



THE AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Corydon Village Neighbourhood Assessment

University of Manitoba | Department of City Planning
December 2011



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This report was created for the City Planning Studio 1 at the
University of Manitoba in conjunction with the Centre on Aging.



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

-World Health Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, many thanks to our group for putting in hard work, extra time and effort.

Thank you to Richard Milgrom and Scott McCullough for their help and encouragement, especially with the content and design.

We would also like to acknowledge the City of Winnipeg for providing the maps and Gary Strike for statistics information.

Special thanks goes to Randy and the seniors group at the Earl Grey Community Centre. We appreciate your time and constructive feedback. Ultimately, this report is for you.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was created by four students in the Department of City Planning at the University of Manitoba in conjunction with the University of Manitoba Centre on Aging. This report focusses on Corydon Village, an older established urban neighbourhood within the City of Winnipeg. The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of strengths, areas for improvements and recommendations that can hopefully enable urban communities, like Corydon, to adopt more age-friendly practices.

General population trends show that the population is getting older. As well, statistics highlight that there are two prominent age groups in Corydon: younger adults (20 – 30 years of age) and older adults (65+ years in age). Age-friendly design means that design that is friendly for all ages. This report aims to provide a synthesis of the challenges that are present within Corydon Village and design alternatives to address these concerns.

The process of this endeavour began with reading two documents that formed the foundation for this study: The World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide and the City of Winnipeg's Complete Communities guide. Then, we made three trips to the neighbourhood and recorded observations of what worked and what needed to be addressed. Afterwards, we did individual research on a particular section of age-friendly practice guidelines. In November, we met with twelve seniors at the Earl Grey Community Centre. We presented our analysis, highlighting what we thought were strengths of the community and areas that needed attention. The Earl Grey seniors' group were a lively bunch with many ideas and provided an abundance of feedback, not all of which was positive. We identified their key concerns and began working on opportunities to address them. In December, our entire studio group met with the Mayor's Senior Advisory Council to present our final analysis and designs/proposals. Finally, we met with the Earl Grey seniors' group again to present our ideas to address their challenges. What follows is a summary of feedback and proposals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Executive Summary	iii
List of Figures & Tables	vii
1. Background Information	1
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Study Area	4
1.3 History	5
1.4 Demographics	6
2. Housing	9
2.1 Observations	10
2.2 Opportunities	11
2.3 Designs	12
3. Transportation	15
3.1 Observations	16
3.2 Opportunities	18
3.3 Designs	19
4. Outdoor Space & Buildings	21
4.1 Observations	22
4.2 Opportunities	23
4.3 Designs	24
5. Social Participation	29
5.1 Observations	30
5.2 Opportunities	31
6. Conclusion	33
7. Resources	35

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

FIGURE 1: CORYDON STUDY AREA	FIGURE 2: WINNIPEG CONTEXT MAP	4
FIGURE 3: WINNIPEG TRANSPORTATION MAP, 1941		5
FIGURE 4: CONCENTRATION OF SENIORS BY CENSUS CANADA DISEMINATION AREAS, 2006		6
FIGURE 5: POPULATION CHANGE IN WINNIPEG AND CORYDON, 1981-2006		6
FIGURE 6: CORYDON POPULATION PYRAMIDS, 1981-2006		7
FIGURE 7: HOUSING AND RETAIL ON GROSVENOR		10
FIGURE 8: HERITAGE HOMES		10
FIGURE 9: AFFORDABILITY GRAPH		10
FIGURE 10: STEPS INTO HERITAGE BUILDING		10
FIGURE 11: MAP OF PROPOSED INFILL DEVELOPMENT SITES		11
FIGURE 12: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE BEFORE		12
FIGURE 13: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE AFTER		12
FIGURE 14: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE BEFORE & AFTER		13
FIGURE 15: CHALLENGING PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS		16
FIGURE 16: ENHANCED STREETSCAPING FOR CORYDON		18
FIGURE 17: STREETSCAPE		19
FIGURE 18: QUALITY SIDEWALKS		19
FIGURE 19: VISIBLE SIDEWALKS		19
FIGURE 20: STAIRS		22
FIGURE 21: CORYDON NIGHTLIFE		22
FIGURE 22: LOW DENSITY		22
FIGURE 23: UNDER-UTILIZED LAND		22
FIGURE 24: TRANSFORMATIVE AREAS		23
FIGURE 25: CONFUSION CORNER ENHANCEMENT		24
FIGURE 25: CONFUSION CORNER ENHANCEMENT		25
FIGURE 26: CONFUSION CORNER PUBLIC PLAZA		25
FIGURE 27: CORYDON PUBLIC SQUARE: AERIAL VIEW		26
FIGURE 28: CORYDON PUBLIC SQUARE		27
FIGURE 29: CORYDON ARCH		30
FIGURE 30: CRESCENTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE		30
FIGURE 31: EARL GREY COMMUNITY CENTRE		30
FIGURE 31: EARL GREY COMMUNITY CENTRE		30

I.

Background Information



Over the coming years and decades, Canadian cities face a significant demographic shift as the Baby Boomer generation becomes older and begins to experience the challenges of the aging process. To prepare for this shift, the city of Winnipeg must endeavour to develop complete communities that ensure a high quality of life for people of all ages.

The first step in this process is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each neighbourhood with respect to being an age-friendly, complete community. This report represents a preliminary analysis of the Corydon Village Neighbourhood. The purpose of this report is to offer an analysis of the area's physical characteristics, demographic profile, and the available services and amenities in relation to the City of Winnipeg's Complete Communities: An OurWinnipeg Direction Strategy (2010), and the World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide.

It is hoped that the following analysis will be used to inform two current planning processes underway in the City – the development of the Corydon-Osborne Neighbourhood Plan, and the Transit-Oriented Development opportunities around Phase 1 of Winnipeg's new Bus Rapid Transit line. There exists an opportunity to frame future development and growth in the Corydon Village Neighbourhood in an age-friendly way; something that benefits residents of all ages.

STUDY AREA

1.2

FIGURE 1: CORYDON STUDY AREA



FIGURE 2: WINNIPEG CONTEXT MAP

When referring to “Corydon Village” the area implied is contained by the boundaries of Gertrude Avenue, the Assiniboine River and Grosvenor Avenue to the north, Nassau Street, Pembina Highway to the east, Fleet Avenue to the south and Harrow Street to the west.

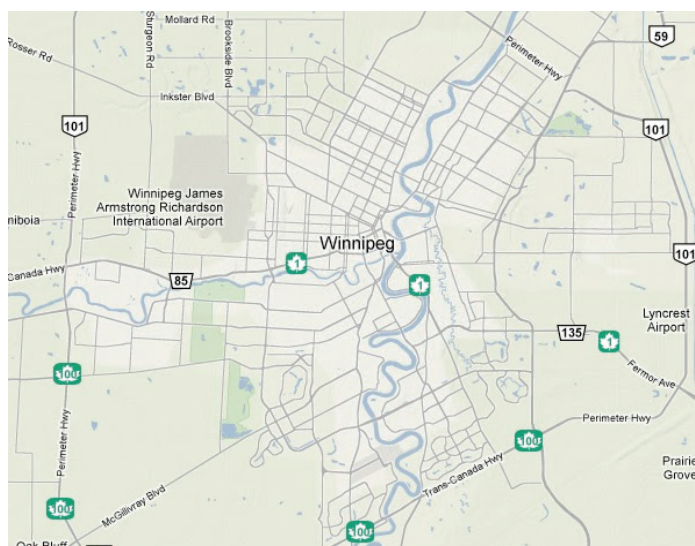
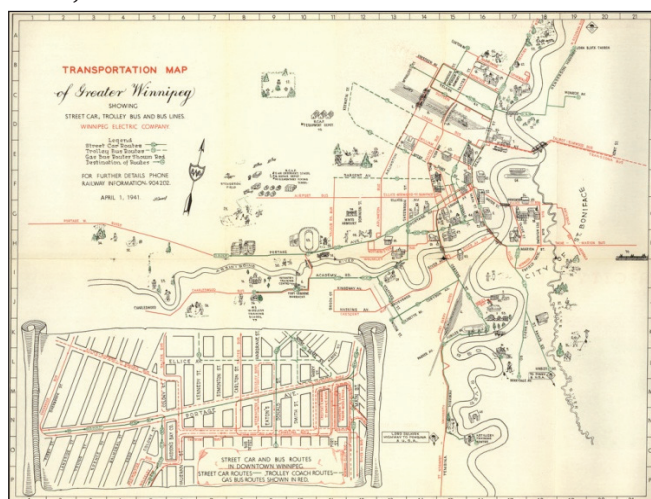


FIGURE 3: WINNIPEG TRANSPORTATION MAP, 1941



The Corydon Village area was originally settled in the 1880's by the city's upper class business community, who sought to build large homes outside of the downtown area. When a streetcar extension was constructed west on Corydon Avenue in 1907, the original settlers were soon followed by the city's working class and Corydon Avenue and Osborne Street soon became the commercial 'main' streets of the Fort Rouge District (Figure 3).

The rail yards located to the east of the Corydon neighborhood were a major employer for residents of the area, but over time as transportation operations shifted from rail to trucking the residential population began to shift to the suburbs causing the Corydon neighborhood to enter a period of decline. The exodus of some groups was an opportunity for others as the area soon saw an influx of younger individuals and households, attracted by the low rents and affordable real estate prices. In the 1990's the neighborhood entered a period of revitalization as the City and local businesses invested to redevelop Corydon Ave as a social and entertainment destination. The Corydon Village Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) formed in 1990 to promote the commercial district and help fund street enhancements. Today the Corydon Village neighborhood is a healthy community, rich with heritage character and vibrant street life. While Corydon Village has emerged as a successful community, it has done so without a community plan to guide development in the area. To address this moving forward, the city is currently in the preliminary stages of developing a community plan for the Corydon-Osborne Neighborhood. The objective of the following analysis is to ensure that future plans for the area incorporate elements that will make the area a complete, age-friendly community for all future generations.

Corydon Village has a population of 18 885. From 1971 to 2006 Winnipeg's population has increased by 18.4%. During the same time, Corydon Village's population has decreased by 23.6%. From 1971 to 1986, development in the suburbs absorbed Corydon village's population. After 1996, Corydon Village population increased slightly as a result of more urban development in the area.

When comparing Corydon Village to the City of Winnipeg, the ratio of female seniors is comparable to that of male seniors. In both instances there are slightly more older women than older men. Income levels among residents of Corydon are higher (\$38,789) than the rest of Winnipeg (\$33,726). Similar to the rest of Winnipeg, women on average earn less than men.

FIGURE 4: CONCENTRATION OF SENIORS BY CENSUS CANADA DISEMINATION AREAS, 2006

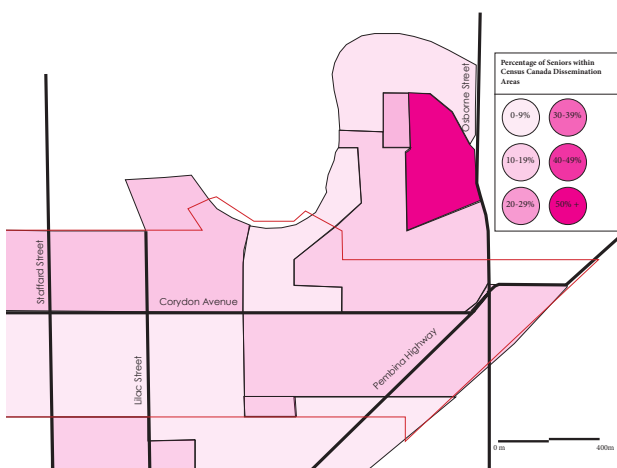


FIGURE 5: POPULATION CHANGE IN WINNIPEG AND CORYDON, 1981-2006

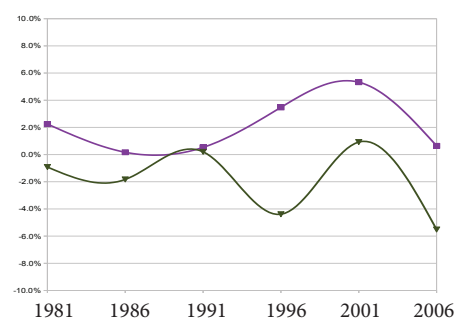
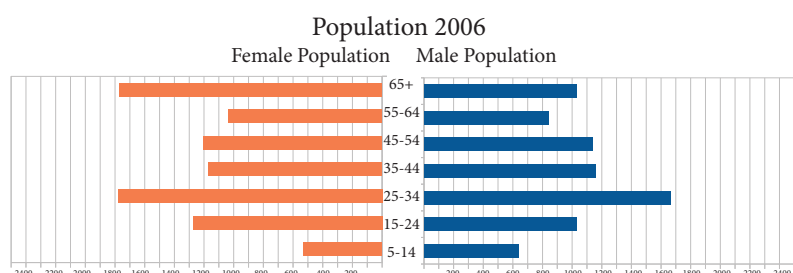
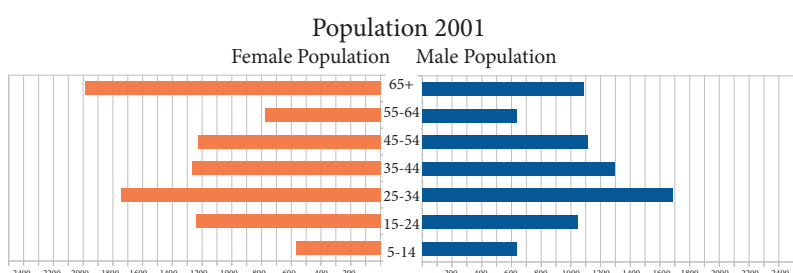
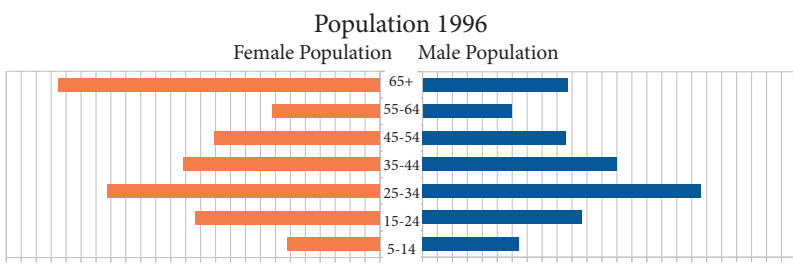
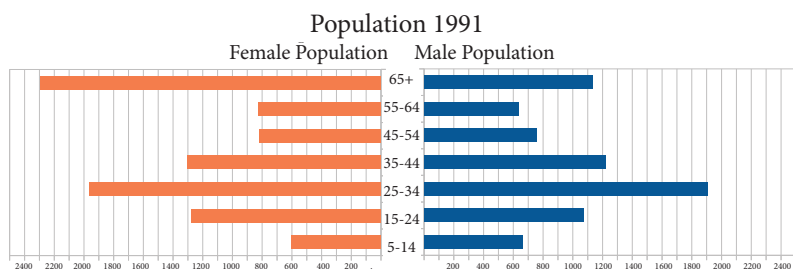
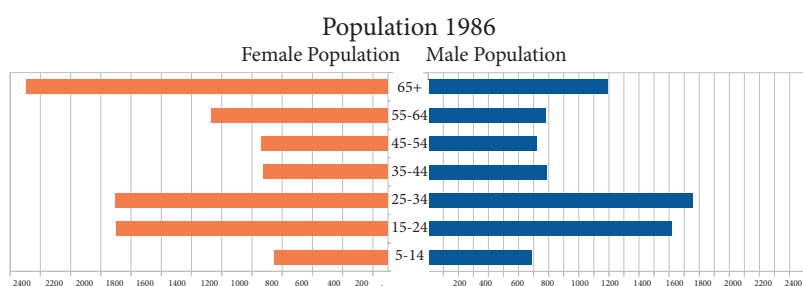
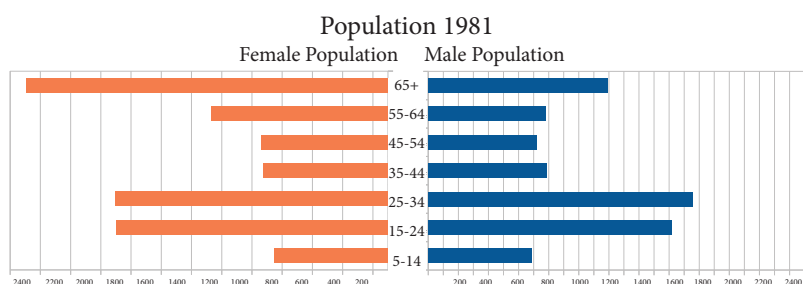


FIGURE 6: CORYDON POPULATION PYRAMIDS, 1981-2006

1981	
total population	17 130
total population over 65 years	3590
percentage over 65 years	21%
1986	
total population	17 220
total population over 65 years	3555
percentage over 65 years	21%
1996	
total population	13360
total population over 65 years	3120
percentage over 65 years	19%
1991	
total population	16 450
total population over 65 years	3420
percentage over 65 years	21%
2006	
total population	16360
total population over 65 years	3120
percentage over 65 years	17%



II.

Housing



FIGURE 7: HOUSING AND RETAIL ON GROSVENOR



Corydon Village is primarily residential. The housing stock is mostly older, from the pre-war stock. The City of Winnipeg's statistics show that over eighty percent of housing in Corydon is single family detached. However, the McMillan neighbourhood is an exception - half of the housing is higher density (apartments, duplex, etc). The homes south of Corydon are located on smaller lot sizes and tend to be single family homes. In comparison, there are more instances of medium to high density developments north of Corydon.

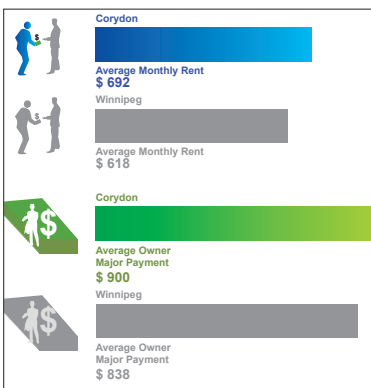
FIGURE 8: HERITAGE HOMES



Strengths

- Diverse housing options: single family detached homes, three to four-storey walkups or multi-floor buildings
- Diverse housing tenure - can rent or own
- Most housing is located in close proximity to transit and shopping
- Heritage homes are part of the neighbourhood's character
- Dense housing pattern - more eyes on the street leads to a greater feeling of safety

FIGURE 9: AFFORDABILITY GRAPH



Areas for Improvement

- Lack of spaces for older adults to age in place or stay in the community
- Seniors at our community meeting unanimously agreed that there were no independent 55+ living facilities in the neighbourhood
- Affordability: the graph on the left shows that the monthly rent/mortgage payments in Corydon are higher than Winnipeg's average
- Visible lack of ramps in multi-storey walk-ups to accommodate wheelchairs or people with mobility challenges - this is especially evident in heritage buildings

FIGURE 10: STEPS INTO HERITAGE BUILDING



OPPORTUNITIES

2.2

Proposals

- Increase opportunities to age in place/community. We would like to suggest infill development for 55+ independent living apartment buildings.
- Tax incentives to create 55+ housing or to convert existing buildings
- Grants for Ramps: lobby for funding to add ramps and to make ramps essential for future developments
- Encourage building of secondary suites - simplify permit process

Best Practices

- Secondary suites are an effective way to increase housing options and maintain neighbourhood character
- High density/mixed-use developments
- Ramps in multi-storey buildings
- Seniors' residences located on ground floors to accommodate mobility challenges

FIGURE 11: MAP OF PROPOSED INFILL DEVELOPMENT SITES



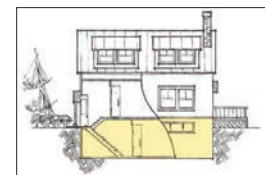
The yellow squares are sites where infill development could occur.

Examples are:

- MTS parking lot
- Shell station on Corydon near Cockburn
- Confusion Corner Bar and Grill on Corydon near Pembina Hwy



Top: Villa Cabrini, independent seniors' living in Osborne Village
Bottom: Examples of ramps



Top and bottom: the yellow spaces indicate where secondary suites can be constructed

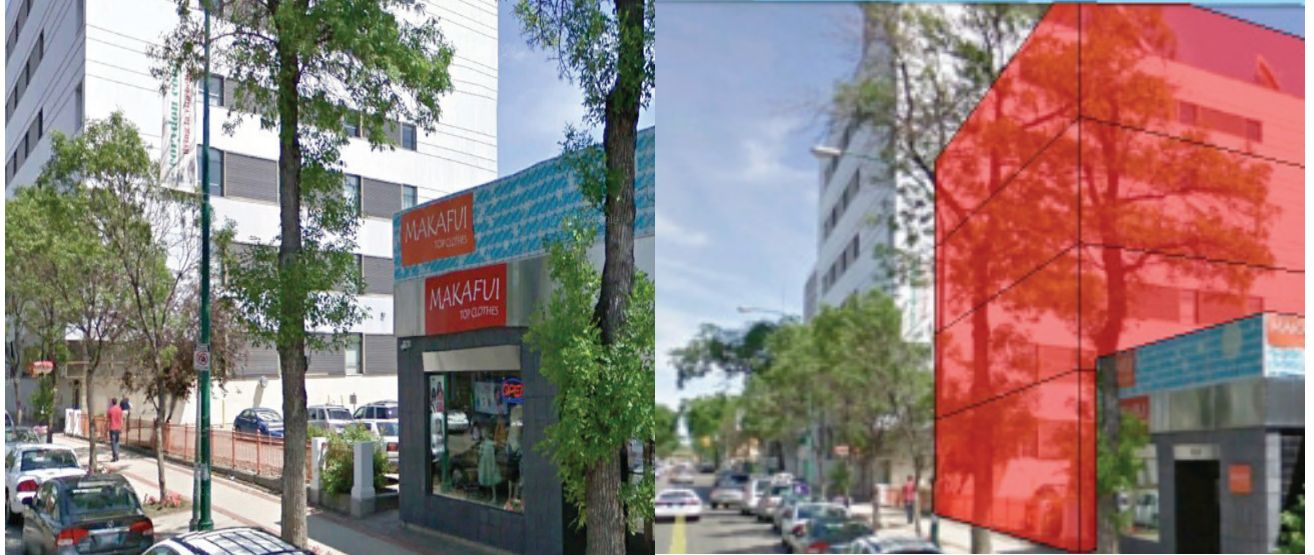
FIGURE 12: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE BEFORE



FIGURE 13: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE AFTER



FIGURE 14: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITE BEFORE & AFTER



Community Feedback

The seniors at the Earl Grey Community Centre were not sure if they would live in an infill development next to Confusion Corner, due to noise and traffic concerns. The seniors were conflicted on the MTS site - some had concerns on the feasibility of procuring the land and others thought it may be a good location due to the proximity to the street and shopping.

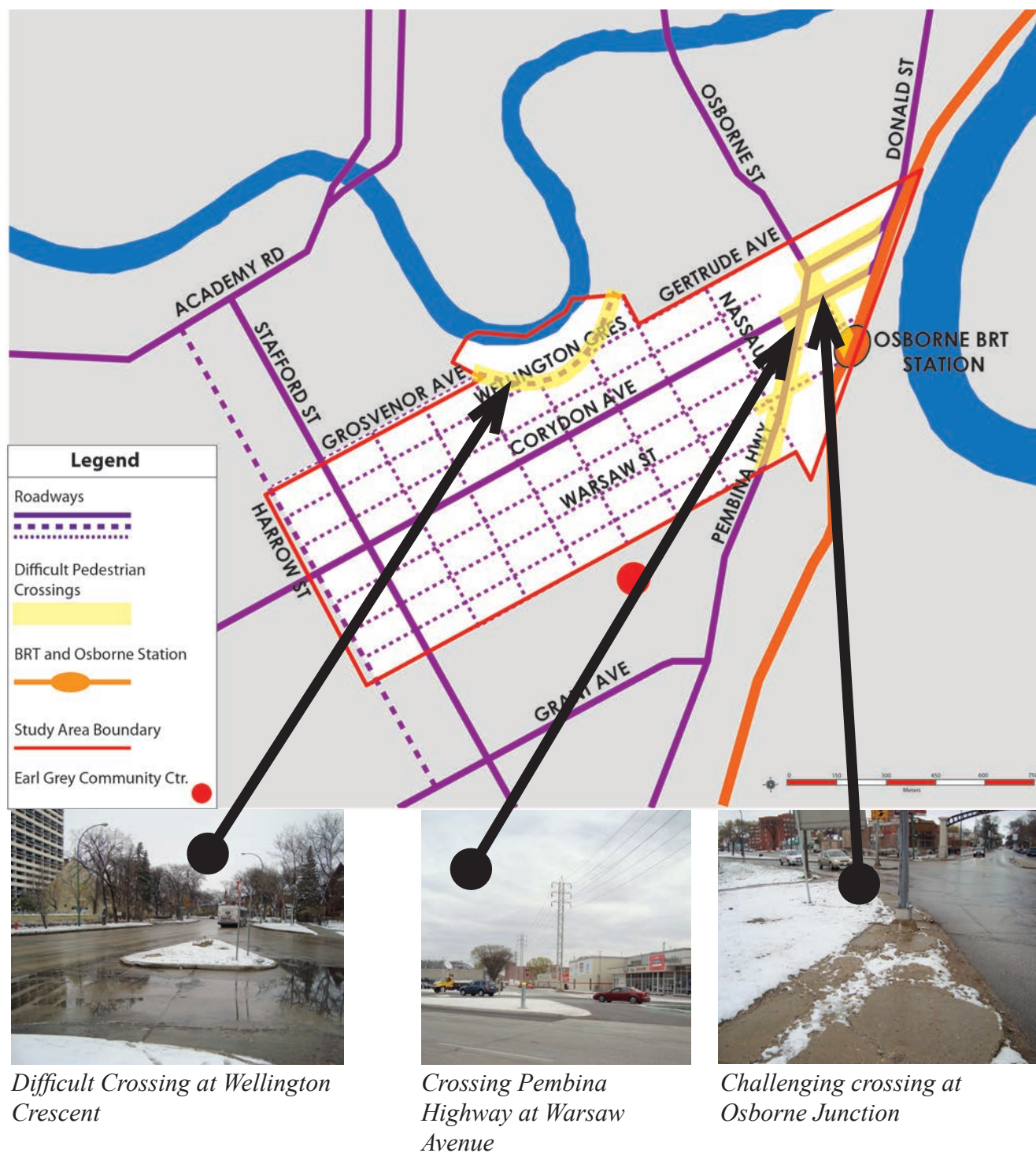
We endeavoured to pick sites that would allow seniors to be near amenities and be the most accessible.

III.

Transportation & Mobility



FIGURE 15: CHALLENGING PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS



While walkable and accessible by transit and cycling, the Corydon neighbourhood does experience challenges with auto-oriented environments. Improvements are of particular urgency due to the increased pedestrian traffic that will presumably come with the launch of the BRT system.

Strengths

- The Corydon Village area is well connected by car, transit, and active transit networks.
- In 2012 Phase 1 of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network will be operational with a new station located on Osborne St. at Jessie Ave.

Areas for Improvement

- Three areas in the study area were identified as having particularly challenging pedestrian crossings where visibility and safety were potential issues, these areas were identified as Wellington Crescent, Corydon Avenue, Pembina Highway, and Confusion Corner (see figure left).
- The condition of many surface areas and curbs along along the sidewalk on Corydon Avenue are poor, tripping hazards, in need of repair.
- Visual cues of sidewalk detailing on Corydon can be misleading to the visually impaired.
- Near Confusion Corner insufficient and inadequate crosswalks make connecting to Osborne Junction at Confusion Corner hazardous to pedestrians.
- Pembina Highway presents a significant barrier in the study area, cutting off the Corydon neighbourhood from the nearby transit infrastructure.
- Uninviting pedestrian environment with few pedestrian crossings and high vehicle speeds.

There are several initiatives underway in the neighbourhood that offer tremendous opportunities to address the various transportation and mobility challenges identified:

- City of Winnipeg Building Communities Initiative grant of \$300,000 to the Corydon BIZ for enhanced streetscaping.
- The City of Winnipeg is in the process of creating a Neighborhood Plan for the Corydon-Osborne area.
- The City together with Winnipeg Transit are constructing a new Bus Rapid Transit line parallel to Pembina Highway with a new Station located on Osborne Street.
- These initiative offer the opportunity to integrate transportation and land use planning to create a more age-friendly and complete community

FIGURE 16: ENHANCED STREETSCAPING FOR CORYDON



3.3

DESIGNS

FIGURE 17: STREETSCAPE



Source: Architecturelab.net

Example of an enhanced streetscape incorporating quality sidewalks, street furniture and lighting.

FIGURE 18: QUALITY SIDEWALKS



Source: Architecturelab.net

Example of an enhanced streetscape incorporating quality sidewalks, street furniture and lighting.

FIGURE 19: VISIBLE SIDEWALKS



Example of a highly visible pedestrian crossing

In order to improve the transportation and mobility within Corydon Village, we propose some physical design changes to the areas existing infrastructure.

- Streetscaping and sidewalk enhancements to address poor existing sidewalk conditions and better balance needs of pedestrians with those of automobiles.
- Curb bump-outs to create safer, more visible crossings
- Introduction of new crosswalks to improve connections to Osborne Junction and the future Osborne BRT Station.
- Improved lighting and colored pavement at crossings and intersections to enhance pedestrian visibility and comfort.
- Introduction of new crossings at Warsaw Ave and a Mulvey.
- Wider sidewalks, wider buffers between traffic and sidewalks and enhanced Pembina median – to mitigate the negative effects of automobiles and creating a more attractive and safe pedestrian environment.

Challenges and Limitations

- One concern with the introduction of curb bump-outs is the loss of parking on Corydon Avenue. In order to address this concern, we recommend a coordinated parking strategy. This could include residents only parking with designated passes or areas.
- There is a potential for a parking structure in this area, which could potentially be located adjacent to the MTS building on Corydon Avenue.

IV.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



4.1

OBSERVATIONS

FIGURE 20: STAIRS



FIGURE 21: CORYDON NIGHTLIFE



FIGURE 22: LOW DENSITY



FIGURE 23: UNDER-UTILIZED LAND



While relatively small, the Corydon Village neighbourhood is a compactly developed area that offers access to a wide range of housing, services and amenities. Though the neighbourhood is predominantly residential, there are a wide variety of uses, which act as a draw to groups from outside the neighbourhood.

Areas for Improvement

- Many commercial buildings with entrances along Corydon Avenue present patrons with stairs, either up or down, acting as a barrier to individuals with challenged mobility.
- The popularity of Corydon Avenue bars and eateries in the summer results in parking scarcity on the street on Corydon and adjacent street. This creates a challenge for local residents in attaining parking near their homes.
- Local residents have expressed concerns over noise and other public disturbances created by individuals believing to have patroned the bars in the neighbourhood.
- Residents have expressed that there is a lack of public space for gatherings, socializing on Corydon.

Parks and Public Space

While the streets are very green with lush vegetation, there is limited public park and green space in the neighbourhood. Existing parks are viewed by some residents as being unsafe, particularly after dark.

Low Density Development & Under-Utilized Land

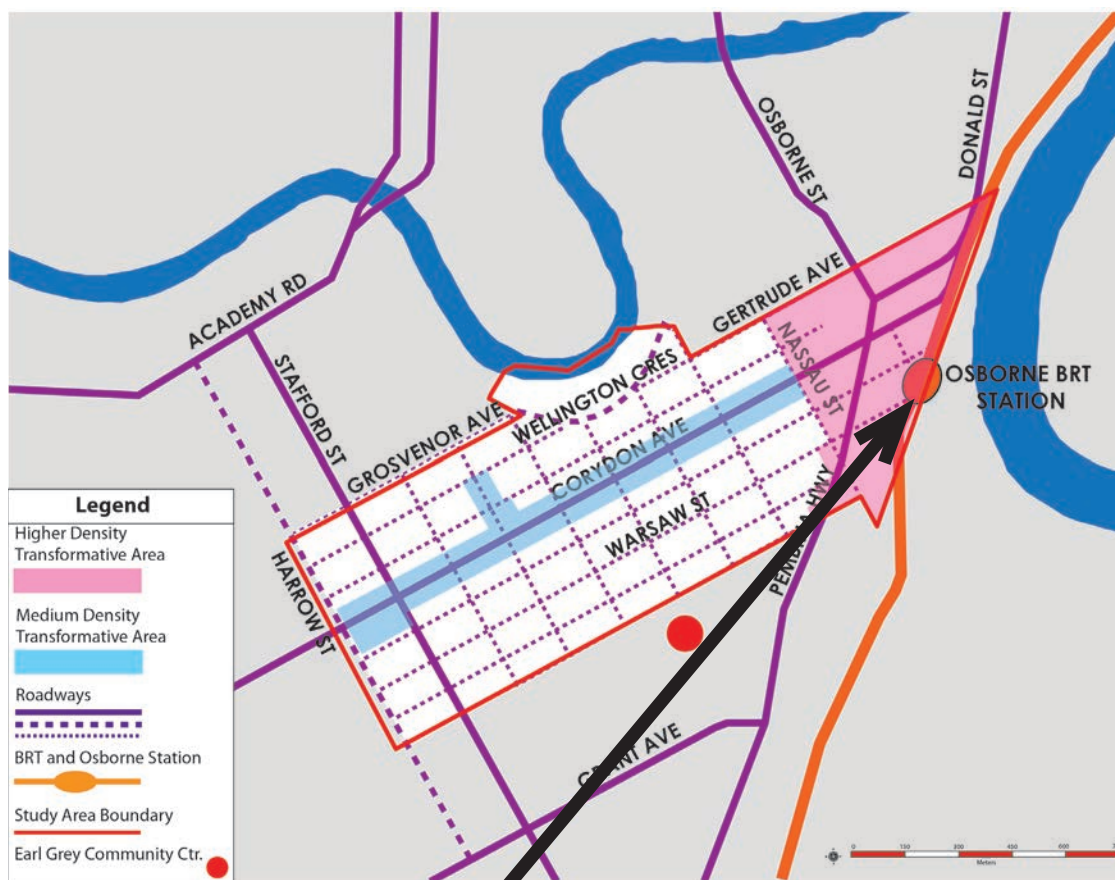
The commercial areas on Stafford, Corydon and Pembina are characterized by a low density development pattern of 1-2 storey structures, greatly underutilizing the land in this desirable area. Both Corydon and Pembina have the capacity to accommodate significantly higher density mixed used development.

OPPORTUNITIES

4.2

Two areas have been selected for increased density and development. The intersection of Corydon Avenue and Stafford Street has been identified as an area well suited for medium density development. Pembina Highway and Confusion Corner, encompassing the area surrounding the BRT station, have been identified as an ideal area for medium to high density development (see Transformative Area Map below)

FIGURE 24: TRANSFORMATIVE AREAS



With the expected increase in transit activity with the new BRT line, upgrades to Osborne Junction transit exchange are needed to create a more inviting space for transit users and local residents.

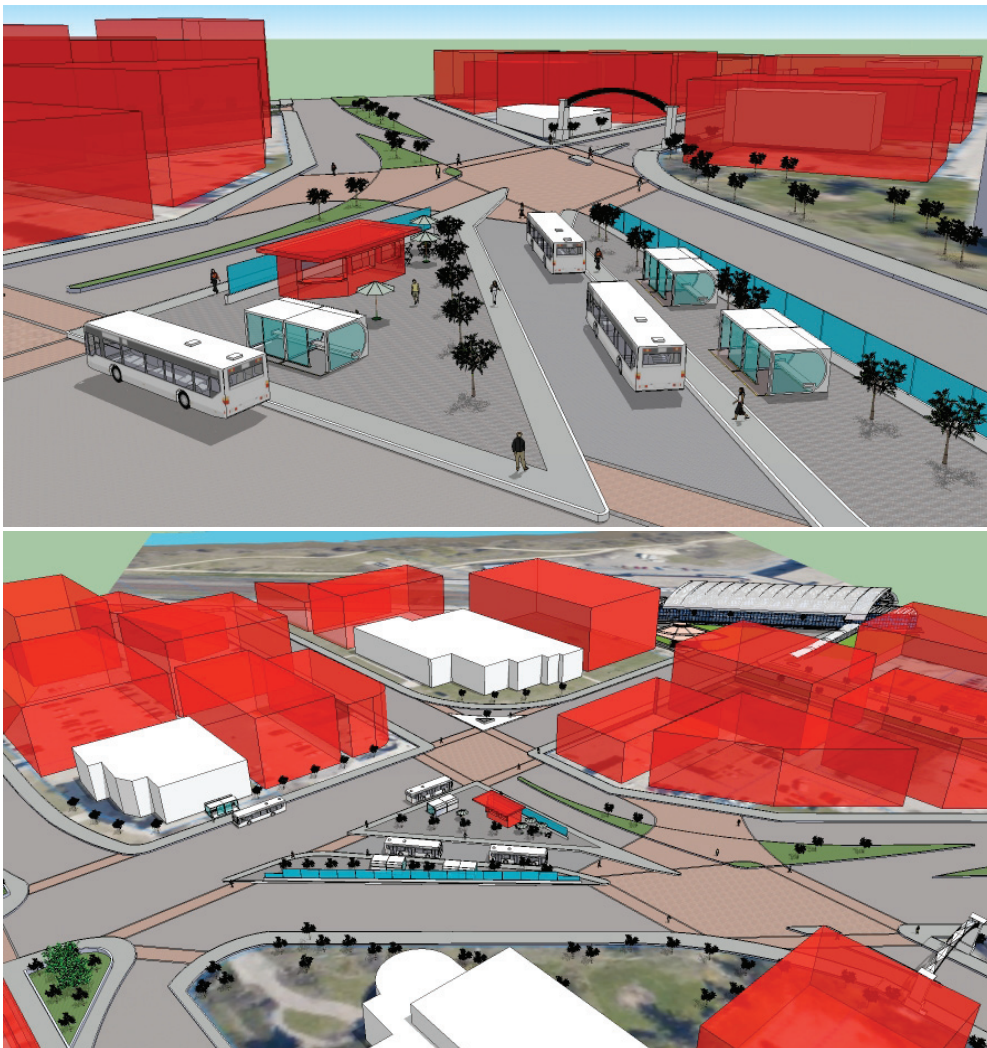


The introduction of a small food service installation at Osborne Junction could contribute to a more attractive public space at Osborne Junction

Proposed Enhancement at Confusion Corner

An enhancement at Confusion Corner is proposed to improve the pedestrian crossings at the Osborne Junction transit exchange. This is would be conjunction with an increase in medium-high density development for this area. Area residents expressed a lack of options for 55+ residential housing units in this area. This would be a potential option for this development. As a result, pedestrian infrastructure changes would need to be organized in coordination with residential development and land-use changes.

FIGURE 25: CONFUSION CORNER ENHANCEMENT



Improved design of Osborne Junction at Confusion Corner will create a more inviting space for transit users and local residents alike.

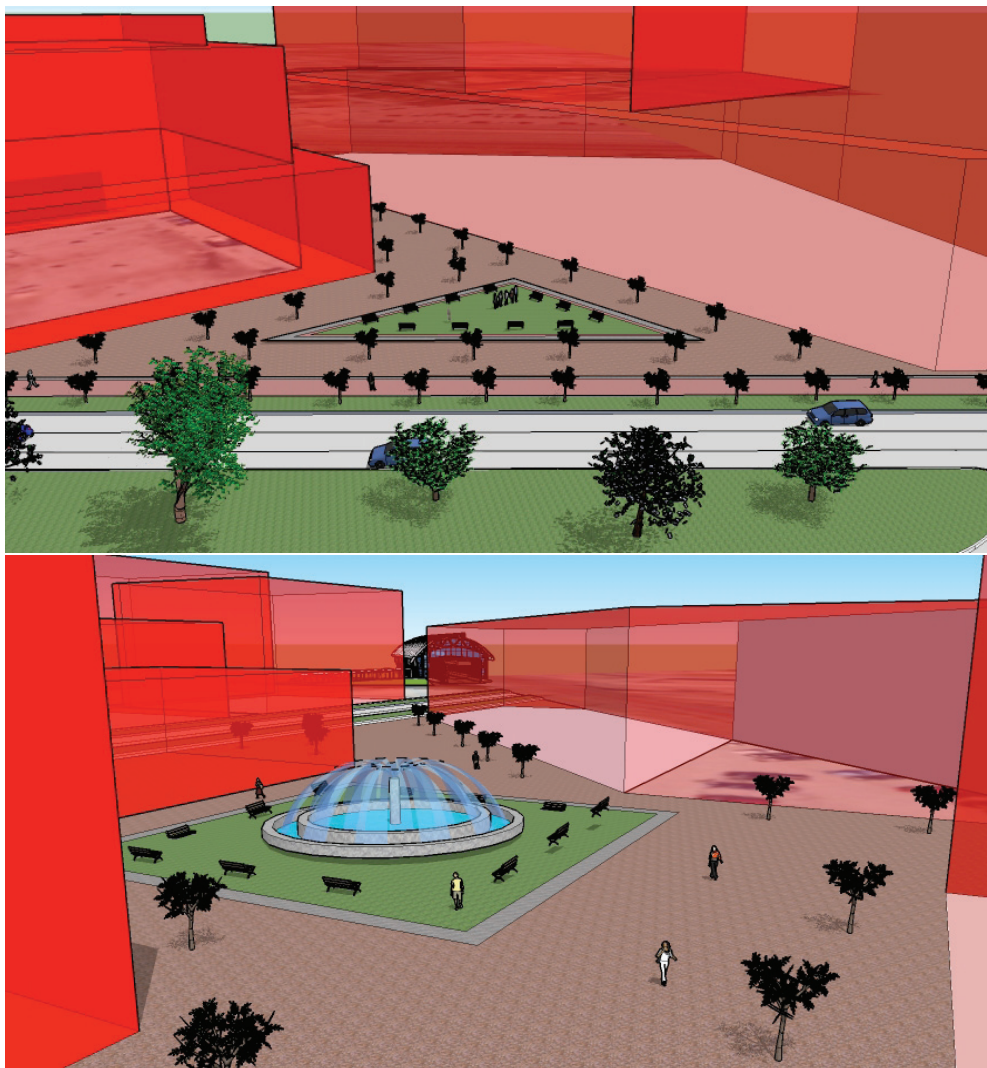
This is an illustration of what Confusion Corner could potentially look like as a higher-density, mixed used area.

The redevelopment of the lands surrounding the BRT Station and along Pembina Hwy not only offer the opportunity to develop compact, mixed-used developments but also the chance to create new green space and public gathering places in the area.

FIGURE 25: CONFUSION CORNER PUBLIC PLAZA: AERIAL VIEW



FIGURE 26: CONFUSION CORNER PUBLIC PLAZA



Proposed Enhancement at Corydon and Cockburn

The creation of a new public square on Corydon Ave at Cockburn Street through enhanced streetscaping, curb bump outs and parklets that extend the public space into the street, thus improving the pedestrian environment and creating a new public gathering place for the neighbourhood.

The effect of a public square can be achieved through streetscaping that includes curb bump-outs and coloured and textured pavement. Parklets are extensions of the sidewalk into the street which expand the public realm and create new gathering places. They can be used by businesses to expand their patios or simply to create additional green space and seating areas along the street. Parklets can be either permanent or seasonal. Curb bump outs extend the sidewalk into the intersection, reducing the distance of the crossing for pedestrians, improving pedestrian safety, and adding to the public space on the sidewalk. Concerns however may be that limited funding for streetscape improvements and removal of some parking spaces on Corydon may face opposition.

FIGURE 27: CORYDON PUBLIC SQUARE:
AERIAL VIEW



FIGURE 28: CORYDON PUBLIC SQUARE



V.

Social Participation



5.1

OBSERVATIONS

FIGURE 29: CORYDON ARCH



The Corydon arch, welcoming visitors and locals into the space.

FIGURE 30:
CRESCENTWOOD
COMMUNITY CENTRE



FIGURE 31: EARL GREY
COMMUNITY CENTRE



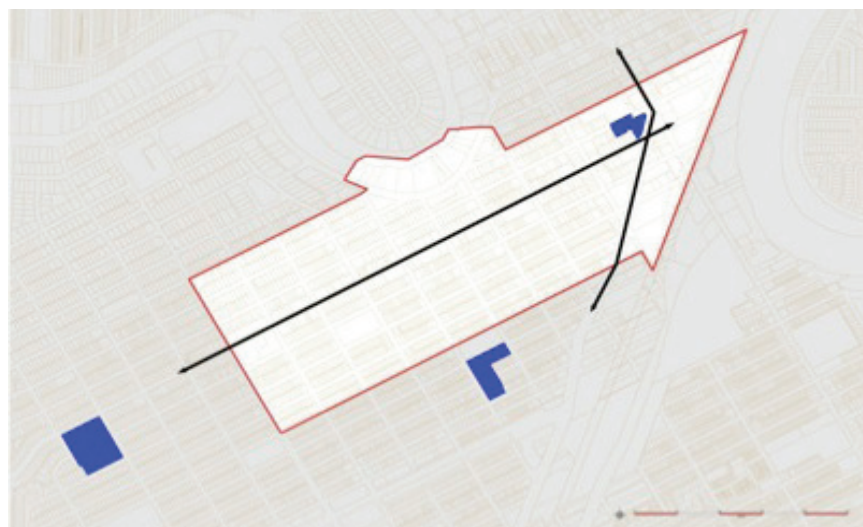
Corydon Village is a destination point for people within Winnipeg and tourists. Residents enjoy the vibrant retail core and various community events all year round.

Currently, Corydon and the neighbouring Osborne Village are undergoing a secondary plan proposed by the City of Winnipeg. This plan has highlighted the growing divide between the younger and older community. Seniors feel that the City is targeting their study and improvements towards the younger demographics and pushing their concerns aside.

Strengths

- Convenient access to health care, shopping, restaurants and lifestyle amenities (eg. fitness classes)
- Variety of activities geared towards older adults at local community centres and places of worship.
- Programming is often available at a discounted rate for seniors.
- Strong sense of community: the seniors we spoke with love their community and have lived there for decades

FIGURE 32: MAP OF AREA COMMUNITY CENTRE



Map of the community centres. Although there is one in the study area, the other two (Crescentwood on the left, Earl Grey to the south) are within close proximity.

Areas for Improvement

- Seniors do not feel heard during community consultations: feel that planning decisions are already made and imposed on the community after
- The City does not adequately address snow removal on side streets or sidewalks: slipping is a hazard and seniors do not feel comfortable shoveling every day
- Barriers to information: most lists of services are available online - what about those who do not have or cannot use a computer?
- Concerns about drinking establishments' noise levels and impacts on safety
- A general feeling that shops and restaurants cater to younger crowd
- Commercial building accessibility: no ramps



Left: the dangers of icy sidewalks.
Right: older man shoveling snow.



Corydon Avenue at night.

Proposals

Corydon's main priority is to make adjustments to the consultation process. This will increase social participation and foster a stronger sense of belonging to the community. One member of the Mayors' Seniors Advisory Council can act as a liaison between seniors groups and the City. It would also be great if a planner from the City would get involved and attend regular meetings with the liaison to share ideas and views.



Seniors at a community meeting.

Businesses can be age friendly too.

- Encourage delivery options for older adults from grocery stores
- Give awards for businesses that have age-friendly practices or are making efforts to be more inclusive to seniors



Age friendly business awards in Gimli, MB

Shuttles

- An option for transporting seniors from home to retail or health facilities
- Safe transportation during winter and ice conditions



Shuttle bus in Port Moody, BC

CONCLUSION

One of the chief concerns expressed by residents who participated in this study was that there was a lack of affordable 55+ independent living options. The older adults we spoke with enjoyed living in their community and wished to remain there. They expressed concern that as they aged, they would have to move to other parts of the city where there is more housing. We proposed infill development on certain sites to address this need. This would include medium-density (three to four-storey buildings) or high-density apartments. Suggested sites included: the parking lot on Corydon at the corner of Pembina Highway, the MTS parking lot on Corydon and the Shell gas station on Corydon near Cockburn. These would fall under the long-term suggestions, as obtaining the land and/or permits would need to be addressed first.

One of assets of Corydon Village is a variety of transportation options. Most seniors we spoke to still were able to drive, but all said they walked to nearby amenities and some took the bus wherever transit was accessible. None of the seniors we spoke with used bicycles as an active transportation option. In terms of mobility, the biggest concern was crossing Pembina Highway. The seniors also felt that crossing Corydon was problematic at times. Proposals included adding crosswalks at every intersection along Pembina Highway to Stafford. These would be pedestrian-activated or timed in accordance to traffic lights, to ensure adequate crossing opportunities while trying not to disrupt vehicular traffic. As well, the median on Pembina could be enhanced with greenery, creating an aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment. Our group also put forth designs to foster a more pedestrian-friendly Confusion Corner. This included widening and adding extra crosswalks, textured pavement and improved lighting. Finally, additional streetscaping and curb bumpouts at corners were proposed for safer pedestrian crossings on Corydon.

Commercial building accessibility was observed as a concern, as wheelchair access into shops and restaurants were often around the back entrance. Also, there were no noticeable ramps to accommodate people with mobility challenges. Other concerns were a lack of lighting in parks and an absence of a public gathering space. First, ensuring commercial building accessibility was proposed as a policy change. Lobbying for changes to building codes and by-laws would be the first step. As well, adding ramps into commercial buildings with steps could be a short-term solution. We also suggested improving lighting in existing parks, to encourage the use of what is already there. To address the lack of a public space, we proposed using the area on Pembina adjacent to the future BRT station. Renamed Pembina Plaza, this area could be utilized for mixed-use development, new green space and creating a gathering space. We also proposed Corydon Square at the intersection of Corydon and Cockburn. Streetscaping and seasonal parklets can enhance the pedestrian environment, especially during festivals and celebrations.

The seniors we spoke with expressed a concern about a lack of engagement on planning decisions, especially during the Corydon-Osborne Secondary Plan process. Seniors feel their opinions are not heard or respected. Their impression was such that most decisions were already made and imposed on them, with little consultation efforts. They do not feel hopeful that the City will listen to them. As well, the seniors feel that the City is not consistent with snow removal on the side streets or sidewalks. Finally, seniors feel excluded from the restaurants and drinking establishments that line Corydon Avenue. To address the lack of consultation, we suggested that an individual from the Mayor's Seniors' Advisory Council act as a liaison with the local seniors groups and the City to ensure concerns are heard. As well, if possible, a planner from the City could also be included in the liaison structure. We proposed voluntary snow programs to deal with the lack of snow removal. Finally, following Gimli's footsteps, we put forth the idea of handing out Age-Friend BIZ awards to businesses that already have age-friendly practices or are making efforts to become more inclusive towards seniors.

RESOURCES

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