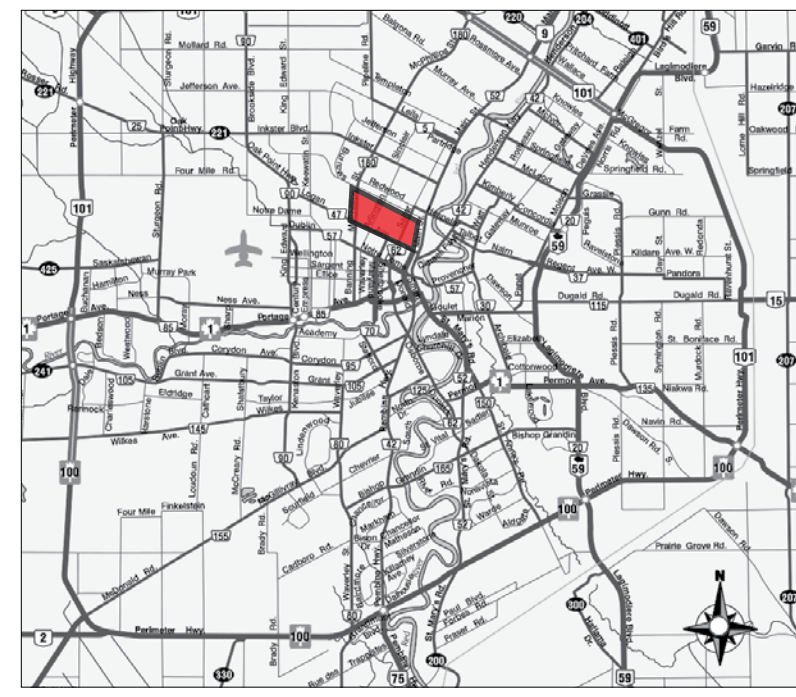


# Selkirk Avenue Overview



■ Selkirk Avenue area



Selkirk Avenue neighbourhood map

“a neighbourhood main street  
is a place you can be proud of”

**Selkirk Avenue has historically** been one of the major commercial arteries in the North End of Winnipeg. Once a bustling and vibrant hub of activity, in recent years the avenue has seen a considerable decrease in commercial activity and overall neighbourhood decline. This project offers recommendations for potential future development in the area in efforts to continue a process of revitalization.

Over the past 3 months, students of the University of Manitoba City Planning program have been accumulating information on the Selkirk Avenue area through site visits, historical and statistical research, neighbourhood comparative analysis, interviews, and a participatory planning process. Though community input was limited in number, the quality of input and insight we received was significant. The recommendations of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were very informative. We have used the information provided in interviews and meetings to develop recommendations for a dynamic and diverse future Selkirk Avenue.

University of Manitoba  
Department of City Planning  
Quincy Brown, David Danyluk,  
Tom Pearce, Stephanie Whitehouse  
Autumn 2006



## A brief history of the Selkirk Avenue area

**The history of the Selkirk Avenue area** at the turn of the twentieth century is one of struggle and hardship, perseverance and commitment to a more vibrant neighbourhood. A year after the incorporation of Winnipeg, in 1874 the area was established and an influx of immigrants predominantly Jewish and Eastern European moved into the working-class neighbourhood where poor housing and living conditions presented immediate challenges. Over the course of 50 years the area grew and prospered with the richness of culture, hard work and spirit of the community. Following

the second World War, with accumulated wealth, many North End residents left the aging housing stock for new houses in the suburbs. It is at this time of significant economic shift that many new immigrants and Aboriginal people moved into the area. They too were met with considerable challenges of poor living conditions and few employment opportunities. Neighbourhood residents still face many challenges and yet a strong sense of culture and spirit of community is present and there is a great hope and commitment for a dynamic future in the area.

left: Selkirk Avenue, circa 1920.  
right: Grocery Store on Selkirk  
Avenue, circa 1929.  
both photos from Machuruk, J.  
(2000). "The People's co-op:  
The Life and times of a North  
End institution."



## Demographics

**Statistical data is** an important tool when analyzing a neighbourhood Main Street. It offers insight into the characteristics and demographics that are relevant to the context of the neighbourhood Main Street. Census data can also show trends and how the area has changed over time while compared to the city as a whole.

The Selkirk Avenue cluster is made up of smaller neighbourhoods determined by the city. Included within the immediate area of Selkirk Avenue are; Lord Selkirk Park, Dufferin, Dufferin Industrial and William Whyte Neighbourhoods. Statistics for the area are drawn from the 2001 Census Data. Some important statistics have been highlighted below:

- The three most predominant ethnic groups in the neighbourhood are Aboriginal, Filipino and Ukranian
- Average employment income is \$21,365 in the Selkirk area, compared to the Winnipeg Average of \$38, 877
- Unemployment rate is estimated at 15% compared with city average of 6%
- Over the past 30 years the neighbourhood has seen an out migration 6560 residents
- 67% of neighbourhood residents rent their homes compared to Winnipeg average of 36.5%
- 50% of the area dwellings are over 60 years old
- 27% of area residents use public transit compared with only 14% in the rest of the city



# Selkirk Avenue Workshop & Interviews



## S.W.O.T. Analysis

### Strengths

- Ethnically diverse and strong communities
- Historical prominence of the neighbourhood in the City of Winnipeg
- Coordinated action from responsible stakeholders

### Weakness

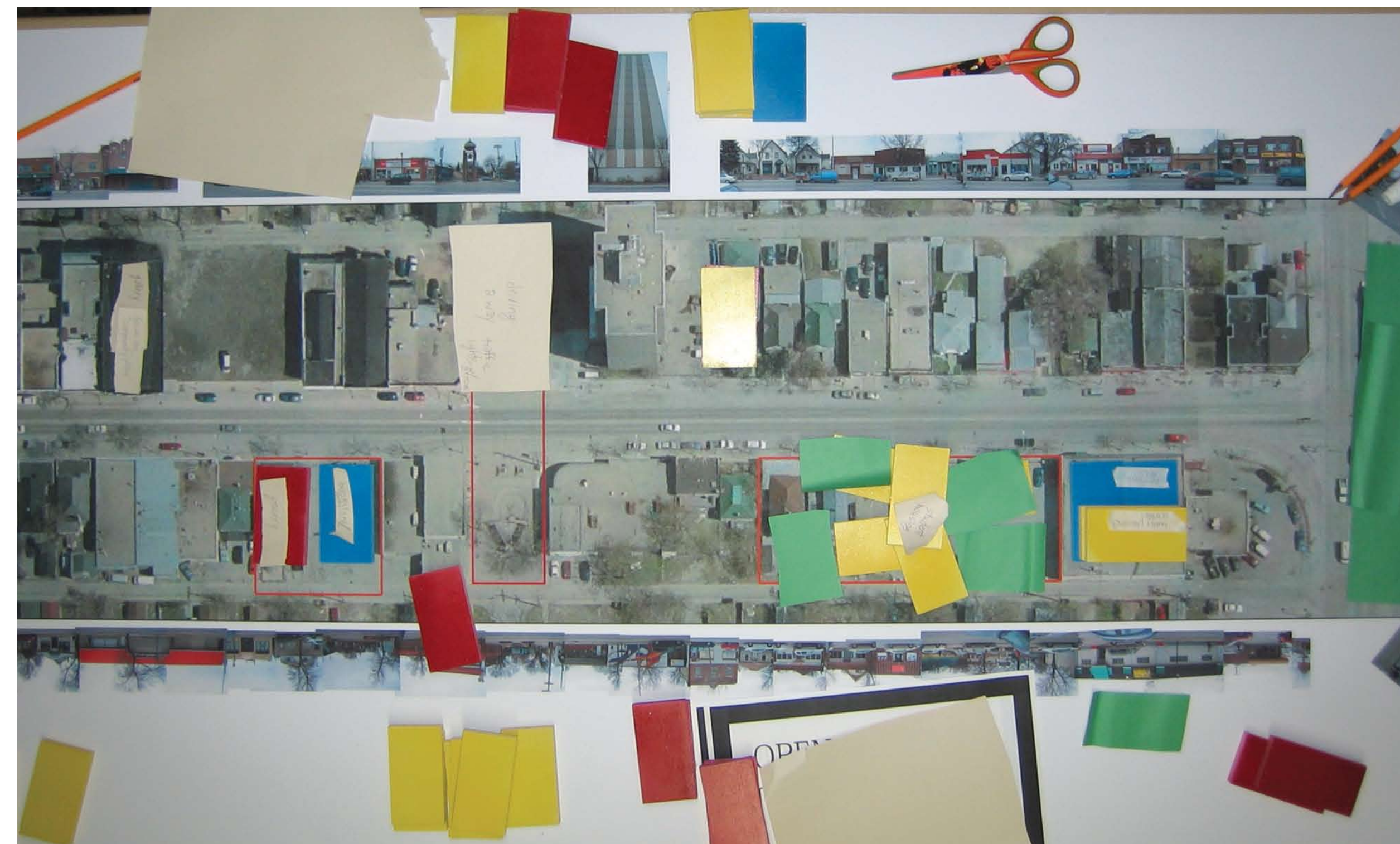
- Increasing age of the built environment and inadequate response
- The existence of fragile social conditions
- Highly transient population

### Opportunities

- Residents are actively engaged in community initiatives
- Mix of built form compliments the diversity of the community
- Underutilized resources with high capacity for growth and development

### Threats

- Broad perception of a lack of security and safety
- The expansion of organized criminal activity
- A disruption of successful initiatives



top: Design Game results (photo Stephanie Whitehouse) bottom: Potential site for improvement (image City of Winnipeg)

### Site Identification

In the process of our analysis we identified that positive change had already been initiated on two blocks of the Selkirk Avenue main street. Some of these positive changes include the William Norrie Centre, Urban Circle Training Centre, and the Palace theatre. Several sites have been identified for potential redevelopment between Salter and Andrews Streets. These sites are the locations from which our main street proposal has responded.

### Community Participation

There were three main phases of community participation. The first was at the United Way conference in October 2006 where a variety of planning tools were presented. At this conference participants brainstormed through a variety of participatory exercises including a design game and a visual preference survey, in relation to their vision for Selkirk Avenue. The second phase of the community participation included targeted interviews with key stakeholders. This process provided valuable insight into current and past initiatives on Selkirk Avenue. The third phase of community participation involved a community meeting where participants focused their ideas and vision for a two block stretch of Selkirk Avenue. Some of the design ideas included a grocery store, student housing, family resource centre and a bannock bistro.

“the greatest ideas come from the community”



A



B



C



D



E

(photos: A, C & top of page — Steph Whitehouse, B — Erin Ferguson/Reuben Koole, D & E — David Danyluk)





# Selkirk Avenue Main Street



What does a  
neighbourhood  
main street  
mean to you?

*“a hub of activity  
and a mix of residential  
and business”*

*“a focal point for activity”*

*“a main artery and  
thoroughfare”*

*“bustling restaurants,  
shops, park benches,  
& ice cream”*

*“ample foot and  
vehicle traffic”*

*“a variety of uses and  
users, well lit, active, clean  
and well maintained”*

*“great history  
and tradition”*

*“have a lot of shops with  
residences up top”*

“a place that  
attracts  
people...  
like Osborne  
Village”

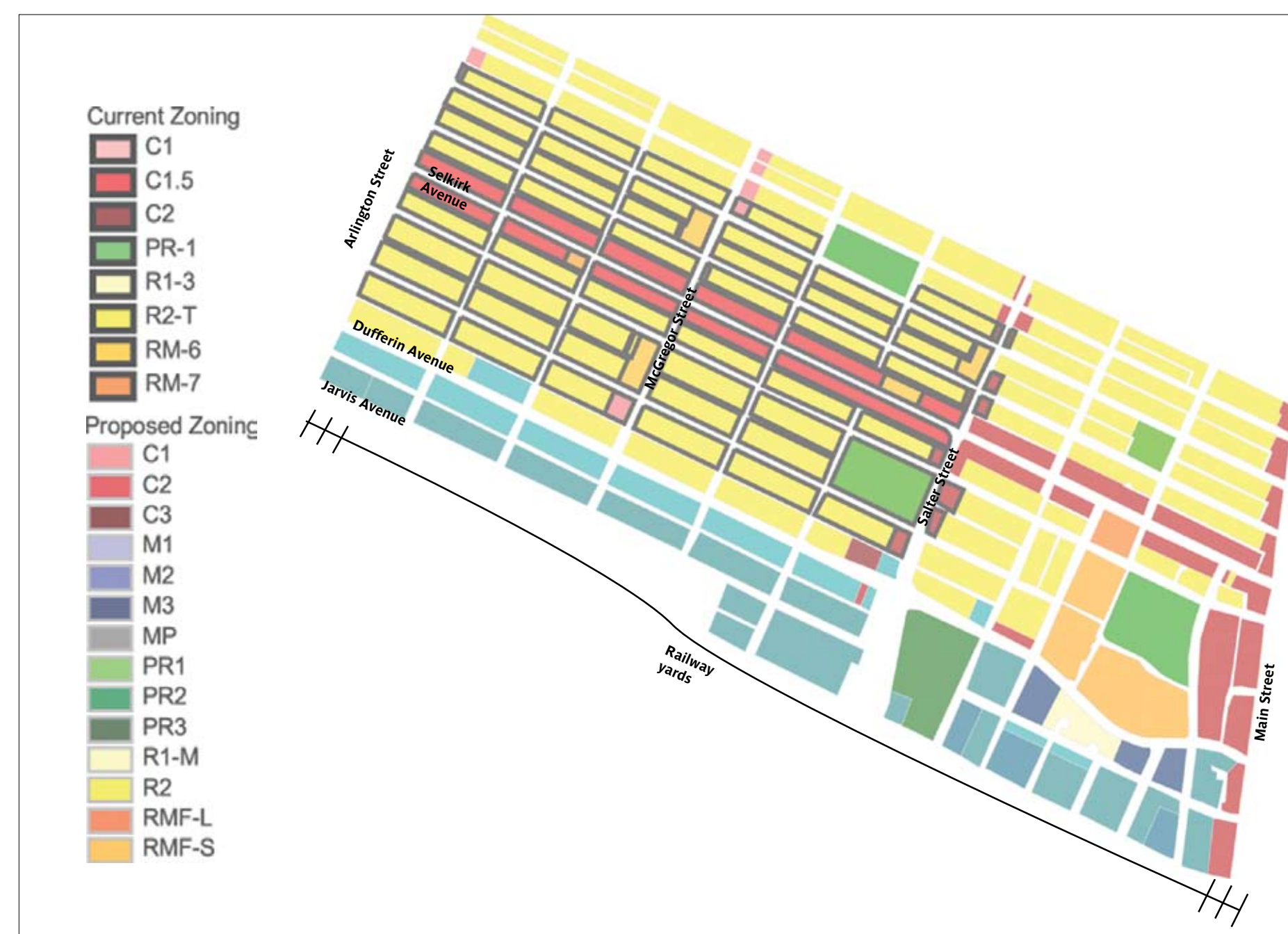
below: Selkirk Area Zoning map

(Image Erin Ferguson)

right (top): Osborne Village (Image Quincy Brown)

right (bottom): Figure-ground drawing  
showing density of buildings and proximity  
to road along Selkirk Avenue.

(Image Shelagh Graham)



## Land Use

Selkirk Avenue developed as a neighborhood Main Street in the early 1900's; at that time there were no building regulations or standards. This created a range of land uses and buildings of mixed-use. In 1911 the town planning commission began separating land uses, designating major traffic routes, establishing housing standards and instituting minimum lot sizes. By the middle of the century zoning bylaws and town planning schemes were entrenched in planning practice. Today, a few non-conforming uses still exist on Selkirk Avenue with strict zoning regulations. Selkirk Avenue is primarily zoned C2 commercial under the City of Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw.

## Built Form

The Selkirk Avenue neighbourhood has a distinct character. The Streets and Avenues are planned in a simple grid form that allows for greater density than most new suburban developments. The overall residential building style is fairly consistent throughout the area. Multi-storey, closely placed homes on narrow lots with back lanes is the typical residential form. Multi-family buildings of 2-3 levels are interspersed in the residential zones and newer high-rise apartment blocks are found on Selkirk Ave. Commercially zoned properties are limited to the corners of some residential blocks, but most are on Selkirk Ave, Main, Salter and Arlington Streets. Commercial properties are mixed among residential and institutional properties. Some residential buildings have been adapted to commercial uses. Industrial sites are located along the southern edge near the rail yards.

## Commercial Use & Social Services

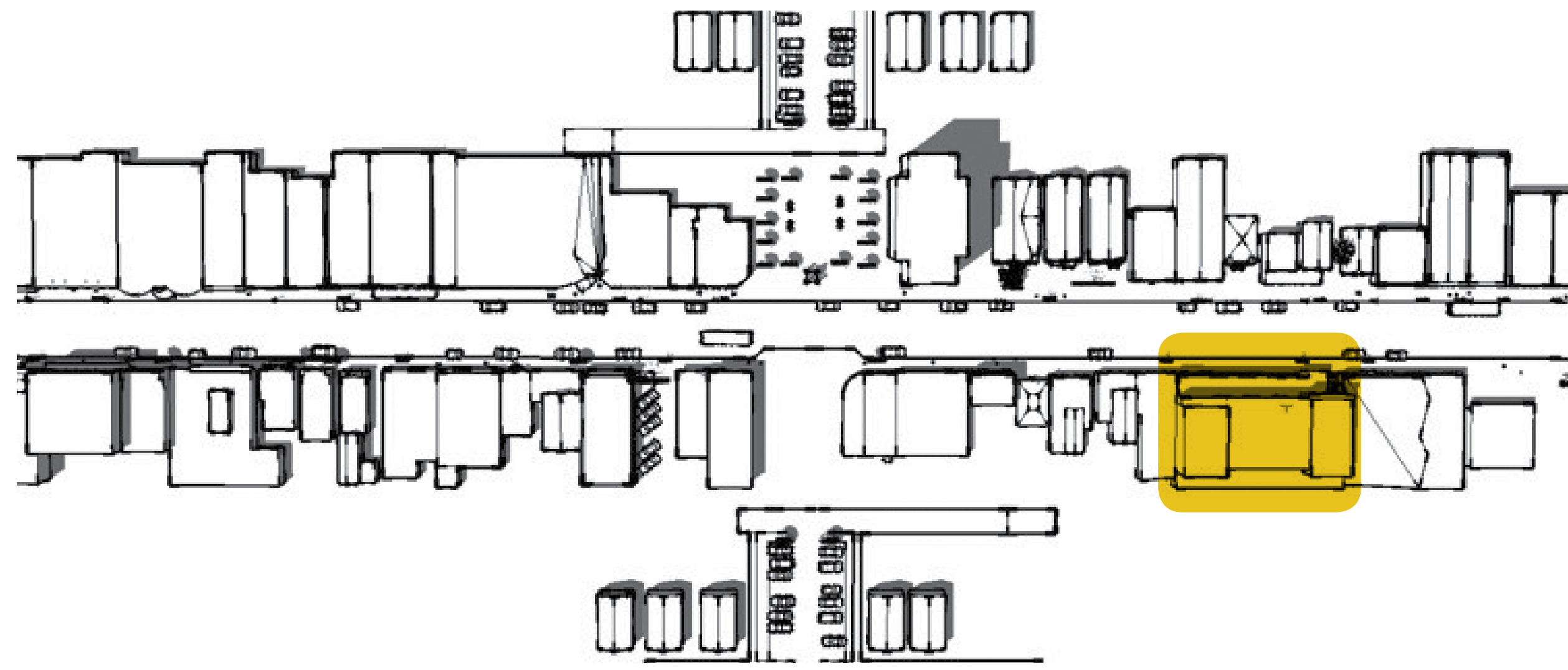
Commercial activity on Selkirk Avenue has evolved over that past century. Two factors continue to influence the economic activity; its location within Winnipeg; and the local demographic characteristics. Apart from the large industrial sites near the rail line, the bulk of economic activity remains smaller, neighbourhood-scale service and retail oriented enterprises. Business flourished in the first half of the 20th century but has since seen an overall and gradual decline. Commercial growth has been limited by development beyond the inner city. The local population has also declined and the recent increase in poverty likely contributes to a lower level of commercial activity. Despite a low number of commercial businesses in operation, local business initiatives and improved social services suggest the situation is improving.

There are over seventy organizations in the area serving the diverse cultures and communities of the neighbourhood. Several of these organizations are located on Selkirk Avenue including the Urban Circle Training Centre; North End Community Renewal Corporation; and The William Norrie Centre, a satellite campus for the University of Manitoba.





# Selkirk Avenue Main Street Proposals



above: Aerial view with proposed site modification (image: Richard Milgrom, Matthew Fitzgerald & James Moore)

below: Proposed site modification, close-up (image: Richard Milgrom, Matthew Fitzgerald & James Moore)



E

**We have observed** through our preliminary observations, analysis, interviews, as well as through community participation workshops that Selkirk Avenue is in transition. We learned that Selkirk Avenue previously better fulfilled its role as a neighbourhood main street. The solution to reclaiming its success lies with the community. From interviews and workshops we observed that the ideas shared by the community offer insightful solutions and vision for Selkirk Avenue. The rich history of the neighbourhood and the significant social capital provides a great opportunity for future success in the area. The aging housing stock and transient population pose significant challenges for community organizations. Many residents are actively engaged and responding to this challenge through community-led initiatives. Special attention will need to be paid to the safety and security of the residents and businesses to ensure success of future improvements. The demographic realities must be adequately addressed in initiatives.

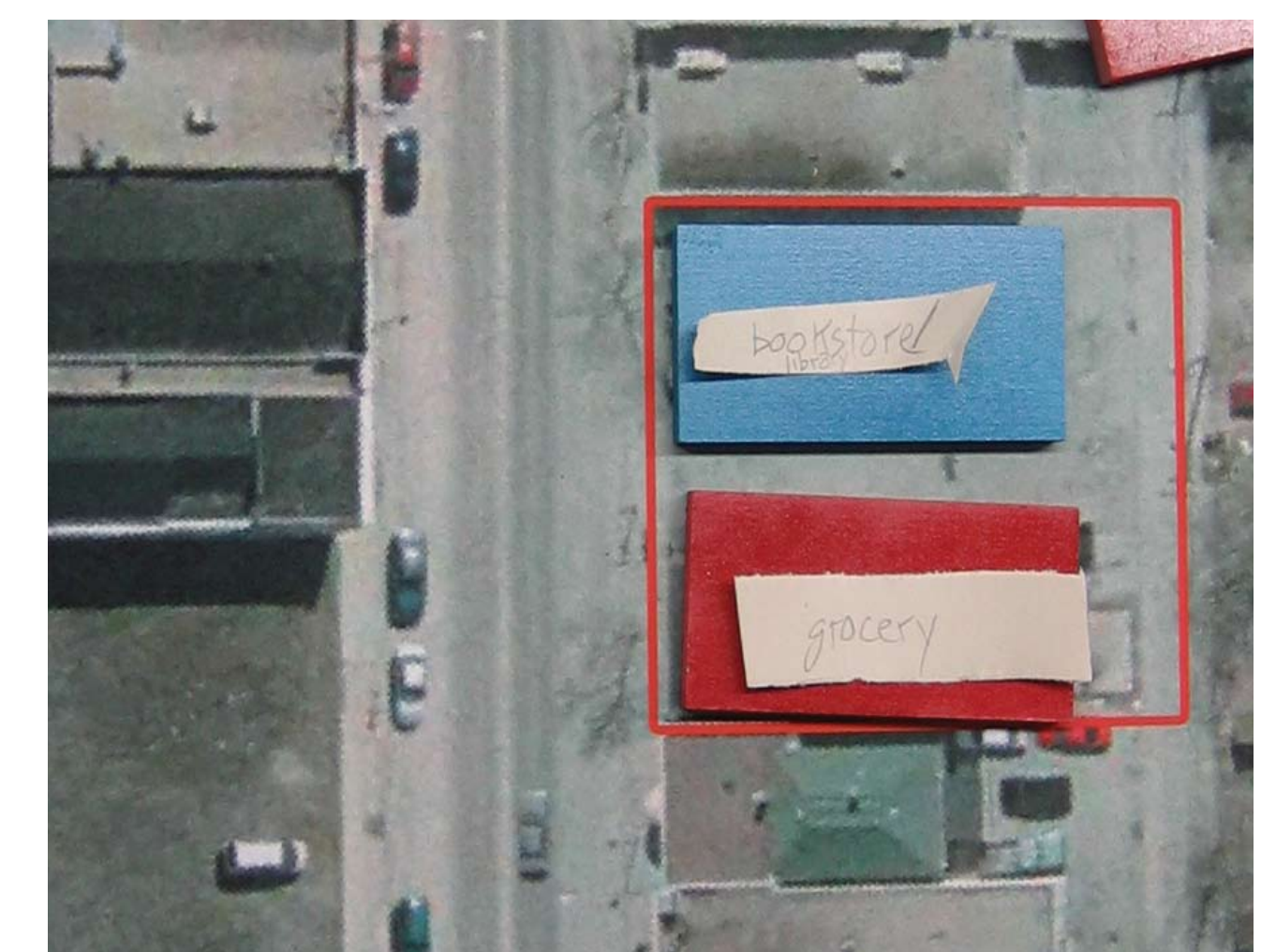
“a resource  
centre for  
kids”



**The profile of land use**, built form, commercial and social services suggest an area ready to capitalize on its assets. Interviews with stakeholders referred to popular Winnipeg main streets such as Corydon Avenue and Osborne Street identifying how their success could be adapted to Selkirk Avenue. Community participation activities also highlighted the need for a range of services and built form to compliment existing businesses and organizations to fill in the gaps on Selkirk Avenue. We would recommend that community ideas be considered in the next steps towards neighbourhood main street improvement. These recommendations must be coupled with existing programming and services that are addressing identified issues including; safety, poverty, and housing issues. The strength of community commitment and the present assets of the area suggest it is posed for success.

## Community suggestions

- The three campuses create an opportunity for student housing
- A grocery store and department store each suited to the area
- A family centre with a daycare and a “head-start” preschool program
- Creative community needs to be tapped in to
- The gaps in the street make the area even worse
- A comprehensive parking strategy is needed regardless of development
- The local bar/hotel is perceived as negatively impacting the area—it’s visibility needs to be improved



(above photos: David Danyluk, left photos: Steph Whitehouse)