

THE DOWNTOWN
BRANDON
DEVELOPMENT
FORUM
FEBRUARY 26, 2015

**WHAT YOU TOLD US:
SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**

Prepared in Partnership by:
Manitoba Municipal Government
The City of Brandon
Renaissance Brandon



MESSAGE FROM MINISTER DREW CALDWELL

As Minister of Municipal Government and MLA for Brandon East, I would like to personally thank all the participants who took time out of their day to attend what is anticipated to be the first annual Downtown Brandon Development Forum. It was certainly an engaging day and I was pleased to have hosted such a passionate and committed group of citizens dedicated to the future of Downtown Brandon.

It was also my pleasure to collaborate with His Worship Mayor Rick Chrest and the dedicated staff and Board at Renaissance Brandon. Their keen participation in this event demonstrated there is a strong commitment to Downtown Brandon and our mutual revitalization goals.

The Province of Manitoba actively encourages downtown revitalization efforts in the city of Brandon and provides significant operating and project funding support to both Renaissance Brandon and the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation. Through these efforts we have seen positive developments downtown, including successful projects like the Kristopher Campbell Memorial Skateboard Plaza, the new Dood Cristall Downtown Family YMCA, the Global Market, and significant housing initiatives, all of which have become cornerstones of our revitalization efforts. We are committed to continuing this good work together with our partners in the community and committed to realizing renewed vitality throughout the downtown area.

The Downtown Brandon Development Forum has prompted a renewed enthusiasm for the future of downtown. My department welcomes the opportunity to build on our working partnership with the City of Brandon, Renaissance Brandon and all those dedicated to the future prosperity of Downtown Brandon.

Sincerely,



Drew Caldwell
Minister
Municipal Government



MESSAGE FROM MAYOR RICK CHREST

A City's downtown is its cornerstone, its heart, and typically, its link to the very history of that community. Brandon's downtown has a rich past and promising future. On February 26, a robust crowd of downtown stakeholders gathered together for a day-long forum to initiate the ground work for renewed efforts for the future of Brandon's downtown area.

Let me say as Mayor, and on behalf of Brandon City Council, that I was most impressed with the turnout of passionate people from a wide variety of interests. The numerous speakers throughout the day were informative, positive and constructive. The forum initiated by Municipal Government Minister Drew Caldwell laid some framework and more particularly, the strong desire and commitment by many stakeholders to amp up efforts in revitalizing our downtown. Renewed focus within Renaissance Brandon serving in its role as a development corporation, enhanced activities by the merchant-led Brandon Downtown Biz Association, and promising developments within the private sector put Downtown Brandon on the brink of an exciting new positive direction.

I would like to commend all those who spent their day and provided their passion and enthusiasm to the process and to thank Minister Caldwell and his staff for hosting this forum.

It is incumbent on all stakeholders and interested citizens to keep building on this momentum and ensure that we turn our dreams for our downtown into actions.

Sincerely,



Rick Chrest
Mayor



MESSAGE FROM RENAISSANCE BRANDON

As major economic drivers of cities, decision makers are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic value and importance of maintaining viable downtown cores. As such, there have been widespread attempts nationwide of reversing trends and revitalizing downtowns. The challenges facing downtown Brandon are not unique, but the tools to address these challenges will have to be tailored to the local context in order to be successful. Renaissance Brandon is but one piece of the puzzle; we cannot do it on our own. In order to effect positive change and in order to revitalize blighted areas of the downtown, we need the private, public and non-profit sectors to work collectively.

Downtown revitalization is very much on the public agenda in Brandon, not only among decision makers but among the general public as well. The Downtown Brandon Development Forum, hosted by Minister Caldwell and Manitoba Municipal Government staff, brought together a range of downtown stakeholders and served as an opportunity to discuss both past successes and challenges standing in the way of downtown Brandon's future.

I would like to thank our partners, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Brandon, and specifically Minister Caldwell and Mayor Chrest, for their continued support of our efforts to revitalize downtown Brandon. I would also like to thank the businesses that have chosen to make downtown Brandon home. Small businesses are the backbone of downtown Brandon and they play an integral role in ensuring that Brandon's economy and social fabric are diversified. Finally, thank you to those who spent the day with us to discuss downtown issues and for your continued support and commitment to downtown Brandon.

Steve McMillan
Chair
Renaissance Brandon Board



THE DOWNTOWN
BRANDON
DEVELOPMENT
FORUM
FEBRUARY 26, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
About the Forum	5
Downtown Business Success Stories	7
<i>ReActive Massage Therapy</i>	7
<i>Zeke's Jewellers</i>	7
<i>The Dock on Princess</i>	8
<i>SKIN Clinics</i>	8
<i>Komfort Kitchen</i>	9
<i>Century 21</i>	9
Why is downtown Brandon a great place to live, work and shop?	11
What are some of the challenges you face when working, living and shopping in downtown Brandon?	12
What are some solutions to the challenges faced downtown?	14
Some potential projects identified	17
Next steps - items for action	18
<i>Immediate/short term actions (May - October 2015)</i>	18
<i>Midterm actions (September 2015 - February 2016)</i>	18
Conclusion	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Brandon Development Forum was held on February 26, 2015, at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba in Downtown Brandon. The forum was organized by the Minister of Municipal Government, Drew Caldwell in partnership with City of Brandon Mayor Rick Chrest and in collaboration with Renaissance Brandon. The forum brought together downtown business owners and community stakeholders to share ideas and perspectives for success in Downtown Brandon.

Approximately 70 people attended the forum, including invited consultant and guest lecturer Joe Minicozzi, who spoke to participants about the economic productivity of downtowns. Mr. Minicozzi's presentation was an engaging look at downtown revitalization and heritage preservation in comparison to the model of urban sprawl. He discussed the principles of land value economics, provided a property and retail tax analysis of the economic advantages of commercial development downtown, and outlined the importance of community design to successful downtown development.

Following Mr. Minicozzi's presentation, **five local businesses shared their story of success in the downtown** - Reactive Massage, Zeke's Jewellers, the Dock on Princess, SKIN Clinic, Komfort Kitchen and Century 21. These businesses summarized what they considered to be the advantages and disadvantages of their downtown location.

Delegates listed some of the advantages to working and doing business downtown:

- the history
- heritage of buildings
- affordability
- visibility
- walkability
- distinct identity and unique downtown culture
- the mutual support of other downtown businesses

Some of the disadvantages included:

- issues of perceived safety
- poor lighting
- low foot traffic
- parking

Later in the session participants were divided into groups to discuss advantages and disadvantages impacting downtown development and to brainstorm solutions.

Potential solutions fell into four key themes:

1. infrastructure investment
2. stakeholder commitment
3. legal assistance/co-ordination with regulations and codes
4. enhancing community appearance/safety and perception.

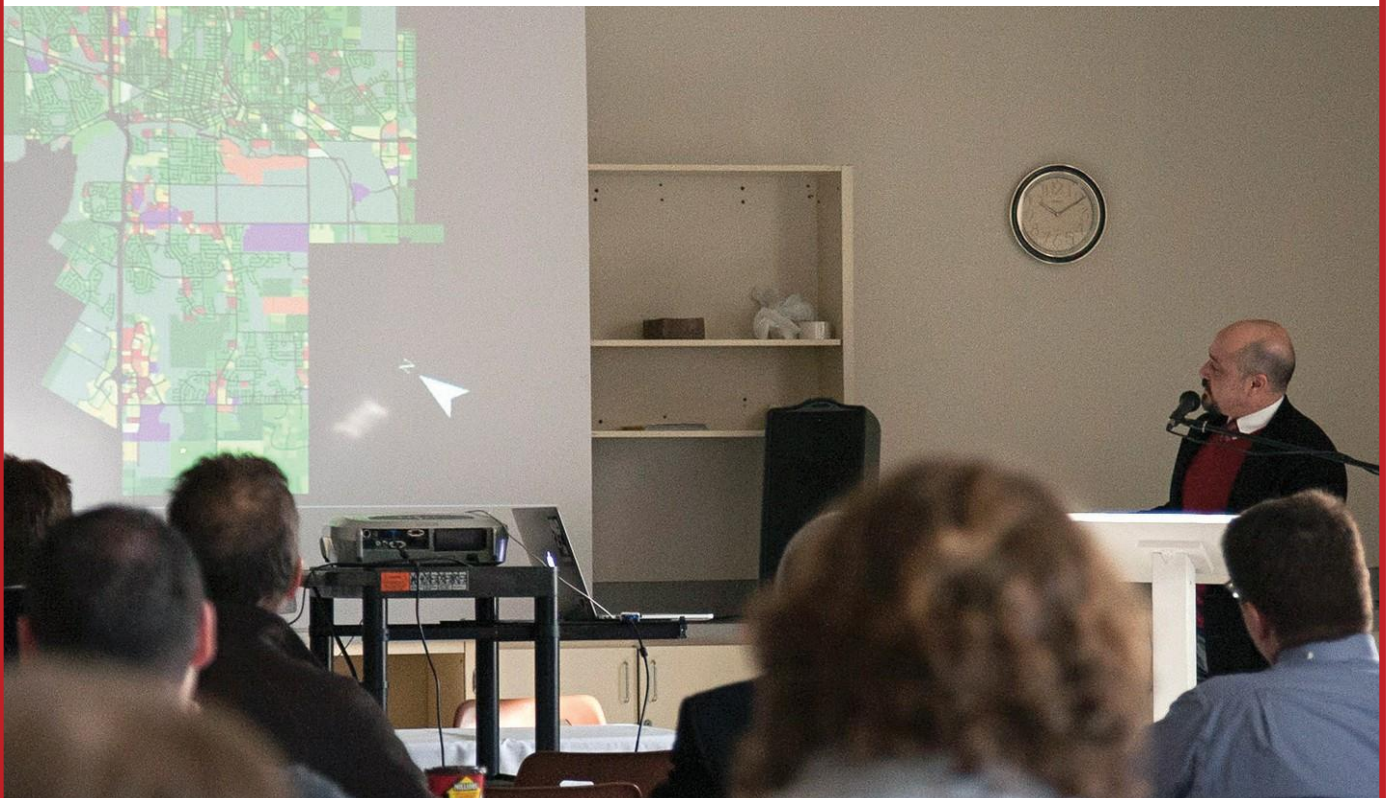
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Specific projects targeted to make a dramatic difference to downtown Brandon included:

1. the redevelopment of McKenzie Seeds buildings
2. the assembly of property at 9th Street and Princess Avenue for destination commercial development
3. the redevelopment of the historic Strand Theatre
4. the redevelopment of the historic downtown Fire Station #1
5. enhancing the downtown public streetscape
6. a continued focus on housing development.

These projects confirm to the objectives of the City of Brandon *Downtown HUB Secondary Plan – Bylaw 7010*.

Items identified for action were placed into a timeline with immediate/short term goals (June – October 2015) and medium/long term goals (October 2015 – October 2016 and onward). It is anticipated that the Downtown Brandon Development Forum will be an annual event where community stakeholders and government can check in on the progress of their mutually identified priorities.



Joe Minicozzi discusses an economic map at the Downtown Brandon Development Forum.



The City of Brandon's Principal Planner, Ryan Nickel, outlines the vision of the downtown HUB.



Michael Cox, architect, discusses his views on downtown Brandon with forum participants.

ABOUT THE FORUM

The Downtown Brandon Development Forum, held on February 26, 2015 at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba in Downtown Brandon, was an all day invitation event organized by the Minister of Municipal Government - Hon. Drew Caldwell in partnership with Mayor Rick Chrest of the City of Brandon and Renaissance Brandon. The forum brought together downtown business owners and community stakeholders to share ideas on opportunities for a successful downtown Brandon.

In addition to community stakeholders and business owners, the forum also invited consultant and guest lecturer Joe Minicozzi to speak to participants on the topic of downtown economic productivity. Mr. Minicozzi is the principal of Urban3, a consulting company created by Asheville, North Carolina real estate developer, Public Interest Projects. Urban3's work in pioneering geo-spatial representations of economic productivity has prompted a paradigm shift in understanding the economic potency of urbanism and the economic value of well-designed cities. Their studies of cities in the United States and Canada have affected the re-evaluation of public policy and a broader understanding of the market dynamics created by tax policy.

Mr. Minicozzi's presentation was an engaging look at downtown revitalization in comparison to urban sprawl. He discussed the principles of land value economics, property and retail tax analysis and community design. For more information on Joe Minicozzi's work visit their website: <http://www.urban-three.com/>.

The Minister of Municipal Government Drew Caldwell and the Mayor of the City of Brandon Rick Chrest were both in attendance at the event and brought words to the forum delegates from their respective levels of government. Presentations from local downtown businesses highlighted success stories and the City of Brandon gave an overview of the *Downtown HUB Secondary Plan – Bylaw 7010* that governs development in the downtown HUB. The event provided a venue for open dialogue regarding the opportunities and constraints currently at play downtown and several themes were uncovered and discussed in detail during the afternoon breakout session.



The BDO offices on 10th Street

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

Two panel presentations were held during the forum led by successful local business people in the downtown. Each presenter described their business and their feelings of downtown.

Ja-On likes being located downtown, describing the downtown as having a “strong core and a vibrant soul”.

ReActive Massage Therapy – Owner: Ja-On Hillman 640 Rosser Avenue, Brandon

Ja-On Hillman and his team opened ReActive Massage Therapy at their current downtown location in 2011. They had been in the downtown since 2004 when the business had only one therapist and one room. Now with nine therapists and six rooms, their new location is in the historic Crawford Block building at 7th Street and Rosser Avenue. The Crawford Block, built in 1908, is one of downtown Brandon's many heritage buildings. Building owners and developers Cam and Colleen Wirch purchased the building in early 2011 and completed a massive renovation on the three storey brick building, that included in the end renovating main floor commercial and upper floor residential units.

Ja-On Hillman likes being located downtown, describing the area as having a “strong core and a vibrant soul”. In their current location they have all the advantages of visibility and accessibility, but not all the vehicular congestion common in other city locations along highway arterials. To improve downtown there needs to be a strong and exciting presence that draws people there.

John enjoys the historical significance of his heritage building downtown.

Zeke's Jewellers - Owner: John Zeke 902 Rosser Avenue, Brandon

The first Zeke's Jewellers opened in downtown Brandon in 1981 and moved to its current location at 9th Street and Rosser Avenue in 1986. Locally owned and operated, the Zeke's Jewellers building underwent a recent renovation showcasing the historic architecture of the 1927 building as a focal point.

John Zeke enjoys the historical significance of his heritage building downtown. When Zeke's first located downtown it was difficult to find an empty location and for many years after opening, downtown was a busy place to work and shop. Today Mr. Zeke says downtown is not the busy centre of activity it used to be and there is little foot traffic. The downtown requires more dedicated resources and a stronger social/political commitment to help revitalization efforts.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

The Dock on Princess – General Manager: Jamie Munro 1133 Princess Avenue, Brandon

The Dock on Princess opened its doors in late 2012 in a historic warehouse/garage building constructed in 1912. Committed to locally sourced food and ingredients, the restaurant identifies strongly with Manitoba's agricultural heritage and buys locally whenever possible for its food and beverage supplies. The Dock has both a restaurant and lounge complete with stage for live music and entertainment.

Mr. Munro has attributed his success to his team and to community partnerships. The challenge for downtown businesses that are open after 6:00 p.m., is that business drops off dramatically after dark. Mr. Munro believes all levels of government and local businesses need to work together to create a big vision for the downtown with the resources to see it through.



*Jamie believes the city and province need to work together on a **big vision** for the downtown.*

SKIN Clinics – Owner: Dr. Jason Sneath 1031 Rosser Avenue, Brandon

SKIN Clinics opened by Dr. Jason Sneath in 2014, after an extensive restoration and renovation of the historic Chrest/Fraser Block at 1031 Rosser Avenue. The full service medical and cosmetic dermatology clinic is the first and only such clinic operating in Western Manitoba.

Dr. Sneath identified four main issues related to improving the commercial downtown core area: vacant buildings; parking; absentee owners; and zoning. By modernizing parking services Dr. Sneath believes parking issues would be reduced and additional revenue would be generated for the city. He also suggested the city take responsibility for clearing downtown sidewalks and pass the cost onto downtown businesses. This would ensure consistently clean sidewalks during the winter months. Zoning regulations should be flexible and absentee ownership and empty buildings that are not for sale should be explored for purchase and redevelopment as such vacancies create a negative image for downtown.



*Dr. Sneath suggests **exploring options** for **empty buildings** that are not for sale.*

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

*Derek supports the changes to downtown **diagonal parking** that were undertaken in recent years.*

Komfort Kitchen - Owner: Derek Woychyshyn 835 Princess Avenue, Brandon

Located on the corner of 9th Street and Princess Avenue, the Komfort Kitchen opened in 2005 and has become a popular dining spot since opening its doors in the turn of the century building. Catering largely to downtown office workers, the restaurant also offers catering services for functions and events throughout the city. Derek Woychyshyn, a Red Seal Chef and graduate of the Assiniboine Community College Professional Cooking Course (1999) and his wife Heather, Catering Co-ordinator and General Manager, recently expanded Komfort Kitchen and added a patio when the adjoining property became vacant.

Mr. Woychyshyn has noticed many changes in the downtown since he first opened in 2005, including the demolition of two downtown hotels, the creation of the skateboard park, and the construction of the new YMCA. He believes all of these factors have had a positive effect on the area and have left room in some areas for new opportunities to better the downtown.

*Ryan sees downtown as a trendy and convenient place for **young professionals**.*

Century 21 – Sales Representative: Ryan Shields 244 10th Street, Brandon

Ryan Shields works for the Century 21 office at 244 10th Street. Mr. Shields believes that there are many benefits to being located downtown including accessibility to financial services, walkability, and the central location of the area. Downtown Brandon can be an especially attractive location for young professionals, as it can be seen as trendy and convenient. While some agents in his office are not comfortable at night in the downtown area, Mr. Shields believes safety is more an issue of perception over reality.



A street-front patio draw diners out into the sun at Komfort Kitchen on Princess Avenue



Diners enjoying the evening air at The Dock on Princess Avenue

WHY IS DOWNTOWN BRANDON A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND SHOP?

We heard from the presenters and participants that the best things about living downtown are:

Historical significance - Some have significant memories of the “good old days” of hanging around downtown as a youth when there were numerous activities available: bowling, movie theatres and a bustling mall with large department stores.

Heritage - The architectural heritage of Downtown Brandon was identified as significant as it tells the story of Brandon's history and made the downtown a unique place to be. It was felt that this factor, as in other communities around the world, was of vital importance to marketing and stimulating economic development in the downtown.

Affordability - Much of the available commercial and residential downtown buildings has been kept at a low rate due to the tax rates on older buildings. It can be more affordable to lease or rent downtown office space due to the lower costs associated with older building stock.

Vibrant daytime population - The downtown daytime crowd is diverse and there is a large population of professionals who access the goods and services in the downtown area between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. During the day when all the services are open there is a unique mixture of students, seniors, professionals, destination-bound individuals accessing services, and small business owners.

Walkability - Downtown has clear and wide sidewalks and there are a wide variety of shops and services within a concentrated area. The historic streetscaping which occurred under the auspices of the former Downtown Business Improvement Area also enhances walkability.

Visibility - Unlike other areas of the city, storefronts in the downtown all face the street and are highly visible to vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The unique and sophisticated historic architecture that defines the area makes it ideal for positively marketing the city.

Support - There are many grants and services offered to aid a downtown business. These supports are offered by both the city and province and by other agencies including Renaissance Brandon and the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation.

Community partnerships - There are many opportunities within the downtown to work together with other businesses and services. Many downtown businesses are small and are interested in working together to support others within the downtown. There is interest in formally reconstituting a Downtown Business District (BIA) so that downtown business can collectively have “skin in the game” directing investment.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHEN WORKING, LIVING AND SHOPPING IN DOWNTOWN BRANDON?

Like all urban centres, there are some challenges to being located downtown. We heard from the presenters and participants on some of the factors that make downtown a challenging place to live, work, shop and do business:

Issues of Safety – specifically after dark - This was identified as a concern due to a number of factors including limited lighting, limited downtown nightlife, and the limited number of businesses that remain open in the evening. In some cases safety is an issue for the customers; however, some owners also report a concern amongst staff when in the downtown area at night.

Parking - Parking can be troublesome during the day when accessing services - ex: banking, medical, or shopping. When renovating the existing buildings for residential development, parking requirements become a challenging development consideration.

Zoning - The HUB Secondary Plan has created strict zoning boundaries downtown. While the importance of adhering to these provisions was recognized, some flexibility should be provided.

Vacant storefronts or upper floors - A large number of vacant storefronts gives a negative impression of downtown. These vacant properties often have absentee owners which contribute to a lack of care for the property, forcing neighbouring businesses to clean, shovel snow, and so on.

Derelict buildings - Some properties are unsightly, unsafe and have been abandoned for too long, despite the derelict building bylaw.

Lack of an anchor store - There are many small boutiques, but no large anchor store to draw people to the downtown for shopping.

Low foot traffic - Many customers come to the downtown for a purpose, not to shop and visit other stores. These destination customers drive to one space, do their business and then leave the downtown. There needs to be more work done to keep customers interested and have them visit other places downtown for goods and services.

Cost of renovations - Many of the vacant spaces are older and have been vacant for some time. Available spaces require considerable renovations to meet building and fire code safety regulations, and to modernize to today's standards.



Natalia Lebedinskaia and Jennifer Woodbury, both from the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, discuss challenges and opportunities in the downtown.

Limited life after dark - There are only a handful of establishments open downtown after dark; the majority of the businesses close by 5:00 p.m.

Building codes - With the older age of downtown's buildings, the majority of properties require extensive building code renovations. Some buildings cannot be renovated to fit code and equivalency code provisions are needed.

Public perception - There is a negative perception of downtown being run down, which presents great challenges when attempting to market downtown as a safe place to be.

Lack of commitment - There have been attempts by numerous groups to work together to better downtown. Groups that form eventually fade as not enough progress is made to gain momentum. The dissolution of the BIA after major streetscaping was completed is a case in point. There is also the perception that the city has been lacklustre in its support over the years.

Lack of resources - Governments need to make a larger financial contribution to actually make a difference downtown. One downtown development agency with very limited funds cannot do it all alone.

Lack of outdoor public facilities - During large outdoor events (ex: summer concert series, parades, classic car show) there are usually no public facilities and most shops are closed. This leaves the few open businesses under pressure to provide this service to downtown visitors.

Variances - Permit applications for variances (ex: outdoor patios) expire and need to be applied for on an annual basis. These applications should be multi-year in nature and formally encouraged.

WHAT ARE SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES FACED DOWNTOWN?

We heard many suggestions from participants regarding solutions to the challenges of downtown development. Four key themes evolved:

Infrastructure investment - Infrastructure requirements for the downtown encompass a number of issues for businesses and residents. There was general agreement that a well functioning downtown is attractive, safe and friendly towards pedestrian and vehicle movement. Infrastructure challenges can be improved by:

- charging higher taxes to absentee property owners to allow city staff to clear the sidewalk of snow and provide routine maintenance
- having the city expeditiously remove snow piled up along the edges of sidewalks as part of routine plowing to allow easier customer access to meters and businesses
- encouraging Manitoba Hydro to change burnt out lights quickly to avoid darkened streets
- modernizing parking meters and creating longer term parking areas
- maintaining current parking areas so they are accessible

Stakeholder commitment - Participants discussed numerous plans, studies and groups that have been formed in the past regarding the improvement of the downtown. These groups have since dissolved and the plans and studies have been unfulfilled. Today, downtown is envisioned to develop under the HUB Secondary Plan, which has achieved consensus and validation through city by-law. A strong commitment for the future would take:

- increased funding resources to Renaissance Brandon
- working to achieving the strong HUB plan and vision for the downtown
- a strong commitment from the city to improve Downtown Brandon
- the municipality, province and local businesses working efficiently together with a commitment to improve downtown
- encouraging neighbourhood involvement, ex: helping hard to employ people by creating jobs for them like snow removal and general cleanup
- more housing grant programs to create a healthy mix of housing types downtown (high, moderate and low incomes)



Empty and under-developed lots in Brandon's downtown have excellent potential for redevelopment.

- identify gaps in types of businesses downtown – such as the need for a late-night coffee shop, daycare and other types of businesses
- create a development strategy and incentive package to fill these gaps

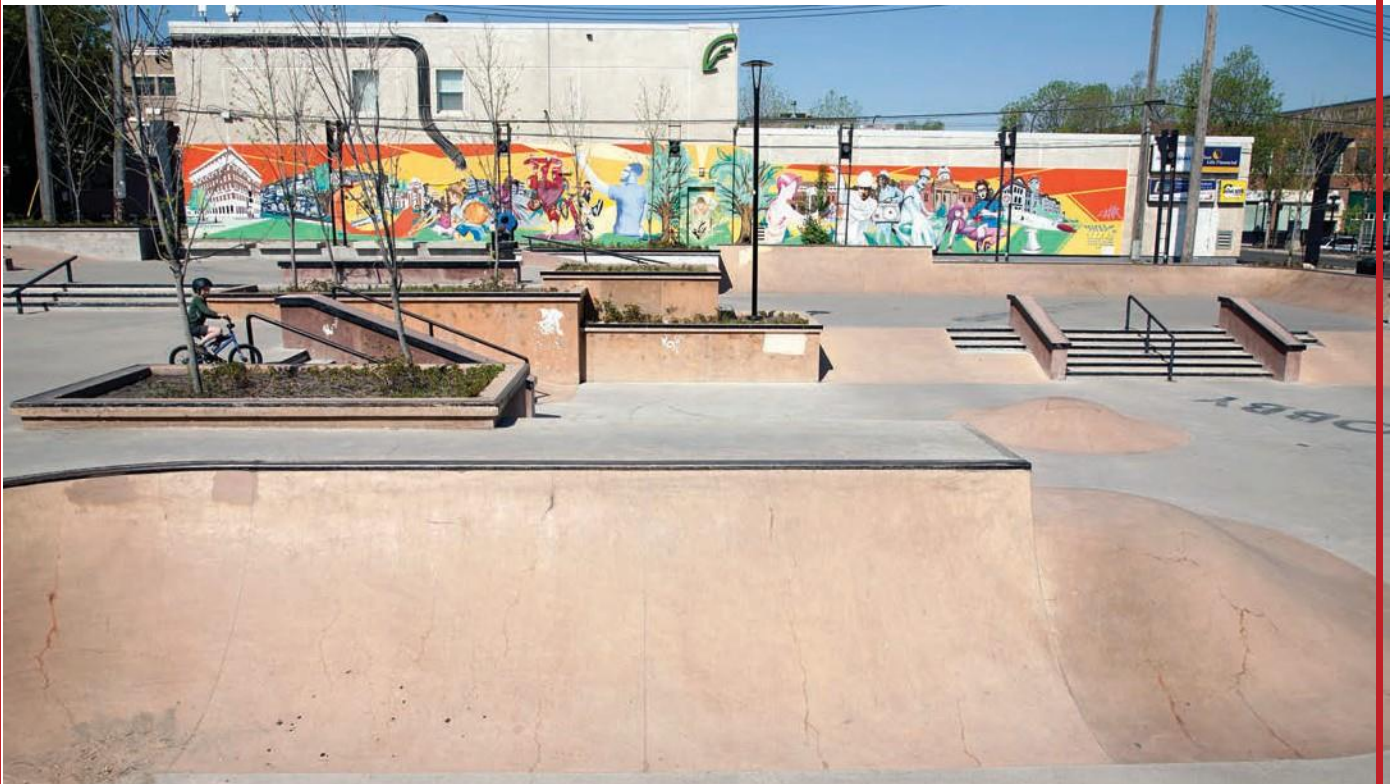
Legal Assistance/Co-ordination to comply with regulations and codes - Some issues are easily fixed, but others are more complicated and involve red tape. Part of working together involves streamlining processes and making the processes simpler. Participants identified a number of solutions to cumbersome legal regulations and codes:

- increased flexibility with zoning regulations and code compliance
- make downtown development financially viable by:
 - developing alternate building code standards or equivalencies for heritage and older buildings
 - providing more grants to developers to close costs such as tax increment financing, heritage tax credits and development grants
- increase taxes on older derelict buildings where no progressive activity is taking place to encourage development rather than allowing them to remain empty paying minimal taxes
- provide access to engineering and planning advice
- have Renaissance Brandon, as the downtown development agency, be the one-stop-shop for potential developers and business owners to get information on zoning/code requirements, grants and other programs

WHAT ARE SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES FACED DOWNTOWN?

Community appearance, safety and perception - There were varying opinions on whether it is the perception that people have. To address safety, perception and appearance, participants agreed downtown needs to be appealing and more inviting to visitors as well as potential residents and business owners. Solutions to issues of appearance, safety and perception included:

- make buildings look occupied even if they are empty – ex: art displays and window dressings make the building look more attractive and occupied
- install tree lighting on boulevard trees to enhance appearance
- increase community police presence downtown
- create a downtown security program to increase business and customer safety
- increase the amount lighting in the back lanes
- create a Manitoba Hydro sponsored program for business owners to partner on new lighting projects on their properties
- talk with potential developers and find out what they need or would like to see to make the downtown more attractive



Brandon's downtown skate park on Princess Avenue.

SOME POTENTIAL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED

The Downtown Brandon Development Forum provided an optimal venue for residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders to participate in conversation about the benefits and challenges living and working in the downtown area. Participants also identified specific projects that were either underway or could be implemented to make a dramatic difference to Downtown Brandon.

Some of the projects identified as transformational opportunities for Downtown Brandon are already underway, while others have been conceptualized but not realized to date. The projects identified were:

McKenzie Seeds

Redevelopment into residential rental units and commercial space.

The 9th Street and Princess Avenue land assembly

A place to build a possible convention complex.

The Strand Theatre

Redevelopment of this site into a community performance arts centre.

The Downtown Fire Hall (Fire Station #1)

Redevelopment into a gastro-pub restaurant with possible residential units on upper floors.



Corner of 9th Street and Princess.



The Strand Theatre on 10th Street.

NEXT STEPS - ITEMS FOR ACTION

The ideas and recommended actions suggested by participants at the forum could potentially be accomplished in a short or mid-term time frame. They are separated into immediate and mid-term actions for the province and city to work on collectively.

Immediate/Short Term Actions (June - October 2015)

1. Identify gaps in the types of businesses operating downtown.
2. Encouraging Hydro to have burnt out lights changed quickly to avoid darkened streets.
3. Talk with potential developers and find out what they need or would like to see to make the downtown more attractive.
4. Maintaining current parking areas so they are accessible.
5. A strong commitment from the city to improve downtown Brandon.
6. Encouraging neighbourhood involvement ex: helping hard to employ people by creating jobs for them like snow removal and general cleanup.
7. Provide access to engineering and planning advice.
8. Make buildings look occupied even if they are empty ex: art displays and window dressings make the building look more attractive and occupied.
9. Install tree lighting on boulevard trees to enhance appearance.
10. Increase community police presence downtown.

Midterm Actions (October 2015 - October 2016)

1. Working towards achieving the strong HUB plan and vision for downtown.
2. The municipality, province and local businesses working efficiently together with a commitment to make downtown better.
3. Charging higher taxes to derelict property owners where no progressive activity is taking place to allow city staff to clear the sidewalk of snow and perform routine maintenance.
4. Having the city remove snow piled up along the edges of side walks to allow easier customer access to meters and businesses.
- 5.



Joe Minicozzi discusses best practices from his experience with urban revitalization.

6. Increased funding resources to Renaissance Brandon.
7. More housing programs to create a healthy mix of housing types downtown (high, moderate and low incomes).
8. Increased flexibility with zoning/code regulations.
9. Have Renaissance Brandon be the one-stop-shop for potential developers and business owners to get information on requirements, grants and incentives and promote downtown Brandon.
10. Make downtown development financially viable by developing alternate building code standards for heritage and older buildings and providing more grants to developers to close costs such as tax increment financing, heritage tax credits and development grants.
11. Increase taxes on older derelict buildings where no progressive activity is taking place to encourage development rather than allowing them to remain empty paying minimal taxes.
12. Create a downtown security program to increase business and customer safety.
13. Increase the amount lighting in the back lanes.
14. Create a Manitoba Hydro sponsored program for business owners to partner on new lighting project on their properties.



The McKenzie Seeds buildings on 9th Street.

CONCLUSION

The Downtown Brandon Forum brought together many stakeholders, businesses and community members who all have a desire for the revitalization of Downtown Brandon. It is anticipated this forum will become an annual event where stakeholders and government can monitor and benchmark the progress of their mutually identified downtown revitalization priorities.

JUNE 2015

THE DOWNTOWN
HUB
THE PLACE FOR PEOPLE



City of
BRANDON

Manitoba

