to determine the presence or lack of facilities and services located directly adjacent to the South Downtown redevelopment site.

Chapter Four contains a review of the main attempts at revitalizing Saskatoon's South Downtown. The physical forms of elements in the failed plans are discussed, as well as the intended uses. Shortcomings of the plans are also addressed. Chapter Five outlines the present proposal for both the adjacent riverbank site and the South Downtown area which, as of late 2004, is in the early stages of implementation. Due to the historical, aesthetic, and functional importance of the area, there has been much controversy regarding ideas for the site; this chapter also covers these matters, and well as other topics that relate to Saskatoon's South Downtown.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, provides the author's recommendations pertaining to the inclusion of facilities and services into the South Downtown revitalization plan. These recommendations are based on the socio-economic characteristics of the residents of Saskatoon, including the residents of the central neighbourhoods surrounding the site. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of contributions of the thesis, limitations of the study and, lastly, implications of the research.

1.7 Note to the reader

For the purposes of this study, the term *revitalization* must be defined. According to Nelson, *revitalization* has traditionally conveyed some form of a "back-to-the-city" movement; a regained popularity of urban areas as fashionable places to live, work and/or play (1988: 7). However, she argues that this narrow definition is incomplete, as *revitalization* undoubtedly encompasses aspects pertaining to the improvement of economic conditions of the city. While the author of this study

recognizes and acknowledges the various economic elements of the revitalization process, for this study *revitalization* is defined as a verb: tangible action performed on the built environment for the purpose of creating a vital city. Described in this way, the term *vitality* must also then be clarified — urban vitality is the vibrancy and liveliness that is displayed in an urban centre; how busy the city is at different times and in different locations within its boundaries (Ravenscroft, Reeves and Rowley 2000). In summary, the term *revitalization* as used throughout this thesis is meant to describe physical upgrading of the built environment for the purpose of producing a lively and vital space, able to support a wide range of functions and activities for the enjoyment of its user population.

CHAPTER 2: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF PAST AND PRESENT ISSUES IN CANADIAN PLANNING

A review of the events and experiences concerning the built environment in inner cities is crucial to any relevant study on Canadian urban revitalization. Not only does a study of past urban revitalization issues provide insight into the unique context of Canadian planning, it also provides information on current matters that are affecting our cities as, once again, major issues from the past are pervading current planning practices. This chapter aims to provide a broad base of literature on historical issues in Canadian planning, as well as present-day concerns and criticisms involving revitalization of metropolitan inner cities areas; a specific case study is also included, as is a section on a specific theoretical viewpoint of urban change.

2.1 Urban renewal

Although brimming with good intentions and motivated by hope and anticipation, attempts at improving the blighted physical environment have, in the past, not been successful. Examples of this are the urban renewal projects instigated by the Canadian government in the mid-twentieth century. Due to the rising concerns in the 1930s and 1940s over the slum housing problems in Canada's largest cities, the government of Canada amended the National Housing Act in 1944 in order to allow for slum clearance; this began the first of two marked phases (1944-1964 and 1964-1973)

of urban renewal in Canada (Smith and Moore 1993: 358). Urban renewal projects began innocently enough, with a genuine interest in providing better housing conditions for the working class populations of urban areas through the construction of housing projects; the first urban renewal project was approved by Toronto's voters in 1946 and involved the city's largest working-class slum. Preconditions that brought about the project included the concern for the citizens of the area and the deplorable conditions under which they had to live – housing conditions on the site before implementation of the project were found to be sub-standard; most were below a minimum level of amenities, lacking adequate heating and ventilation systems, proper drainage and toilet facilities and private household cooking facilities. These poor conditions were coupled with higher-than-average residential densities. In 1947 the city of Toronto created a Housing Authority in order to take charge of this urban renewal effort, which included both the demolition of the current structures on the property as well as the construction of the planned housing project (Holdsworth 1993: 48).

The resultant Regent Park North was the largest public housing project ever completed in Canada; it was an experimentation of then-current planning and architectural design trends. Immediately after completion, the Regent Park North housing project was hailed a milestone towards urban revitalization and social reform; indeed, this first project resulted in modern, albeit, modest accommodation and had proceeded with minimum disruption to the residents. Subsequent urban renewal projects were “less sensitively pursued” by the planning professionals and politicians of the day (Lemon 1993: 272). Indeed, there was a distinct shift in focus of the projects; instead of the provision of housing for working-class families, the projects were now

intended for welfare recipients. An optimistic opinion at the time was that these urban renewal projects could eradicate the social problems that accompanied the slum areas; bulldozing inner city neighbourhoods was seen as way of obliterating crime, vandalism, delinquency and relaxed morals.

In the 1950s urban renewal projects came under the leadership of the Central (now Canada) Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and between 1954 and 1964, fifty studies were conducted by the agency prompting the initiation of twenty-one urban renewal projects spanning coast to coast (Smith and Moore 1993: 358). Aside from Regent Park North, other urban residential neighbourhoods in Toronto were systematically redeveloped; Moss Park, Alexandra Park and Don Mount were designated slums areas, bulldozed and redeveloped into public housing (Sewell 1993: 154). The implementation of Regent Park North had experienced relatively no opposition by the site's original tenants in 1947; however, this was not the case for the later renewal proposals. Public protests by the residents of targeted areas occurred at City Hall; the disappearance of their 'slums' meant replacement with housing projects that had been described as "forbidding, multiple-unit monoliths... lacking humanity, scale, and any sense of community" (Diamondstein 1978: 22). The protestors did not prevail; construction of all three projects was finished before the end of the 1960s. In some instances the residents of the razed area were re-housed in a public housing project on the same site as their previous dwellings (such as the Regent Park North project), other times the value of the cleared land dictated a new use – as a commercial, not residential, site (Hodge 1998: 146). When residents were not re-housed on the same property the results were often devastating to the tenants; friends and neighbours

were separated, connections were severed, the community was split up and dispersed throughout the city.

Urban renewal was not successful in its attempts at reforming the blighted physical environment and providing accommodation for lower-income groups; indeed, it is speculated that more housing units, particularly low-cost units, were destroyed than were created (Lemon 1993: 272). After funding for new planning studies was cut-off in 1968, the urban renewal program fizzled and was eventually abandoned in 1973. The main reason cited for the abandonment was that the program was not addressing the National Housing Authority's mandate of improving housing conditions for lower-income Canadians (Smith and Moore 1993: 361).

2.2 Gentrification

Gentrification, a highly visible process, is not only expressed through observable physical transformations of the urban environment, it is also articulated through social changes (van Weesep 1994). Indeed, it is a term with inherent social class connotations. Gentrification is the “social upgrading of...inner city neighbourhoods as middle- and upper-middle class households move into renovated or redeveloped dwellings in previously more affordable districts” (Ley 1993: 214). Redevelopment often leads to displacement, and so it is with gentrification occurring in residential areas; and although gentrification has been praised as the ‘medicine’ for blighted central cities – promising urban regeneration – the displacement aspect of the process provides for the fundamental basis for the argument against gentrification (Lees 2000). The upgrading of residential dwellings in the decaying inner city displaces poor

and working-class residents that inhabit the area. Whereas the urban renewal strategies of the 1950s and 1960s had directly displaced the inhabitants of neighbourhoods slated for redevelopment through expropriation, gentrification indirectly displaces residents of desirable dwellings through private redevelopment of that area. Reid (1991: 13) notes that gentrification in urban areas has displaced more residents than the urban renewal projects that were employed in the middle of the century. Displacement in gentrification occurs when properties are upgraded, raising property values and therefore rents, driving tenants to find other living arrangements. This conquest of urban residential neighbourhoods has left in its wake fragmented communities and an increasingly unaffordable housing market in the inner city. The new inhabitants of the area have been described as a culturally sophisticated urban class fraction, usually childless, more highly educated, skilled and paid, compared to the former inhabitants of the area (Lees 1994). Over the last three decades the continuance of gentrification affecting inner city residential areas has led to increased conflict between the working-class population and what Lees (2000) calls the “Starbucks coffee crowd” (gentrifiers). This conflict is due to the feeling of “increased competition [for lower-income housing,]..options are diminished by the conversion of affordable dwellings into luxury accommodation” (van Weesep 1994).

2.3 Urban renewal and gentrification in current planning practice

Across the Atlantic Ocean in the United Kingdom, Newcastle upon Tyne is a city facing a revitalization proposal that incorporates wide-scale redevelopment. The city has implemented a revitalization policy entitled *Going for Growth*; at its core is

large-scale redevelopment calling for the demolition of dwelling units and the construction of new, privately-funded housing stock in order to draw a middle-class population to the declining inner city residential area (Cameron, 2003). Public objections to *Going for Growth* are based on two familiar themes in urban geography: urban renewal and gentrification. Regarding the former, this planned large-scale clearance of inner city residential structures in older central neighbourhoods is reminiscent of the urban renewal projects that transpired in the mid-twentieth century in cities across Canada and the United States. The *Going for Growth* proposal has triggered public protests comparable to those witnessed in the 1950s and 1960s in Toronto and other Canadian cities that had experienced the “federal bulldozer” approach to urban regeneration; Newcastle upon Tyne’s City Council has been accused of attempting to socially cleanse the area by demolishing the current residential structures in the area and displacing the former residents. In the same way, gentrification is also a prevalent theme of the protestors; the new residential units that are to be constructed on the cleared land will be marketed to higher-income groups than the previous residents of the area. Although it is not gentrification in the traditional sense, it nonetheless incorporates a major indicator of gentrification, social status upgrading (Cameron, 2003).

Unquestionably, revitalization issues such as urban renewal and gentrification do not only have a place in past planning practice; as evidenced by the case of Newcastle upon Tyne, they are still relevant issues in contemporary urban geography.

2.4 City size and potential for redevelopment

In general, it is Canada's largest metropolitan areas that have experienced some success at revitalizing portions of their downtown cores. The specific examples of Granville Island in Vancouver and Byward Market in Ottawa attest to this fact. These mixed-use areas have effectively combined residential, shopping, leisure, and entertainment venues in aged, recycled structures; in both instances the resultant revitalized areas have been extremely successful (Ley 1996: 304). On the contrary, smaller urban areas – those with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 (Bunting and Phipps 1988: 137) – have faced continuing problems regarding revitalization of their downtown areas. Compounding the problem, many smaller metropolitan areas, including those found in the prairie provinces, face stagnated or declining populations; these “shrinking” cities experience repeated failures at economic rejuvenation, a requisite component in the comprehensive revitalization of an area (Bunting and Filion 2001). Scholars give multiple explanations to account for unsuccessful revitalization attempts of Canada's smaller urban centres. Everitt and Ramsey (2002) attribute the failures to the structure of urban government in Canada; they contend that, either consciously or unconsciously, the economic development strategies employed by the various levels of government work to exacerbate the social and economic problems that face Canada's smaller urban locales. O'Hara (2001) states that urban revitalization models are inappropriate as they are dependant almost exclusively on the expert-based (planners' and politicians') assessments of local resident needs. She contends that two barriers persist in the realization of appropriate development/redevelopment: they are, 1) the lack of effective communication between the decision-makers and the local

residents of the neighbourhood in question, and 2) the absence of a valuation system that accurately evaluates the significance of the redevelopment area's social and physical context, including the contributions that these two issues may have to the development of the area (2001).

There are, however, some smaller urban centres that have enjoyed revitalization success; these successes have been achieved by processes that deviate from approaches utilized in Canada's larger metropolitan centres. In contrast, the revitalization of smaller urban areas is primarily dependant on local support and participation of the area's residents. In the case of Brandon, Manitoba, Everitt and Ramsey (2002) state that revitalization of the historic downtown core was not approached with a comprehensive master strategy or plan; rather, it was a series of events put in place by citizen associations and businessperson groups. The authors outline specific events led by local groups in the revitalization efforts of Brandon; the first was spearheaded by a group of like-minded business people whose focus was on reviving Brandon's central business district. In 1985 the members invested some of their own capital in order to sponsor a revitalizing Main Street Programme; it was originally slated to last for three years. The program was later extended, and its success convinced the City of Brandon to create a revitalization plan for city's downtown area funded by both city monies and compulsory levies from downtown businesses; the funds were used for marketing and capital redevelopment projects in the central business district. Three years later, the Brandon Business Improvement Association (BIA) was formed; the BIA continues the revitalization work started by the original group of concerned business people, and in addition to the initial Main Street Programme, upgraded infrastructure and

beautification projects have been undertaken culminating, up to 2001, expenditures in excess of \$3 million. The BIA has been credited with changing negative perceptions regarding the downtown core of Brandon and thus improving community pride.

Other events that have prompted local support revitalization efforts are the development of the Rosser Ward's Citizens Association and the Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation. The boundaries of the Rosser Ward approximate the historical heritage area of Brandon; its population is comprised of residents of varying socio-economic status, and it contains most of the city's gentrified housing stock. The non-profit Rosser Ward Citizens Association was created in 1994 in order to encourage attitudinal changes by the city towards this core neighbourhood. For example, the group requested that the area be 'down-zoned' in order to allow for increased single-family owner-occupied housing. The Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation was created in 1999 under provincial legislation in order to promote a "Neighbourhoods Alive!" project. This provincially funded project has allowed local citizens to get involved with Brandon revitalization efforts – the Board of the NRC continues to be comprised mainly of core area residents. The NRC has participated in the historic commercial heart of Brandon as well as core residential areas; in the central business district physical rehabilitation and beautification has occurred, in the core residential district, neighbourhoods have been promoted as communities, housing stock has been upgraded and the recreational areas located in parks and school grounds have been improved.

Everitt and Ramsey praise all of Brandon's citizen-led revitalization efforts, and credit the groups with being the driving force behind the city's revitalization progress;

“without these groups, and in particular certain key players within these groups, it is likely that little positive change would have taken place in central Brandon over the past fifteen years,” (2002). Indeed, the support from local residents was vital to the improvement and revitalization of Brandon’s downtown area.

In summation, although it is generally Canada’s larger metropolitan areas that experience successes in downtown revitalization efforts, improvements to the urban physical environment can be made in smaller cities and towns through citizen participation and citizen-led improvement projects; it is often only through these smaller-scale means that revitalization can and does take place.

2.5 The urban revitalization experience in Winnipeg

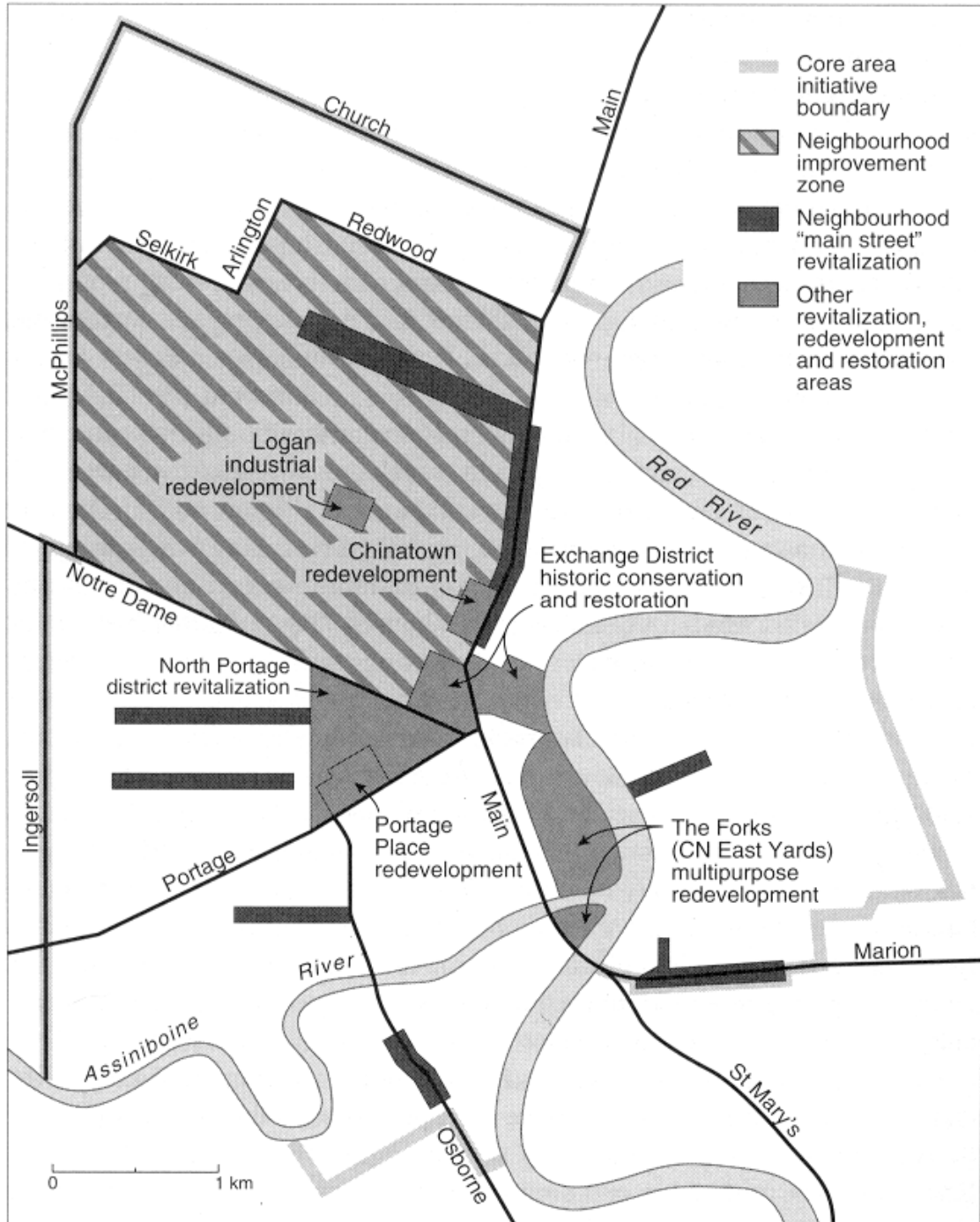
An appropriate review of a case study involving a Canadian city’s urban redevelopment efforts can offer insights into current revitalization issues. Winnipeg’s experience with revitalization of its downtown core is a specific example of issues raised by geographers and planners in other contexts.

Throughout the 1980s attempts at revitalizing Winnipeg’s inner city through commercial and residential redevelopment transpired through the city’s Core Area Initiative (CAI) program. There were three principle areas involved: the North End, The Forks lands, and Portage Avenue.

2.5.1 Winnipeg’s Core Area Initiative

Beginning in the early 1980s a redevelopment project entitled the *Core Area Initiative* was implemented in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Figure 2). The project was the first

Figure 2: The physical concept plan for Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative



Source: Smith and Moore 1993: 364

of its kind due to its unique tri-partite nature; for the first time in Canadian history the three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – were banding together to combat inner city decline. According to Gerecke and Reid (1990), the Core Area Initiative was a planning model based on an autonomous development corporation, public and private sector partnerships, intergovernmental cooperation, and aggressive attacks on urban inner city problems. It was an ambitious plan, covering an area of ten square kilometres and spanning over a decade. Based on the principle that all urban problems are interconnected and must be attacked comprehensively – physically, socially and economically – the three basic objectives of the Core Area Initiative were:

1. The stimulation of substantial economic development. The formulation of a single, highly visible cohesive project identity, which focused on a diverse set of projects throughout the downtown and inner city. This resolute, stable nature of the CAI has attracted private investment.
2. A program supplying employment and training opportunities for inner-city residents, particularly for those individuals from special needs populations; and,
3. The physical, social and economic revitalization of Winnipeg's declining inner city neighbourhoods

(Kiernan 1987)

An initial five-year agreement lasted from 1981-1986 and dispersed a direct expenditure of \$96 million to comprehensively address Winnipeg's economic, social and physical problems. During its first phase the Initiative appeared to be successful; to varying degrees its objectives were met – tangible outcomes included the construction of new housing and new community facilities, and as well as heritage conservation efforts, programs sponsored by the CAI included special education programs, job

creation and job training programs, as well as social and cultural services (Smith and Moore 1993: 363). The initial direct investment equally shared by the three governments led to further investment from other governmental and private sector agencies in excess of \$500 million. A second five-year agreement (1986-1991) and investment of \$100 million continued the advancement of the CAI's objectives. The three main projects of the Core Area Initiative along with a brief history of each will be discussed; these key projects are Portage Place, The Forks redevelopment, and the revitalization efforts centring on the neighbourhood of North End.

Portage Place

Prior to the Core Area Initiative, downtown Winnipeg experienced a dramatic loss of its retail market share to suburban shopping centres located on the periphery of the city. In an attempt to bring life back into the area and restore the retail character of the north side of Portage Avenue, Portage Place was built. Managed by a CAI spin-off company, the North Portage Development Corporation, the \$300 million structure was described as a mixed-use development, not a mall, and the structure was hailed as a major urban design initiative for the city (Kiernan 1987). The location of the development on the north side of Portage Avenue spans a ten-acre site of publicly acquired downtown land that previously had been a part of the railway lands owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Forks

The precursors to Winnipeg's two most significant streets, Portage and Main, originated as two paths leading from the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It was here that Henry McKenney constructed his dry goods store in 1862; however, archaeological evidence suggests that for thousands of years before his arrival the area was used as a First Nations meeting place. The expansion of the railway at the turn of the century claimed the land for industrial purposes, converting the land to marshalling yards with expansive warehousing facilities. The rail yard land-use function dominated the Forks' site for the next century, until the Core Area Initiative targeted the area for revitalization; relocation of the Canadian Pacific Railway's marshalling yards freed up three hundred acres of strategic inner city land (Kiernan 1987). Subsequent limited CAI redevelopments such as the Forks market and riverbank trails have provided Winnipeggers with an entertainment hub, heritage park, and recreational open space in the previously abandoned railway yards in the core area. The Market located at the Forks has become a destination attraction in its own right; with its specialty food vendors, craft and folk art shops, and entertaining buskers, a lively atmosphere has been created.

Winnipeg's North End

The area known as North End was included in the revitalization plans set forth by the Core Area Initiative for the inner city neighbourhoods of Winnipeg. As the name suggests, the North End of Winnipeg is located in the northern part of the city, just west of the Red River. The decline plaguing the area stemmed from the

introduction of the railway; this location experienced decline on two fronts when the Canadian Pacific Railway company built its transcontinental rail line through the area in 1881. Firstly, although the railway lines that ran through the North End were popular with manufacturing and warehouse purposes, the area as a residential district suffered; it became known as the “wrong side of the tracks”, significantly devaluing the housing stock. Secondly, the railway brought waves of migrants into the city drawn by promises of vast opportunity; the social geography of the city was split north to south as the affluent segment of the population settled in the more desirable southern district, the northern neighbourhoods surrounding the rail lines were left to the poorer residents of the city (Artibise 1975: 160). The remainder of the twentieth century continued this trend, and by the beginning of the 1980s the North End was Winnipeg’s most disadvantaged neighbourhood, its residents suffering high unemployment rates, low levels of educational attainment, and inadequate family income levels, many below the poverty line (Kiernan 1987). Projects aimed at revitalizing the North End neighbourhood included funding of \$22.9 million to upgrade the low quality housing stock plaguing the neighbourhood; the funds facilitated the construction of 827 new homes, and the renovation of approximately 7,000 existing dwellings (Leader Post November 19, 2001: B7). Training and job creation programs were implemented, community facilities were constructed, and community services projects ranging from pre-natal care classes to aboriginal culture and identity awareness programs were critical elements of the CAI’s plans for the North End neighbourhood.

2.5.2 Criticisms of the Core Area Initiative

Responses to the outcomes of the Core Area Initiative have been mixed. On one hand, it has been praised as a great accomplishment of Canadian planning and a complete financial success (Kiernan 1987; Smith and Moore 1993: 363). On the other side of the spectrum, some critics call the plan a complete failure. Park (1999) equates the Core Area Initiative's actions to the disastrous urban renewal attempts of the 1950s and 1960s; Gerecke and Reid call it an "embarrassing chapter in Canadian planning history" (1990). Throughout the two phases of the Core Area Initiative, the negative aspects of the redevelopment projects far outweigh the positive aspects.

One of the main criticisms of the project is also the most prominent outcome of the CAI, the mega-structure, Portage Place. Portage Place has completely destroyed the remaining businesses along what was once a major retailing strip; small businesses along Kennedy Street were destroyed due to the land expropriation measures necessary to make room for the structure. The project has also faced problems regarding retail tenants – many commercial spaces within the structure remain vacant. Furthermore, the contextual issues surrounding Portage Place were not addressed; the brand-new construction did not fit into the environment, and the deteriorated and ageing urban landscape surrounding the project was greatly magnified by the new development (The Canadian Architect 1995). Portage Place created both a physical wall, and a psychological "wall" along the north side of Portage Avenue; and although Portage Place was declared to be a mixed-use development and not a mall, the form that the project took was the same as the latter, with large, featureless blank walls. Blank walls destroy the fundamental nature of a city street; a city street displays "a brisk social life

of its own, a place of retailing-stores, windows with displays, signs to attract your attention, doorways, people going in and out of them” (Whyte, as quoted in Gerecke 1991: 175). The form that Portage Place encompasses hinders the liveliness of the area; its purpose is to separate the internal space of the development from the street, thereby effectively re-routing pedestrians from the sidewalks to the confines of the mixed-use development. A similar case is Eaton Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia; the mall occupies prime downtown land, however, the structure is detrimental to the area, as it draws people off the street, decreasing the vitality in Vancouver’s heart. Portage Place, intended as a catalyst and flagship to rejuvenate Winnipeg’s downtown urban core, failed miserably.

The Forks development has also been criticized, largely due the lack of respect the CAI has shown for the heritage value of the area – the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers on which archaeological finds have been discovered dating back over 5,000 years (The Canadian Architect 1995). The Forks civic plaza, the market, and the riverbank trail have been developed as a meeting place and green space to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors to the city. This portion of The Forks revitalization scheme is not the issue of contention for critics; indeed, urban markets have shown to be beneficial centres of cultural, social and economic significance (Tunbridge 1992). The issues that caused concern occurred in the last two years of the Core Area Initiative, the continuance of redevelopment – inappropriate redevelopment – given the historical and heritage value of the Forks’ lands. Winnipeggers surveyed in 1989 overwhelmingly indicated that they wanted outdoor uses for the site, including park space, non-permanent structures for cultural uses and celebratory events, and

statues or monuments paying homage to the heritage value of the area. Along with their desired uses for the area, many provided examples of structures they did not want, “no condos, no shopping centres, no parking lots, no freeways” (Dobson 1989). In the late 1980s, projects including a marina, German Cultural centre, CBC building, hotel and arena were slated for the area. Such projects would completely cover the historic site, limiting the site’s future as a heritage park and green space. Public outcry over these projects led only to a temporary halt in redevelopment; architectural consultants from Toronto were commissioned to put forth a proposal for a Visitor’s Centre at the historic junction. The \$6 million dollar construction was to be a high-tech centre complete with video screen walls, laser walk, time capsule and space flight simulator, clearly an unfitting and tasteless idea for The Forks site (Gerecke 1990). Fortunately, the development was also never completed.

Regarding the CAI’s social programs, Gerecke and Reid (1990) state that only some of the programs have produced beneficial results and, as such, have been exploited and employed as “lost-leaders” [sic] in order for the mega-projects to be more readily accepted by the public. Aside from the few social programs that have achieved good results, the consensus among the Core Area Initiative critics is that overall there has been no improvement in the social situations of poorer residents; in fact, their situations have worsened. Investigation by the “Community inquiry into inner city revitalization” of the conditions in post-Core Area Initiative Winnipeg concludes that, regarding social aspects, nothing has changed. The Inquiry goes on to state that:

The basic conditions continue to prevail in the inner city and in some instances have worsened. Incidences of poverty,

unemployment and lack of affordable housing were more severe in the 1980s than at the beginning of the decade. Moreover, the gaps between inner-city residents has widened on measures such as income and employment. (1990)

2.5.3 Core Area Initiative Conclusions

Although enormous in scope, the Core Area Initiative – comprised of two separate phases, thousands of individual projects, and spanning ten years – clearly did not achieve its goal of comprehensive physical, social and economic revitalization of Winnipeg’s inner core. Current redevelopment efforts in the inner city area are again underway at both the neighbourhood and citywide levels. At the local level, community development corporations (CDCs) are spearheading the redevelopment efforts in local neighbourhoods. Community development corporations initiate planning from the “bottom up”; the basic principles guiding the concept include local neighbourhood ownership and leadership, empowerment and skill set training for residents, and a local level partnership with the larger community (Leader Post November 19, 2001: B7). In Winnipeg, the West Broadway Development Corporation, begun in 1995, has worked to improve the physical condition of the inner city, as well as establish a positive image for the area. The Corporation was created in order to raise capital for projects including employment programs for residents, child-care facility construction, renovations to a local community centre, and a neighbourhood garden, among other projects.

In recent years, planning issues addressing citywide redevelopment, such as the upgrading of the two major thoroughfares in downtown Winnipeg, have been

undertaken by governmental agencies. In 1999, a total of \$22 million was earmarked for the rebuilding and redesigning efforts along Portage Avenue and Main Street; the main goal of the plan is to open up the area in order to make it more pedestrian friendly, this in turn, would stimulate economic activity in the small businesses that line the streets (Park 1999). More specifically, Portage Avenue has been redesigned into three separate zones: the first zone directly borders the building facades and will accommodate sidewalk cafes and news kiosks; the second zone is a pedestrian walkway, comprised of a smooth path of concrete that will facilitate movement up and down the length of the street. The third zone is the roadway itself, however, aesthetic considerations such as planters in the median will contribute to a positive image of the area; also, heated bus shelters will be located in this final zone, creating a comfortable waiting environment for patrons of the city's public transit system during the harsh winter months. A rehabilitation strategy for Main Street has also been designed; along with major upgrading of infrastructure including water mains, traffic signals and street-lights, a raised barrier in the centre of the roadway will provide an area for tree planting and double as a jay-walking deterrent.

With the continuation of local and citywide redevelopment projects being undertaken by community development corporations and government agencies, Winnipeg's future remains bright; Distasio proclaims, "the seeds being planted today will blossom into a vibrant and exciting downtown and inner city" (2003).

2.6 Criticisms of Winnipeg's CAI based on urban change theory

Attempts at explaining changes in urban spatial form in Canadian cities began in the 1970s with a Federal government study of inner city change; the result was a fourfold-classification of neighbourhood types, defining them as: declining, stable, revitalizing, or in the midst of massive redevelopment (Bunting and Filion 1988: 2). This simple classification approach, though valid, did not provide fundamental explanations as to the possible causes of the recognized change in Canadian urban areas. Subsequently, detailed academic theories emerged in an attempt to identify the processes and actors central to the issue. David Harvey's "circuits of capital" theory has been especially noteworthy in the urban geography field; it is a supply-oriented interpretation of changes in urban form rooted in Marxist economic theory (Wilson 1991). The theory is comprised of two distinct parts: the shift of investment capital across economic circuits, and the logic of uneven development. While the former accounts for the cyclical movement of capital between interconnected outlets (production, built real estate, or technology), it is the latter – uneven development – that directly accounts for inner city change.

Harvey's circuits of capital model explains the uneven development of urban areas in terms of capital flow into and out of urban areas. The basic premise is that although all buildings depreciate due to ageing, increased maintenance costs/ requirements, outdated building style, and/or obsolete technologies, the subsequent revitalization of some structures and the continuing deterioration of others is determined solely on flows of capital (Wetzel 2001). Capital will flow into areas of the city that, in terms of investment, are perceived as "safe"; it is these areas, which are

generally located next to affluent areas, that have attracted the needed capital to experience revitalization. On the other hand, capital flows out of areas that are viewed as “risky”; these areas are often poorer neighbourhoods with a higher rate of renter-occupied dwellings; structures in these areas will continue to decline as there is no capital coming in to the area. The underlying basis of Harvey’s circuits of capital theory is that urban structures are primarily viewed in terms of capital investment.

Criticisms of the circuits of capital theory are centred on its core supposition that capital takes precedence over social needs (Leysshon 2004). A similar notion was also the basis of criticisms of Winnipeg’s Core Area Initiative, which was established in order to physically, socially and economically revitalize the area. While the construction projects were commenced with fervour, culminating in, among other structures, Portage Place; the social/cultural programs which were meant to better the social situations of the area’s lower income residents were under funded and poorly pursued. Gerecke and Reid (1990) charge that the social/cultural programs were merely “lost-leaders” [sic] employed so that the public at large would be more receptive to the over-sized, capital-intensive building projects that comprised the physical improvement aspect of the CAI. Clearly, in the case of Winnipeg’s Core Area Initiative, the human side of redevelopment was ignored in favour of capital investment in the form of the numerous construction projects, including the mammoth structure and centrepiece of the CAI, Portage Place.

2.7 Chapter summation

Revitalization of Canada's cities is a major concern of planners, and understanding the processes that have shaped Canadian urban areas in the past is crucial in providing a basis by which to tackle the problems currently affecting our cities. As seen in this chapter, the issues of urban renewal and gentrification have played paramount roles in planning practice. However, these concepts have a pronounced lack of compassion for the human element of planning; urban renewal has been responsible for the displacement of whole communities under the guise of helping residents improve their housing conditions. Gentrification has caused direct conflict between higher-income newcomers, and the original lower-income residents in inner city neighbourhoods across Canada. It is the latter group which loses the displacement battle. As a result of the problems associated with urban renewal strategies and gentrification, public perceptions of governmental agencies, such as city planning departments, have been tarnished by a less-than-perfect planning past scarred by these issues.

While no revitalization project completed in Canada has been flawless, valuable knowledge can be gleaned from the various examples of redeveloped areas. The case of Winnipeg's experience with downtown revitalization provides insight regarding the treatment of the human element in redevelopment projects. Regardless of the planners' visions of grandiose buildings and open green space plazas proposed for an area, a fundamental aspect of revitalization that cannot be ignored is the human side; tailoring a potential redevelopment to be accessible and appropriate for a specific user population brings the human element of the issue to the forefront. The next chapter

explores the socio-economic context of Saskatoon by reviewing Statistics Canada census data in order to determine the social and economic characteristics of the potential user population for the proposed South Downtown revitalization project.

CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF SASKATOON

The purpose of this thesis is to define the socio-economic characteristics of the user population of Saskatoon's South Downtown; this population is comprised of all residents of Saskatoon, including the lower-income residents of the neighbourhoods directly adjacent to the South Downtown area. By understanding their socio-economic circumstances, suggestions regarding appropriate facilities and services that are required by this user population can be ascertained and implemented in the undertakings currently transpiring in Saskatoon's South Downtown.

An accurate portrait of the socio-economic characteristics of Saskatoon's residents can be obtained by examining statistical information provided in the census of 2001. Although all Saskatonians are considered by this author to be the user population of a redeveloped South Downtown area, the socio-economic traits of Saskatonians are not homogenous; data observations of the census tracts within the city's boundaries indicate marked variations between individual census tracts' social compositions. In particular, residents in the census tracts surrounding the South Downtown are generally disadvantaged compared to residents in the remainder of Saskatoon. As such, for the purpose of this study, the residents of central neighbourhoods adjacent to the South Downtown will be distinguished from the city at large, as the group as a whole requires

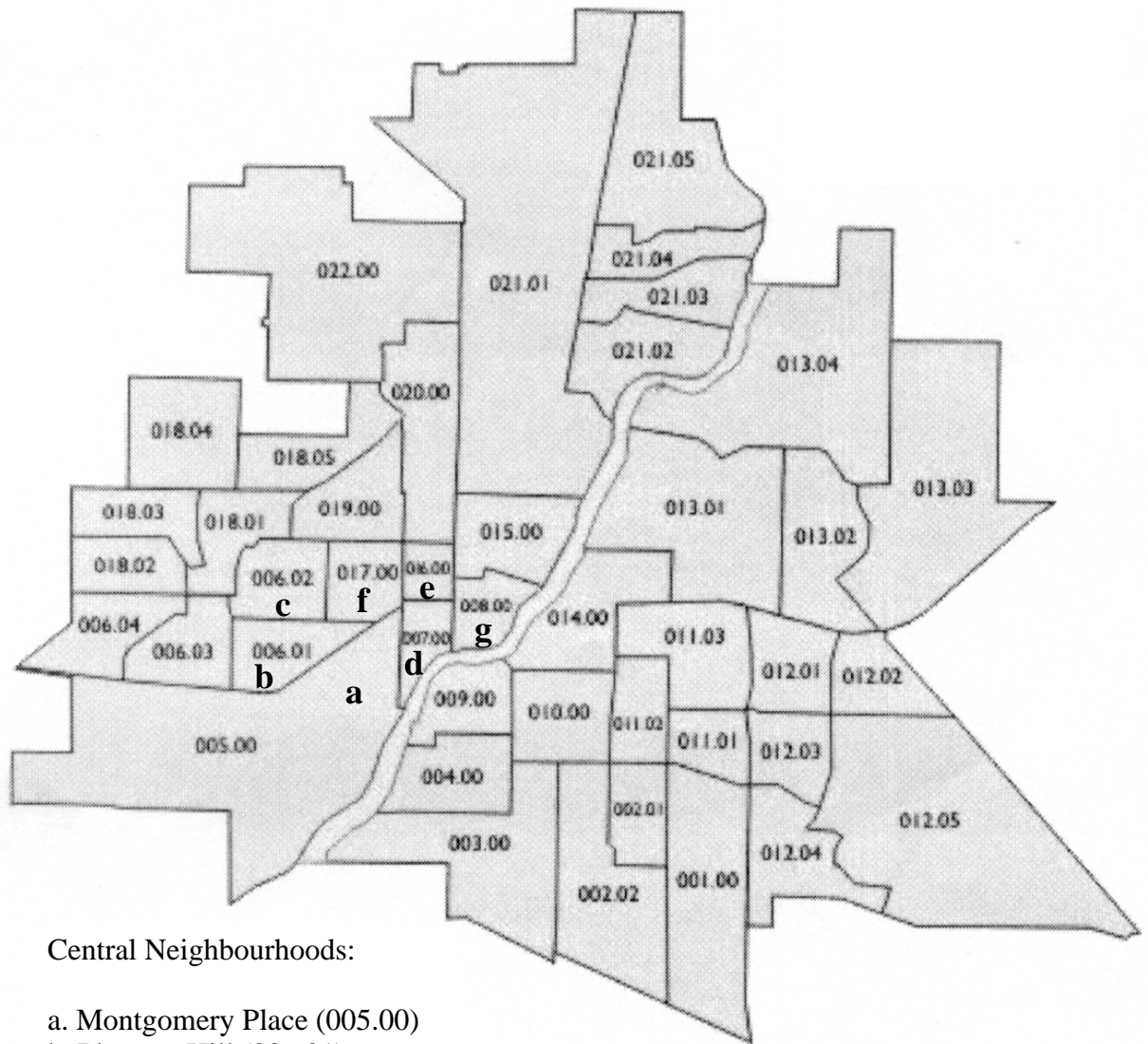
different services and facilities in the South Downtown redevelopment project. The central neighbourhoods include: Montgomery Place (Census Tract 005.00), Pleasant Hill (CT 006.01), Meadow Green (CT 006.02), Riversdale (007.00), Caswell Hill (CT 0016.00), and Westmount (CT 0017.00) (Figure 3). It must be noted that since there are geographical variations between census tract boundaries and neighbourhood boundaries, some neighbourhoods may not be entirely contained within the corresponding census tracts.

A number of factors will be used to determine the residents' socio-economic profiles including, but not limited to: income, educational attainment, employment/unemployment, single-parent households and aboriginal and visible minority populations. Only after analyzing the socio-economic characteristics possessed by Saskatoon's residents can recommendations regarding the facilities and services to be included in the South Downtown redevelopment site be made.

3.1 Age demographics for the central neighbourhoods and the City of Saskatoon

In 2001, Saskatoon's population was 225,927, an increase of three percent since the 1996 Census. The age groupings in the census tracts in Saskatoon reveal that it is a relatively young population, with an average of 28.3% of the population aged nineteen or younger; only 11.5% of the population are aged 65 and older (Table 1). The six central neighbourhoods, which comprise roughly ten percent of the population of Saskatoon, are consistent with the city average; 30.5% of the population is

Figure 3: The central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown



Central Neighbourhoods:

- a. Montgomery Place (005.00)
- b. Pleasant Hill (006.01)
- c. Meadow Green (006.02)
- d. Riversdale (007.00)
- e. Caswell Hill (016.00)
- f. Westmount (017.00)
- g. Saskatoon's CBD (008.00)

Note: Since there are geographical variations between census tract boundaries and neighbourhood boundaries, some neighbourhoods may not be entirely contained within the corresponding census tracts.

Source: Statistics Canada 2003

Table 1: Population characteristics for the census metropolitan area and the central neighbourhoods

	Saskatoon CMA	Central Neighbourhoods
Population, 2001	225927	23375
Population, 1996	219056	23831
Percentage of Population in 2001	100	10.35
in 1996	100	10.88
Total Population, male and female, by age group	225927	23375
0-19	63950	7125
20-39	68880	7085
40-54	49175	4930
55-64	17250	1655
65 and older	26700	2580
Percent of population, aged		
0-19	28.3	30.5
20-39	30.5	30.3
40-54	21.8	21.1
55-64	7.6	7.1
65 and older	11.8	11.0
Number of children at home		
Under 6 years of age	16960	2150
6-14 years	29140	3015
15-17 years	9635	885
Percentage of population, children at home	24.7	25.9
Under 6 years of age	7.5	9.2
6-14 years	12.9	12.9
15-17 years	4.3	3.8

Source: Statistics Canada 2001

under the age of twenty and 11% are aged 65 and above. For children living at home in the central neighbourhoods, 9% of the population are under the age of six, almost 13% are of elementary- and middle-school age (6-14), and close to 4% are in the high school age group (15-17 years old). Overall, the statistics for the central neighbourhoods regarding age demographics closely mirror those for the city as a whole (Table 1).

3.2 The economic composition of Saskatoon's central neighbourhoods

Generally speaking, the residents of the central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown area are more economically disadvantaged compared to the remainder of Saskatoon's residents. And while Statistics Canada does not provide an absolute measure of poverty in Canada, it does present a measurement of low income; a person is considered to be low-income if his or her income level is less than a predetermined threshold dependant on household size and population of area of residence. In the central neighbourhoods 8,860 of the 22,985 residents (38.6%) in private households in the central neighbourhoods are reported as having an insufficient income and therefore officially classified as low-income. Of Saskatoon's total population only 18% are classified as low-income. Average household income for the six central city neighbourhoods in the year 2000 is \$37,192; well below the average for the city as a whole for the same period (\$59,695). The central neighbourhoods experiencing the lowest level of income are Westmount (CT 0017.00) with \$28,925 and Riversdale (CT 007.00) with \$31,162; of all the central neighbourhood residents 45.3% have an income of \$29,999 or less, well over half (59.5%) have an income of less than \$40,000 (Table 2).

Table 2: Income characteristics for Saskatoon, the central neighbourhoods and the remaining census tracts

Area	Saskatoon CMA	Central Neighbourhoods	Remaining Census Tracts
Total - population in private households	221680	22985	198695
Low income - population in private households	39940	8860	31080
Other - population in private households	181740	14125	167615
Incidence of low income in 2000 % - population in private households	18.02%	38.55%	14.02%
Census family income in 2000 of all families - 20% sample data	60240	6165	54075
Under \$10,000 - family income in 2000 of all families	2815	615	2200
\$ 10,000 - \$19,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	4305	1155	3150
\$ 20,000 - \$29,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	6115	1020	5095
\$ 30,000 - \$39,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	6990	875	6115
\$ 40,000 - \$49,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	6715	770	5945
\$ 50,000 - \$59,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	7105	520	6585
\$ 60,000 - \$69,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	5815	370	5445
\$ 70,000 - \$79,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	4980	225	4755
\$ 80,000 - \$89,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	4015	195	3820
\$ 90,000 - \$99,999 - family income in 2000 of all families	2990	140	2850
\$100,000 and over - family income in 2000 of all families	8285	270	8015
Average family income \$ - family income in 2000 of all families	59695.31	37191.83	62695.78
Total Composition of total income in 2000 %	100	100	100
Employment income % - composition of total income in 2000	73.82	66.97	74.73
Government transfer payments % - composition of total income in 2000	13.01	24.87	11.43
Other % - composition of total income in 2000	11.22	8.20	11.62

Source: Statistics Canada 2001

Specific groups at risk of being low-income include aboriginals, recent immigrants (those arriving ten years or less before the census year) and single-headed household members (specifically in female-headed households) (Statistics Canada, 2004). The six central neighbourhoods include higher than average populations of these groups compared to the city as a whole; additional information regarding these aspects of demographic and social composition are discussed below.

Sources of income are also indicative of the economic situation faced by residents in the central neighbourhoods. In the 2001 census data, Statistics Canada provides a breakdown of sources of income, classifying them as: employment income, government transfer payments, or other. Of the income received by central neighbourhood residents in 2000 nearly one-quarter (24.9%) comes from government agencies in the form of welfare, subsidies, pensions, old age security, etc, and two-thirds (67%) from employment earnings. Riversdale has the highest percentage of income coming from the government at 33.6%; only 59.8% comes from employment sources. Saskatoon as a whole averages 73.8% of income from employment earnings and 13% from government sources (Table 2).

3.3 Educational attainment and employment/unemployment rates

The lower incomes of residents in the central neighbourhoods of Saskatoon (Table 2) are not surprising when viewed in relation to the area's educational attainment, and therefore employment status; the central neighbourhood population has significantly inferior educational attainment levels and substandard employment and unemployment statistics compared to the remainder of Saskatoon (Table 3).

Table 3: Educational attainment for persons aged twenty and older for the CMA of Saskatoon, the central neighbourhoods and the remaining census tracts

	Saskatoon CMA		Central Neighbourhoods		Remaining Census Tracts	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total residents 20 years and older	158700	100	16055	100	142645	100
Residents with less than ninth grade	10160	6.40	2005	12.49	8155	5.72
Residents without highschool diploma	39950	25.17	6730	41.92	33220	2.34
Residents with highschool diploma	16815	10.60	1700	10.59	15115	10.60
Residents with trade certificate	21350	13.45	2295	14.29	19055	13.36
Residents with College education	32640	20.57	2835	17.66	29805	20.89
Residents without College degree	7725	4.87	940	5.85	6785	4.76
Residents with College degree	24955	15.72	1900	11.83	23055	16.16
Residents with University education	47850	30.15	2485	15.48	45365	31.80
Residents without University degree	17160	10.81	1215	7.57	15945	11.18
Residents with University degree	30705	19.35	1270	7.91	29435	20.64

Source: Statistics Canada 2001

The census of 2001 collected information regarding educational attainment for persons age twenty and older; therefore, individuals of school age (children and teenagers) are not factored into the analysis. In the central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown, 41.9% of the population do not have a high school diploma, and of those, over 2,000 people (29.8%) have less than a ninth-grade education. These statistics illustrate the disadvantaged state of the central neighbourhoods when compared to the City of Saskatoon as a whole; the percentage of Saskatoon's population without a high school diploma is 23.3%, this ratio drops to 18.8% when the central neighbourhoods' statistics are not factored into the analysis. Residents in the central neighbourhoods are more likely to possess a trade certificate or diploma (14.3%) than spend any amount of time in a college or university; in fact, the central neighbourhoods have significantly lower numbers of residents with College and University degrees – only 11.8% of the population have a college diploma and 7.9% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Collectively the city has higher percentages of resident population with College diplomas (15.7%) and University degrees (20.6%) – nearly triple the percentage of central residents with University degrees (Table 3).

Results are similar when evaluating employment and unemployment statistics; the central neighbourhoods have higher unemployment rates compared to the average for Saskatoon. Concerning individuals age 25 and above, the unemployment rate for Saskatoon is 4.5%, whereas the unemployment rate for the central neighbourhoods is 12.9%. Unemployment percentages increase when including persons aged 15-24; Saskatoon's unemployment rate increases to 6.1%, the central neighbourhoods' rate for the expanded age group is 14.1% (Table 4).

Table 4: Labour force activity by age groups and gender for the census metropolitan of Saskatoon and the central neighbourhoods

Area	Saskatoon CMA		Central Neighbourhoods	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total population 15 years and older by labour force activity	158155		17790	
In the labour force, population 15 years and older	112440		10465	
Employed, population 15 years and older	105640		8985	
Unemployed, population 15 years and older	6835		1470	
Not in the labour force, population 15 years and older	45760		7325	
Participation rate, population 15 years and older	71.09		58.83	
Employment rate, population 15 years and older	66.80		50.51	
Unemployment rate, population 15 years and older	6.08		14.05	
Population 15-24 years by labour force activity	33100		3605	
In the labour force, population 15-24	23280		1930	
Employed, population 15-24	20510		1560	
Unemployed, population 15-24	2800		365	
Not in the labour force, population 15-24	9840		1665	
Participation rate, population 15-24	70.33		53.54	
Employment rate, population 15-24	61.96		43.27	
Unemployment rate, population 15-24	12.03		18.91	
Population 25 years and older by labour force activity	125065		14190	
In the labour force, population 25 years and older	89185		8540	
Employed, population 25 years and older	85165		7435	
Unemployed, population 25 years and older	4040		1100	
Not in the labour force, population 25 years and older	35910		5655	
Participation rate, population 25 years and older	71.31		60.18	
Employment rate, population 25 years and older	68.10		52.40	
Unemployment rate, population 25 years and older	4.53		12.88	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Males 15 years and over - Labour force activity	84105	100	8715	100
In the labour force, males 15 years and over	63665	75.70	5760	66.09
Employed, males 15 years and over	59120	70.29	4920	56.45
Unemployed, males 15 years and over	4555	7.15	835	14.50
Females 15 years and over - Labour force activity	91870	100	9070	100
In the labour force, females 15 years and over	59270	64.52	4710	51.93
Employed, females 15 years and over	55485	60.40	4060	44.76
Unemployed, females 15 years and over	3755	6.34	635	13.48

Source: Statistics Canada 2001

Examining employment and unemployment statistics in relation to gender yields similar findings; the central neighbourhoods are still disadvantaged as noted above. The unemployment rate among males aged fifteen and older in the central neighbourhoods is 14.5%, slightly higher than their female counterparts at 13.5%. Saskatoon's averages for the male and female groups in the aged fifteen and above category is 7.2% and 6.3% respectively. It is important to note that while females in both the central neighbourhoods and the city of Saskatoon have lower unemployment rates, they also have lower labour force participation rates; this may be due to the domestic and child-rearing role that many women play, and to continuing differentials in wages and salaries received by women and men.

3.4 Households in the central neighbourhoods and City of Saskatoon

A review of statistics regarding household size in the central neighbourhoods and the remainder of the city of Saskatoon reveals only slight variances; consistent percentages of private households by household size occurs across the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon (Table 5). Of the 9,515 private households in the six central neighbourhoods, one-person and two-person households comprise 2,915 (30.7%) and 3,110 (32.7%) of the total respectively; the percentages are consistent with the remainder of the city at 27.1% and 32.9%. While the majority of the city's households (over 60%) contain one or two people, the city – including the central neighbourhoods – also encompasses larger households; across all fifty-one census tracts 21,805 households (24.5%) contain four or more people. Concerning average number of persons per household, the central neighbourhoods' average of 2.4 is almost identical

to the remaining neighbourhoods' and city's average, both at 2.5 persons per household.

Variances pertaining to proportions of single-parent households between central neighbourhoods and remaining census tracts are evident; although the six central neighbourhoods constitute just over one-tenth of Saskatoon's total private households, the area has 18.5% (1,960) of the single-headed private households in the city.

Regarding the division of female versus male single-parent households, there are similarities between the two areas; in the central neighbourhoods and remaining census tracts, 88.3% and 84.4% of private households are headed by females respectively.

Males head 11.7% of private households in the central neighbourhoods, compared to 15.6% in the remaining census tracts.

3.5 Aboriginal and visible minority populations residing in the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon

The central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown contain much higher concentrations of aboriginal people than the remainder of the City of Saskatoon. In the year 2001, aboriginal populations in the central neighbourhoods average over one-quarter; 6,235 (26.7%) of residents in the neighbourhoods identify themselves as belonging to one or more of the following groups: North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit (Table 6). For the same period, roughly nine percent of the city's population is aboriginal; the percentage drops to 6.9% if the central neighbourhoods are not included in the calculations. Riversdale (Census Tract 007.00) possesses the highest rate of aboriginal population at 38.2%, next highest is Westmount (CT 0017.00) with 35.9%.

Table 6: Aboriginal and visible minority populations in the central neighbourhoods and the CMA of Saskatoon

	Saskatoon CMA		Central Neighbourhoods		Remaining Census Tracts	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total non-Aboriginal identity population	202360	89.6	16920	72.4	185440	91.6
Total Aboriginal identity population	20265	9.0	6235	26.7	14030	6.9
North American Indian single response, abor. identity population	11265	55.6	4410	70.7	6855	48.9
Métis single response, aboriginal identity population	8290	40.9	1650	26.5	6640	47.3
Inuit single response, aboriginal identity population	120	0.6	0	0	120	0.9
Multiple Aboriginal responses, aboriginal identity population	200	1.0	20	0.3	180	1.3
Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere	365	1.8	170	2.7	195	1.4
Total visible minority population	12420	5.5	1340	5.7	11080	5.5
Chinese, visible minority population	3985	32.1	535	39.9	3450	31.1
South Asian, visible minority population	1850	14.9	0	n/a	1850	16.7
Black, visible minority population	1490	12	125	9.3	1365	12.3
Filipino, visible minority population	1455	11.7	200	14.9	1255	11.3
Latin American, visible minority population	820	6.6	55	4.1	765	6.9
Southeast Asian, visible minority population	1140	9.2	350	26.1	790	7.1
Arab, visible minority population	460	3.7	35	2.6	425	3.8
West Asian, visible minority population	375	3.0	30	2.2	345	3.1
Korean, visible minority population	180	1.4	10	0.7	170	1.5
Japanese, visible minority population	140	1.1	0	n/a	140	1.3
Visible minority, n.i.e., visible minority population	175	1.4	0	n/a	175	1.6
Multiple visible minorities, visible minority population	315	2.5	0	n/a	315	2.8

Source: Statistics Canada 2001

Of the aboriginal population in the central neighbourhoods, aboriginals of North American Indian origin constitute 70.7%; the Métis origin population comprises 26.5%. North American Indian and Métis origins are more equally balanced in the remaining census tracts of the city, at 48.9% and 47.3% respectively.

Other visible minority groups are evident within Saskatoon; visible minority populations make up 5.5% of Saskatoon's total population, the rate for central neighbourhoods is similar at 5.7%. And while the Chinese population comprises the highest percentage among the visible minorities found in Saskatoon – 39.9% in the central neighbourhoods, 31.1% in the remainder of the city – the second largest ethnic populations within the city varies; Southeast Asians have a population of 350 individuals in the central neighbourhoods (26.1% of visible minorities), and the South Asian community has 1,850 members in the remainder of the city (16.7% of visible minorities).

These data for the central neighbourhoods and the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon provide the basis for a better understanding of the social and economic circumstances experienced by individuals and families in Saskatoon. Defining the South Downtown's potential user population is not only beneficial, but also necessary, so as to adapt the current concept plan in order to adequately address the population's requirements.

3.6 Assessing central neighbourhood needs: Facilities and services located in Riversdale

At issue in this thesis are recommendations of appropriate economic and social facilities and services to be included in Saskatoon's South Downtown project in order to create an area that is accessible and appropriate for all Saskatonians. Compared to the remainder of the city, the residents of the central neighbourhoods have differing South Downtown requirements due to their lower socio-economic status. In order to determine the facilities and services required by the central neighbourhood population, an inventory of present commercial and social locations in the central neighbourhoods should be consulted. However, in preparation of the three past proposals for the South Downtown area – the Meewasin Valley Project, the Mayor's Task Force Report and Princeton Developments' Master Plan – no studies were done. Even in the case of the current proposal for the area, no research was undertaken in this regard (Mann 2004). Business and organization directories for the City of Saskatoon can provide insight as to the central residents' access to, and need of, commercial and social facilities and services; this is beneficial in recommending types of business and social institutions to be included in the redevelopment of the South Downtown.

Analysis of directory data for the census tract of Riversdale reveals both the types of businesses and organizations present, as well as their geographical locations within the tract's boundaries. Riversdale contains over fifty commercial and social organizations in several categories such as beauty salons, banks, retail clothing/accessories stores, and senior citizen centres, among others. It is interesting to note that the majority of organizations in the area are either ethnic restaurants (mainly Asian

influenced), or automotive repair and service centres. Geographically, the majority of organizations are located in three clusters: the area of H Avenue South and 22nd Street, C Avenue South and 22nd Street, and the main retail corridor in Riversdale, Twentieth Street between F Avenue South and C Avenue South (Figure 4).

While information regarding organizations that are present in Riversdale can be gleaned from directory data, so too, can information on the types of organizations that are in short supply or absent altogether from the area. While there are four retail grocers listed in Riversdale, these are smaller “mom and pop” ethnic food shops that tend to have a limited selection of products at higher prices compared to the large, corporate chain stores; this is not a positive aspect as the central neighbourhood residents typically have lower incomes than the residents in the remainder of the city and are less likely to have access to a private automobile. Also, although almost nine percent of the population is under the age of five, there are no preschool centres located in the census tract. The percentage of senior citizen population in the area is almost eleven percent however, the area has a complete lack of a number of health services including, dentists, hearing clinics and first aid services. In order to access these types of organizations, the residents of Riversdale must venture out of their neighbourhood, which for certain segments of the population might present a major challenge.

O’Hara (2001) surveyed the lower-income population of the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighbourhoods in Schenectady, New York in order to gauge the residents’ needs of services and facilities. The survey of 444 households representing 1398 residents asked the respondents to rank the importance of neighbourhood needs. Among the amenities rated as “very important” were a grocery store, and facilities for child-care

Figure 4: Social and business organizations located in Riversdale, by type



Legend			
Automobile Repair and Service	A	Insurance Agents and Brokers	H
Grocers - Retail	B	Mortgage Companies	I
Convenience Stores	C	Restaurants	J
Banks	D	Schools - Academics	K
Beauty Salons	E	Senior Citizens' Centres	L
Clothing/Accessories - Retail	F	Service Stations – Fuel and Oil	M
Appliance - Retail	G	Light Manufacturing	N

Source: compiled from Servpro data 2004

and care for the elderly. Besides indicating residents' perceived need for types of organizations within the community, O'Hara states that the survey study was also significant in providing an outlet for participation and community involvement (2001). Such studies are beneficial for both the community and the city; local residents are included to a fuller extent of the planning process and, since residents themselves are the most fully aware of the neighbourhood's needs, the City gains valuable information regarding the facilities and services that are required by the population.

The City of Saskatoon's *South Downtown Concept Plan 2004* has recognized that residents of the Riversdale neighbourhood face many challenges due to their socio-economic standing. The report has identified that the South Downtown redevelopment area will have an impact on the Riversdale neighbourhood and, along with possible problems that the neighbourhood may face, the report outlines some potential positive effects as well. First, the new redevelopment in both the South Downtown and the south eastern portion of Riversdale will draw more people into the area, thereby stimulating the small businesses on Nineteenth and Twentieth Streets, and B and C Avenues. Attracting more people to Riversdale will also make the area safer and more secure according to Jane Jacob's "eyes on the street" concept. Also, the location of the planned business incubator adjacent to the Farmers Market on B Avenue will provide the community with increased employment opportunities.

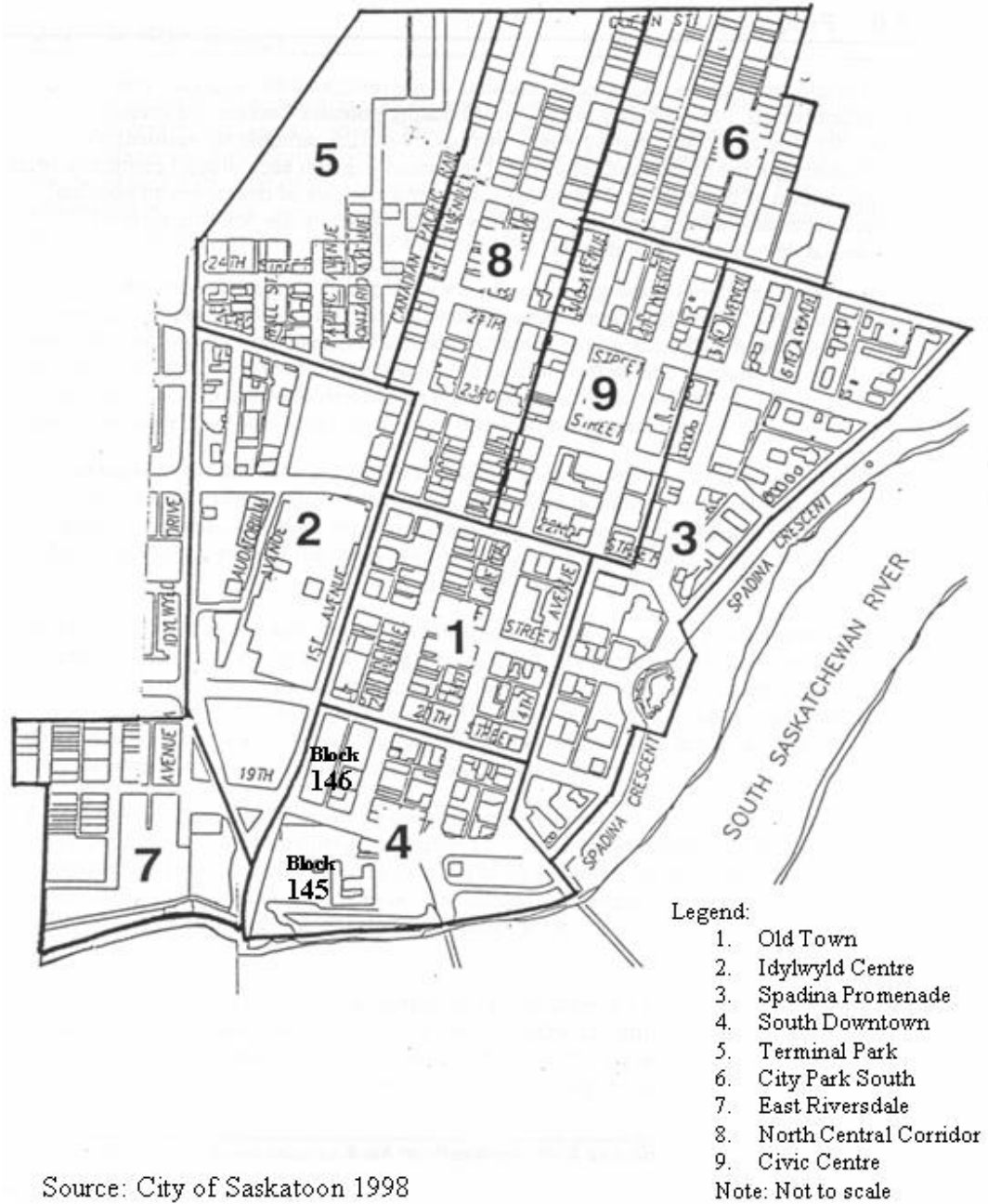
While no formal studies of current facilities and services located in the central neighbourhoods were conducted in preparation of the plan for the South Downtown, and although the report states that "[p]rojecting the impacts of new development cannot be an exact science", it is evident that the authors of the concept plan have examined

many aspects and possibilities that the intended redevelopment project may have on the residents of Riversdale.

CHAPTER 4: REVITALIZATION ATTEMPTS OF SASKATOON'S SOUTH DOWNTOWN

The South Downtown is defined by the City of Saskatoon's Downtown Housing Study Working Paper #5 (1998) as a large parcel spanning First to Fourth Avenues west to east, and from Twentieth Street to the riverbank north to south, totalling four blocks (section 5: 12). However, the South Downtown revitalization projects outlined in this chapter are concerned only with two of those blocks, blocks 145 and 146 (Figure 5). The current built environment on the property consists of predominantly low-rise commercial structures of varying age, condition and building quality. The most salient structure is Clinkskill Manor, a relatively new senior citizen apartment complex located in the northwest corner of Block 145. Up until April 2004, Block 146 had been the location of the Gathercole Building, originally the Saskatoon Technical Collegiate, which opened its doors in 1930 and up until 2000, had been occupied by Saskatoon's School Board. This structure had some heritage value, the façade of the structure more so than the interior. The remainder of Block 146 is a gravel parking lot and has been for the past twenty years, ever since the city of Saskatoon acquired the land.

Figure 5: Residential development precincts in Saskatoon



4.1 The history of Saskatoon and its South Downtown

Spanning the east and west banks of the South Saskatchewan River, Saskatoon, the largest urban area in the province, has struggled with revitalization attempts involving its South Downtown area for the last six decades. This area, comprised of blocks 145 and 146, was once the bustling commercial heart of the newly founded village of Saskatoon in 1901. Previously, in 1883, John Neilson Lake, the leader of the Temperance Colonization Society, prepared the first site plan for a settlement, laying out the site of Nutana on the east side of the South Saskatchewan River. Less than a decade later in 1890, the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railway Company bridged the river, and a tiny settlement called Saskatoon formed around the railway station on the west side of the South Saskatchewan River. The village of Saskatoon was officially incorporated in 1901, and five years later Saskatoon, Nutana and another settlement, the nearby village of Riversdale, amalgamated to form the incorporated city of Saskatoon. Successful lobbying by the City's businessmen brought the Canadian Pacific Railway's westward expansion through Saskatoon, bringing with it a major economic boom (1906-1908) as Saskatoon became the main commercial hub of the region, exporting three important commodities of the day – buffalo bones, cattle and grain (Kerr and Hanson 1982: 31). The heart of Saskatoon, the commercial centre, was dictated by the placement of railway lines that ran through the area; First Avenue paralleled the tracks, and five streets (Nineteenth to Twenty-Third Streets) were laid out at right angles to it. Historically, the South Downtown was the original centre of commerce in Saskatoon. The city's original railway station was located south of Twentieth Street and the various land-uses in the immediate area were either retail or

service-oriented in nature – mechanics, grocers, boarding houses and locksmiths had set up shop in the area, along with some industrial/ manufacturing businesses such as the Saskatoon Bottling Works plant, which bottled, among other beverages, Coca-Cola (The Star Phoenix August 5, 2000). South of Nineteenth Street was a high-class residential area; Riehl (2003) equates this historic neighbourhood to present-day Saskatchewan Crescent West, with its expensive residences and magnificent views of the South Saskatchewan River.

The pre-war “boom” years of 1910-1913 witnessed Saskatoon’s commerce district drift north of Twentieth Street due to the new rail station built on Twenty-First Street, and the construction of grand, new commercial buildings on Twentieth Street stretching up to Twenty-Third Street. The impressive economic development in these areas led to the decline of economic activities in the South Downtown.

The vibrancy of the South Downtown was further damaged by the misconceptions and prevailing prejudicial attitudes of the Anglo-majority regarding the Chinese population in the area. When the first Chinese merchant set up shop in the South Downtown in 1911, most of the Chinese residents of Saskatoon, many who had migrated for employment as railway workers, followed. By 1920 this migration process had resulted in Saskatoon’s own Chinatown (Mayor’s Task Force 1990). The prejudiced public perceived the area as a place where illegal activities such as gambling and opium smoking were commonplace; the Chinese were seen in a negative light because they were foreign, non-white and non-Christian (Riehl 2003). Subsequent changes in the demographics of the neighbourhood were due to the racist sentiments of the white majority; as an excuse to raze Chinatown and disperse the Chinese residents,

the area was chosen as the site of the new school, the Saskatoon Technical Collegiate (now known as the Gathercole Centre), which opened in 1930. It is interesting to note that while the homes and businesses of the Chinese residents were torn down to make room for the new addition, the Canadian Legion and the Clinkskill House (home of the first mayor of Saskatoon) - both of which were also on the site - were left standing.

The dispersal of the Chinese residents and conversion of the area from a mixed-use environment (encompassing residential and commercial uses) to the present-day situation contributed to the decline of the South Downtown. When the South Downtown area was known as Chinatown the built landscape encouraged vibrancy; it paralleled Lennard & Lennard's definition of livable urban spaces: "multifunctional, accommodating as many uses and activities as there are citizens, [they] serve the community's social integration and give to all a sense of membership in the community" (1987: 13). The decision by City Council in 1929 to tear down Chinatown to make room for the new technical collegiate destroyed this vibrancy by decreasing the usability of the area, decreasing the pedestrian flow into the area, and converting the mixed-use area (residential and commercial) into a single-use, institutional area. The demolition effectively destroyed the South Downtown's vitality; to this day it remains an area of contention among the population of Saskatoon.

4.2 Riversdale and Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods

In order to accurately portray the current state of the South Downtown and the main redevelopment projects that have been proposed for the area over the past three decades, the South Downtown must be explored within the context of Riversdale and

Saskatoon's other core neighbourhoods due to their close proximity to the proposed redevelopment site.

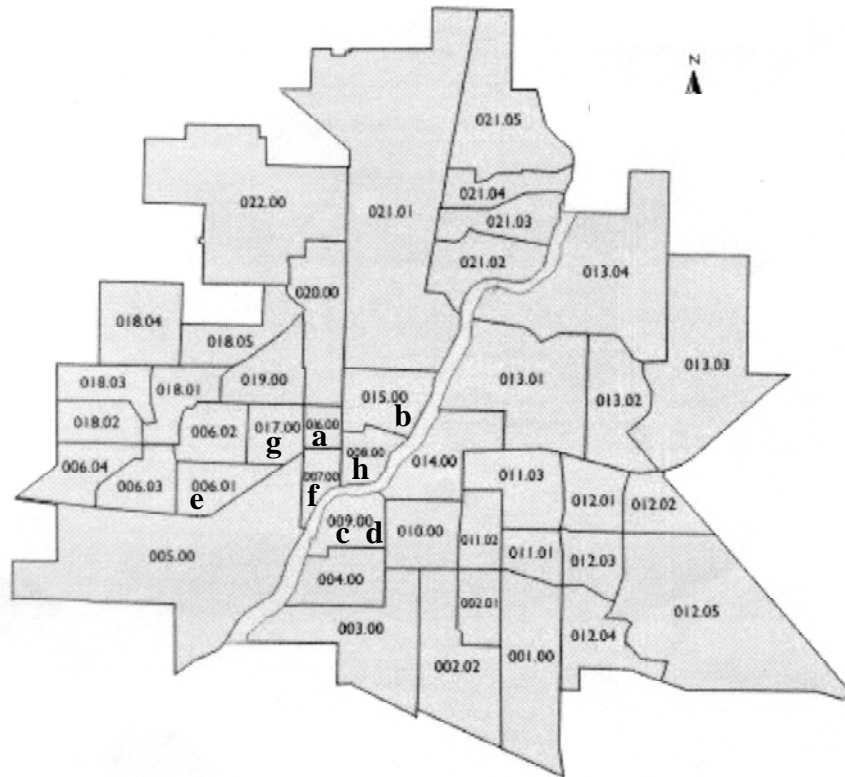
The village of Riversdale, the incorporated village of Saskatoon, and the settlement of Nutana, comprised the original three areas that amalgamated to form the City of Saskatoon on May 26, 1906. The principles used to subdivide lots in Riversdale vary from those employed in the other settlements; whereas the founders of Nutana and Saskatoon planned wide boulevards, public riverbank access and larger lots, the real-estate firm that was responsible for the subdivision of Riversdale was driven by profit as the sole objective. As such, the land was divided into comparatively smaller rectangular blocks on narrow streets, so as to generate as much area and frontage for sale as possible. Only one block was reserved for a school site and no open space or park site was set aside; this, combined with the small blocks contributed to Riversdale's congested character that has remained to the present day (Delainey and Sarjeany 1975: 12). The placement of the railway tracks was a further disadvantage to Riversdale, the location of the tracks effectively cut-off access to the nearby city centre, the rail yards and associated industrial facilities situated nearby led to a general lack of amenity, and the housing stock that was developed in the area was of poor quality. With its congested, industrial environment and substandard dwellings, Riversdale became the least desirable neighbourhood in the city; cheap rents attracted Saskatoon's lower income residents, and Riversdale soon became "a 'ghetto' in which people with problems were especially concentrated" (Delainey and Sarjeany 1975: 43). Riversdale continues to be a disadvantaged community, characterized by lower incomes, higher than average rates of single parent families, and low levels of educational attainment,

among other attributes. Decisions made when Riversdale was in its infancy have contributed to its present-day character.

Beginning in the late 1970s, the City of Saskatoon noticed a distinction in the character of certain residential neighbourhoods that were located in Saskatoon's Downtown area. These neighbourhoods became known as "core" neighbourhoods; the initial list of six included Caswell Hill, City Park, Nutana East, Nutana West, Pleasant Hill, and Riversdale. More than a decade later, three more areas were added to the list of core neighbourhoods: Albert, Brunskill, and Westmount (Albert and Brunskill later amalgamated into . (Figure 6). According to the City of Saskatoon (1991: 2), core neighbourhoods are classified as such due to five common attributes:

- 1) Proximity to the central business district – the core neighbourhoods are affected by housing and retail pressures not experienced by neighbourhoods located further away from the downtown core;
- 2) Change in housing stock – In the period of 1981-1988, every core neighbourhood had experienced a net gain in multiple unit dwellings and a net loss in single-family housing;
- 3) Housing stock age – Two-thirds of housing stock found in core neighbourhoods was built before 1946, suggesting a need for newer structures;
- 4) Density of housing units – Core neighbourhoods have significantly higher housing densities (dwelling units per hectare) compared to selected suburban neighbourhoods (such as Forest Grove, Massey Place, Sutherland, and others); suburban neighbourhoods average 13.39, core neighbourhoods average 22.93;
- 5) Persons per household – core neighbourhoods have smaller average household size than other neighbourhoods; this suggests that fewer families with children and many single individuals reside in core neighbourhoods.

Figure 6: Core neighbourhoods and corresponding census tracts



Core Neighbourhoods:

- a. Caswell Hill (016.00)
- b. City Park (015.00)
- c. Nutana East (009.00)
- d. Nutana West (009.00)
- e. Pleasant Hill (006.01)
- f. Riversdale (007.00)
- g. Westmount (017.00)
- h. Saskatoon's CBD (008.00)

Note: Since there are geographical variations between census tract boundaries and neighbourhood boundaries, some neighbourhoods may not be entirely contained in the corresponding census tracts.

Source: Statistics Canada 2003

Core neighbourhoods also differ from their suburban neighbours in terms of their socio-economic characteristics (lower incomes and higher percentages of single-parent households, among other factors), the relatively old age of the infrastructure found in the areas, and the increased amount of renovation activity experienced by the neighbourhoods (City of Saskatoon 1988: 10).

4.3 Past attempts at South Downtown revitalization

After the construction of the Gathercole Centre in 1929, limited development did occur in the South Downtown. Revitalization attempts in the form of large-scale public projects transpired throughout the 1930s, resulting in structures such as the Broadway Bridge, the Nineteenth Street Subway and the Saskatoon Arena. These revitalization efforts were completed, but nonetheless, they did not accomplish the goal of reviving the economic activity in the South Downtown. Aside from a few commercial structures that have been built in the area in the last two decades, the South Downtown has remained relatively unchanged over the last half century, as the bulk of downtown development has occurred north of Twentieth Street (Mayor's Task Force 1990).

4.3.1 The Meewasin Valley Project

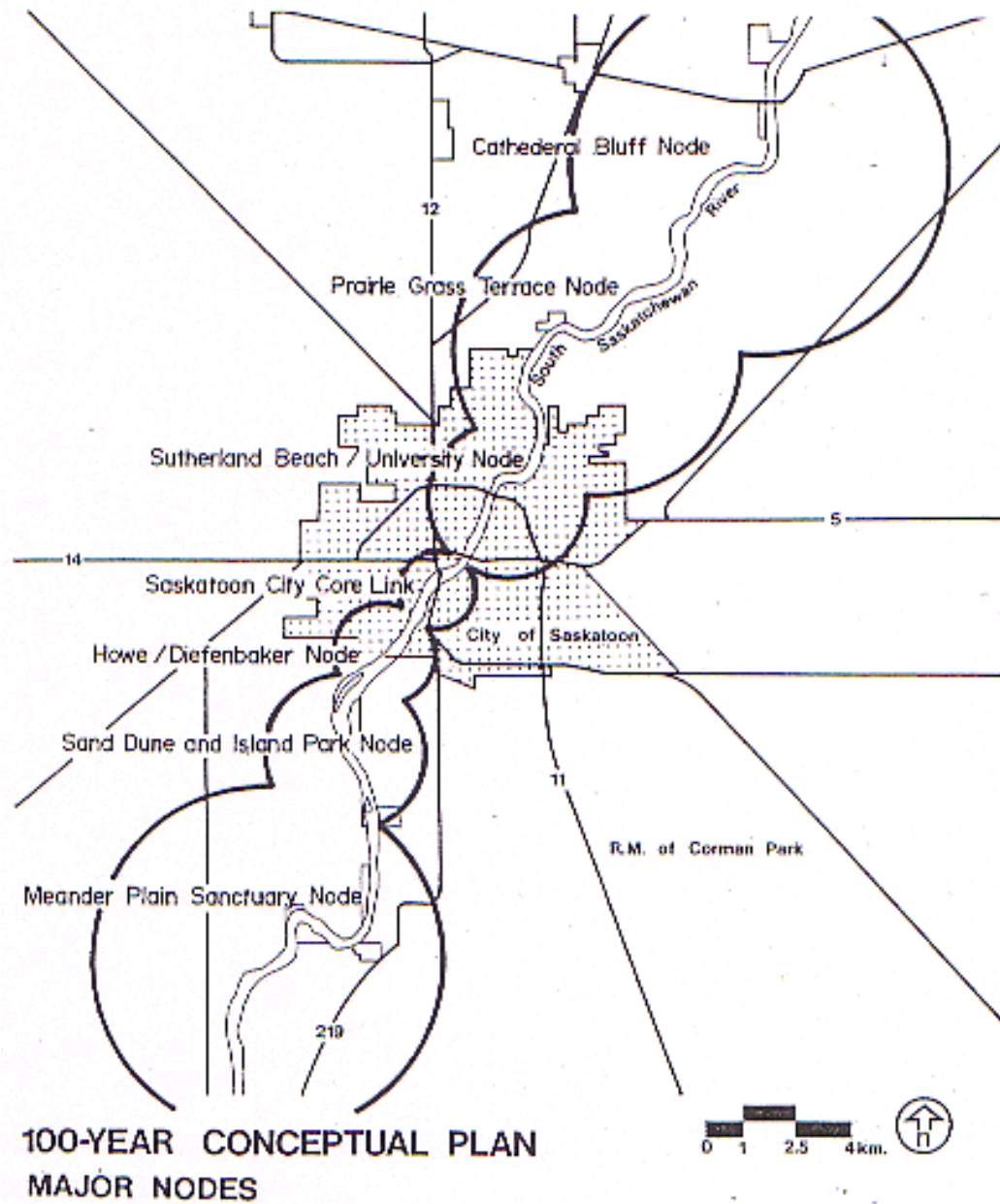
The year 1978 saw the adoption of a 100-year conceptual master plan for the urban river corridor authored by Raymond Moriyama and Associates. Entitled the *Meewasin Valley Project*, it was a comprehensive plan encompassing a vast stretch of the South Saskatchewan River. It was intended only as a “dynamic document” not a

concrete plan; it was to serve as a long-term flexible guide for development of the area (Meewasin Valley Authority 1987). The plan, also known as the 100 Year Plan, was commissioned by the Province of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon, the Rural Municipality of Corman Park and the University of Saskatchewan; it detailed a visionary plan for the area emphasizing five aims:

- 1) Enrichment of life for residents in the immediate vicinity, the city as a whole, and visitors/tourists in the area;
- 2) Recognition of the importance of the river and surrounding environment as aesthetically appealing green space, where natural vegetation and wildlife are protected;
- 3) Facilitation of pedestrian access to the river;
- 4) Establishment of connecting access along the river corridor by incorporating links (pedestrian pathways) and nodes (larger public squares as gathering and socializing spaces);
- 5) Reflection of the dreams of past pioneers (preservation of the riverbank), the recreation/open space needs of the current population and the projected needs of the generations to come (1978).

A major theme within the Meewasin Valley Project was the notion of “links and nodes” that were to geographically connect the northern river valley with the southern river valley by way of man-made environment (Riehl 2003). Specifically, six nodes and one major link were outlined in the document (Figure 7). While some of the nodes are partially located within the city’s boundaries, the majority of the nodal areas are located on the outskirts of the City of Saskatoon. To the south are the Meander Plain Sanctuary node, the Sand Dune and Island node, and the Howe-Diefenbaker Park node; to the north are the Sutherland Beach-University node, the Prairie Grass Terrace node

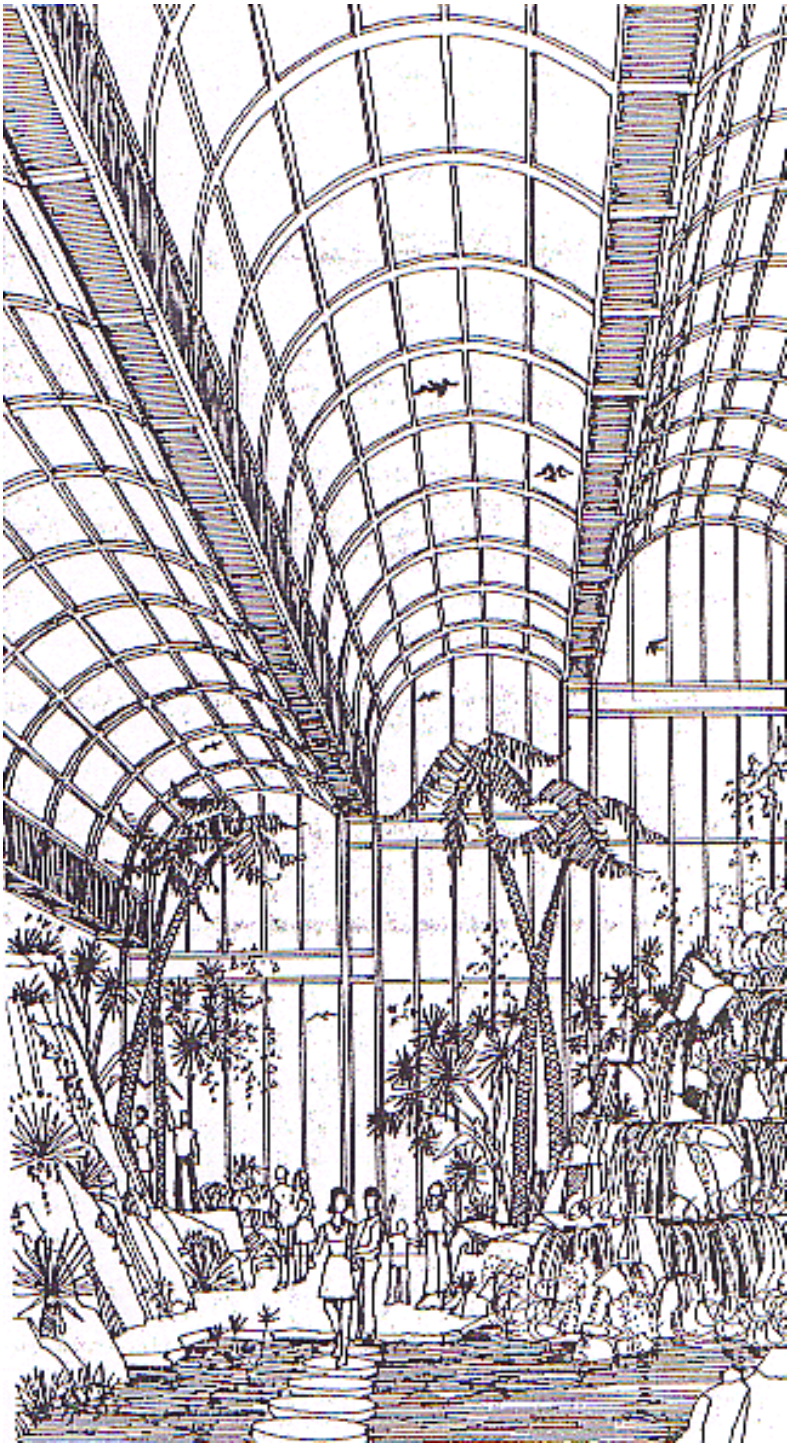
Figure 7: The Meewasin Valley Project's Links and Nodes



Source: The Meewasin Project 1978

and the Cathedral Bluff node. The main focuses of the nodes were conservation, research and education; they were to be connected to one another by a river valley drive and trail system (Meewasin Valley Authority 1987). The major link was the Saskatoon City Core link, which includes the South Downtown site, and, as such The Meewasin Valley Project outlined redevelopment ideas for the area. Moriyama suggested that the property south of Twentieth Street and bordered by the Broadway Bridge and Idylwyld Bridge (now called the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge) – land which included blocks 145 and 146 – be developed into a vibrant, residential and commercial use area, which, facilitated by the built environment, could highlight social and cultural activities. Given the proximity of Blocks 145 and 146 to the South Saskatchewan River, it was a natural conclusion to include the river as the focal point of the commercial side of development. The site offered the potential for a new and distinct way for Saskatoon to interact with the South Saskatchewan River. This interaction would be achieved through the creation of an environment that would facilitate year-round use of the riverfront, including restaurants, cafés and boutiques. The commercial aspect of the area, coupled with the provision of residential dwellings, would result in a dynamic mixed-use landscape (Moriyama 1978). A new and exciting element of the plan was the suggestion of a winter garden (Figure 8). Essentially a public park located inside an enclosed structure, it was to incorporate a “multi-tiered tropical garden and a “forest” of tall tropical trees interspersed with walks, streams and waterfalls” (Moriyama 1978). The Winter Garden would bring nature to the built environment for enjoyment of Saskatoon’s residents during the harsh winter months.

Figure 8: The Winter Garden concept of the Meewasin Valley Project



Source: The Meewasin Project 1978

In the 1980s, the City of Saskatoon, the Meewasin Valley Authority and the Public Board of Education actively pursued the objectives laid out in the 100 Year Plan. In preparation of the implementation of some of the Moriyama's suggestions, the parcel of land designated as block 146 was assembled by the city, and the South Downtown as a whole was re-classified as a direct control district. Various reports and publications sponsored by the three aforementioned groups included the "South Downtown Working Paper" (1981), "South Downtown Design Considerations" (1981), and the "Meewasin Valley Authority Development Plan: 1987-1992" (1987); these publications further demonstrate the desire of the City of Saskatoon, the Meewasin Valley Authority and the Public Board of Education to revitalize the South Downtown. However, as mentioned above, the Meewasin Valley project was meant as a conceptual framework for the development and/or redevelopment of the South Saskatchewan River environment only, not as a concrete plan for the area. Most significantly, although it did recognize the historical significance of the area, calling for archaeological exploration in order to better understand our own human history in the area, it did not consider the human environment of the South Downtown; only vague statements regarding human perceptions of the area were included. The plan states:

a time link
connecting and carrying the past and present creatively
forward into the future;
a spiritual link
the relationship of people to nature, of urban society to
rural society, of people to people.

(1978)

Although actively pursued by the City of Saskatoon the full potential of the Meewasin Valley Project was never realized due to the lack of private business

initiative. It was believed that the enormous scope of project, coupled with the bleak economic conditions of the time, resulted in no suitable proposal submissions put forward by private developers. Perhaps if the economic climate had been different, and the plan for the area broken down into more manageable parts, a fitting submission could have been in place for the South Downtown by the end of 1988.

4.3.2 The Mayor's Task Force Report

In 1989 the then-mayor of Saskatoon, Henry Dayday, assembled a task force in order to once again tackle the rehabilitation of the South Downtown, establishing “a formal structure and strategy under which an integrated redevelopment of the South Downtown [could] be pursued” (Mayor's Task Force 1990). The mayor presented his ‘vision’ concerning the potential of the area; in general, the South Downtown had the capability to become a multi-use environment, radiating with urban vitality. His ‘vision’ included two particular components: linkages and gathering places (discussed in further detail below). A wide diversity of business types and land uses, including spaces of residential designation, public areas and green spaces, would lend to the transformation of the area from its present state – a pathetic, neglected environ – to an exciting locale, teeming with life and offering the best restaurants, hotels, shops, arts and performance venues, and riverbank recreation activities in all of Saskatoon.

Besides this general, positive redevelopment objective for the area, the Mayor's Task Force outlined specific goals in both their study and subsequent design plans for the South Downtown. These goals were: 1) to create a buffer zone for transition of land-uses between the downtown core and the river, 2) to delineate the current

boundary of the city core and link it to the riverbank's parks, 3) to provide public access to the river in a space that is able to accommodate a large number of people, and 4) to draw people into the South Downtown by creating an exciting pedestrian-oriented environment.

The outcome of the study, a report entitled *South Downtown Development*, was published in 1990; the report detailed the recommendations of the Task Force for Saskatoon's South Downtown. Regarding businesses that would be located in the area, specific criteria and tenant classifications (labelled "targets") were included to ensure that development paralleled the objective for the area. Three tenant classifications were proposed:

- 1) Primary target tenants: Primary target tenants are defined as businesses that are open six or seven days per week, open long hours including evenings, are contributory to the social and/or cultural fabric of the city, and are a destination point. Examples of primary targets are restaurants, arts and crafts galleries, theatres and clubs. Tenants categorized as primary targets are identified in the Mayor's Task Force Report as the City's preferred tenant type, due to the fact that primary targets contribute the greatest (out of the three classified tenant types) to the mixed-use, pedestrian environment that was envisaged for the area. It is important to note that a diversity of primary targets is also required. The area would not achieve maximum vitality potential if all the primary targets in the South Downtown were, for example, hotels or restaurants.
- 2) Secondary target tenants: Secondary target are supplementary tenants to the primary target users. Examples of secondary tenants include residential establishments, offices, and other retailers associated with the primary target tenants.
- 3) Tertiary target tenants: The last classified tenant group are the tertiary users; tenants which are commercial in nature and who wish to be located in the area.

The presence of tertiary tenants in the South Downtown are not required to contribute to the desired atmosphere of the area, however, these users must not negatively affect it.

Along with these recommendations for private businesses, two themes were apparent in the Mayor's vision for the South Downtown: linkages with the Downtown core and within the South Downtown, and gathering places – public areas where the general public could gather for social and cultural events.

Linkages:

Regarding linkages, the report stated that the new development within the South Downtown would prove to be a crucial link between the South Downtown area and the river; also the area would act as a link along the riverbank by extending the Meewasin Trail west to east. This linkage would be realized by modifying streets in the immediate vicinity; primarily, Second Avenue would be extended southward to the river, thereby almost completely bisecting Block 145 from north to south, and linking the Downtown with the South Saskatchewan River. The landscaping in and along the surrounding area would stretch from the adjacent parks through the South Downtown and northward to Second Avenue. The area would be therefore physically linked by way of road extensions, as well as visually assimilated, due to the landscape architecture utilized throughout the district.

Also in the Mayor's Task Force Report, Spadina Crescent would be extended west to east, entirely bisecting Block 145 in that direction, from Third to First Avenues. This expansion would provide improved access ways for both pedestrian traffic and

vehicular traffic (however, only local vehicles would be allowed into the area). Nineteenth Street would become the major thoroughfare into the district, with high volumes of vehicular traffic – and little to no pedestrian traffic – expected. First Avenue north and south of Nineteenth Avenue would accommodate high volumes of vehicular traffic due to the access that First Avenue would offer to both patron and employee parking.

Gathering Places:

Concerning the second major theme of the Mayor of Saskatoon’s ‘vision’ – gathering places – Dayday recognized that the South Saskatchewan River’s bank was a valuable asset for the location of a series of public spaces that could be utilized for informal, as well as formal (organized) events; “[t]he essence of the Vision is a place where the community gathers for social and cultural activities...[a]s a primary gathering place, the riverfront is a unique feature of the South Downtown” (Mayor’s Task Force 1990). The Mayor’s Task Force speculated that a successful plan would result in usable, yet enjoyable public spaces and buildings along the riverbank that would be usable throughout the year by a wide range of people regardless of age, gender or physical ability/disability. Estimated construction times of the proposed structures were longer than the estimated construction times of the public spaces, therefore the public spaces would be designed so as to function independently from the buildings planned for the site.

While the Mayor’s Task Force report of 1990 was well detailed and imaginative, it lacked insight into the effect the redevelopment would have on the residents of neighbouring Riversdale and other central neighbourhoods. The plan

ignored the surrounding community, instead choosing to cater to a higher-income subset of the population; this is evidenced in the high-end shops and expensive restaurants that were repeatedly touted throughout the report.

The City of Saskatoon had demonstrated its willingness to revive the South Downtown by purchasing Blocks 145 and 146. Although this was a necessary prerequisite for redevelopment of the area, again no initiative was taken by the private sector regarding proposals for the property due to “the project’s scope and the economic conditions at the time” (Mayor’s Task Force 1990). By the end of the 1990s, the South Downtown remained untouched and still in decline.

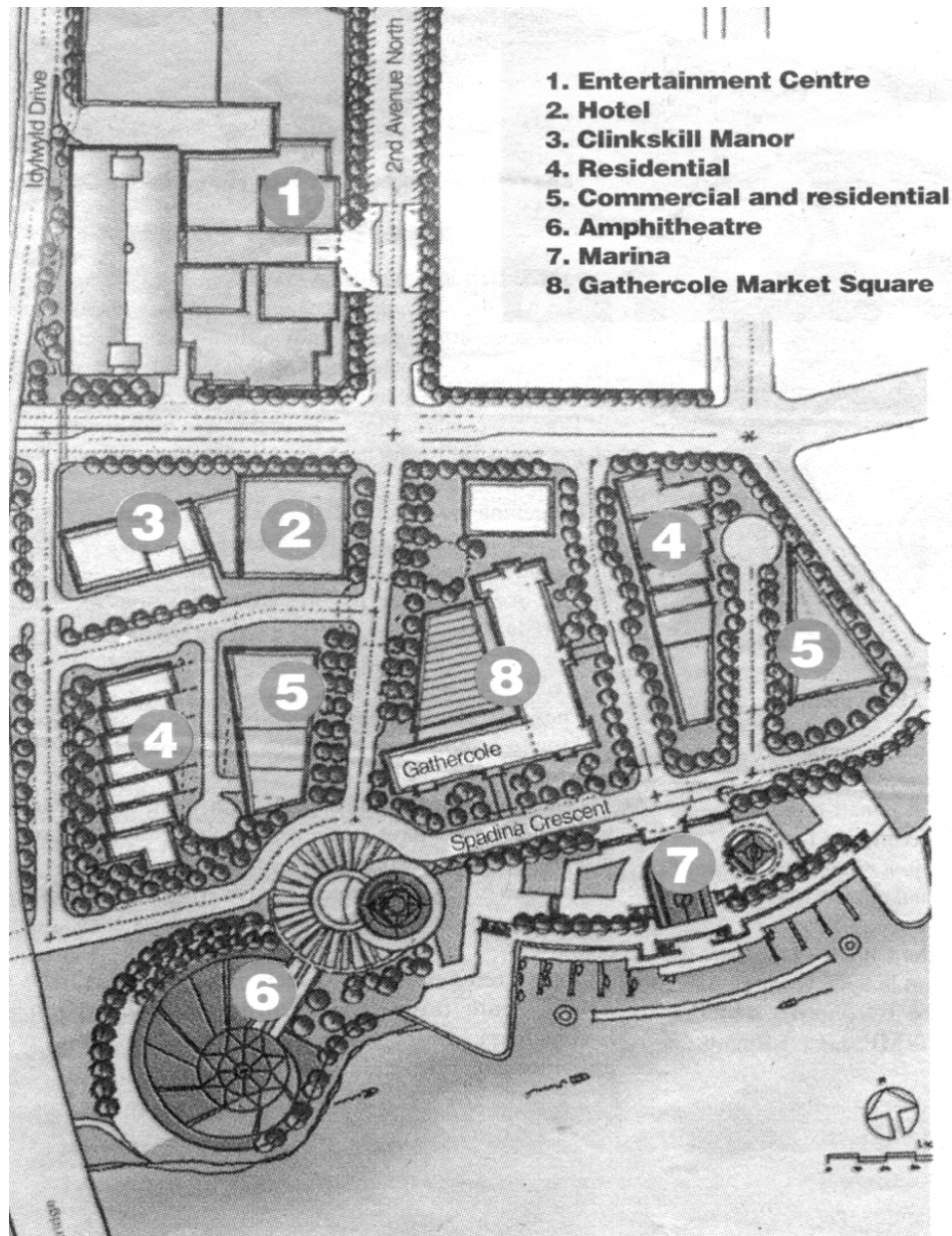
Four years after the Mayor’s Task Force Report of 1990, another attempt to develop a comprehensive project for the South Downtown was on the drawing board. Known as *The Landing*, it included aspects of Moriyama’s 100 Year plan including a riverfront edge, kiosks and various wading pools and water features that would link the redevelopment project to the South Saskatchewan River. The anchor of the project was a structure called the “River Centre” which was loosely modeled after the Meewasin Valley Authority’s Interpretive Centre, but meant to provide a more in-depth look at the River’s history (Riehl 2003). The theme of the Centre was “science entertainment” presented in an amusement-park format; features that were to be included in the structure ranged from an indoor man-made river raft ride, indoor forest with an artificial sky, a 400,000 litre tank filled with approximately 1,500 fresh water fish, a multi-media centre with video screens and hydraulic chairs to simulate earthquakes, and a large indoor water park broken into three distinct bodies of water (The Star Phoenix October 9, 1992: A3). There were two possible locations for the River Centre;

either the old A.L. Cole site or Block 145. The main area of contention with The Landing plan was that along with the River Centre, provincial justice centre, residential units, and farmer's market, the plan also called for the construction of a large trade and convention complex complete with a casino. While the proposal had many backers, it also had many critics; Saskatoon's origin as a Temperance colony no doubt played a part in the harsh criticism that the plan received. Along with the casino issue, the public was wary of the large price tag of \$20 million that accompanied the project. These two concerns, the casino complex and the financial aspect of the plan, were the main reasons that the project was soundly defeated in a plebiscite on the issue that was held in conjunction with a city election (Riehl 2003).

4.3.3 Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan

In 1999 Princeton Developments, the lead developer for Saskatoon's South Downtown redevelopment project, unveiled visionary plans for that area in a document entitled the *South Downtown Master Plan*. Led by Princeton Developments' executive Lanny White, the goal of the said plan was by no means new, it had been echoed many times in the past; Princeton Developments objective was to rejuvenate the South Downtown through construction of commercial, residential, and institutional structures, streetscape enhancements and a variety of public activity opportunities along the South Saskatchewan River intended to link the Downtown area to the riverbank (Figure 9). The overall desire was to develop the location into a "people place", a pedestrian-friendly locale with an alluring atmosphere, which would act to draw people into the area by promising a new and exciting environment. The basic layout of the new South

Figure 9: Princeton Development's Master Plan for the South Downtown



Source: Saskatoon Sun, April 16, 2000

Downtown would be a diversity of residential areas in close proximity to a major retail strip and central pedestrian attraction located on the riverbank.

After a nearly twenty-year relationship with Princeton Developments, with the last decade in constant on-again, off-again negotiations, Saskatoon had once again in 1999 given Princeton Developments the green light to proceed with the South Downtown revitalization plan. Following Princeton Developments' own South Downtown Master Plan, redevelopment of the South Downtown would commence with Phase One, which was intended to involve Block 146 (bounded by First and Second Avenues, and by 19th and 20th Streets). Princeton Developments was only allowed to proceed as scheduled provided they attend to specific prerequisites laid out by the city. The City of Saskatoon would have final approval of the South Downtown Master Plan and Princeton Developments would abide by cost and total square footage guidelines dictated by the city. In return – and, in time – Princeton Developments would be permitted to buy block 145, a parcel of land assembled by the city as well as the Gathercole Building that sits on the property. The company would also be given a five-year tax break on both Blocks 145 and 146; this was Princeton Developments' motivation to get the initial redevelopment projects constructed and tenants signed up for the proposed available retail and commercial spaces in a timely manner.

Specific space and cost guidelines laid out by the city required Princeton Developments to construct a minimum 70,000 square foot, \$7 million complex, and with Princeton Developments presenting its Phase One plan these conditions were satisfied. Phase One of the South Downtown redevelopment project was slated to be a 150,000 square foot retail and entertainment complex along with a parking garage

costing an estimated \$34 million. Not only did the proposed first phase of redevelopment attend to the space and cost stipulations imposed by the City of Saskatoon, but it also kept with the company's own aspirations regarding the area's overall atmosphere. A mix of retail uses, including a major bookstore franchise, assorted small retail boutiques and shops, three restaurants, small cafés, and a media entertainment (music) store would be brought together by the anchor of the project – a well-recognized movie theatre franchisee. The specifics of the space within the complex to be held by the anchor of the project were impressive; the movie theatre would be equipped with state-of-the-art projection systems in all ten cinemas and be able to accommodate up to 2500 customers; the space would also include a videogame arcade, food court and separate party room. Along with this ambitious plan, parking for 200 automobiles was slated for this initial phase of redevelopment concerning Block 146.

The complex proposed for Block 146 was not designed to be a closed structure such as a mall, but rather styled as a street-level concept in order to create consumer interest. By designing the retail venues with short store frontages and varying façade styles, the area would be consistent with the heritage feel of its close neighbour, Second Avenue.

Retailers, restaurants and bookstores had held off on committing to lease space in the complex until the anchor of the project – a movie theatre chain – had signed on. In Spring 2000 Cineplex Odeon did just that, and Princeton Developments seemed to be well on its way to successful redevelopment of Saskatoon's South Downtown – a

feat that had not been able to come to fruition in any of the numerous attempts over the past decades.

Subsequent phases after Phase One would include residences in high-density, multi-family structures such as apartments and condominiums interlaced with commercial and retail shops, restaurants and a hotel. A marina complex as well as an amphitheatre on the riverbank was also on Princeton Developments drawing board for the South Downtown; the amphitheatre concept mirrors the Mayor's Task Force Report (1990) which called for a large, formal plaza to be used for festivals and performances, and able to accommodate up to 4,000 people. In the report of 1990 the plaza occupied the same site as the proposed amphitheatre. Also intended for the Princeton Developments' redevelopment project of the South Downtown was the conversion of the Gathercole Building into a marketplace similar to the Forks Market in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Unfortunately, Cineplex Odeon Corporation filed bankruptcy in 2001, thereby pulling out of the role of anchor venue in the South Downtown redevelopment scheme. Princeton Developments was unable to secure an alternate anchor venue and as such, other spaces in the proposed structure went unleased also. Due to the lack of tenants, Princeton Developments was unable to even begin construction on Phase One, which left the prerequisites laid out by the city of Saskatoon unsatisfied. Consequently, Princeton Developments was unable to acquire Block 145 and the Gathercole Building that, at the time, was located on the property.

4.4 Criticisms of the past failed South Downtown proposals

Over past decades there have been numerous failed revitalization attempts for the South Downtown; the three chief proposals were: The Meewasin Valley Project (also known as Moriyama's 100 Year Plan), the Mayor's Task Force Report, and Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan. With high-end bistros, chic boutiques and luxury condominiums included in the plans, these redevelopment proposals were aimed at transforming the South Downtown into an exclusive, upscale area; the intended outcomes was an environment geared towards a particular user population – one comprised mainly of higher-income tourists and visitors to the area, along with Saskatoon's upper-class residents. By targeting such an exclusive population as primary users of the South Downtown redevelopment, the authors of the previous proposals had – either advertently or inadvertently – sought to develop an elite district of Saskatoon, financially inaccessible to a vast majority of the city's population. While it cannot be assumed that the plans were inherently wrong and doomed to fail, clearly, they did not target an appropriate user population for the area.

As a consequence of tailoring the redevelopment to upper-income groups, the needs of the Riversdale community, as well as other special groups in Saskatoon's downtown, have been ignored. Regarding the residents of Riversdale, facilities such as daycare centres, adult learning centres and women's shelters are desperately needed in the area. For example, daycare centres in Riversdale are necessary due to the young population residing in the area. There are approximately 170 children between the ages of 0-4 years old that would require all-day care if their primary caregiver(s) are not able to care for the child due to employment, educational or other obligations. An additional

150 children in the neighbourhood are between the ages of 5-9 and require care outside of school hours. The census provides data that gives insight as to the current situation of child-minding in Riversdale; 240 females and 190 males aged 15 and older have reported that they provide some level of unpaid childcare either alone or combined with housework and/or care of senior citizens. However, it cannot be assumed that each child minder is the child's primary caregiver, various family members such as siblings, aunts, uncles, or grandparents may also have a part in childcare duties. It is also interesting to note that the above data regarding unpaid child minding does not account for informal paid work (babysitting) performed by family members or unrelated individuals.

The area is also in need of an adult learning centre. In the neighbourhood of Riversdale, 1375 persons aged 15 and older have not completed high school, and of those, 370 have less than a ninth grade education. There are also problems concerning the attendance of young people in educational institutions; almost half of all persons aged 15-24 in the census tract of Riversdale are not regularly attending school (Statistics Canada 2001). Riversdale also requires a women's shelter. While it has been women that are listed as one of the groups most likely to become homeless, and a rise in the number of women and children that are homeless has also been recognized in recent years, shelters for women in Riversdale are lacking. (Dear and Wolch 1993: 299). Factors that contribute to the need for a shelter include the high incidence of female-headed households (90% of the lone-parent households are headed by females), coupled with the low incomes earned by women (the average full-time employment income earned by women in the Riversdale neighbourhood in 2001 was under

\$20,000). Incidences of domestic violence against females also contribute to the need for a women's shelter. While there are no statistics on domestic violence contained in the census tabulations, it is an issue that is prevalent in volatile home environments where insufficient incomes and unstable relationships exist. In Riversdale, 46.7% of families are classified as low-income, and 43.5% are non-traditional families. While these factors do not dictate the presence of domestic violence in the home, they can be valuable when analyzing household situations. These factors all contribute to the need for a women's shelter in Riversdale.

The past proposals for the South Downtown also ignored the sizeable senior population located in the downtown. In the four census tracts surrounding the central business district of Saskatoon (census tracts 007.00, 008.00, 015.00 and 016.00), there are 2,655 persons aged 65 and over (Statistics Canada 2001). This segment of the population has particular needs in that they are often plagued with health issues. Health services including doctors' offices, specialized clinics and pharmacies are required in the downtown to serve the population. Also, facilities that cater to the social needs of senior citizens are also desirable in the area; card game clubs and other social gatherings would fulfill this need.

It is critical that the authors of the current plan learn from the past plans' mistakes. All Saskatonians, including significant subsets of the population such as senior citizens and the lower-income populations of neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown, should not be ignored in the process.

4.5 The Expression of Interest Submissions

With Princeton Developments out of the picture, the City of Saskatoon began focusing its revitalization efforts on the Gathercole Centre (formerly Saskatoon's Technical Collegiate), located on Block 145. A city-commissioned report stated that in order to bring the structure up to leasable standards, the electrical wiring, plumbing and a new roof for the building would have to be undertaken. Also, operating costs were estimated at \$600,000 to \$1.05 million per annum, and archaeological and environmental studies of the property would cost an additional half a million. In total, the approximate cost to update the then seventy-two-year-old structure ranged from \$7.5 to \$11.8 million (The Star Phoenix October 19, 2002: A1). At that time, in 2002, the property was owned by the City of Saskatoon, and it would be the city's taxpayers footing the Gathercole repair bill. The enormous costs of saving and restoring the Gathercole Centre was much debated between city council members; some thought that the building should be levelled and the land sold, an option that would cost the City \$1 million in demolition costs and result in an approximate net profit of only \$200,000 (The Star Phoenix November 25, 2003: A3). Others believe that the structure should be saved, repaired and leased to commercial and retail venues; not-for-profit groups would not be allowed space in the Gathercole since the city would need to maximize lease revenues in order to pay the massive costs incurred in saving and upgrading the structure (A1).

In the latter part of 2002, the City put out a call for Expression of Interest submissions for the 4.5-acre property from any interested individual or party; it was requested that the EOI submissions incorporate either all or a portion of the Gathercole

Centre structure. Those who replied to the City's call for EOIs included private citizens, professional developers, community organizations and even a group of third grade students from local elementary schools.

The City's call for Expression of Interest submissions for the South Downtown was important because it allowed Saskatonians to present their visions for the area. However, by late 2003, no Expression of Interest had been chosen as the new concept plan for the area. Irregardless of the lack of a plan for the South Downtown, plans for development of the adjacent riverbank were underway.

4.6 Chapter summation

The two themes of this chapter, Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods and the past attempts at revitalizing the South Downtown, provide the background context for the current redevelopment of the area. The analysis of census data in Chapter Three, combined with the information regarding the failures of past proposals for the South Downtown area, provides insight that furthers the research objectives; the mistakes of the past can be avoided in the current proposal for the South Downtown by targeting an appropriate user population for the area. Whereas the Meewasin Valley Project, the Mayor's Task Force Report and Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan had all geared their redevelopments to the higher-income residents of Saskatoon, as well as tourists and visitors to the area, the current proposal for the South Downtown must tailor the redevelopment to a more realistic user population – all residents of Saskatoon, including the lower-income residents of the central neighbourhoods.

The following chapter outlines the current revitalization proposal for the riverbank redevelopment as well as the South Downtown site. It also provides a look at the controversy surrounding the Gathercole Centre which, until 2004, was located on the future site of the redevelopment.

CHAPTER 5: THE CURRENT REVITALIZATION PROPOSAL FOR THE RIVERBANK AND SASKATOON'S SOUTH DOWNTOWN

5.1 The riverbank development project in the South Downtown area

When John Lake prepared the first plan for Saskatoon in 1883, he recognized the importance of the South Saskatchewan River as a source of enjoyment for all people; as such, its banks were declared public preserves and were not divided into private lots. In 1930 when the City of Saskatoon prepared its first comprehensive zoning plan, the riverbanks remained in the public domain and scenic boulevards were constructed. Due to the careful planning by Saskatoon's forefathers, and careful management by the Meewasin Valley Authority, which was formed in 1979 for that specific purpose, the riverbanks of the South Saskatchewan River remain pristine and well preserved (Mathur 1989).

The South Saskatchewan River has been acknowledged as a significant resource in the area, as evidenced by Saskatchewan Premier, Lorne Calvert, "Public access to miles of riverbank makes Saskatoon unique and allows for a variety of seasonal activities...adding to the quality of life for residents and visitors in the Saskatoon area" (Saskatoon Sun October 12, 2003: 39). As of late 2003, riverbank redevelopment was to proceed separately from the yet-undecided happenings in the

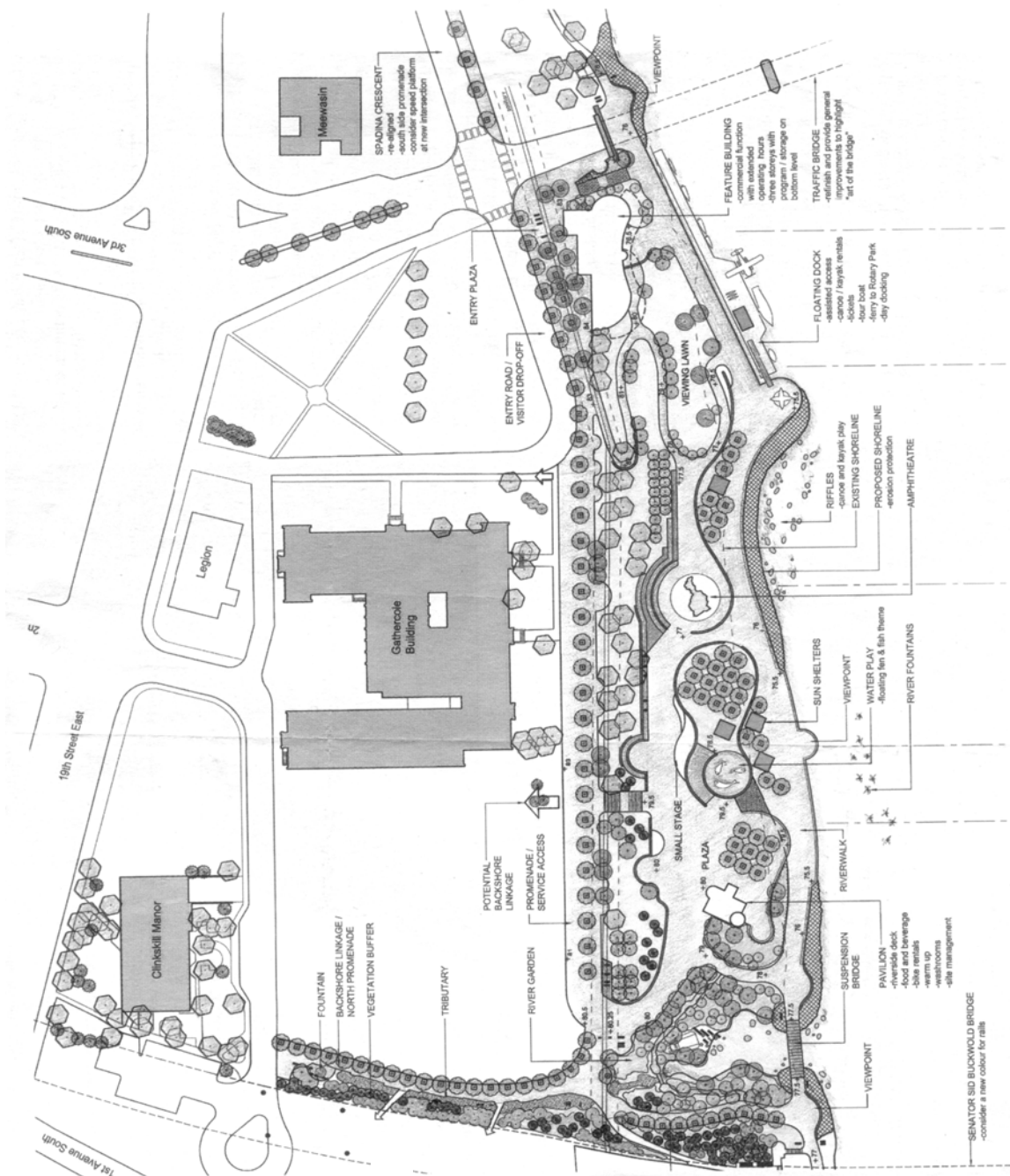
South Downtown. It was hoped that the redevelopment of that portion of riverbank would be a catalyst propelling the South Downtown redevelopment effort forward.

In October of 2003, the government of Saskatchewan gave \$4 million towards the costs associated with the riverbank development project, a project that would be led by the Meewasin Valley Authority. As stated in the Saskatoon Sun (October 12, 2003: 39) the riverfront design was to include:

- A riverwalk for “close-to-the-water strolling”;
- Strategically placed river viewing areas to reinforce the concept of the “river as a stage”, a goal outlined in the Mayor’s Task Force Report of 1990;
- A river tributary and garden, complete with suspension bridge;
- A site specifically for a feature building (possibly a restaurant);
- A riverbank promenade to tie together Friendship and Kiwanis Parks
- A new dock to strengthen river activities and events
- A pavilion to house daily activities and special events
- A water play area for children
- Two amphitheatres to host special performances and events
- Links to neighbouring Riversdale, the downtown core and Broadway

A conceptual illustration of the riverbank development plan was provided in The Star Phoenix (November 25, 2003: A3) (Figure 10). Along with the above-mentioned elements – all of which are present in the proposal – other components such as sun shelters, a canoe/kayak park, river fountains and a realignment of Spadina Crescent are also included.

Figure 10: Conceptual plan of the riverbank development in the South Downtown



Source: The StarPhoenix November 25, 2003

5.2 Criticisms of the riverbank development project

The conceptual plan of the riverbank and surrounding area presents a number of concerns. The plan does not seem to adequately address parking; limited automobile parking is included in the scheme, however many more spaces will be needed for the vehicles of both patrons and employees of the redevelopment area. The parking lot is situated on the western periphery of the property bordering Riversdale, thereby cutting-off the neighbourhood from the redevelopment project. Riversdale is further isolated from the South Downtown redevelopment due to a vegetation buffer and river tributary that are to be located east of the parking lot; both run north to south and prevent people from areas west of the South Downtown to enter the area at any point other than at two small pedestrian bridges and the north western entrance to the area. This author believes that this creates a “no-man’s-land” boundary effect that will work to psychologically distance neighbouring residents. Although these boundaries are not physically impossible to pass, the three obstacles – the parking lot, the vegetation buffer and the river tributary – will present a psychological hindrance for the residents from Riversdale and prevent them from entering the South Downtown. This should not be so; all residents should have free and easy access to the riverbank itself unimpeded by physical and psychological boundaries.

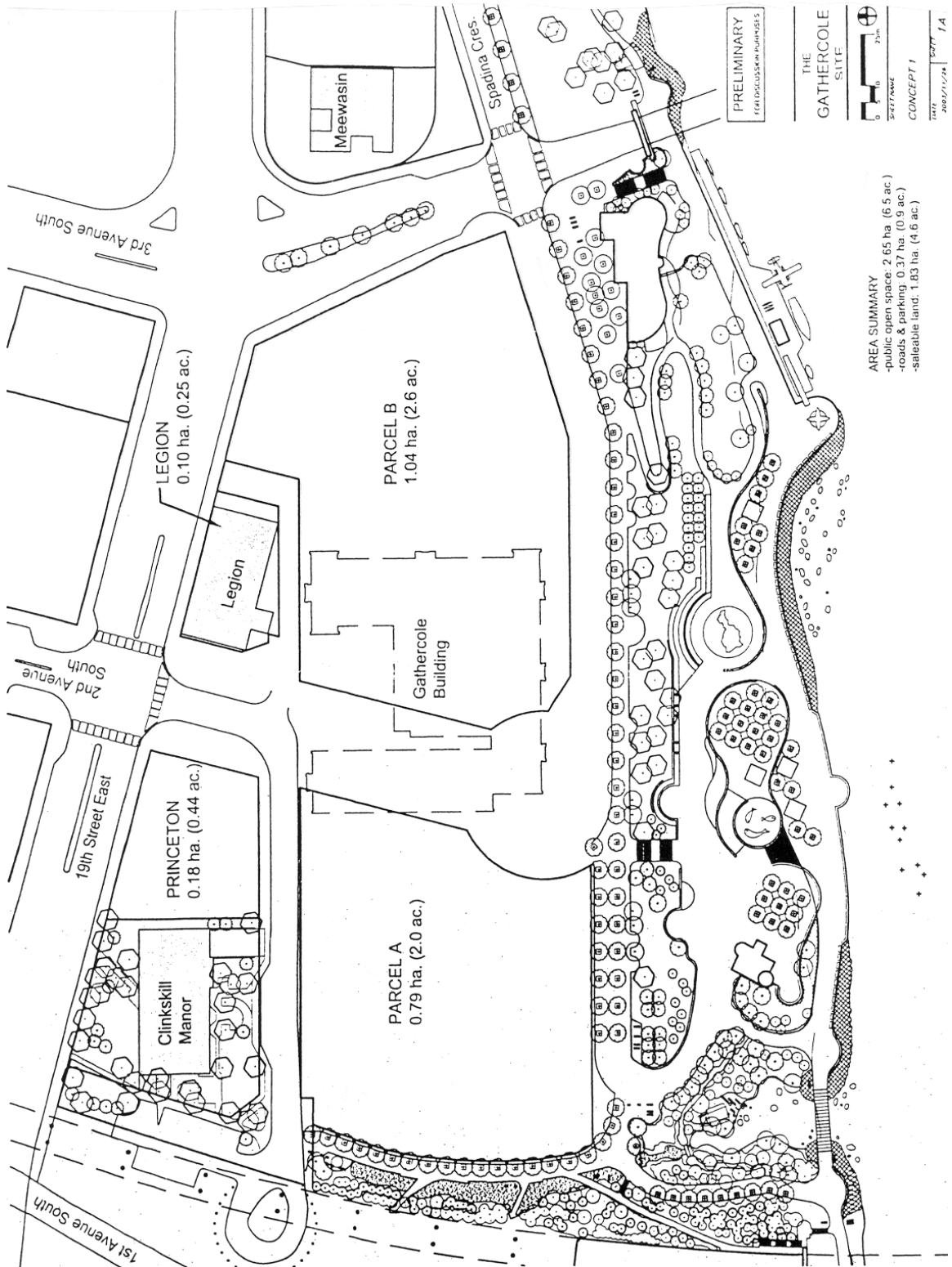
Certain elements of the riverbank conceptual plan also pose a problem regarding the possible perceived sense of inclusion experienced by Saskatoon’s aboriginal residents. All of the built structures included in the conceptual drawing are exclusively European-influenced and lack traditional native aspects; examples of this include the amphitheatre and small stage, formal structures intended to house

performances and events in the South Downtown. Although aboriginal societies also held special performances – such as dances and other tribal rituals – the performance spaces in those instances lacked a formal structure and were carried out in multi-purpose areas. Another area of contention recognized in the conceptual plan is the treatment of the environment. The majority of the riverbank area is paved over, with only scattered pieces of manicured lawn, strategically placed vegetation and well-spaced trees. This treatment is contradictory to the value placed on the natural world by aboriginal cultures; aboriginal cultures tend to respect nature and do not attempt to control it.

5.3 The future of the Gathercole Centre is decided

In the midst of immense pressure from the public at large regarding the preservation of the Gathercole Centre, Saskatoon's City Council decided its fate on December 8, 2003. Although no redevelopment scheme for the area had been chosen yet, the council, in a 10-1 vote, passed a resolution to extend Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent through the South Downtown site, thereby making necessary the demolition of the west wing of the Gathercole Centre (City of Saskatoon 2003) (Figure 11). The city cannot unilaterally decide the fate of the site, which is zoned a direct-control-district, and therefore also governed by the Meewasin Valley Authority, the province, and the University of Saskatchewan. Although these other agencies have a say regarding the completion of the proposed road extensions, they have no input over the planned demolition of the Gathercole Centre, as it is wholly owned by the City of Saskatoon (A2).

Figure 11: Proposed road extensions – Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent



Source: Office of the City Clerk 2003

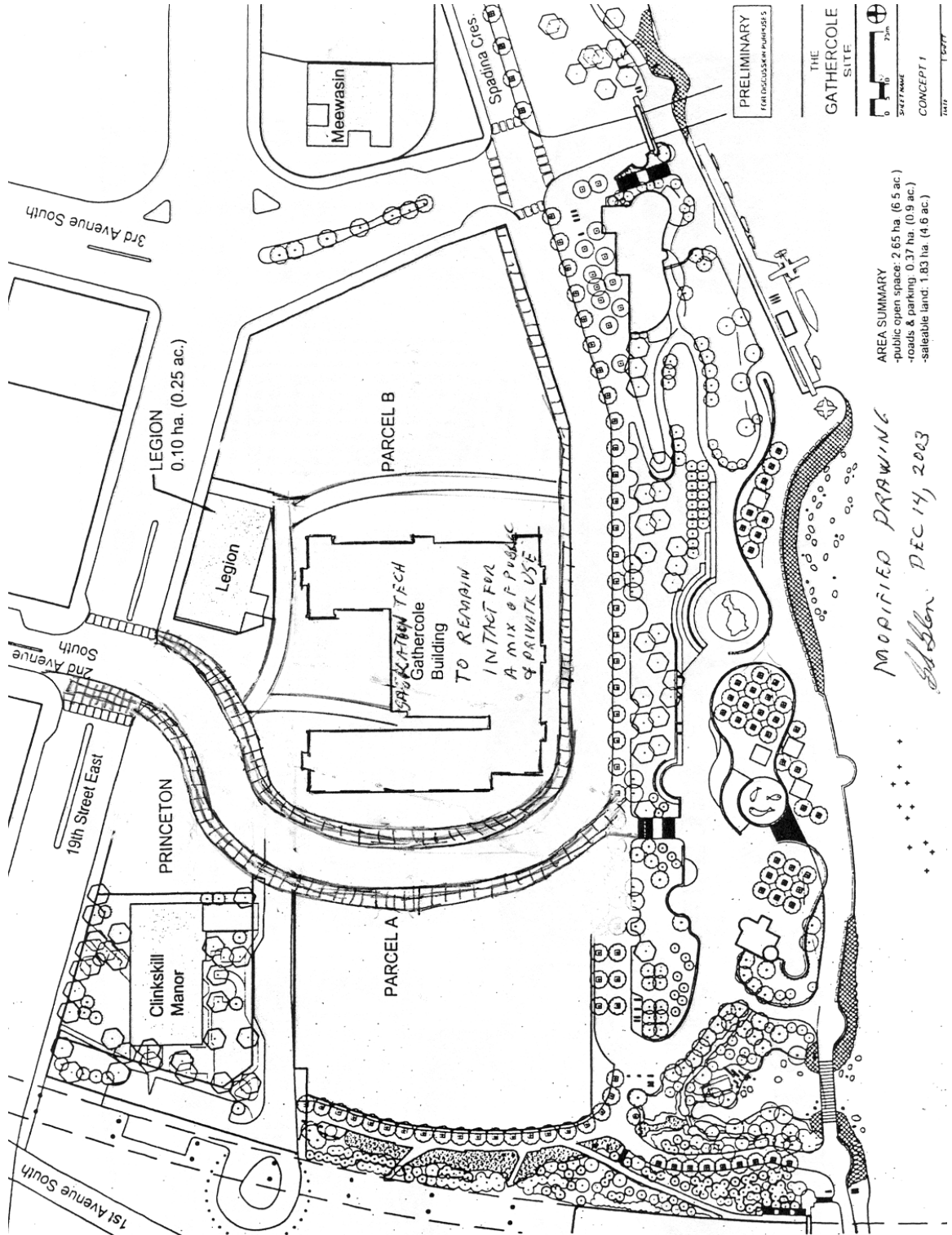
The City Council's decision has created a backlash of criticism as numerous groups and individuals have voiced their opposition to the demolition of any part of the Gathercole Centre. At the Council meeting thirty-four individuals spoke regarding efforts to keep the structure, the "Raging Grannies" sang protest songs against any demolition attempts, and numerous persons have written to Council regarding their opinion on the matter – all responses have been against the controversial decision. Along with their criticisms of the fate of the Gathercole, many have also included their own suggestions. Gordon Glen, an alumnus of the Technical Collegiate (before it became known as the Gathercole Centre), wrote to City Council not only to articulate his opposition to their decision, but also to propose an alternate solution that would accomplish the Council's goal of extending Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent, while preserving the entire Gathercole structure (2004). His vision, which he illustrated in a modification of the City's drawing (Figure 12), includes relocating the extension of Second Avenue, the pedestrian walkways, and required services further to the west, curving around the current Gathercole Centre. This simple modification would keep the historic building intact while accomplishing the City Council's goal of road extensions into the South Downtown.

The protestors would not have their way; the Gathercole Centre was demolished in Spring 2004.

5.4 The redevelopment plan for the remainder of the South Downtown

After unveiling its waterfront redevelopment proposal in the latter part of 2003, the city of Saskatoon put forth a comprehensive concept plan for the remainder of the

Figure 12: Modified conceptual drawing showing Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent road extensions curving around the Gathercole Centre



Source: Gordon S. Glen, letter to City Council 2003

South Downtown in early 2004 (Figure 13A and 13B). This expanded plan details specific land uses that will be in place in the South Downtown, as well as the locations and boundaries of each. Although no retail, commercial or residential tenants for the proposed redevelopment have been secured, the concept plan for the area includes the following features.

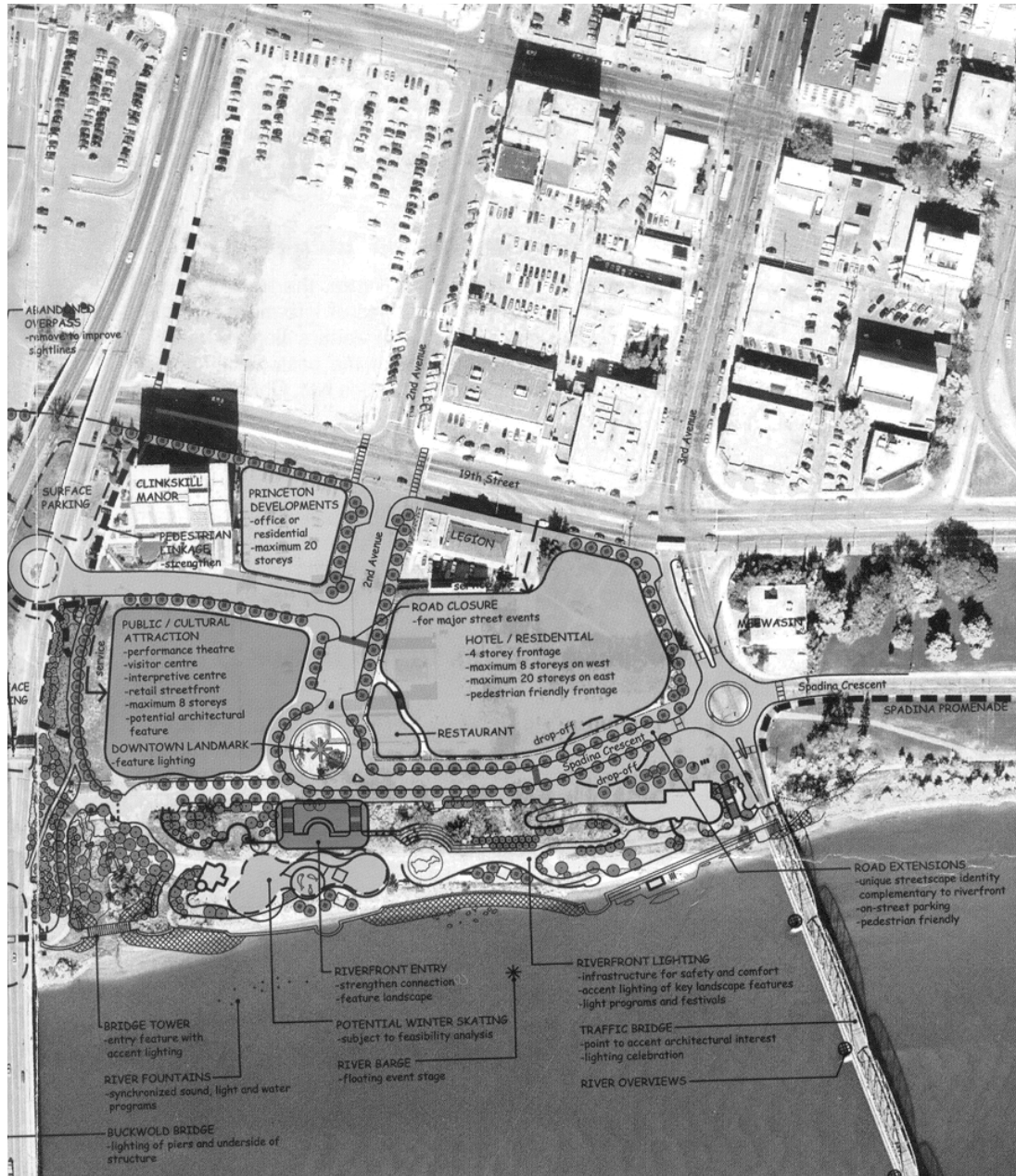
Block 145 will be divided by extensions of Second Avenue and Spadina Crescent into three separate parcels; the northwest parcel will include the current Clinkskill Manor and a proposed office or residential structure managed by Princeton Developments and comprised of no more than twenty storeys in height. The southwest portion of Block 145 will boast a cultural attraction structure with spaces for a visitor centre, retail shops, interpretive centre and performance theatre. Already, Saskatoon's Persephone Theatre has expressed interest in this aspect of the plan; the theatre company is seeking a 450-seat venue with a 90 to 250-seat second stage, as well as a rehearsal stage. The structure housing these occupants will be maximum eight stories in height, and possibly be designed to become an architectural feature in the South Downtown – a visual symbol of the area. The eastern section of Block 145 will keep the current Legion Building and add hotels (short- and/or long-term stay) and residential structures. The frontage of these buildings must be pedestrian friendly, and not exceed four storeys, the back portions may be higher, eight storeys for structures located on the west side of the parcel, twenty storeys for eastside structures. A restaurant will be located on the southwest edge of the hotel/residential portion of block 145.

Figure 13A: Western portion of the current South Downtown redevelopment



Source: City of Saskatoon 2004a

Figure 13B: Eastern portion of the current South Downtown redevelopment proposal



Source: City of Saskatoon 2004a

Block 146 is not included in the city-sponsored plan due to the fact that the block is wholly owned by Princeton Developments. Lanny White, Princeton Development's vice-president of operations, has alluded to building residential condominiums on the parcel, but has added that his decision will be greatly influenced by what happens on Block 145. White states, "If you had a choice for a condo on the riverbank or 146, where would you go? The riverbank." (The StarPhoenix April 6, 2004: A6).

The South Downtown concept plan includes blocks located to the west of First Avenue on the eastern side of Riversdale, blocks never before considered in previous South Downtown revitalization attempts; as such, the South Downtown redevelopment area will stretch east to west from the Victoria Bridge to Avenue C. As part of the new redevelopment plan, these blocks will include additional residential structures comprised of four storeys and fourteen storeys, a live/work structure with loft units and built-in workspaces, and a community park with structured areas for soccer and baseball as well as playground and landscape amenities. Also included in this aspect of the concept plan is a commercial space, envisioned as a micro-brewery and restaurant combination, and a structure designated as Riversdale Square, comprised of spaces for a Farmers' Market and a "Commemoration of Immigration" Hall, offering various community events and programs. A final structure, a new public library branch, will be located at Avenue C and Twentieth Street. This new branch is hoped to ease the stress on the main downtown library, as well as become a "hub of education" in the community (The StarPhoenix, April 7, 2004: A10).

5.4.1 Planning principles and key concepts guiding the South Downtown redevelopment

The City of Saskatoon developed twelve land planning principles that served as guides during the preparation of the concept plan for the South Downtown. They are:

1. Support and strengthen the Downtown & Riversdale and relationship to the riverfront
2. Plan south eastern Riversdale and Gathercole sites together
3. Create a distinct identity and sense of place
4. Design to be a destination
5. Design for development viability
6. Ensure appropriate density and building heights
7. Remember the past and plan for the future
8. Provide for special events
9. Ensure a barrier-free access
10. Plan for all day and all season use
11. Ensure a mix of land-uses
12. Plan for safety and security

(City of Saskatoon 2004)

The land planning principles have directed the formation of eight key elements in the South Downtown concept plan – all eight mirror elements of previous redevelopment plans for the area. The eight elements, outlined in a glossy City of Saskatoon brochure (2004), are:

Landmark

The concept plan calls for two landmarks that will serve as symbols of the city. The location of one of the landmarks will be on the southwest portion of block 145; it will take the form of a stylized grain elevator, similar to the Province of Saskatchewan's pavilion at Expo '86. A second landmark structure, a giant Native-inspired dream catcher, will be placed at the junction of the extensions of Second

Avenue and Spadina Crescent; symbolizing the future hopes of all Saskatonians, as well as paying tribute to the city's aboriginal population.

Strengthen Connections and Access

The planned improvement of pedestrian links and access in the South Downtown redevelopment is separated into two main issues; firstly, the upgrading of three east-west routes: along the riverbank, on Nineteenth Street, and the construction of a new pedestrian bridge over the First Avenue off-ramp. The second issue concerns direct access, as well as the establishment of a visual link, connecting the downtown and the riverfront. This will be achieved by extending Second Avenue south towards the riverbank and lengthening both the east and west portions of Spadina Crescent (thereby creating the space for the dream catcher landmark mentioned above).

Mix of Land Uses

In order to ensure an exciting and vibrant waterfront and South Downtown, the City of Saskatoon recognizes the importance of creating an area comprised of a variety of land uses. Land uses for the South Downtown will include residential, hotel and live/work structures, recreational parks and green spaces, commercial/retail areas, office complex and cultural attractions.

The Riverfront as a Stage

First outlined in the riverbank redevelopment plan is the riverfront as a stage idea; the roads and open areas in the concept plan will be designed to be adaptable, deterring and redirecting vehicle traffic so as to accommodate major street events such as markets, concerts and festivals.

Ambient and Special Event Lighting

Ambient lighting of specific structures and areas in the South Downtown will further enhance the area and promote it as a vibrant destination. Lights on the Victoria Bridge, the newly planned landmark at the end of Second Avenue, and along the riverbank will accomplish the goal. Special event lighting will be in the form of light shows projected over the South Saskatchewan River, thereby further utilizing the riverfront as a stage concept mentioned above.

Heritage and Environmental Interpretation

The interpretation centre planned for the South Downtown will pay tribute to both Saskatoon's remarkable past and picturesque natural environment. On the trails along the riverbank, a series of attractive displays featuring wildlife and environmental information will serve to guide and inform visitors. Locations and areas that will be highlighted in the centre and along the trails include: old Chinatown, the Gathercole Centre (also known as the Technical Collegiate), immigration hall, the power station, and the rail lines (including Saskatoon's railroad history).

Streetscape and Public Art

In keeping with Saskatoon's urban design program, public art and appropriate street furniture design will be incorporated into all the streets within the South Downtown area.

Development Form, Design Detail and Controls

To ensure a successful redevelopment, density, form, and design will be well-controlled in the South Downtown. The DCD1 (Direct Control District) guidelines are presently being revised to correspond to the structures outlined in the concept plan.

Regarding building heights, limitations have been reduced from the previously allowed thirty-storeys, to the current twenty storeys on the eastern edge of the redevelopment site, and maximum fourteen storeys on the eastern edge of the A.L. Cole site.

Concerning the sites slated for retail and commercial development, the city will hold veto power over the design details of the city-solicited private sector proposals.

Furthermore, architectural guidelines will be in place to guarantee material and design quality.

5.4.2 Public opinion of the South Downtown concept plan

The city of Saskatoon has asked for the public's input and opinions regarding the concept plan for the South Downtown area. During the city-sponsored open house showcasing the new plans for the new thirty-acre site, numerous Saskatonians viewed the various maps and illustrations presented by the city and made suggestions for improvement. Some of the areas of contention include:

- The proposed density, including the planned high-rise nature of certain structures. Although density is important for the financial viability of the redevelopment, some residents are wary of "too many tall buildings close to the river" (The StarPhoenix, April 21, 2004: A3).
- The river barge planned to be anchored in the river and used as a floating event stage. Some individuals have wondered if performers will be drowned out by bridge traffic noise.
- Lastly, the winter uses planned for the South Downtown are inadequate and weak; the only mention of winter use is the construction of an outdoor skate park. Due to the city's harsh winter climate, more attention should be given to indoor activities during the frigid months.

Not all of the public feedback was negative, however. Many people were excited by the variety of land uses, the planned cultural venues, the recreational green space areas; in short, the overall vibrancy envisioned for the South Downtown.

5.5 Urban renewal and gentrification issues in the context of the South Downtown revitalization proposal

Along with Block 145, the current South Downtown redevelopment proposal incorporates the southeast corner of Riversdale, bordered by Nineteenth Street to the north, the riverbank to the south, Avenue C to the west and, to the east, the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge (formerly Idylwyld Bridge). As part of the new redevelopment plan, these blocks are slated to include not only a live/work building and other residential structures in high-rise format, but also a community park, commercial and retail space, a new public library branch, and “Riversdale Square”, a multi-purpose building that will house a Farmers’ Market and special interest memorial hall, among other features. Located in the larger neighbourhood of Riversdale, it is not surprising that some of the current structures presently on the site are residential in nature; the Downtown Housing Study Working Paper #5 indicates that the built form in the specified area includes “single family residences characteristic of marginal inner city neighbourhoods”, along with other industrial and commercial structures (City of Saskatoon 1998: 20). In order for the South Downtown redevelopment project to proceed, methods reminiscent of urban renewal from the 1950s and 1960s are planned for the area; the built environment located in the southeastern portion of Riversdale, including the current residential dwellings on the site, will be demolished.

Parallels exist between Saskatoon and the aforementioned example of Newcastle upon Tyne located in Chapter Two; both contain a population of approximately one-quarter million people and both are regional centres; additionally, the two cities have recognized the need to revitalize their urban areas. While there are many similarities between the revitalization attempts embarked upon by the two cities, one major difference does exist: the redevelopment of Saskatoon's south eastern portion of Riversdale has not been met with the same resistance as the attempts in Newcastle upon Tyne. However, Riversdale residents are nonetheless concerned about their neighbourhood; a consultation meeting with local residents on community issues has identified some apprehension – the most significant regarding the issue of affordable housing (City of Saskatoon 2004b). Gentrification of the area is a cause of concern; current residents believe that housing prices will increase resulting in the displacement of lower income residents. The authors of the *South Downtown Concept Plan 2004* have acknowledged the apprehension of the residents; however, their position is that the likelihood of in-migration by higher income residents will be slow due to competition from other residential areas in the city. Their concern is not the gentrification itself, but rather the pace in which upgrading could occur:

The residential portion of Riversdale may become more attractive to higher income purchasers and renters, but this is likely to be very slow... In the event that change occurs at a pace that could be dysfunctional, there are strategies that can be adopted to mitigate this...

(2004b)

Revitalization attempts utilizing urban renewal and gentrification are under way in other cities besides Saskatoon; however, they are experiencing negative public

reactions similar to the protests of the past. Saskatoon, on the other hand, has experienced little or no opposition to the redevelopment of its South Downtown area and southeastern portion of Riversdale; it remains to be seen if this changes as the project progresses and the real implications of employing urban renewal and gentrification strategies emerge.

5.6 Chapter summation

While there are both positives and negatives to the riverbank redevelopment plan and the South Downtown revitalization proposal, it remains to be seen if the current undertakings in the areas accomplish the goal of revitalizing their respective locations. There is cause for concern among some groups residing close to the redevelopment sites; however, the general consensus among the majority of Saskatonians is that the City has waited long enough for implementing a revitalization scheme in the South Downtown and adjacent riverbank.

The thesis concludes with a chapter outlining recommendations regarding facilities and services to be included in this new South Downtown plan; these are based on the socio-economic traits of Saskatoon residents that were examined in Chapter Three and are compared to elements that are already planned for the current South Downtown proposal. The work concludes with sections on the contributions of the thesis, limitations of the study and, finally, implications of the research.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

Regarding overall findings of this thesis research, Statistics Canada census data was analyzed for the purpose of defining the socio-economic characteristics of the residents of Saskatoon in order to suggest facilities and services that should be included in the South Downtown revitalization proposal. In looking at the data, it was quickly obvious that the socio-economic traits of the populations in six neighbourhoods that surrounded the South Downtown redevelopment site differed from the remainder of the population. As such, the census tracts that corresponded to these neighbourhoods, termed central neighbourhoods, were analyzed separately from the remaining census tracts.

Data pertaining to issues such as age, income, educational attainment, employment/unemployment, household information, and aboriginal and visible minority populations were reported for each of Saskatoon's census tracts. The central neighbourhoods were compared to the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon as a whole, as well as against the remaining census tracts. The findings are as follows:

- Regarding age, the CMA of Saskatoon, including the central neighbourhoods, has a relatively young population, with over a quarter of the population under the age of nineteen.

- Generally, the central neighbourhoods' residents are more economically disadvantaged than the remainder of Saskatoon's residents,
- Residents in the central neighbourhoods have significantly lower educational attainment levels compared to other Saskatonians,
- The central neighbourhood residents also have higher unemployment rates,
- Households in the central neighbourhoods are more likely to be headed by single-parents, and,
- The central neighbourhoods have much higher concentrations of aboriginals.

Analysis of the social and business organizations currently found in the Riversdale neighbourhood reveals a lack of health services such as dentists, hearing clinics and first aid services. The neighbourhood also lacks a preschool centre, even though almost nine percent of the population in that area is under the age of five. And, while Riversdale has four retail grocery outlets in the vicinity, they are small and over-priced.

After determining the socio-economic characteristics of the population of Saskatoon, and more specifically, the residents of the central neighbourhoods surrounding the South Downtown, and reviewing the social and business organizations found in one of the neighbourhoods, recommendations regarding facilities and services to be included in the redevelopment have been made. They are presented in the following section.

6.2 Recommendations for a Saskatonian-friendly South Downtown area

Already a large part of the current redevelopment that is planned for the South Downtown and its adjacent riverbank area is geared towards a general and representative user population; planned elements of the site such as a Farmer's Market, Immigration Hall, library, community park, public/cultural attraction and green space areas are not necessarily elitist or restrictive in character. However, spaces for restaurants, shops and theatres are slated for other parts of the redevelopment and, as yet, specific tenants for these venues have not yet been secured; it remains to be seen if the tenants approved by City Council will be of an exclusive nature or not. Nevertheless, as appropriate users for the redevelopment project must include all Saskatonians, the residents of the central neighbourhoods must not be forgotten. And although the above-mentioned "neutral" components of the South Downtown are of value not only to the majority middle-classes of Saskatoon but the central neighbourhoods as well, additional facilities and services specifically targeted towards the central neighbourhood residents would further enhance their use and enjoyment of the finished South Downtown area. Although designed with central neighbourhood residents in mind, these additional elements would not be exclusively for their use, but for the use of all Saskatonians.

Spaces for children

The central neighbourhoods and Saskatoon as a whole contains a relatively young population – almost one-third is under the age of nineteen – therefore, facilities targeted towards children and teenagers, including parks and playgrounds, should be included in the South Downtown redevelopment. This need had been recognized and

addressed by the authors of the current plan; green spaces with playground equipment are slated for land immediately adjacent to the river's edge, and on the western portion of the property baseball and soccer fields, including a field specifically for younger children (6-12 year olds), are also in the works.

Other ideas to create a child-friendly South Downtown include the staging of children's theatrical productions in one of the performance spaces planned for the area. These performances should be free or very low cost in order to facilitate the attendance of the central neighbourhoods' residents. Specific performances geared to a variety of age groupings (2-5 year olds, 6-9 years old and 10-13 year olds) would allow every child to be active and participate in the happenings in the South Downtown. Also, a summertime children's street festival would work to include the city's young residents in the revitalized South Downtown; the concept plan allows for the closing off of streets in the area in order to host special events such as the one mentioned above.

To allow for the inclusion of teenagers (13-19 year olds), a skate park would work to draw youth into the area. A teenage "hang-out" space would also be beneficial; teenagers would pay a small drop-in fee for the use of a pool table, ping pong table and lounge area, under the careful supervision of qualified adults.

Programs for the downtown's senior population

Due to the large elderly population residing in close proximity to the South Downtown, a senior citizen centre would be useful in the redevelopment area. Along with providing a space for scheduled clinics and other health services, the space could also accommodate a variety of programs to satisfy the social needs of Saskatoon's

senior citizen residents. Along with hosting card game clubs, the space could also have senior-level exercise classes, and be able to host other special events and activities.

Programs for lower-income residents

Due to the central neighbourhoods' low incomes and dependency on government subsidies, the South Downtown is the logical choice for the location of job training services, as well as other community programs such as budgeting classes, nutrition information sessions, child rearing seminars and the like. A modest *Community Help Centre* consisting of one or two classrooms and administrative offices could be situated on the South Downtown property, which is within walking distance and/or easy bus access from the central neighbourhoods. Already, a structure is planned for the area; *Riversdale Square* is slated for the southwestern corner of Avenue A and Nineteenth Street. One of the functions of the structure is purported to be "community events and programs" however, full details, including what programs would be offered, are not yet available (City of Saskatoon, 2004).

Education centre

In order to combat the low levels of educational attainment that plague the majority of residents in the central neighbourhoods, and in keeping with the theme of the above *Community Help Centre/Riversdale Square* notion, additional rooms for daytime and evening adult education classes could be included in the structure. The education division could offer high-school equivalency diplomas (GEDs) as well as preparation courses for adults desiring to return to school at the technical and college levels.

Services to aid single parent households

As a service for single-parent households, daycare for babies and toddlers, and pre-school for young children, could be offered at a nominal fee or no cost for families living in the central neighbourhoods. Daycare and pre-school services could also be available for other members of the community from outside the central neighbourhoods, depending on availability. A need for pre-school services was determined by the review of social and business organizations in the Riversdale neighbourhood. After-school programs for school-aged children could also be offered; all services could be located in the *Community Help Centre/Riversdale Square* structure.

Including aboriginal and visible minorities in the South Downtown

In order for Saskatoon's aboriginal and visible minority populations to feel included in the South Downtown revitalization scheme, elements of the various cultures must be included in both design and form throughout the site. Already the concept plan has included a giant native-inspired dream catcher as a major landmark; also, an Immigration Hall is planned for the *Riversdale Square* structure in order to honour recent immigrants to Saskatoon. Other facilities that would aid in the inclusion of aboriginals would be the creation of a living heritage museum based on the origins of the aboriginal populations of Saskatoon; it would serve as a forum for the impartation of aboriginal customs, traditions, history and language to the younger generations. Also, it could be the basis of a job creation program for the aboriginal community.

Other

As determined by the review of social and business organizations located in Riversdale, a large grocery store, and a community health centre providing hearing clinics and general, non-emergency first aid care should also be included in the South Downtown redevelopment.

6.3 Furthering the theoretical discussion

The literature review (Chapter Two) examines the unique context of planning in Canada and provides insight on current planning matters affecting our urban areas. In order to further the theoretical discussions of that chapter, the contributions of the findings of this thesis are reviewed on the subjects of urban renewal, gentrification and Harvey's circuits of capital theory.

6.3.1 Urban renewal and gentrification

While issues including urban renewal and gentrification are undoubtedly salient elements of Canada's planning past, they are not topics contained to yesteryear. As evidenced in the example of Newcastle upon Tyne in the United Kingdom, as well as aspects of Saskatoon's South Downtown redevelopment proposal, urban renewal and gentrification are still prevalent themes in contemporary urban planning. However, compared to the urban renewal program that began in the 1950s, and gentrification in the traditional sense that was widespread throughout the 1980s, there are differences in these issues at present.

Urban renewal began as a federally funded program meant to improve the housing conditions of working class populations in Canada. This approach to revitalization later became known as the “federal bulldozer” due to its methods of razing entire neighbourhoods and relocating the site’s original tenants in housing projects often built on the same site. It was thought that the construction of such housing projects was the way to eradicate social problems that accompanied low-income residential areas. Urban renewal in the present day encompasses the same action – demolition – however the reasoning and logic behind the action, as well as the intended use for the cleared land, have changed. In current revitalization projects such as Saskatoon’s South Downtown, urban renewal-type demolition makes way for the implementation of a wide-scale redevelopment plan slated for a large parcel of land. In the Saskatoon example, a handful of residential properties in Riversdale are to be destroyed in order for the western portion of a revitalization plan to take shape. In this way, urban renewal of the 1950s is vastly different from urban renewal today; land is not cleared for the purpose of bettering existing residents’ housing conditions or curing social problems, it is cleared as part of a larger revitalization strategy. Also, the new uses for the site tend to be different from past urban renewal; instead of remaining single-use (residential), the site is to encompass a mixture of uses: retail, commercial, residential and recreational.

Regarding gentrification, although it still occurs in the traditional sense – private individuals upgrading dwellings in older, inner city neighbourhoods – it has taken on a different connotation when used in conjunction with present-day revitalization strategies. Gentrification has become a generic term used to describe an

increase in the social status of a neighbourhood due to an influx of higher-income populations into areas traditionally inhabited by lower-income, blue-collar groups. This alternate definition disregards important attributes concerning the term's participants and processes. In the example of Newcastle upon Tyne, the primary participants have changed from private citizens to governmental agencies as, in this specific situation, gentrification has been structured as government policy. The City's *Going for Growth* strategy calls for the construction of middle- and upper-middle income housing where a lower-income neighbourhood once stood, igniting protests by citizens concerned with the displacement of the site's original tenants and diminishing affordable housing stock. These two negative issues continue to plague gentrification in the conventional definition, as well as in the modified meaning of the term.

It is interesting to note that some cities (such as the above-mentioned examples of Newcastle upon Tyne and South Downtown area of Saskatoon) utilize a combination of urban renewal and gentrification processes to achieve revitalization goals. Urban renewal action clears the proposed site of run-down residential structures so that higher-quality condominium units, live/work lofts, and other commercial, retail, and recreational use buildings can be constructed on the site. Gentrification occurs because these replacement buildings are targeted to higher-income groups, compared with the lower-income tenants that had resided on the site, thereby resulting in an increase in the social status of the area.

6.3.2 Harvey's Circuits of Capital

Harvey's Circuits of Capital theory as a model of urban change is pertinent to this thesis study in that it provides an explanation as to the possible processes and factors that are the causes of change in Canada's urban environments. The findings of this thesis are consistent with Harvey's Circuits of Capital theory; in addition, this work also furthers a generality of the concept.

Harvey's theory postulates that change in urban form is due to flows of capital into and out of an area, its core supposition is that capital takes precedence over social needs. The findings of this thesis concur with this assertion, and provide an example of a revitalization plan that has disregarded the human element; Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative pursued capital-intensive plans with fervour, while paying little attention to the social needs of the city's lower-income residents. As stated above, the findings of this thesis also contribute to the theory; Harvey postulates that the built environment will only attract the capital required to update, maintain or replace aged structures if the buildings are located in a neighbourhood or area that is perceived as constituting a safe investment; he states that these "safe" areas are in close proximity to affluent neighbourhoods. The findings of this thesis extend the notion of a safe site to include areas that possess one or more distinctive attributes. In the example of Saskatoon's South Downtown, the site's riverbank location is a natural draw for the flow of capital into the area.

6.3.3 Furthering the theoretical discussion: Conclusion

The aim of this section is to further the theoretical discussion begun in the literature review and to consider how the thesis findings contribute to our understanding of the issues raised. Regarding urban renewal and gentrification, the definitions and uses of the terms have evolved since their early beginnings; as such, the present-day usage of the words has been examined and the concepts' involvement in contemporary revitalization strategies has been reviewed. Concerning Harvey's work on urban change theory, consistency between the Circuits of Capital model and the thesis findings has also been recognized. Also, an extension of the theory's generalizations based on findings of the thesis has been proposed.

6.4 Conceptual and methodological implications of the study

The research for this study stemmed from a need to determine the facilities and services that are required by the user population of Saskatoon's revitalized South Downtown based on the socio-economic characteristics of the City's residents. As no known studies of this nature exist, the findings of this thesis are beneficial to the professional planning community both conceptually and methodologically.

From a conceptual viewpoint, the entire notion of using socio-economic census data in the determination of revitalization components may be employed in other Canadian cities currently contemplating revitalization strategies for their own inner city areas or downtown cores. While this concept is not a revelation *per se*, nevertheless it has not been done before. Most, if not all, of the revitalization projects that have been attempted in Canada and other first-world countries have been solely based on their

expert planners' and politicians' ideas for the area. By using concrete data such as census data, a more complete and accurate picture of the user population of the revitalization site can be made; as well, the situation of residents in the neighbourhoods surrounding the area can be understood thereby leading to a successful, appropriate, and sensitively pursued revitalization project.

Methodologically, and in the case of Saskatoon, the research required that the census data of the City's residents be divided into two categories (central neighbourhood census tracts and remaining census tracts). This was necessary due to the distinct character of the central neighbourhoods surrounding the redevelopment site. If census data research for the purpose of determining facilities and services is employed in other locales undergoing revitalization, it should be noted that this distinction should not be automatic; rather, individual urban area contexts should guide decisions regarding the classification or distinction between groups of neighbourhoods or census tracts.

6.5 Limitations of the study

Limitations of this study are based on three themes: the manipulation of the census data, the recommendations of facilities and services to be included in the South Downtown revitalization project, and the limited scope of current social and business organizations present in the area.

Regarding the census data, division of the City's census tracts into central neighbourhood census tracts and remaining census tracts based on socio-economic trait generalizations and geographical location simplifies the issue at hand. The broad division insinuates that every resident in the remaining census tracts are identical to one

another, in essence, that the remaining census tracts are comprised of homogenous populations. This is not the case. Even with the central neighbourhood census tracts populations, it is recognized by this author that variations in personal socio-economic circumstances do exist. However, since only two broad distinctions are distinguished for the purpose of this study, the most logical divisions of central neighbourhoods census tracts and remaining census tracts is made.

Concerning recommendations of facilities and services to be included in the South Downtown revitalization project, limitations of the study do exist. These recommendations were made based on the socio-economic characteristics of the populations; and, bearing in mind the current proposal for the revitalization of the South Downtown, recommendations of facilities and services were made. However, no input from residents, either from the central neighbourhoods census tracts or remaining census tracts, was taken into account. While that information would have been useful in providing recommendations, it is the opinion of this author that recommendations based on socio-economic profiles constructed from census data are still valid in determining the character of the user population.

The third theme apparent in the limitations of this study involves the limited scope of study regarding the presence of social and business organizations in the study area. In this respect, only Riversdale was reviewed; the other five central neighbourhoods were disregarded. A more complete picture of the total social and business organizations located in all six of the central neighbourhoods might have changed the recommendations of facilities and services that must be implemented in the South Downtown.

6.6 Conclusion

The revitalization and redevelopment of Saskatoon's downtown urban area has been at the forefront of the city's planning concerns for decades, and although numerous attempts and proposals have been drafted for the South Downtown area over the previous decades, Saskatoon has yet to enjoy a success in urban revitalization of the area. This revitalization of the South Downtown is of particular importance to the City of Saskatoon and its residents; the significance of the area stems from its proximity to the natural beauty of the South Saskatchewan River and the commercial heart of Saskatoon.

The three foremost past revitalization attempts aimed at creating a more vital character in the South Downtown include Moriyama's 100 Year Plan, The Mayor's Task Force Report, and Princeton Developments' South Downtown Master Plan; these proposals were aimed at transforming the location into an exclusive and upscale area, complete with high-end boutiques, trendy cafés and expensive condominiums. The intended outcomes of these redevelopment schemes was an environment that was geared towards particular users – one comprised of mainly higher-income tourists and visitors to the area, along with Saskatoon's upper-class residents. Although the exclusive nature of the past attempts were not the reasons of their failures, the majority of the residents of Saskatoon are middle-class and do not fit the profile of the typical consumer for such an elite area. The past plans failed to target and define an appropriate user population for the area; and, for the purpose of this study, it was assumed that all Saskatonians comprise such a population. It is within this context that the redevelopment of Saskatoon's South Downtown area was examined in this study.

Once again the South Downtown is facing a current redevelopment plan that is meant to completely transform the area from its current state – one of disrepair, decay and lifelessness – to one that is revitalized and filled with vitality. Given the consideration of an appropriate user population, all residents of Saskatoon, and proper planning to satisfy the users’ requirements, the South Downtown has the opportunity realize its full potential.

The social and economic attributes of both the census tracts in close proximity to the South Downtown as well as the census tracts in the remainder of Saskatoon have been examined in an attempt to define the potential users for the South Downtown revitalization proposal that was instigated at the beginning of 2003. The socio-economic profiles in this study have been compiled by utilizing applicable 2001 census data for the fifty-one individual census tracts of that comprise Saskatoon, as well as the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon as a whole. The data from Statistics Canada concerning these census tracts have been examined, and several observations have been made with regards to the census tracts that correspond to the central neighbourhoods that surround the South Downtown area; these neighbourhoods experience higher rates of unemployment, high incidence of single-parent households, low income, and low levels of educational attainment compared to the remaining census tracts of the city. Apart from the central neighbourhoods, the majority of Saskatonians are typically middle class. The implications of this research are significant; the socio-economic situations faced by the residents of Saskatoon’s central neighbourhood census tracts as well as the city’s remaining census tracts can be used in the formulation of an

appropriate and suitable redevelopment scheme for the South Downtown – one that is both socially and culturally sensitive to the resident population of Saskatoon.

Of course, full judgement of the finished South Downtown project must be reserved until it is completed. At this stage of the game, it is impossible to tell if the redevelopment will incorporate facilities and services that will aid in the inclusion of all Saskatonians as the user population. If it does, it will fulfil its potential of becoming a revitalized area open and accessible to all residents of Saskatoon, including the residents of the nearby central neighbourhoods.

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