

# OSBORNE VILLAGE

## Neighbourhood Analysis



### Location

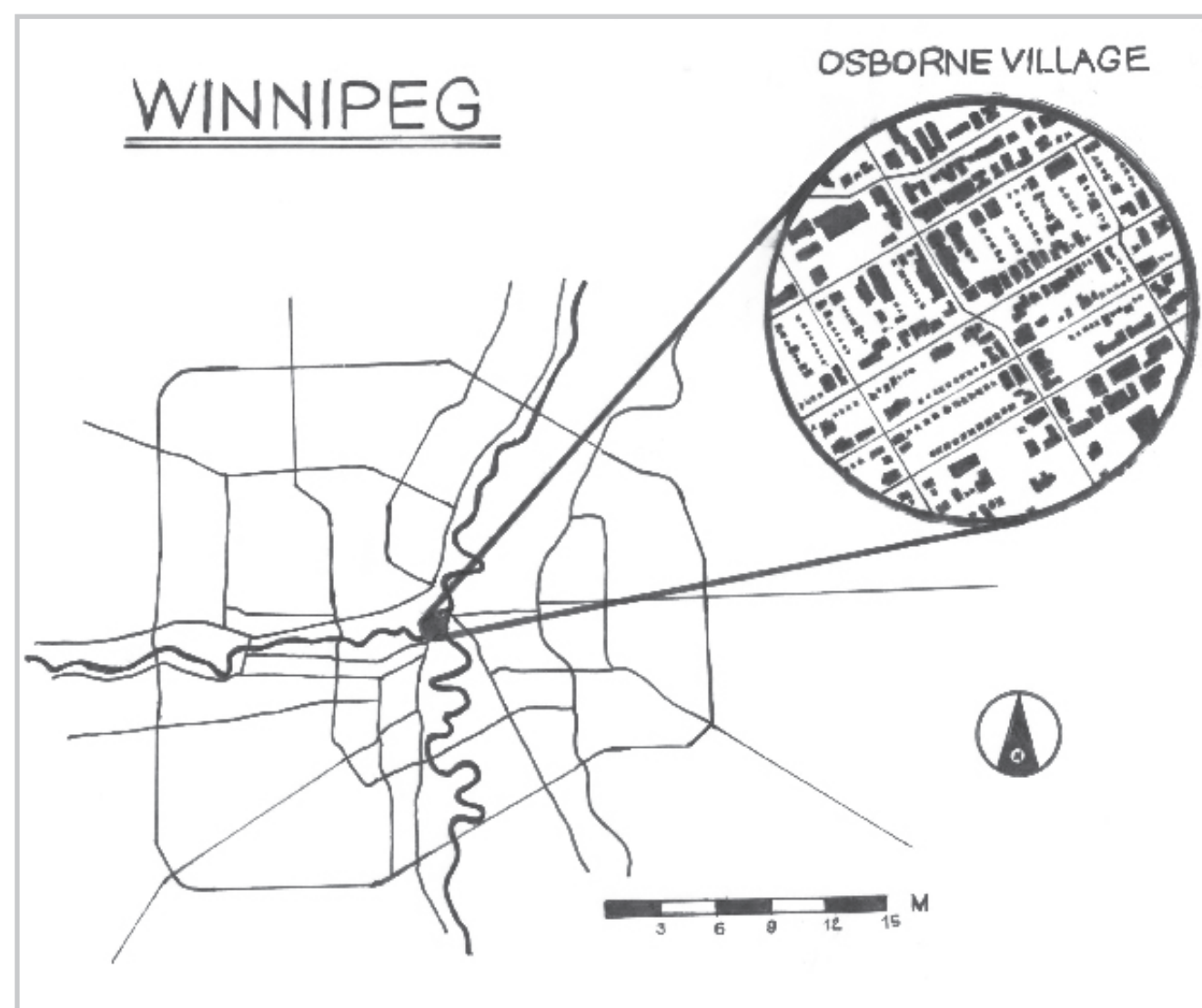
Osborne Village is located just south of Winnipeg's downtown. The area is bordered to the north and west by the Assiniboine River, to the south by the confusion corner interchange and to the east by Donald Avenue.

### Neighbourhood Information

Today the Village is a dense mix of both commercial and residential development. The main Osborne Avenue commercial strip is still one of Winnipeg's strongest neighbourhood main streets and features many of the amenities needed for living such as grocery stores and doctors' offices. In 2001, the population of Osborne Village was 12,450 people. The area was 1.75 km<sup>2</sup> or 0.4% of the entire city. This means the area has an average density of 7114.3 people per km<sup>2</sup>, much higher than the city average of 1617 people per km<sup>2</sup>.

The demographic make up of the Osborne Village neighbourhood is quite different from that of the city as a whole. The area has a lower than average population of children, higher than average number of those in the 20-34 age group, and the northwestern area has a high number of seniors from 60-75 age group.

The Village area has strong social infrastructure that serves both the inhabitants of neighbourhood and the wider city. It has a strong network of social and health related services. The area supports a variety of arts and cultural venues, such as the Gas Station Theatre.



### Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan

The Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan (OVNP) was developed to guide redevelopment in a manner that reinforces and strengthens the Village's unique character.

According to the neighbourhood plan, new development in the Village should focus on creating places, not just spaces. The concept of an 'Urban Village' is designed to give residents a sense of identity and to reinforce places of unique character. A variety of life styles, housing, employment, shopping, and recreational choices at a smaller scale is encouraged to satisfy a desire to belong to an identifiable community within a larger city context.

### Urban Form

The human scale of the compact urban form allows for a high degree of walkability in the area, especially along Osborne Street. The main streetscaping occurs along Osborne and its intersection with River and Stradbrook Avenues. Recent commercial development **(A)** in the area has concerned many area residents for its lack of consideration towards the existing character of the neighbourhood in regards to design, architecture, setbacks, scale, massing and height **(B)**. These concerns led to the creation of the Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan in 2006, which will help maintain the area's unique character as future development takes place.

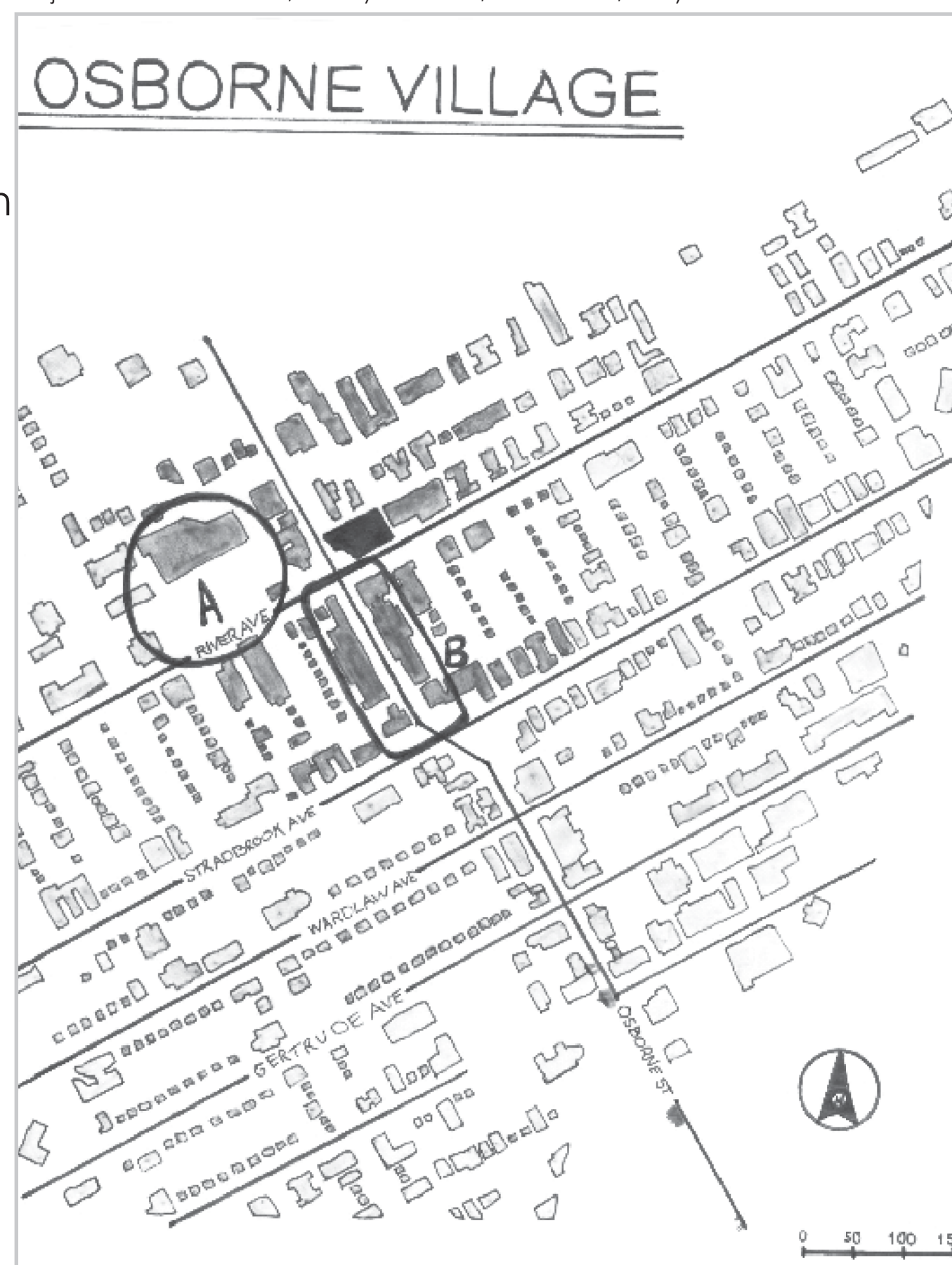
### Economy

Osborne Village has a strong economy and ranks high in commercial vitality indicators such as low commercial vacancy rates, a diversity of stores, many local entrepreneurs and high foot traffic.

Although the perception of Osborne Village is that of a retail district, the majority of the commercial activity is in the service sector. The village is home to many services such as banks, salons and professional offices.

Photos Credits: Robyn Webb

Project Team: Chris Baker, Kaeley Wiseman, Devin Clark, Robyn Webb & Richard Mahé

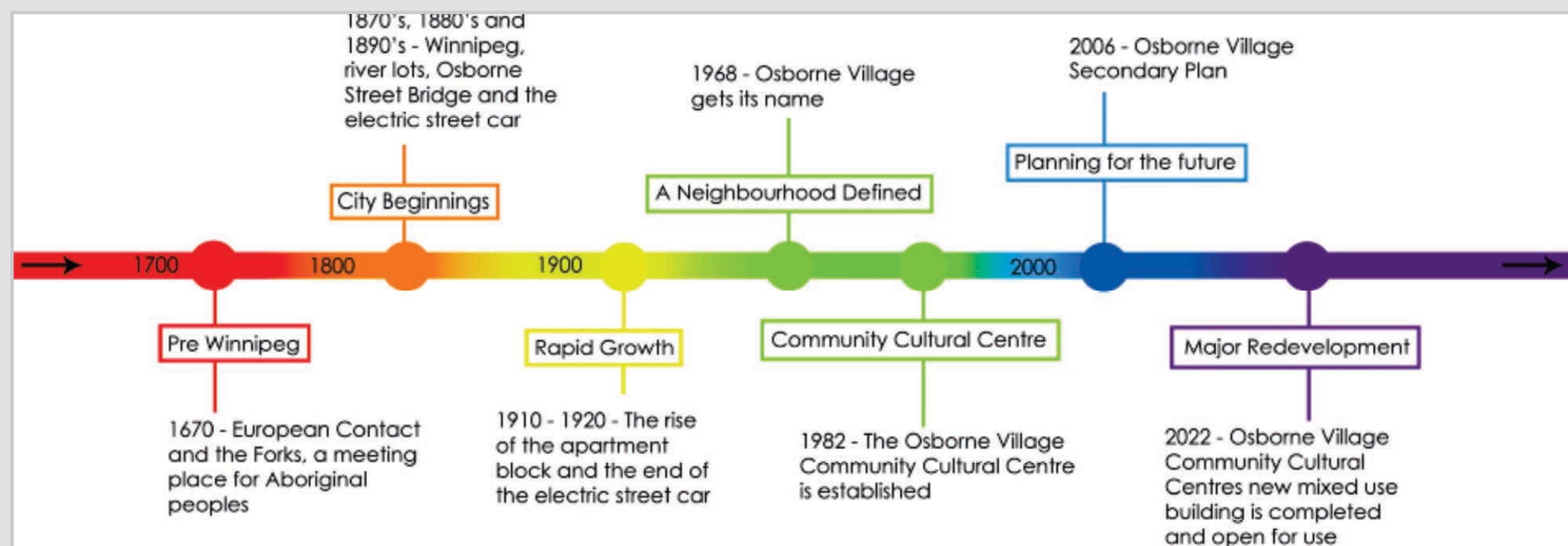


**(A) The new Safeway development along River Avenue**

**(B) The main Osborne Street commercial strip**

**"To promote high quality urban development and redevelopment in Osborne Village in a manner that supports and enhances the neighbourhood and advances the Urban Village concept. The plan ensures that [all development] within the area reinforces the appeal of the neighbourhood, discourages suburban-style development, and manages the impact of regional traffic"**

## Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan, 2006



### History

Osborne Village was the first suburban area in Winnipeg, originally known as Fort Rouge. A number of key historical periods solidified the character of the neighbourhood as it exists today. Rapid growth experienced at the turn of the 20th century and the area become home to Winnipeg's wealthy and elite. In the early 1890's the area saw Winnipeg's first electric streetcar development, which ran down River Ave.

The 1950's and 60's marked another period of development for the area. During this time many of the large homes in the area were demolished to make room for large apartment complexes. In the late 60's and early 70's many boutiques and cafes opened on Osborne Street and the neighbourhood really began to garner its image as a bohemian "urban village".





## S.W.O.T. Analysis

### Strengths

- Location: within a dense neighbourhood of strong social capital; proximity to downtown and vibrant commercial district; adjacent to transit hub; possibility for prominent visibility
- Large facility; indoor and outdoor space
- Stable financial situation with rental unit

### Weaknesses

- Underutilized membership base and community following with board/leadership challenges
- Few partnerships
- Lack of regular community programming
- Negative reputation of outdoor space: the 'Circle', the fence, drug activities
- Generic commercial/retail tenant not specific to neighbourhood with limited revenue capacity
- Site limitations: environmental deterrent of gas tank presence

### Opportunities

- Comedy Festival
- Fringe Festival
- Partnerships with local businesses and like-minded organizations
- Drawing clientele from high traffic location
- Engaging with diverse local residents, cultural and arts community

### Threats

- Safety and reputation of site
- Changes in political power
- Competition with other venues and sites
- Incompatible Zoning

The OVCCs mission is to create a sustainable, and inclusive community based cultural/arts organization, which supports a wide variety of artistic expressions that capitalizes on its unique location to create a landmark within Winnipeg.

### Short Term: (1-3 years)

#### Fostering greater connectivity to community

- survey to help determine future programming
- demographic focused board positions (i.e. youth, elderly, performing arts, visual arts)
- create partnerships with existing arts organizations (i.e. Fringe, Artspace)

#### Expand marketing potential

- Mail outs, postering, signage, website, local media, cinémathèque, WECC

#### Capital Campaign

- Higher full-time fundraiser
- Draw-in volunteers for fundraising subcommittee

#### In-house programming

- Creation of a regular programming schedule (i.e. emerging artist evenings)
- Increase profile of existing programming (ie: outdoor concert series)

#### Create local partnerships

- Facilitating medium term objectives (ie: Villa Cabrini, Augustine Church, River-Osborne Community Centre, Gladstone Elementary School)
- Corporate sponsored theatre passes and theatre subscriptions

### Transition/construction phase (3-5 years)

#### Capital campaign

- Continuing the marketing and fundraising campaign

#### Creation of provisional programming

- Using alternative venues through developed partnerships made in the short term

#### Remediate site

- Total site redevelopment
- Remove gas tanks

### Long Term (5-15 years)

#### Create a financially stable cultural arts centre

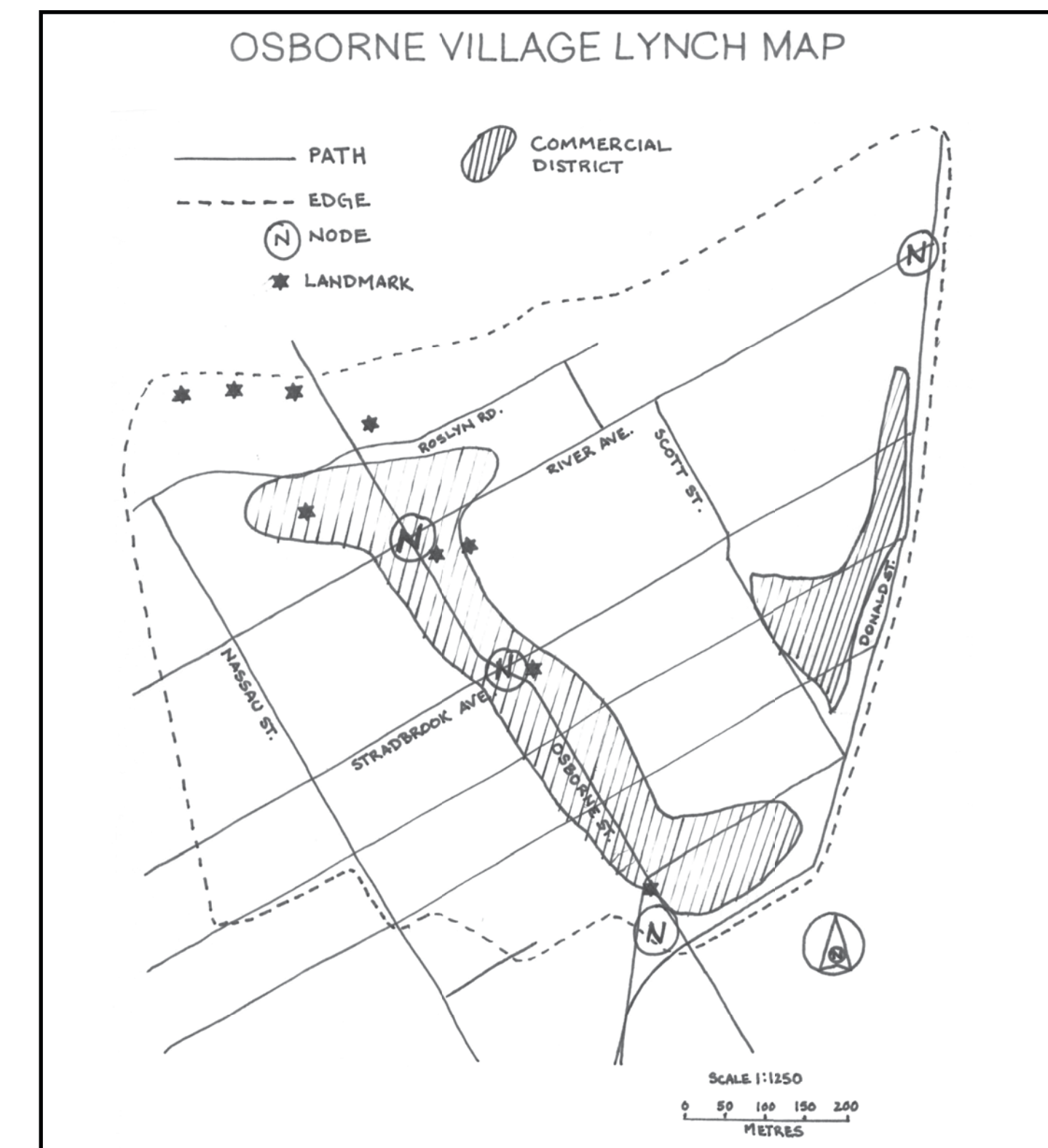
- Establishing a café/bar that is OVCC owned
- Creation of rental apartments
- Incorporating a newspaper kiosk into the re-designed bus stop

#### Create an environmentally sustainable cultural arts centre that is carbon neutral

- Ensuring the use of LEED standards in the re-construction
- Designing for the use of urban gardens, a green roof, and resident green spaces
- Creating environmentally focused educational programming
- Ensuring the OVCC owned café/bar provides local foods
- Ensuring the day-to-day operations are environmentally sustainable (i.e. cleaning products, energy efficient appliances)
- Farmers market

#### Create a socially responsible and comprehensive cultural arts centre

- Creation of subsidized artist live/work space
- Creation of art programming in public space (outdoor stage, public art in various mediums)
- Renting out the theatre to community groups and various organizations
- Using universal design principles in the design of the centre
- Creation multipurpose educational space
- Incorporate transit node into the functioning of the building
- Outreach initiatives to the local neighbourhood



Kevin Lynch, author of *The Image of the City* and *Good City Form* developed this type of map in the 1960's to depict space through its function and social meaning. Elements such as *paths*, *edges*, *districts*, *nodes*, and *landmarks* are used to describe the neighbourhood and provide an understanding of spatial use.

**PATHS** - often roads, as well as the predominant vantage point from which we perceive the image of surrounding space. Osborne Street is a major path through Osborne Village, bringing thousands of people past the Gas Station Theatre daily.

**EDGES** - boundaries, reflected through bio-physical features and other barriers. Osborne Village is bounded by the Assiniboine River to the north, and Donald Street to the east. The west side bounded partially by the river and the south by the rail bridge

**DISTRICTS** - distinct sections of the neighbourhood. The commercial district lines Osborne Street which has many boutique shops and restaurants, drawing many local residents and patrons from all over the city.

**NODES** - are points of high social activity. Often these concentrations are the main focus of districts. The node located at River Avenue and Osborne Street is a major strength to the Gas Station Theatre as it is a highly trafficked area.

**LANDMARKS** - points of reference that orient people in their surroundings. The Gas Station Theatre is located near two Village landmarks, the Augustine United Church and the McKim building.



# PRECEDENTS

## Community Cultural Centre and General Precedents

Precedent Theory: Urban Design Compendium, 2007. Photo Credits: Figure A- [www.thepoint.org](http://www.thepoint.org); Figure B- [www.wecc.ca](http://www.wecc.ca); Figure C- [www.projectrowhouses.org](http://www.projectrowhouses.org); Figure D- [www.ifcc-arts.org](http://www.ifcc-arts.org); Figure E- [www.ci.monterey-park.ca.us/home/index.asp?page=1287](http://www.ci.monterey-park.ca.us/home/index.asp?page=1287); Figure F to R- [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com).



A



B



C



D

### The Point Community Development Corporation

Located in the Bronx, New York, The Point (A) is concerned with and involved in environmental issues within their neighbourhood. In partnership with other economic and environmental organizations, The Point works to **create a healthy environment for the citizens of the community**. Responsible ecology, environmental justice, and revitalization issues are incorporated into the programming, which include an environmental stewardship program, and community gardening initiatives.

### The West End Cultural Centre

The West End Cultural Centre (B) made **partnerships with local businesses in their capital fundraising campaign**. The Centre has also reached out to the local community and has recruited a 150 member volunteer base, which run the facility during events. The WECC's financial stability was achieved through concert ticket, bar and merchandise sales (80%) and donations and grants (20%). Of the 160 music events that take place at the venue, approximately half of them are produced and advertised in-house.

### The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center

The IFCC (C), located in Portland, Oregon, has had similar experiences as the OVCC. One of their challenges has been deterring activities such as drug and sex trading in the neighbouring park. These activities have been deterred by explaining to the individuals involved what the IFCC did for the community. Having people engaged in positive activities, particularly in the evening, also makes the center an undesirable place for negative activity. The IFCC has learned that they need to **use it or lose it (to negative activity)**.

### Project Row Houses

Project Row Houses (D) in Houston, Texas is a community arts organization which produces their own programming while also providing a venue through the El Dorado Ballroom. It has created housing for impoverished young mothers, as well as housing and studio space for artists. It also holds an annual arts and music festival which incorporates theatrical arts into their established visual arts programming.

### Live/work Spaces

The live/work artist studio is an important concept for the promotion of the arts within cities (E). It provides subsidized housing for the artist, allowing them to concentrate on producing art.

The creation of live/work spaces on the site at River and Osborne would compliment the cultural character of the community and help solidify the reputation of the OVCC as a leader in the arts community. Live/work studios would also increase safety on the site as residents of the newly created complex would be coming into and leaving the building at different times throughout the day and night.



E

### Cafe/bar

An OVCC run local foods café/bar (F) would be a gathering space, an intimate arts venue (G) and be a catalyst for drawing-in the community to the Centre throughout the day. The café/bar will also provide a consistent source of revenue for the OVCC, and **increase the perception of safety with additional "eyes on the street"** (H).

A community-based cafe and bar could be a place to meet and to reflect, to pause before, in the midst, or at the end of the day.



F

G



H

### Public Spaces

Public spaces are most successful when they provide an opportunity for a wide range of activities. Public art can play a central role in **creating positive public spaces by fostering character and identity**, as well as diversifying interaction with the site. The Wildfire Bakery in Victoria, British Columbia, engages local graffiti artists to paint murals on a monthly basis (K). Public art can also help define public and private space in a non-obtrusive way. The metal spheres in London, England, allow for a creative delineation of the public and private realm (J).

Transit nodes allow for linkages to be made, a variety of movement options, and gathering places. A kiosk (adjoining the café/bar) (I) at the River/Osborne transit node will encourage positive use of the space through the provision of amenities and ownership over the semi-public space. **Marquees create a sense of place and enhance visibility**. We were inspired by local and international historical marquees, such as the Apollo and Chicago Theatres (L & M) to capitalize on the high traffic River/Osborne transportation corridor.

### Environmental Sustainability

Designing with sustainability in mind involves incorporating environmental, social and economic elements into the design. Sustainability goes further than constructing to LEED certification; it is also about ensuring the energy efficient maintenance of the Centre (N). Practical applications to the site, such as green roofs (O & P) and grey water systems, allowing for energy consumption savings as well as providing for recreational and educational programming potentials. **A farmer's market (Q), would encourage community ecological education and involvement, while creating a potential for local partnerships** (i.e. Gladstone School).

Environmental sustainability means:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well-run with effective and inclusive participation
- Environmentally sensitive communication services
- Well served by local, regional, and national public, private and community services
- Fair for present and future communities
- Link to transportation nodes and corridors (R)



K



I



M



O



R

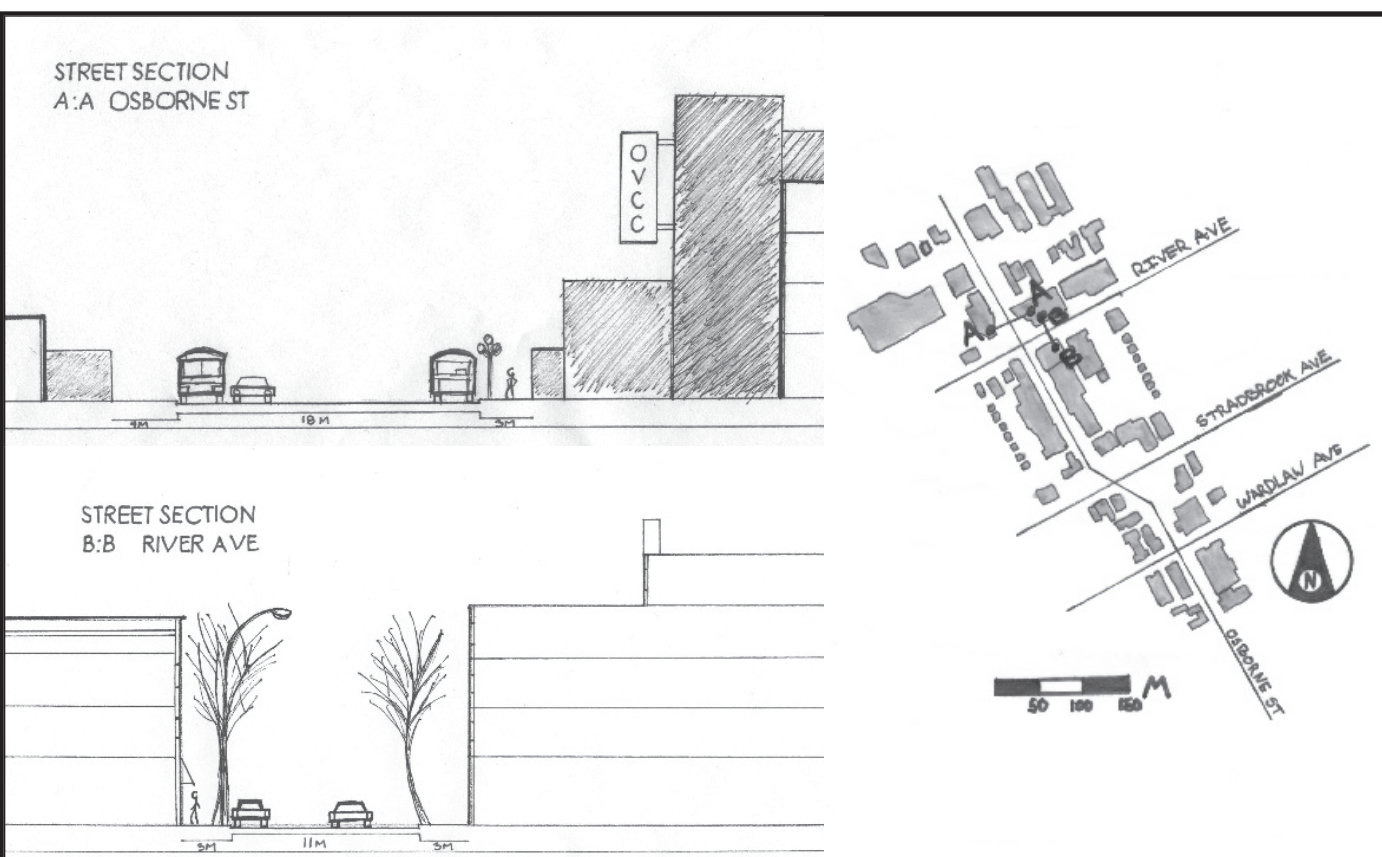


Q



# PROPOSAL

Go Big or Go Home!



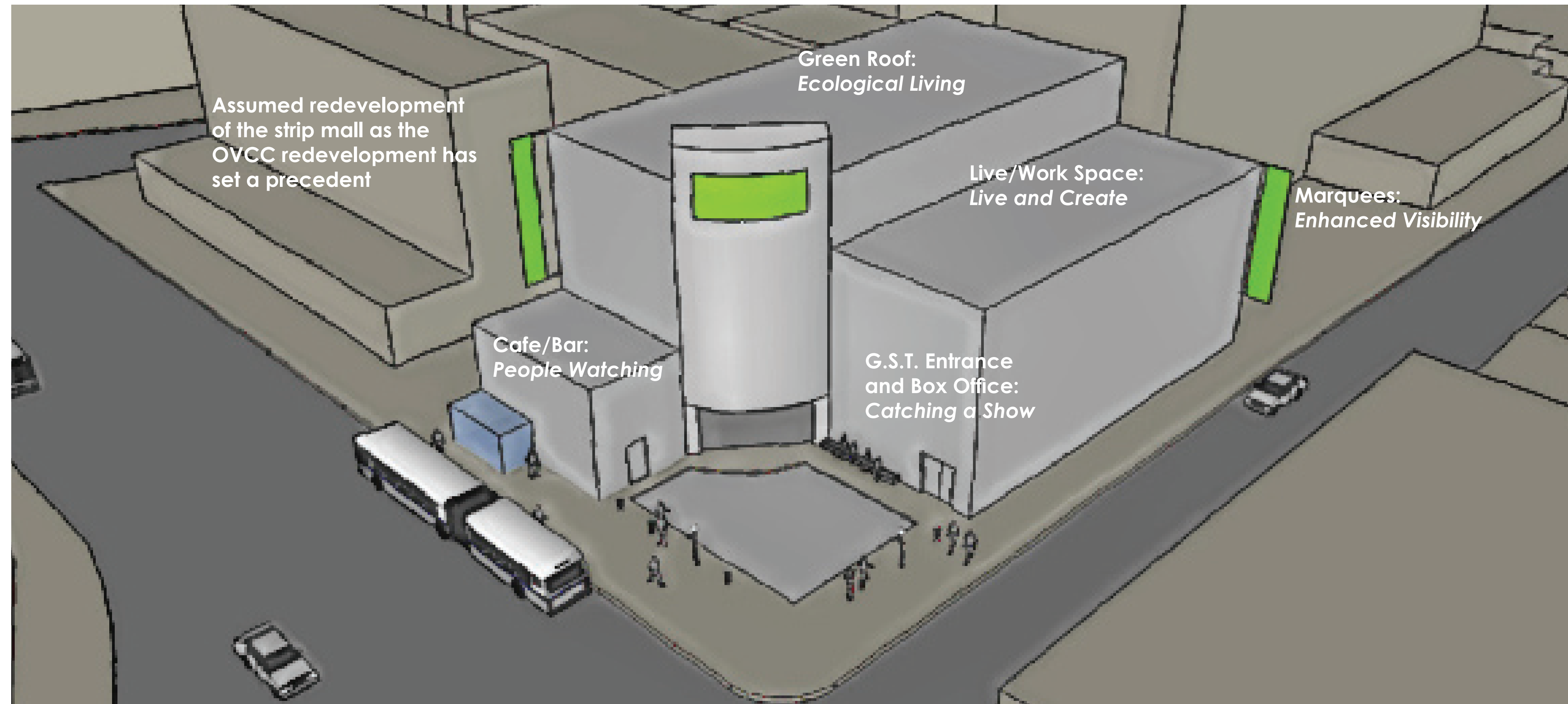
Vibrant Public Space



Evening Sun



Integrate with Neighbouring Buildings



## OVCC Redevelopment Proposal

Our proposal for the complete redevelopment of the OVCC site reflected our view of how it can redefine itself as a community based cultural/ arts organization. A long-term focus on the three pillars of sustainability (financial, environmental, social) will produce a creative and dynamic artistic venue at one of Winnipeg's most important intersections.

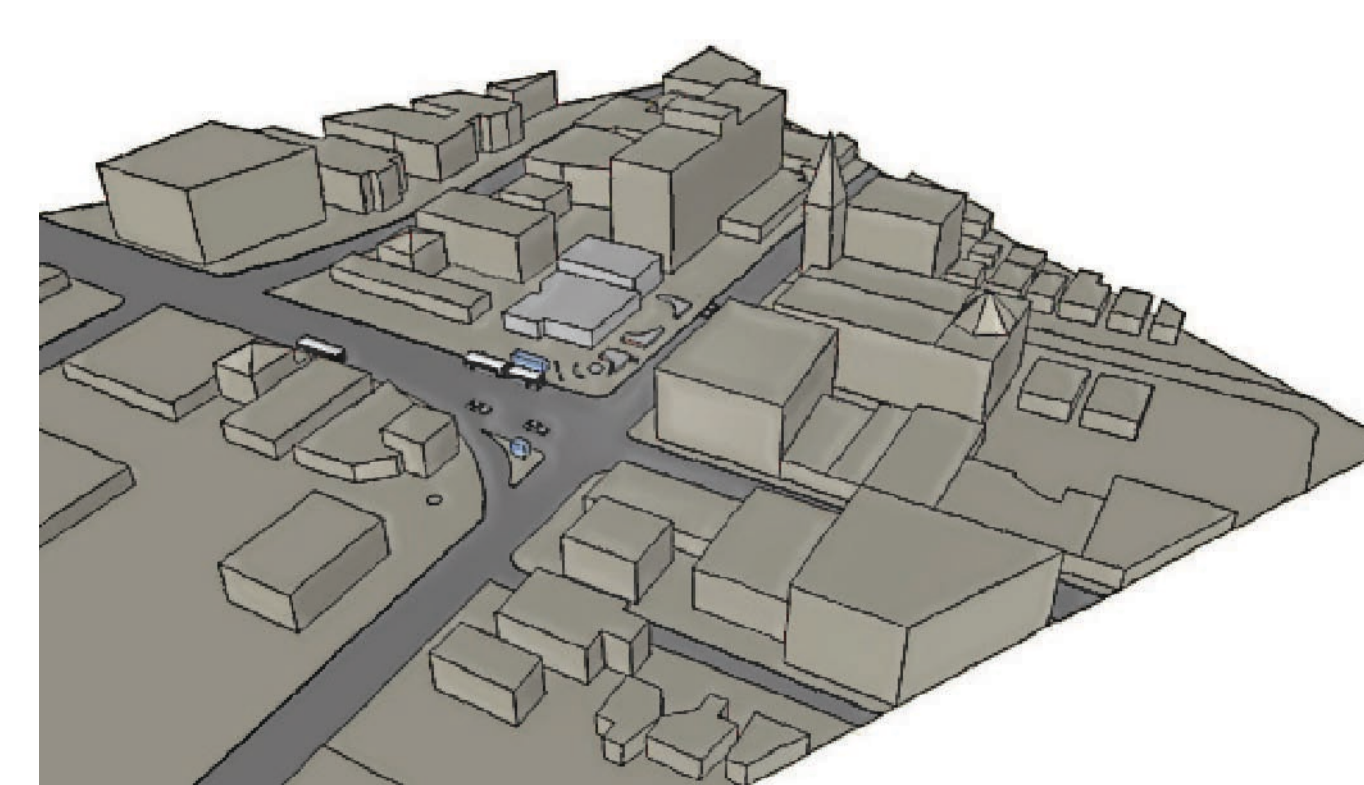
This proposal is based on our research into the overall character of the Osborne Village neighbourhood, our SWOT analysis as well as discussions with members of the OVCC. One of the major challenges that we focused on was the overall visibility of the theatre in relation to the street. The massing of the new structure and its setback help create a strong relationship to the street. The placement of **marquees** on Osborne Street, River Avenue and on the façade overlooking the plaza will help to inform the public of the activities occurring at the Gas Station Theatre and help raise the profile of the site.

Another issue that we wanted to address was the perception of safety on the site. The circle at the corner of River Avenue and Osborne Street is a well known hang out for street kids and drug dealers, and this negative activity is an

impediment to the future success of the Gas Station Theatre. The proposal would include multiple new uses of the facility (**live/work studios and café/bar**) including the outdoor space (patio), which would help generate higher volumes of foot traffic during the day and at night, as well as create new sight lines from and into the site. Also, the reconfigured outdoor space will allow greater access to the box office.

The Gas Station Theatre site is situated at one of the most active street corners in Winnipeg and we felt that this new proposal would greatly enhance the utilization of the facility and the site. The reconfigured outdoor space will provide for a wide mix of usages and outdoor programming options

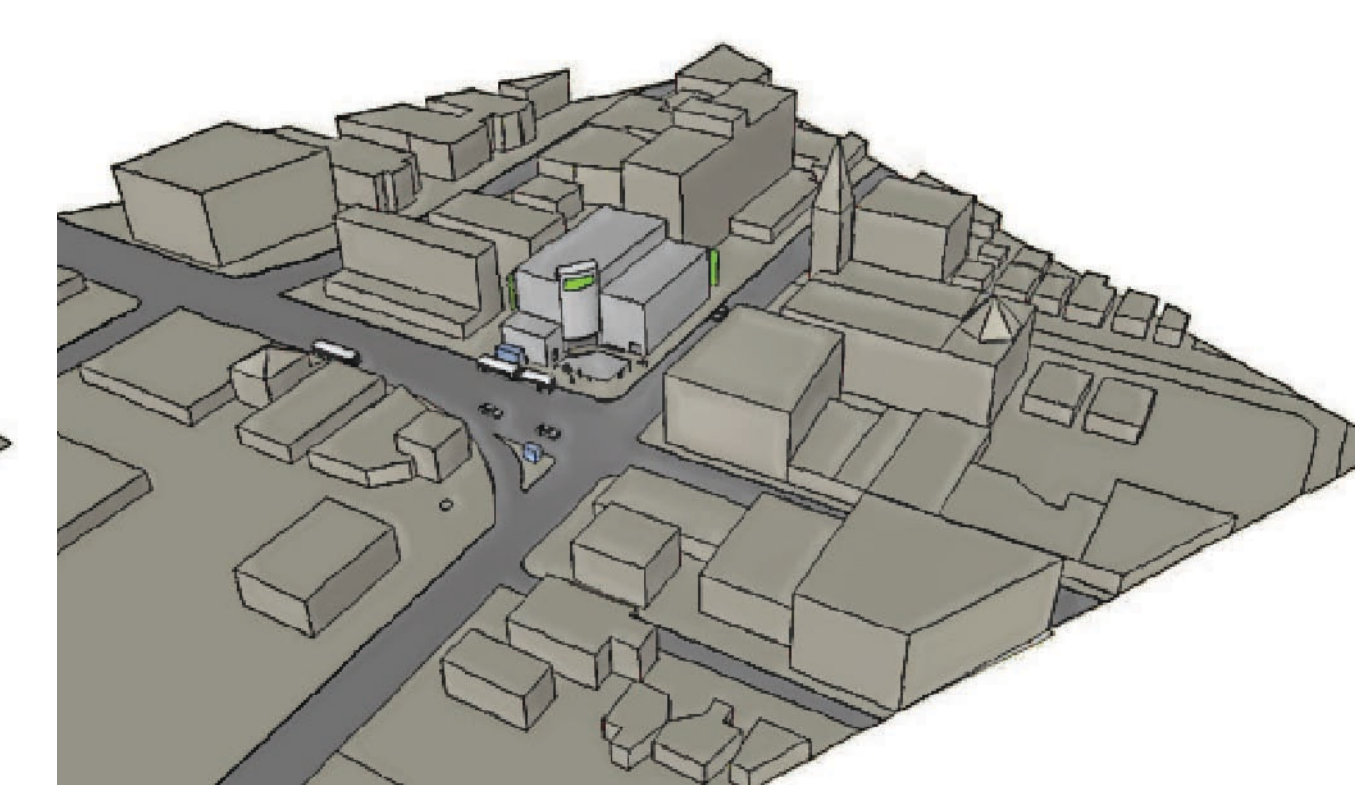
## Existing Site in the Neighbourhood



for the community. The existing outdoor concert series will be enhanced by an outdoor stage in front of the replicated 'gas station' doors facing the **public space**.

Other challenges the OVCC identified were a lack of programming in the summer months and shortage of adequate space for programming outside of the theatre. The current configuration of the theatre leaves the group little room to engage in their own programming. The newly proposed building would dedicate the entire main floor and second floor as OVCC/GST space. This would include the existing theatre, a new box office, lobby, admin offices, multi purpose space and possible retail space on River Avenue.

## Proposed Site in the Neighbourhood



## Urban Design – Physical

- The massing of the building emphasizes outdoor public space by defining it as part of the building
- Sitting areas should be placed at the edge of the space where a person's back is protected and view is unobstructed (**A**)
- The bollards provide a place for people to stand near or lean on in the transition area of the space (**A**)
- The curved wall focuses the building not only on the plaza but also the entire street corner
- The path of sunlight (south and west) has been taken into account with the plaza and café exposed to direct sunlight from mid day to sunset (**B**)
- The proposed redevelopment is sensitive to the neighbouring Villa Cabrini building by maintaining setbacks, defining Villa Cabrini's public space and providing a buffer between a music venue and seniors residence (**C**)

## Urban Design - Context

A common perception of Osborne Village is the strip on Osborne Street between River Avenue and Stradbrook Avenue. The newly created public space resembles a quarter-circle and would provide a visual queue that matches the quarter-circle created by the Liquor Mart and Starbucks across the street. The completed half circle would create a frame at the north end of the dense commercial area to the south (**D**). It will help to accommodate existing pedestrian flows from Osborne Street, Safeway and River venue, and will visually connect the new building with the commercial strip to the south. This redevelopment could be the catalyst for further development (strip mall site) of the traditional 'strip' reaching north towards Roslyn Road.

## Pedestrian Flow and Built Form

