



A Preliminary Feasibility Study for the Gas Station Arts Centre

September 2012

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It is an intimate performance venue

Almost every performing *artist*
in town has performed at the *Gas Station*
and views it as **home**

It is a **great presentation venue,**
especially for **dance**

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Background Information	3
1. Terms of Reference for the Study	3
2. Methodology.....	4
3. Stakeholder interviews	5
4. The Survey Form	6
5. Density Concept Images	6
6. Think-Tank.....	6
III. Findings	7
1. Zoning & Land Value.....	7
2. Planning in Osborne Village.....	8
3. The Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan.....	9
4. Identified Priorities.....	10
5. Interviews with Stakeholders and Community Leaders	11
Q 1. What do you like about Osborne Village the way it is today?.....	11
Q 2. What do you like least about Osborne Village the way it is today?	12
Q 3. What are 3 changes that would make Osborne Village a better neighbourhood?	14
Q 4. What do you think of the following ideas to improve Osborne Village?.....	17
Q 5. What do you like best about the GSAC the way it is today?	18
Q 6. What do you like least about the GSAC the way it is now?	20
Q 7. What are 3 changes that would help the GSAC contribute to the neighbourhood?	23
Q 8. What do you think of the open space / courtyard in front of the Gas Station?	26
Q 9. What do you think of the following ideas to improve the Gas Station Arts Centre?	27
Q 10. Massing concept sketches	28
Q 11. Why did you respond the way you did?.....	31
Q 12. What are some of the GSAC's biggest challenges?	33
Q 13. What would it mean for the GSAC if it no longer had to pay property taxes?	34
Q 14. How significant is it to a non-profit to be a part of the MCCC?	34
IV. Cost Estimates	35
V. Conclusions.....	36
VI. Recommendations.....	37
VII. References.....	38
VIII. Appendices.....	39
1. List of Primary Research Interview Participants:.....	39
2. Stakeholder Interview Survey Form:	40
3. Consent to Record the Interview Form:	45
4. Concept Images, As Shown to Interview Subjects:	46
5. Think Tank Invitation:	47
6. Think-Tank Attendance:.....	47
7. Concept Images with Results:	48
8. Think Tank Presentation:.....	49
9. Think Tank Meeting Notes:.....	56

I. Introduction

Like so many arts organizations in Canada, the Gas Station Arts Centre (GSAC) has struggled with the perennial challenges of financial instability, high board turnover and aging facilities. Located at the corner of River Avenue and Osborne Street, it is a centrepiece of Osborne Village, which has long been recognized as one of Canada's best-loved urban neighbourhoods. The Gas Station is a gathering place much-loved by the community, originally as a theatre, and more recently as an arts centre.

Its traditional role has been that of a "first stage" for performing artists and organizations who subsequently outgrow the space, requiring the Gas Station to constantly seek out new partnerships and to redefine itself. Most recently, it has done this through a name change and rebranding as an Arts Centre, in order to appeal to a wider audience and move towards a position of greater stability. It has achieved a steady revenue stream afforded by the leased unit on site, which is currently occupied by a sandwich franchise, as well as through its partnership with a comedy festival, who operates from the space. Thanks to hard work and a strategic approach, it is facing a brighter future.

Stewardship of its high-traffic and high-profile site has been a challenge in the past, but great progress has been made in recent years. It was recently confirmed that fuel storage tanks, thought to have been left onsite by the gas station that previously owned the land, are confirmed to have been removed, thereby alleviating a major concern. However, the site is still identified as a *brownfield* for the purposes of redevelopment, as some level of soil contamination remains.

Currently, two high-profile redevelopment projects underway at the same intersection have brought into sharp focus the need to plan for the future. As the village grows and changes, how can the Gas Station Arts Centre continue to serve its diverse audiences, and contribute to a vibrant and engaged neighbourhood?

The Gas Station's board of directors and its administration have initiated this project to investigate possible directions that might be pursued in redeveloping their site. This preliminary study is meant to assist current and future boards in their process of envisioning the possibilities for the future, by presenting some development options to a group of identified stakeholders, to begin a dialogue of what is possible and what is desirable, and to identify potential partners and champions. It is hoped that this work can build upon past investigations and provide a background for future decision-making.

II. Background Information

1. Terms of Reference for the Study

The goals of this preliminary study were set out in the workplan dated May 27, 2012.

The Project:

The project is a preliminary study looking at possible development directions for the Gas Station Arts Centre. The Centre would like to examine how it can continue to serve its membership and audience in the changing context of Osborne Village.

The essence of the study will explore whether this can better happen through a relatively minor renovation or enhancement of the existing building / facilities, or a major redevelopment of the entire property.

At the outset, there are two desired directions for the study:

- Improving the facility. This may include replacing theatre seating, and investigating what can be done with the building in its current state.

- Improving the site. This may include changing the configuration of the courtyard, improving the soil of the site, or other enhancements to the site itself.

The study will begin by looking at the context and history of the site and the organization.

It will investigate various constraints and opportunities for development of the site. Areas to be investigated will include:

- the history and current state of the centre;
- alternative directions in redeveloping the existing arts centre;
- the inclusion of more services on-site in a higher density development scenario;
- the feasibility of accommodating the development of:
 - i. space for other complementary arts organizations (eg. galleries, artist run centres);
 - ii. multiple family housing (mixed income);
 - iii. commercial – retail and office space;
- the current zoning and possible necessity of rezoning;
- issues of site remediation to address the site’s legacy as a gas station;
- the relationship of the centre to its on-site tenants;
- the Centre’s relationship to the surrounding neighbourhood context;
- the centre in the public realm (eg. its role in a fostering a pedestrian-friendly development);
- exploring the possibility of the project coming under the umbrella of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, thereby reducing the burden of property taxes.

This project involved thirty-two days of work: research, twenty-four interviews, analysis, one stakeholder consultation “Think-Tank” event and this concluding report. The work was completed by University of Manitoba Master of City Planning student Andrea Spakowski, under the guidance of professional planner Harry Finnigan of McKay Finnigan and Associates of Winnipeg.

2. Methodology

It was recognized early on that the Gas Station Arts Centre has been a focus of the community throughout its long history. Osborne Village residents feel a strong sense of collective ownership towards the Gas Station and its site, although this may not always be manifest in attendance numbers. The original theatre was conceived as a community – based project with a strong objective of providing a gathering place for all. It is clear that respecting this history should be the basis for all future discussions.

Our workplan called for our consulting team to work with the GSAC through an iterative process which would enable all involved to respond in a timely manner to issues and opportunities which may arise during the work. Regular communications – emails and phone calls – were maintained with the GSAC during the months that the study was conducted, thus enabling all involved to keep abreast of various issues and to make timely decisions on alternative approaches to be taken in addressing them.

The initial meeting was held on May 1, 2012. At this meeting, clarification was provided with respect to project goals, processes, various issues, challenges and overall expectations for the final report. Key community leaders to be interviewed were identified, copies of relevant reports and background information were shared, and a draft work plan was reviewed.

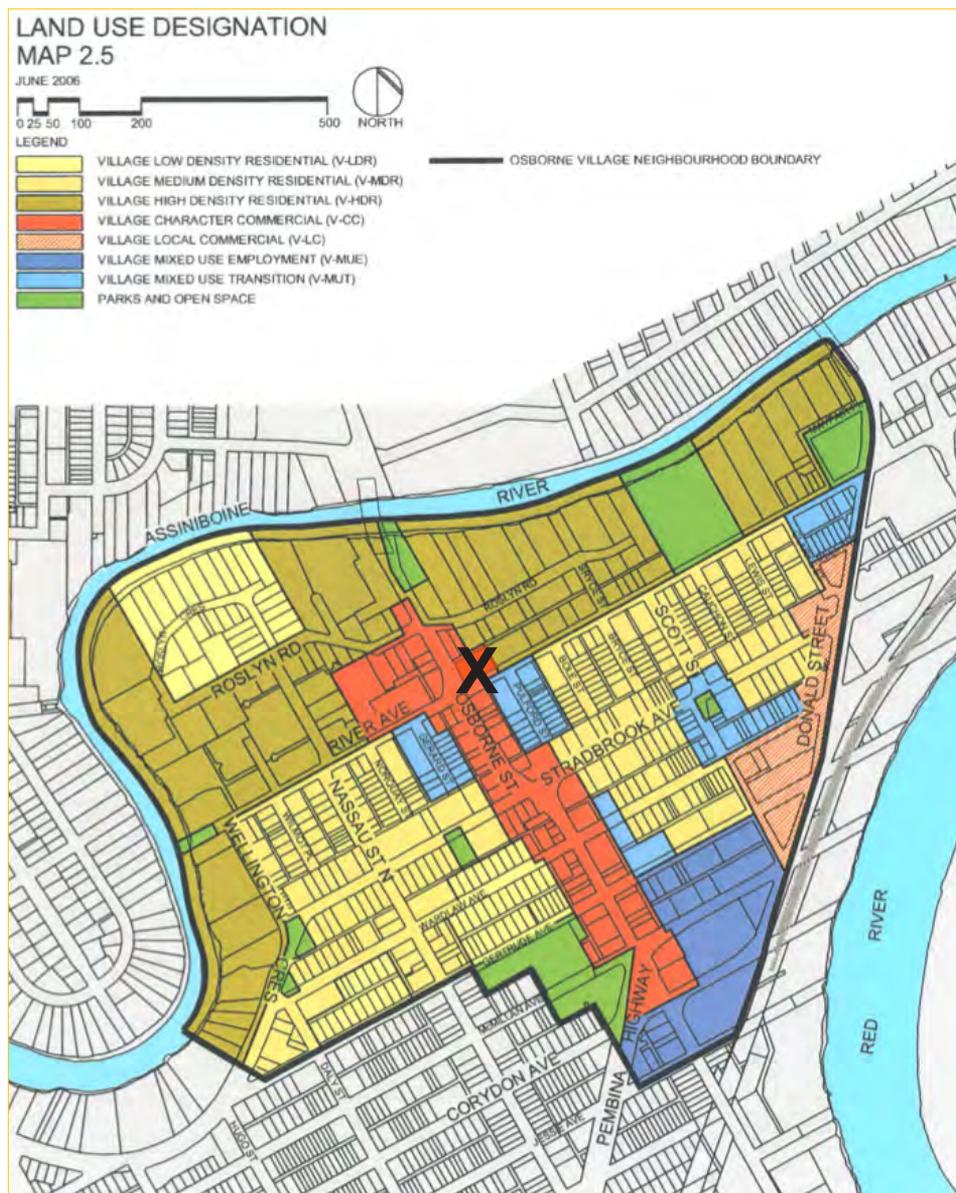
Over the next few weeks, background information was reviewed in detail and arrangements were made to meet with a number of community leaders and stakeholders, who we hoped would identify the challenges to future redevelopment of the site, as well as strategies to overcome them. Similarly, we sought to learn the current and

historic strengths of the client and the neighbourhood, on which to build.

3. Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-four stakeholders (eventually yielding twenty completed surveys), between June 4 and July 27, 2012. The list of individuals were identified by the Gas Station leadership as those who:

- have a detailed knowledge of the history of the centre and the neighbourhood;
- have an interest in the future direction of the centre; and
- have a unique and informed perspective on the strengths and challenges faced by the centre.



The list of interview participants included:

- clients
- elected officials
- rental tenants
- neighbourhood leaders
- local business people
- neighbours
- funders

The participants in these interviews were carefully selected to ensure that a broad range of perspectives and expertise could be brought to bear on the study. All interviews were held in face-to-face meetings in Winnipeg. A list of those interviewed may be found in the Appendix.

Figure 1. Osborne Village Land Use Designation map. Source: City of Winnipeg *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan, BY-LAW NO. 220/2006*.

4. The Stakeholder Interview Survey Form

A survey form with a list of specific questions was prepared in advance of these interviews (please see the Appendix, pp. 40-44). The survey form, which served as a guide for each interview, helped to focus the discussion and ensure that a consistent approach to exploring key issues was followed. Most of the interviews took about one hour each to complete.

5. Density Concept Images

Understanding that density is an important factor in creating walkable urban neighbourhoods, which themselves foster an active and engaged lifestyle, we wanted to discuss what degree of density stakeholders would support for this site, if redevelopment were to be undertaken. In order to engender more specific discussions, six preliminary concept images presented the status quo, along with five options of increasing density (please see Appendix page 46).

During the interview and discussion, it was made clear that the Gas Station Arts Centre would remain on site, as part of a mixed-use redevelopment, be it a renovation or a complete rebuild. Subjects for discussion included:

- the extent to which other uses could successfully co-exist and be supported by the site and the neighbourhood;
- the maximum desirable size of a new building, in order to fit into fabric and context of the neighbourhood;
- identification of potential partners who might be a good fit with the Gas Station Arts Centre's mandate and vision;
- issues of parking; and
- issues of courtyard size, placement, design features, and security.

The feedback received from the community leaders who were consulted was both very positive and very diverse. Among other things, many reinforced the importance of the continued presence of the Gas Station Arts Centre to the Osborne Village's future. As a meeting place, an incubator, and training ground for young artists and performers, it is unparalleled in Winnipeg and is seen by many performers and their families, as a second home.

6. Think-Tank

A summary of the information gathered through the study to date, including input from the community leaders, was summarized in a powerpoint presentation which was shown at a special "invitation only" workshop or "Think-Tank" which was held at the Gas Station Arts Centre on September 5, 2012.

This event provided an opportunity to present the vision and proposed project(s) to those with professional experience in site redevelopment. Fourteen people attended the "Think-Tank", including six representatives of the Gas Station Arts Centre and two Winnipeg-based experts in the fields of urban development and housing: Jim August, Chief Executive Officer of the Forks North Portage Partnership, and Wayne Bollman, Vice-President of Real Estate Services for Lakeview Realty of Canada. Other guests and invitees included those who might potentially be participants and / or investors in the final project. Slides of the powerpoint presentation are included in the Appendix (page 49).

The Think-Tank meeting notes are included on page 56.

Property Profile

Location: 445 River Avenue,
Winnipeg
Owner: Gas Station Arts Centre

Land Area: 21,572 sq.ft.
Interior Area: 6000 sq.ft.
approx. (includes 1 tenant on
5-year lease)

Theatre size: 232 seats
Theatre area: 49' x 77' = 3773
sq.ft.
Lobby area: 1000 sq.ft.

2012 Property taxes:
\$12,073.80
School tax: \$1721.00
2006 Market value: \$1.1 million

Zoning: C2 - Commercial -
Community / VCC - Village
Character Commercial

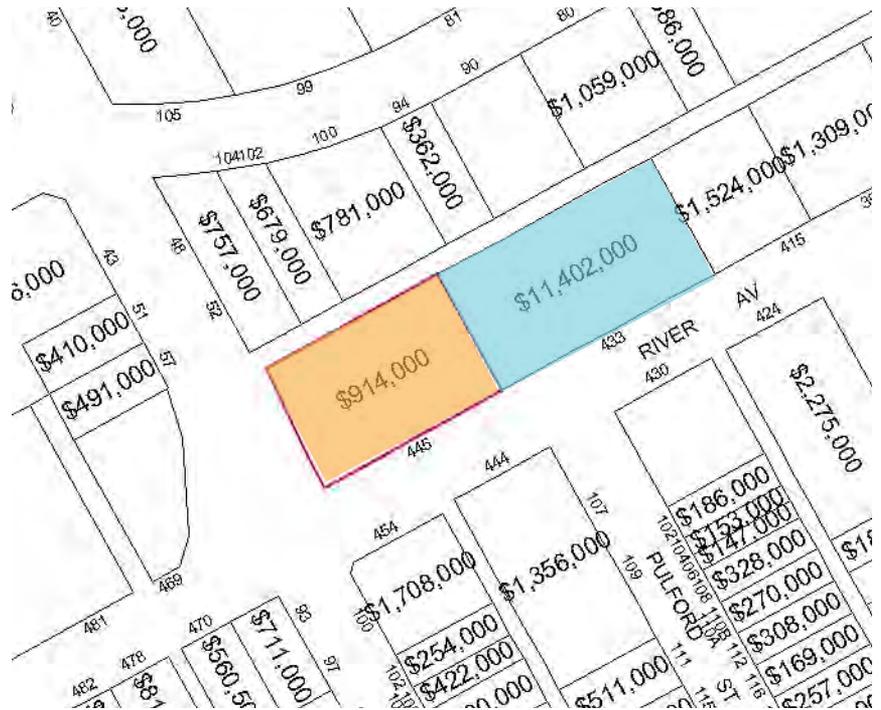


Figure 2. The Assessed Value and current zoning of 445 River Avenue, Winnipeg. Source: City of Winnipeg (<http://www.winnipegassessment.com/AsmtTax/English/propertydetails/default.stm>).

Name	Class	Address	Land Area	Zoning	Assessed Value
Gas Station Arts Centre	Institutional / Other	455 River Avenue	21,572 sq.ft.	C2 – Com - Community	\$745,000 / \$169,000 = \$914,000
Villa Cabrini	Institutional / Other	433 River Avenue	26,400 sq.ft.	Rmfl – Res – Multi-family	\$9,920,000 / \$1,254,000 = \$11,402,000

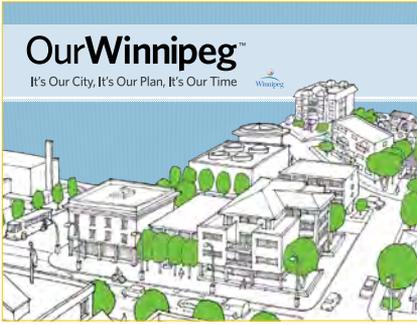
Figure 3. The Assessed Value and current zoning of 445 River Avenue, Winnipeg. Source: City of Winnipeg.

III. Findings

The following summarizes the main findings of this study including some of the key issues that came to light through the research, the alternative concept sketches for site redevelopment which were created for discussion purposes, as well as feedback received from interview respondents and experts in the field of redevelopment.

1. Zoning & Land Value

Description of the current “C2 - Commercial - Community” zoning of the site, from the City of Winnipeg By-Law No. 26/2009:



OurWinnipeg is the City of Winnipeg's official development plan that took effect on August 17, 2011, replacing *Plan Winnipeg 2020*.



The City of Winnipeg's *Complete Communities* direction strategy. Osborne Village fulfills all the definitions of a "complete community", which "provides opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, shop, learn and play in close proximity to one another" (City of Winnipeg, 2011).



The *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan* (2006): this "secondary plan" sets out in detail the requirements for development and redevelopment in the village.

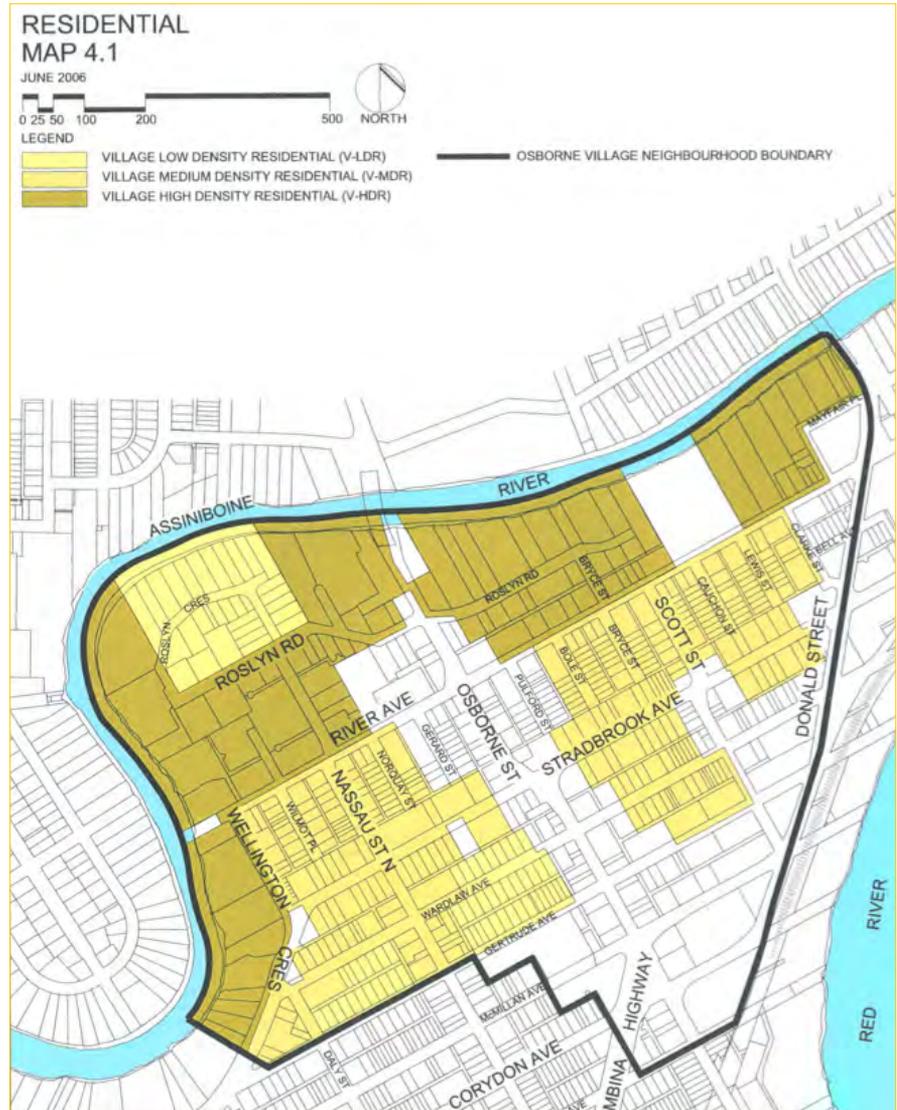


Figure 4. This graphic from the *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan* shows housing density in Osborne Village in 2006. Recent redevelopment projects since then suggest housing density in the area may be on the rise. Source: City of Winnipeg.

(3) The Commercial Community (C2) district is intended to accommodate more intensive commercial sites that do not have a local or neighbourhood orientation. The district is intended to include attractive commercial, institutional, recreational, and service facilities needed to support the surrounding neighbourhoods and the broader community. C2 districts are generally located along collector streets, at arterial /collector intersections, or along portions of arterial streets with relatively shallow lots.

2. Planning in Osborne Village

There are a number of land use planning documents in place governing

the development and redevelopment of sites in Osborne Village and in Winnipeg. Fulfilling the vision of these planning documents will not only ensure that any redevelopment project receives full community understanding and support - it will help avoid delays in the approvals process.

Similarly, our stakeholders acknowledged many times the importance of following a thorough public engagement process, such as the ones that accompanied the development of the *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan*. Working with the community will be key to any successful redevelopment project in the Osborne Village neighbourhood.

3. The Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan

The following excerpt from the *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan* describes the criteria that apply specifically to the Gas Station Arts Centre, which is currently designated as “V-CC - Village Character Commercial”.

5.1.2 Village Character Commercial (V-CC)

5.1.2.A Encourage a mix of day-to-day and special purpose shopping, dining, and entertainment services to meet the needs of village residents and visitors;

5.1.2.B Encourage mixed-use buildings, with ground floors predominantly occupied by street-oriented commercial uses such as retail, restaurant, entertainment, and personal services. Upper floors should contain offices, professional services, live work units, and residential uses; (*Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan*, 2008, pp.22-23)

The neighbourhood plan further supports mixed-use development, walk-ability and public spaces in the Village:

5.1.2.C Development will be pedestrian-oriented in form by requiring that buildings maintain the traditional building line and height at the street. Periodic setbacks not to exceed 25% percent of the building facade may be considered for the purpose of accommodating public spaces, plazas, cafes, outdoor seating and dining areas, and other amenities;

5.1.2.D Buildings fronting onto River, Stradbrook, McMillan, and Corydon Avenues may have additional setbacks for the purpose of accommodating public open spaces, plazas, cafes, outdoor seating and dining areas, and other amenities;

5.1.2.E Development along Osborne Street, River Avenue, Stradbrook Avenue, Wardlaw Avenue, Gertrude Avenue, McMillan Avenue, and Corydon Avenue will be characterized by street-oriented retail, entertainment, and restaurant / cafe uses; (*Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan*, 2008)

There is clearly much here to support an expanded Gas Station Arts Centre redevelopment, providing it respects these guidelines and maintains a focus on a pedestrian-friendly street environment.

Regarding height limits:

5.1.2.F New development and additions will have a minimum of two storeys and a maximum of four storeys, subject to the following exceptions:

5.1.2.F.1 Additional storeys will not result in any adverse shadow or wind impacts on the street and public sidewalks;

5.1.2.F.2 Decorative building elements such as towers, cupolas, or clock towers are exempt, provided that there are no adverse shadow or wind impacts on the street and public sidewalks; (p. 23)

Notably, the imposed height limit of four storeys may be excepted, provided the additional storeys do not result in undesirable shading of public spaces and sidewalks. Therefore, any detailed design should consider this carefully and detailed shadow studies should be completed to accompany any proposal.

Considering that a larger development may be a more desirable direction from an economic point of view, especially if it includes housing, it makes sense to use available land to the maximum advantage, by building as tall as is allowable, to realize economies of scale and maximize returns on investment.

Regarding the “courtyard”, the secondary plan also speaks generally about green space in Osborne Village:

Opportunities for parks and open space are very limited; therefore efforts should be made to maximize existing green spaces, while also focusing on the importance of informal meeting and interaction spaces, such as patios, squares, plazas, and street seating areas; (p. 23)

With this in mind, every attempt should be made to maintain the volume of existing greenery, especially mature tree canopy. However, there are other approaches: rooftop gardens, green walls, and planter boxes are viable options.

4. Identified Priorities

A number of priorities have been identified through consultations with Gas Station administration and stakeholders over the course of this project. These include:

Mixed-use

- Combining retail and commercial uses with housing is an accepted strategy in creating vibrant, livable and walkable neighbourhoods.
- Clustering of thematic and like-minded organizations will help build on neighbourhood and community strengths.

Environmental remediation and sustainable design

- Cleanup of this brownfield site is an essential first step before any redevelopment can occur.
- The use of green building technologies in construction, wastewater and energy systems has been identified by the Gas Station as an area of priority. Many of these technologies are increasingly affordable and achievable. Tackling this situation alongside the building of underground parking might make good financial sense.

Housing

- Partnering with organizations committed to offering affordable housing options has been identified as an area of interest to the GSAC. These could provide important ways to enhance and engage the community on an even deeper level. Innovative forms of housing tenure might be used and combined to enhance diversity and financial sustainability of a larger redevelopment project.
- Alongside the conventional condominiums, rental units, hotels, hostels, long - and short - term residencies, and artist live / work spaces should all be considered as ways to achieve the stated priorities of the Gas Station and the neighbourhood plan.

Parking and Transportation Connections

- Osborne Village today offers many transportation advantages: bus and cycle routes, a pedestrian-friendly environment, and car-share resources may well present partnership opportunities for the GSAC. For example, a new underground parking facility at the site could become home to a car-share co-op, thereby offering local residents another alternative to the parking dilemma.
- Winnipeg Transit has indicated that it might be interested in partnering to integrate a new bus shelter into a new building design, which could have significant impacts on the pedestrian environment of the corner.

Partnerships

- Identifying potential partnerships can open doors to new opportunity.

5. Interviews with Stakeholders and Community Leaders

The following section presents actual quotes from interview respondents.

Question 1. What do you like about Osborne Village the way it is today?

People / Community:

- The Village has a soul and a rich history.
- Diversity – people of all kinds live, work and play here.
- The community atmosphere - everybody is accepted.
- It has a diverse and engaged population. It is a downtown urban suburb. People here are passionate about this area.
- The resident mix is really interesting.
- It is a whole community, not just a single demographic. I love the diversity. It is not just a group of a single status, ethnicity or income level.
- There is every socio-economic class here: the professor, the student, the young professional, the retired lawyer - are all interwoven. People who have raised their kids in the suburbs, move back to the village.
- People dress better in this neighbourhood.

Vibrancy:

- I love the neighbourhood. I love that people live and work there. It is the artistic place to go for me.
- It's a more 'visible' area than the Exchange.
- It's a vibrant community. There are lots of businesses and activities that complement each other. The combination of restaurants and theatres is a complementary one.
- In Winnipeg, it offers the most urban experience you can find.
- This area has a soul. It has a great feeling.
- I like its diversity - both of people and of types of business – and its density - more in terms of people.
- It's a living, breathing place. This place has not just a day or nightlife: it lives twenty-four hours a day. Osborne Village has inspired many other neighbourhoods - in Winnipeg and elsewhere. It has set a standard and made Winnipeg a better place. It has soul that you don't find in many other areas. It is busy around the clock.
- It's one of the few areas of the city that feels as if it has a life. It is one of the few good destinations in the city. It is a good place to find a restaurant. It feels like it's got life.

Business:

- Many business people who work here, live in the neighbourhood as well, so there is less of an "us / them" mentality.
- I like the convenience and the density.
- It provides all the services I need.
- Small-scale, independent businesses make the village special.
- Independent shops, [local bistro], and bookstores [in the past, as there is no longer a bookstore in the neighbourhood] are / were great.
- Independent business owners have a higher stake in the neighbourhood – a sense of ownership and involvement. In dealing with issues like safety, they are residents as well as business owners. That helps them understand the tension between residents and business.
- The diverse mix of retail and small business is interesting.
- Unique businesses that are not chains.
- When you are having an event at the GSAC, there are lots of conveniences nearby - drugstore, restaurants,

transit. It is easy to get to for people who use transit. The location is great - being central, close to transit, shopping and restaurants is great.

- The diversity of land use - there are lots of restaurants, shopping, groceries - it is a neighbourhood with lots of amenities.
- The restaurants.
- The shops, the variety of restaurants is great.

Walkability:

- Walkability is key.
- It is a walkable neighbourhood.
- Transit connections. You don't need to drive.
- It is well-served by transit.
- It has great transportation connections. It is walking distance to downtown.
- You don't need to drive. It's a lifestyle choice.
- It is one of the better Active Transportation-friendly areas of the city, in a city that is not very AT friendly.
- It has a very high density - perhaps the second densest area of the city.
- It has the feeling of a green space.
- Rapid Transit has been beneficial in changing usage patterns in the village.

Question 2. What do you like least about Osborne Village the way it is today?

Safety:

- There is a lot of concern with crime and safety, but I've found it to be quite safe. There is a transient population in the summer, but I don't really see them having a negative impact on safety.
- The perception of [lack of] public safety.
- Perception of safety - panhandling and vagrancy makes people feel unsafe.
- The fact that [the neighbourhood's liveliness] is somewhat inhibited by the street people - particularly in the summer. It means that there are lots of people in the city who don't go there for that one reason. Those of us who live in the city get used to being approached on the street all the time by people wanting money or wanting something. But for people who live in cozy suburban neighbourhoods where they don't have to deal with that, it is a little disconcerting. In Osborne Village, it is almost invariably younger people, who are more intimidating than some of the older people. Late at night it tends to be younger people hanging out. I don't have a problem with people hanging out there, but pushing drugs becomes an issue.
- The panhandling and vagrancy is a problem - it makes people feel unsafe.
- The squeegee people on the corners - they screw up traffic. Sometimes at night I have seen people fighting in the courtyard.
- There is a perception of lack of safety.

Parking:

- Parking is always an issue.
- The parking is tricky for those coming by vehicle. Otherwise, there's not much I don't like.
- It is tough for parents and grandparents coming to the GSAC to find parking.

Walkability:

- Osborne is quite unfriendly to pedestrians.
- Lots of shops are not handicapped accessible.
- Larger-scale development has led to less foot traffic. You don't notice the individual changes but the effects are felt.

Transportation / Infrastructure:

- Crumbling pavements are not pedestrian or wheelchair friendly.

- The streetscaping and basic infrastructure is getting old and needs to be refreshed.
- Some of the land uses that have parking out front really take away from the pedestrian environment. It would enhance the pedestrian environment and create a better sense of enclosure if these buildings came up to the street. The 2008 neighbourhood plan requires all buildings to come up to the street. For example the [Name] hotel has a parking area out front.
- Traffic is another challenge.
- The infrastructure needs to be refreshed - there are lots of cracked sidewalks (both concrete and pavers) and curbs. It is an accessibility issue as well.
- There's a gap in the cycling environment between Nassau and over the bridge.

Greenspace:

- There is not enough usable green space. For some reason, the park on River is not well used.
- There are no street trees to speak of.
- I wish there were more green space in Osborne Village. I wish there were a larger, more visible park to bring people in.
- There is not enough usable green space. For some reason, the park on River is not well used.
- There's no place to go and swing if you're a kid.

Neighbourhood Dynamics:

- The lack of young families living in the area. It makes it difficult to get programming for children, if there aren't enough of them. There are a huge number of people under 25 and over 50 but not many in between. Mayfair school has a lot of immigrant and aboriginal children.
- The intimate feel of the neighbourhood is gradually being lost. There is too much through traffic. Large-scale development has led to less foot-traffic. You don't notice the individual changes but the effects are felt.
- The merchants here today don't become involved in the village in the same way as their predecessors.

Noise / Crowding / Density:

- The fire station is noisy for people who live nearby.
- Noise on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.
- It is a destination so things like noise, traffic and litter.
- It's a little too crowded.

Social / Community:

- In the past, it was an exciting and artsy place to be. The Contemporary Dancers brought a more upscale feeling to the area.
- Community groups could be stronger.
- When the award for the best neighbourhood in Canada is talked about, its creation was not mentioned. There is a lack of recognition of the history of the village and how it was created.

Business / Services / Development:

- The [national pharmacy chain] parking lot is a mess - dumpsters, traffic, vagrants - it is very chaotic.
- Hopefully what they plan will be what is built. A more cohesive approach is needed.
- I'm not a fan of the new [national pharmacy chain] plan. I feel we are losing some of the diversity of small business and I don't feel chain stores add to the area's caché.
- There is a lack of medical services, especially for the senior population.
- I wish there was a bit more of a density of commercial space there. More offices would be great. Other rec space would be great.
- [Name of international coffee chain] - having two branches of the same shop is silly.
- The BIZ could function at a higher level.
- Compared to the Exchange the village is lacking in density of arts activity.
- The Exchange is clearly the cultural district. The Village is more of a retail destination.

Question 3. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important changes that would make Osborne Village a better neighbourhood?

Safety:

- Improving safety and perceptions of safety.
- Ensuring safety and ease of movement for seniors.
- A police presence - even an empty car, changes the feeling of the whole corner. The BIZ foot patrol was a great idea and worked quite well. The community foot patrol was also really helped create a presence on the street.
- Dealing with the vagrancy problem is a priority - having more presence on the street would help that a lot - funding has been lost for the foot patrol. More police presence would be helpful.
- More supervision and /or police presence would help - the BIZ used to have a street patrol.
- A visible security presence on the street – police or the BIZ patrol
- The BIZ used to run a neighbourhood foot patrol - having that kind of presence ups the perception of safety.
- People stay away because they are afraid of being accosted by a panhandler.
- Perceptions of safety - but vibrancy creates safety.
- People need to understand the neighbourhood is safe.
- Changing public perception of safety.
- Lots of people won't tolerate panhandlers.
- My suburban counterparts are not comfortable here.
- We haven't had a street patrol for a long time - they were a good liaison between the businesses and the city. They identified things before they happened.

Parking:

- More and better parking.
- The availability of parking is always an issue.
- More paid parking.
- Parking and access to transit would improve the situation there.
- There are people who want to park with their car in the window, within view. Parking won't win over those people, but telling them where the parking is, might.
- Another 10 parking spaces available for the performers and crew would be helpful, as well as additional parking for patrons. There is a fairly high incidence of vehicle break-ins and vandalism.
- Parking is problematic, particularly at rush hour. It is already a compressed neighbourhood, and the village is a destination as well as a major through traffic route, which leads to a traffic problem. Easy parking is important for performers especially during rush hour, when street parking is extremely limited. This can be problematic for performers. Patrons also sometimes complain about how far away they have to park. Additional public parking for patrons would be an advantage.

Housing:

- There is a need for assisted living in the village.
- Bridging the East - West dichotomy of high-rise and low-rise, rich and poor.
- Keeping housing affordable and services available.
- I don't think the village could support more high-density housing.
- More affordable, decent housing.

Walkability:

- Create a better pedestrian environment along Osborne alternatively develop the back lanes parallel to Osborne as a pedestrian environment between Stafford and River (to better accommodate wheelchairs etc.). The sidewalk in front of the TD is a much better width.
- A mid-block crosswalk along Osborne would be useful.

- Better accessibility.
- The intersection of Osborne and River - keeps being suggested as a scramble intersection. It is suggested to make it more walkable and is an interesting thing to try.
- Dealing with traffic on Osborne is an issue. It is a pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood with a thoroughfare running right through it.
- Widening the sidewalk would be great if you could do it. Many cities have done it and it has either been successful or a terrible failure. Sparks Street mall in Ottawa is an example, because people don't want to go there.
- These intersections are difficult for pedestrians. There are many ways intersections can be made more pedestrian friendly.

Transportation / Infrastructure:

- Having the rapid transit station at the south end of Osborne village will benefit the village.
- It is overdue for a streetscaping renewal.
- There is a clash between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Everyone needs to take more responsibility for their actions and need to cooperate better when sharing the streets.
- Infrastructure renewal is overdue.
- Connect cycle routes between neighbourhoods.
- The city will help fund bike racks in partnership with organizations.
- Improving the pedestrian and cycling environment.
- Refresh the crumbling infrastructure.
- Slowing and reducing traffic volumes.
- Something to alleviate traffic at least at rush hour would be helpful. A swing lane could be introduced to help ease through traffic during rush hour. We've heard from some of our patrons that they just don't go to the village because of the congestion.
- Bringing more buildings out to the street.

Greenspace:

- More green space and trees.
- Improve the park spaces (like on Stafford) to increase usage. Better maintenance is necessary.
- We can always use more green space in urban areas.
- I love trees - they're wonderful things to have, but on Osborne Village, they just don't survive.
- Osborne is just not an attractive street - people go there for the activities.
- Our trees need to be replaced.
- More landscaping.

Events / Social / Community:

- More daytime events.
- The relationship between the Corydon / Osborne corridor will lead to more vibrancy.
- A really great gathering place is needed.
- Canada Day is great but we need more events like this. We need to get together more often.
- Gathering / meeting / office space is needed.
- I suggest that Osborne Street be made a pedestrian thoroughfare during the summer - from May long weekend to Labour Day. That would make a huge difference to the neighbourhood in the summer.
- A really great gathering place is needed.
- Sustained citizen engagement, perhaps due to transience. Its been difficult to sustain a residents' association due to all the rental properties. People love the village but there's not as much neighbourhood identification as in other areas.
- Businesses and residents need to connect / communicate better.
- It would be great if the merchants and the residents were better linked together. We have a very vocal community of seniors here.

Services needed:

- There are too many sushi restaurants around the village.
- It would be great to have a credit union in the village.
- There is a need for a daycare in the area.
- An independent bookstore is needed (like The Neighbourhood Cafe).

Business / Development:

- Any downtown development will benefit Osborne Village.
- Improving the BIZ
- Better connection between the residents and the businesses - groups don't communicate.
- A return to smaller businesses would help foster a better sense of community.
- Many businesses could use a clean-up to look their best.
- The area between Roslyn and River needs to be improved.
- A return to small, independent business would be positive.
- Businesses need to be more proactive in their support of the village. If you don't make any noise, you don't get any attention. The city takes huge amounts of money for the BIZ, and then expect the BIZ to do everything. The city downloads these things onto the BIZ: businesses still need to clean their own sidewalks, plant their own flowers, shovel their own snow.
- Businesses should get better value for their property taxes.

Question 4. What do you think of the following ideas to improve Osborne Village?

This question asked people to assess the importance of a variety of ideas to improve Osborne Village, in order to prioritize issues that are not currently being addressed today.

Answer Options	Very Important	Important	I'm not sure	Not important	Very unimportant
Close the street to vehicular traffic more often	3	1	9	1	4
Improve safety for cyclists, scooters and wheelchairs	16	0	2	0	0
Make more free parking available	2	3	3	3	8
Make more paid parking available	5	6	2	2	4
Improve the mix of essential services (banks, physicians, shoe repair etc.)	7	5	3	2	1
Improve building accessibility (eliminate stairs, include lifts, widen doorways)	9	2	3	1	1
Ensure affordable housing choices remain available	15	1	1	0	1
Widen the sidewalks on Osborne	3	4	3	4	3
Slow / reduce vehicular through-traffic	6	2	2	4	4
More events for families	4	4	6	2	1
More events for seniors	6	5	5	0	1
More special events in general	4	6	6	1	0
Create a destination for "outdoor eating" in summer with more kiosks / food trucks	5	4	5	0	3
A bicycle rental service depot, connecting the area with downtown	6	6	4	1	0
Heated sidewalks in key areas to make walking safer	3	1	5	1	6
Create a "scramble crossing" for pedestrians at the corner of River and Osborne	7	1	6	0	4
Increase overall density of the area (Vancouver style)	3	5	5	2	2

Question 5. What do you like best about the GSAC the way it is today?

Highlights:

- 45% identified the GSAC staff and/or board as a major strength.
- 50% identified the GSAC as an important community gathering place.
- 25% highlighted the GSAC's affordable prices as an important advantage.
- 35% mentioned GSAC's existing connections to "children" or "youth" as a strength.

People:

- Todd is always great to work with - he's a real asset.
- It has a competent, consistent and seasoned technical staff - Todd!
- Todd the technician is always great to work with. He's a great asset to the Gas Station. He knows what he'd doing and he's extremely efficient. He's patient with the kids and very pleasant and professional.
- Nick is a dedicated and energetic administrator.
- The board is determined and persistent in challenging times.
- Nick is very helpful and a pleasure to work with.
- It has a great mix of people.
- The staff.
- I appreciate the competency of the staff - they are easy to deal with.
- The current board deserves a lot of credit from rescuing it from a very dire situation. They deserve a standing ovation.
- Nick has done a really great job.
- It has a consistent technical staff - Todd! In recent years, they have moved toward a mentorship model, and as a really seasoned technical person, Todd really excels at that.

Programming / Direction:

- I love the variety of programming - the Farmer's Market is great.
- The courtyard is used a lot recently, with the concert series and the Farmers' Market, though it varies every year.
- There are lots of events.
- They fit the funding mandate of an urban arts centre, similar to the West End Cultural Centre.
- It has lots of events and activities.
- It is a community based non-profit.
- The Farmer's Market, Canada Day.
- They are emerging as more than a theatre.
- It hosts a variety of events.
- I would like to see more events there - like the Park Theatre. They are doing the Farmer's Market. I would love to see it become more involved in the community. I can see that it's trying.
- Being open in the summer is really important.
- The arts camps are a great thing for schoolchildren who may not have those kind of opportunities.
- The village market is a fantastic thing.

Affordability:

- We have great rates with them.
- It is relatively affordable.
- Their prices are on target.
- It's a professional place but not unaffordable.

Community:

- It is an incubator for young talent.
- Almost every performing artist in town has performed at the GSAC and views it as home.
- It is a centre for dance.
- They bring audiences from all over the city.
- It has rebranded and re-energized itself over the last few years.
- It contributes youth and vitality to the neighbourhood.
- It is a great space that allows everyone to meet there. It is a place for the community to get together.
- Almost every performing artist in town has performed at the GSAC and view it as home. The GSAC brings a lot of people to the area.
- There are lots of community organizations that use that space - I love that there are parents and grandparents. It has a great suburban reach in terms of its clients.
- In many ways it represents the soul of the village.
- The only way something can become successful is if you get people to buy into it. Get the groups involved, to own a piece of it.
- It is well-connected to the community. They reach out beyond theatre - like the farmer's market and their planting of flowers.
- What I like about the GSAC is its potential - to be a real community centre for things to happen in OV.
- It's good for the area because it brings lots of people to the area, hopefully on a nightly basis, but not always.
- It serves the community in various ways - as a rental venue.
- It could be a nice people place.
- It has strong roots in the community. It provides a venue for lots of people.

Location:

- It's a good complement to other businesses in the area, which is a tremendous asset.
- A theatre is a good fit with the neighbourhood.
- Its location broadens the theatre district outside of the exchange. We don't distribute cultural centres around the city, the way we do with arenas and sportplexes. We don't consider cultural centres in the same way, and I think that's a shame.
- People like it because there is a lot to do nearby.
- There is lots of shopping and food nearby.
- It is an amenable place in a desirable location for our patrons.
- The location is great. I like the [sandwich shop] - I go there all the time. They are open late.
- It has lots of space to work with.
- It is in one of the most vibrant neighbourhoods in the city, which is a great advantage.
- The location is a double-edged sword: it is really easy to get to, there is lots of food service around - you can have a complete night out in the village, but parking is an issue.

Support Spaces:

- The bar is great!
- The Farmers' Market is great.
- It is generous of them to use their open space as a community gathering place.
- The circle is an important meeting place and was echoed across the street. It should be retained somehow.
- The lobby is friendly and welcoming.
- The bar is great. We keep the theatre warm for the dancers, so people come out and need a drink at intermission.
- I like the lobby, that doubles as a gallery. Bringing multiple forms of art in, creates vibrancy.
- The bar and concession area is great - that is something that doesn't exist in other small theatres in town, that are accessible in price.
- I like its amazing courtyard.

- [A nearby coffee chain] has created such a nice outdoor seating area. If the Gas Station had a business that provided a similar function on site, it could be a nice space to be.
- It has a nice indoor/outdoor transition.
- I love its openness to the street. It invites people in.

The Theatre:

- The sight lines are good.
- The theatre is a great size and has great sight lines.
- It is a great presentation venue, especially for dance.
- It is a well thought out little theatre both for technicians and performers.
- For modern dance, it's a perfect space because it's not too big. The backstage is perfect for our program. The flow works really well.
- Their upgraded sound system is great.
- It provides a facility for use by up and coming performers that is fairly inexpensive.
- It is fairly well-equipped, so it can accommodate more professional and higher level performances as well.
- In the performance space, I appreciate that there's no competition from neighbouring sound volume, the way there is in [another facility] for example.
- It is a good size the way it is now. If it had fewer seats, it would limit potential revenue and I think it would be less viable.
- It's a nice theatre, it's a great rental venue.
- It is an intimate performance venue.

Question 6. What do you like least about the GSAC the way it is now?

Highlights:

- 26% identified that current GSAC support spaces are inadequate - needing improvement, refinishing, or enhancement.

Parking:

- Parking is always an issue for audiences and performers.
- Lack of parking creates frustration in the neighbourhood.

Exterior / Courtyard:

- The exterior is not very noteworthy.
- The courtyard attracts vagrants and drug dealers (also the bus shelter, especially in winter).
- The [sandwich shop] branding is quite heavy, on that side of the building. The GSAC is sometimes not very active during the day. There might be opportunities there.
- The courtyard is very unfriendly and uninviting - it's like a maze. The theatre entrance is obscured from the street by foliage. It's overgrown. The graffiti makes it look very trashy - on one hand it looks artsy or it could be interpreted as looking trashy - I think the latter.
- The biggest problem with the site is the petroleum contamination.
- The fabric of the building is old and in need of extensive repairs.

Community:

- Originally, the Gas Station was meant to be a place for youth. There is a lot of creative energy that could be redirected around here.
- In the context of the city, it is an early stage for young people just starting out, so it is always searching for new directions, which can be quite challenging.
- We need stronger relationships between businesses, the BIZ and the community. The GSAC uses the internet very well - maybe they could do more of that. The merchants need to work with the Gas Station more, and the BIZ could help with that. I'd like to see more art, inside and out. More exciting events to draw people to the neighbourhood.

- It used to be used as a training facility. There was something great about using a community space as a teaching space. Has that affected how young people coming up see that space, or do they see it at all any more?

Administration:

- Financial viability is always a challenge. Unfortunately, the board seems to change quite regularly and most are more involved in the arts side, rather than the business side and the responsibilities of a landlord. Where I would hold landlords responsible elsewhere, I just shut up because they are a community organization. They don't have the resources to move ahead. I've seen the direction change many times and that hurts them. They don't always have what they need to sustain the place and keep it vibrant. They need to look at how they continue to generate revenue.
- The field is quite full of small venues, so they have lots of competition. They can't take big risks, for lack of funding, venue size, and lack of funding. They have a hard time attracting larger presenters. Since they are located outside of the SHED zone, they are out of the loop of funding. The backstage space is not adequate - this limits their opportunities as a presenting venue.
- Financial viability is an ongoing challenge.

Support Spaces:

- The lobby doesn't really accommodate a full house.
- The building is quite ugly. It needs to be made more functional.
- New finishes (carpet, paint) will be needed soon.
- The lobby can be very congested when the theatre is full.
- The rear loading door is blocked by a dumpster.
- With a kitchen, this could be a Folklorama venue in August, which is typically slow.
- A coat check would be useful in the winter, especially for receptions.
- A water fountain would be great to have.
- It would be great to have a larger lobby that would accommodate the number of patrons who fit into the theatre, especially in winter, which is the busy season.
- It might be time to redo the bathrooms.
- It needs a bit of an update - the dressing rooms and washrooms need a bit of a refresh - nothing major - but it needs to be repainted.
- Sometimes the space isn't cleaned very often.
- The box office needs fixing up - the Plexiglas is very scratched - it's horrible.

Signage:

- The new sign is too small, hard to read, and poorly located.
- The new marquee is not good - it's too small and it's hard to read. It's not visible to people on River.

The Theatre / Facilities / Technical:

- Air conditioning is hard to control.
- The backstage is too small for larger productions and larger casts.
- New finishes (carpet, paint) will be needed soon.
- The seats could be updated. New carpet will be needed soon.
- The lighting could use updating in the theatre and the lobby (incandescent bulbs).
- We've heard from our patrons that it's too warm in the theatre.
- The backstage area is quite constricted.
- What I like least is its lack of technical equipment. It needs more lights. Even a small organization needs to bring in a great deal of equipment.
- If the seating arrangement could be more adaptable, for more intimate performances, it would be really great.

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- Their seats are not the most comfortable, but I don't think that keeps people from going there.
- Sound is problematic - you can hear traffic and people in the lobby.
- The smell of the bread baking is very distracting in the theatre.

Question 7. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important changes that would help the GSAC better contribute to the neighbourhood?

Highlights:

- 25% identified that safety in the courtyard remained a concern needing to be addressed.
- 20% suggested that building relationships with youth and education were a logical direction for the future.
- 20% suggested that more thematic retail tenants on site that support GSAC activities would be beneficial.
- 20% of respondents identified that support spaces need improvement.
- 15% thought parking was one of the 3 most important changes that should/could be addressed by the GSAC.
- 20% thought either interior or exterior renovations were needed (in no particular order: bathrooms, exterior paint, carpet, theatre seating, box office Plexiglas).

Partnerships / Connections:

- You can build excitement and a sense of ownership by integrating like-minded community groups.
- There are lots of single parent families in the area.
- Better connections with nearby schools would benefit both.
- There are schools nearby - get those kids involved - kids are our best resource.
- There are nine churches in the neighbourhood and they all have choirs. Why not put on a chorale show once a year?
- There are lots of seniors nearby, who do some great things - put on plays, etc. They are a great resource.
- The merchants and the BIZ could get involved and put on neighbourhood events, like a talent night.
- Strengthening nearby connections is a logical direction (ie. churches, schools).

Programming / Events:

- It would be a great venue for public meetings. It is an important gathering place.
- The snow sculpture effort last year was a good one.
- It has potential as a film-screening venue - it could build on this. It would need to invest in the equipment and find a niche. Introducing a greater curatorial aspect to the space - like the "Cultch" in Vancouver. This could also expand their channels of funding. Expanding their vision from their current role, as a roadhouse, to a unique vision that involves multiple forms. They are somewhat pigeon-holed as a roadhouse.
- Have more regular events (like regular comedy nights) that get a regular crowd in there from the neighbourhood.
- They don't generate a lot of programming. Finding ways to work with the neighbourhood on arts and cultural activities, to become a neighbourhood resource. For example, working with seniors to have storytelling or something.
- I see a lot of young, low-income families who may not have transportation, and are likely having a hard time finding things for their children to do.
- They need to welcome the community a little more, perhaps through the BIZ or the residents' association, those kind of things. They could open the doors in a broader sense. That might extend to programming, like a movie night, etc.
- Expanding the vision from the current role as a roadhouse, to present unique programming that involves multiple forms.

Parking:

- Board members sometimes compete with renters for parking on the side and this can be awkward. If renters could have use of one or two of the side-lot spaces, it would be very helpful. Reliable paid parking nearby would be helpful. It would also be great to have a drop-off area for grandparents and performers.

- Finding ways to include non-surface parking.
- Adding more parking to better compete with [theatre at the Forks].
- Parking is a challenge - there are ways of getting around that, but it's a challenge to convince suburbanites of that.

Courtyard / Exterior:

- Outdoor events can be noisy - respecting the noise by-laws is important.
- Better monitoring of activity in the heated bus shelter would improve perception of safety.
- A more inviting, park-like atmosphere would improve perceptions of safety in the courtyard. It seems wild, overgrown, and underlit.
- Bringing the art outside more often would help the courtyard become more of a destination.
- Bringing the right kind of people to the courtyard would really add to the site.
- More benches would be great.
- A Granville Island model would be great here - where you could experience artists and craftspeople working as a form of entertainment.
- More public performance and cultural activity outside including theatre and installation outside. More ice sculpture outside would be great. Another idea is suspending things in the air to animate the space. It can be magical and really make you engage in the space. A piece of public artwork would be amazing
- The courtyard has improved a lot over the last 5 years. They could think about how to use the courtyard more by putting more regular positive activity on site.
- The building and site could use a little freshening up. The exterior space could be made more interesting and inviting. It looks 60's-ish. If there's enough money, remove the concrete barriers and replace it with something better. It could be more interesting. The [sandwich shop], [convenience store], [fast food restaurant] combination looks like a suburban strip mall approach.
- If we could shoo away the undesirables - the guys who have slept there with their dogs - they would be replaced almost immediately by seniors and kids. That space is never empty. It is the stronger, more aggressive members of society pushing the weaker members aside.
- The graffiti needs to be refreshed. It is a bit of an eyesore. It needs to be repainted.
- The building looks a little shabby these days.
- The building is not very noteworthy. It needs to be refreshed - the building and the graffiti.

Mixed-Use:

- The whole site could be rebuilt with a mixed-use building incorporating both the theatre and housing.
- An all-day use in the building to bring round the clock traffic. My impression is that there is not a lot of activity there. Putting a cafe onsite would help.
- Instead of [the sandwich shop], something thematic that would draw a like-minded crowd.
- Get rid of [the sandwich shop] and put something better suited. Something better could be done with that space, in a way better suited to the community.
- Another use might help solve some of the other problems on the corner - like a high-end restaurant or a jazz club. In Osborne Village there are fewer restaurants that appeal to older people. Or maybe it should be a children's centre or a daycare. A bistro. A lobby for the theatre. Something where people come and hang out and go away again, as many hours as possible.
- It would be great to have a tapas bar or restaurant onsite - which would keep the kids away. As long as it's busy and social, the loiterers are kept away. If you force people to buy food or drinks, you will get a better group of people. It would also work well with the theatre. It would be great for large groups and patrons to know they have a place to go after a performance.
- I'd love to see [the sandwich shop] go away.
- I'd love to see a 4 or 5 storey mixed use building on that site.
- Including artist space onsite would further develop the arts centre mandate.
- Another idea is providing better access to our visual artists. Six-month or year-long studio rental spaces would be great.

- Classroom and rehearsal space would really add to their viability.

Support Spaces:

- Some places have studio facilities adjacent to the theatre - change rooms, audition / rehearsal space, etc.
- When there are lots of people there in the winter, there is no space for coats or boots - this can be an issue when there are lots of people.
- More support spaces for rehearsal, coat check, a wood shop.
- Increasing the gallery / exhibition space is a good idea.
- The bathrooms need to be updated.
- The lobby needs to be bigger, it is not quite large enough, especially in winter.
- Adding another storey that expands what they can present on the stage.
- Regarding usability - the space is lacking in repertory space and personal space. The backstage area is inadequate for a larger production.
- It requires a second floor perhaps - that is a big issue. The footprint is too small to support the work on stage. If you have a cast over 6 people, you are really cramped backstage.

Technical / Theatre:

- Security is an issue. At least 5 times, people have walked in and caused difficulty for us. An ability to lock the door with an intercom, or door security has been necessary sometimes.
- They need a better air conditioner, with a condenser. We get complaints about the lack of temperature control. It needs to be updated - the peeling paint outside needs to be addressed.
- Losing seats would not be a good idea.
- There are some issues with sound bleed in the performance space - in a hailstorm the roof is very noisy.
- The GSAC's loading bay is quite limited. The loading dock is seldom used, because you have to block the laneway. Instead, the single side door is used, and scenery needs to be built to fit through that door, which is problematic. Additional loading facility would be beneficial. Their backstage space could be improved.
- Some new equipment would be beneficial, especially lighting equipment, - we tend to bring 20-25% of our own equipment with us. They could probably use additional sound equipment as well.

Signage:

- We miss the marquee that was on the River Avenue side. Is it coming back?
- The LED sign does not conform to the plan - this sign is not pedestrian oriented - it is intended for automobiles.

Question 8. What do you think of the open space / courtyard in front of the Gas Station?

Programming:

- It is an important meeting and social place.
- The farmer's market is great!
- All kinds of people like to gather there.
- It would be great if the space could be used more.
- Having more events onsite brings people to the space.
- It is important overflow space in good weather.
- Seniors like to gather there.

Courtyard Features

- A permanent stage would be a nice addition.
- I would love to have a sophisticated café there – an inviting place to linger.
- A place with purpose is an easier place to manage than a place that doesn't have a purpose.
- There is no sense of entrance.
- It would be nice to have some additional seating outside in the summer.
- The Subway is an important source of income, though it would be great if it were a better fit with the theatre.
- Starbuck's has created a nice place to sit outside and work on their laptops. It has been well done - and the Gas Station could do similar.

Safety:

- The situation has improved a lot in the last few years.
- It has improved a lot recently.
- The redesign has helped with crime prevention.
- The courtyard is a welcoming space, it just does not always welcome the right kind of people.
- Keeping the courtyard safe for nearby residents is important.
- It's a matter of chasing away the people you don't want.
- We have no issues with the courtyard.

The Fence:

- The fence is confusing - it obscures the main entrance.
- The fence is an obstruction for loading and unloading.
- I think the fence upsets patrons as much as it keeps the troublemakers away.
- The fencing is disorienting – there might be a better solution.
- Being able to walk diagonally across the site was great.
- The fencing excludes as well as protects.
- It's hard to monitor a space when you're not there 24/7.

Landscaping:

- The foliage and fencing makes it feel like private space.
- It is the green space of the village.
- I suggest thinning the trees in order to have clear views through the site, so you can see the building and the signage.
- More could be done with flowers.
- It could be made more attractive.
- I'm all for trees but those are too heavy - the architecture should be more prominent.
- Maintain as much green space as possible.
- This green space is very important.
- I love the trees!

Question 9. What do you think of the following ideas to improve the Gas Station Arts Centre?

This question presents some specific ideas in order to more accurately gauge stakeholder support. The value that received the highest score is shown in the shaded field.

- 70% said the courtyard “should be retained as exterior public space (in some form)”.
- 60% said including onsite underground parking was “very important”.
- 58% said it would be “very important” to include artist studio / rehearsal space in a redevelopment of the site.
- 50% said it would be “very important” to expand the lobby / event space.

Response Options	Very Important	Important	I'm not sure	Not important	Very unimportant
Include Onsite Underground Parking	12	5	2	1	0
Include a larger lobby / event space	9	4	4	0	1
Enclose the courtyard space (completely)	1	1	11	2	4
Include artist studio / rehearsal space	11	5	1	1	1
Include onsite living space	7	4	3	2	2
Include multi-family residential units onsite	6	5	3	1	4
Add more retail space onsite	4	9	2	3	1
Add more commercial space onsite	5	4	7	2	1
Include a dedicated drop-off point	4	6	5	1	3
Include specific retail (cafe, bakery, diner, ATM)	7	7	3	2	1
Include artist live / work space	5	7	1	1	3
Retain the courtyard as exterior public space (in some form)	14	3	2	1	0

Question 10. Have a look at the concept images showing potential redevelopment of the Gas Station Arts Centre site.

These six massing sketches were created to engender discussions of what might be suitable and desirable density for site redevelopment options only. They are not intended as design drawings.

Points for discussion with interview subjects included:

- Examining the potential for changing the size and placement of the 'courtyard' space (ie. if the courtyard were to decrease in size to accommodate a larger building on the site, where would it best be located?).
- What positive and negative impact(s) would / could a larger building potentially effect on the neighbourhood? on the Gas Station Arts Centre itself?
- To what extent would stakeholders support a larger re-development project on-site providing the Gas Station Arts Centre remains onsite as a key player (it was made clear to respondents that this was a non-negotiable)?

[Please note: Although the survey as drafted asked respondents to rank their choices from 1 to 5, in practice, respondents were asked to choose their top two favourites, due to interview time constraints. As a result, percentage figures shown total 135%, and should be considered accordingly].



Concept 1: Current Situation

The Gas Station Arts Centre as it exists today (approximately 6000 sq.ft.)

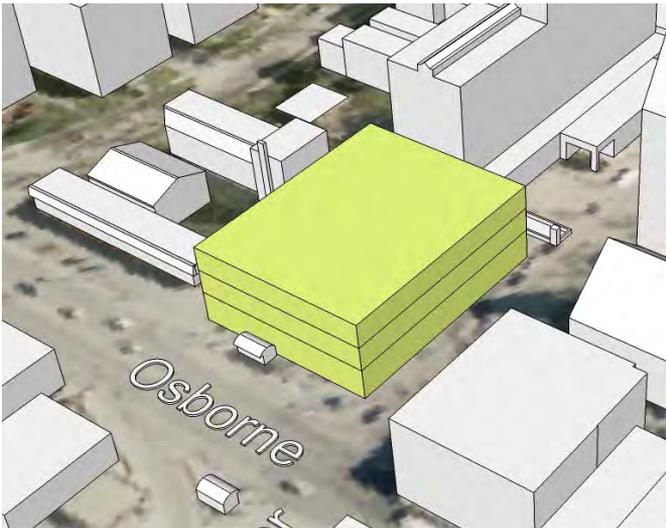
As it would not represent a significant increase in site density, this was not presented to respondents as a choice.



Concept 2: Fill the site – Two storey

- Where could a smaller courtyard be located? (at the corner).
- Who might potential partners be? (community, children and youth, education, arts groups, crafts, local business). This option might represent a renovation project, approximately doubling the current built area. (6000 sq.ft x 2 = 12,000 sq.ft)

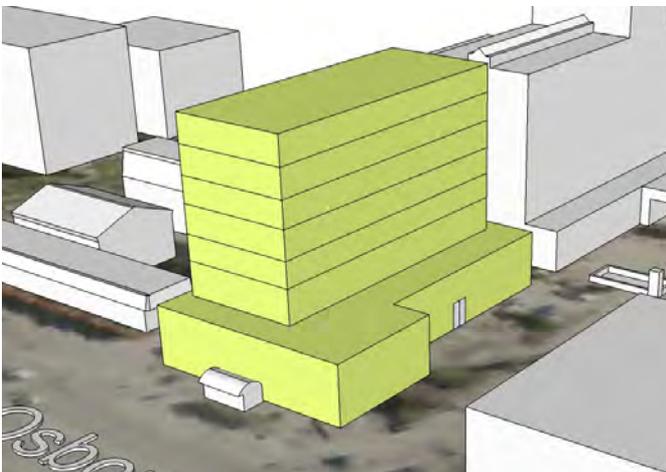
25% chose this concept (with modifications)



Concept 3: Fill the site – Three storey

- Three storeys that mirror the McKim Courtyard building across River Avenue (the “traditional building line and height”) to give a dense feeling (“up to 25% of a façade may be set back for amenities” – more is allowed on River Avenue)
- A dense, big city feeling
- “The courtyard should be retained”, but where?

**10% chose this concept
(with modifications)**



Concept 5: Mirroring the Villa Cabrini

- A successful precedent for a mixed-use development with affordable non-profit rental housing in the vicinity
- An more cost-efficient way to maximize density on the site

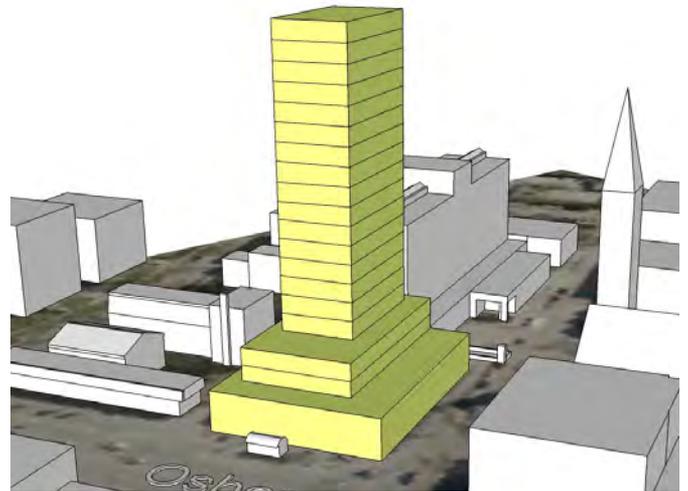
**40% chose this concept
(with modifications)**



Concept 4: A ‘Stepped Pyramid’

- To avoid shadowing the neighbours
- Matching the height of Villa Cabrini (or lower)
- Potential for lots of rooftop exteriors – roof garden, solar/green roof, restaurant, lounge, etc.
- A less efficient use of space
- (6000 sq.ft x 8 = approximately 48,000 sq.ft. modified to maintain courtyard)

**35% chose this concept
(with modifications)**



Concept 6: The Tall Tower

- A ‘blue sky’ exercise to get people thinking
- “A new building should respect the height of the church spire”
- “Retain the courtyard at the corner”;
- Secondary plan stipulates new development and additions have minimum 2 storeys and maximum 4 storeys, on Osborne, but more are permitted on River (pending sidewalks and public spaces are not shaded);
- “Underground parking would be essential”

**40% chose this concept
(with modifications)**

The Favourites

It was decided to combine the two top-rated choices, in order to achieve a balance of the best qualities of both:

- maximizing vertical height would allow a larger courtyard at ground level, while still maximizing floor area.
- maximizing the tower footprint will maximize the potential number of housing units that might be included.



Concept 4

Concept 5



A Hybrid of Concepts 4 and 5

Question 11. Why did you respond [to question 10] the way you did?

“I like the idea of extra space, but maybe not for housing. Keeping it as a usable arts centre is important. But, having said that, housing at that corner would be extremely desirable. Having multiple income streams is a great way to subsidize a performance space. It would be great to have more interior space in the lobby and adjacent support spaces, so I wouldn't mind if the courtyard were lost. You could have more events or a cast party onsite. A private gathering space on the second floor would be very desirable.”

“Conference / meeting facilities are much needed in the area. Parking is a big issue and needs to be addressed. A theatre school or educational focus would bring young people. Mixed use is essential. It would be great to have artists working onsite, in a very visible way.”

“It is important not to block neighbours' views.”

“It should not be higher than the McKim building. The courtyard should be retained in some form, as much as possible. Keep the neighbourhood plan in mind.”

“A maximum height of four storeys is desirable - not higher than the McKim building. The courtyard should be maintained. The larger the housing capacity, the more parking would be needed. Affordable retail rent is in demand.”

“The courtyard should be maintained, in some form. People feel very strongly about the courtyard, in both directions. The larger the project, the more revenue-generating potential. The more significant the redevelopment, the greater the potential for underground parking.”

“The courtyard needs to be retained as public space in some form. Young professionals might be the best market. I'm not sure we need any more art galleries, aside from the existing display space. Studio space onsite is essential. The work should be generated by people living onsite.”

“Keep the public space. People don't want a box on such a high profile corner. Mixed-use is essential.”

“Having more people on site would give more people a sense of ownership of the space, which would be awkward. The smaller the better, but a larger building would allow more partnership opportunities, which would make us more financially independent. The choice is to keep it intimate or to go big. Without the courtyard, we could have a fantastic theatre here. A new building should be no taller than the Villa Cabrini. [Concept] 2 (plus the courtyard) or [Concept] 6 (capped at Villa Cabrini height).”

“They should keep the courtyard. I don't think the village needs any more tall buildings. Including any housing on site would certainly require more parking. There is a big need for extra dance rehearsal space in the city. Rehearsal rooms would be fantastic. Parking is the major factor in including more housing. Don't remove parking from the street.”

“We have too many buildings coming out to the street in Osborne Village. One of the downsides to Osborne Street, in that it seems constricted, even more than it actually is, which gives a negative impression. A taller building would limit the skyline view. As you approach the bridge, it's nice to have lower buildings. Taller towers tend to gravitate towards higher incomes, and that's a market we don't really need to address in this city. Controlling rents and cost would be necessary in a larger building. A skywalk would be a better amenity than a scramble crossing across Osborne.”

“I think you could expand the building while maintaining the courtyard space. Building right up to the sidewalk would make it much less pedestrian-friendly. Keep it in the same world as the rest of the buildings in the village - maximum 4 or 5 storeys. My head says that a taller structure is the way we have to build, but my heart says no. I love the idea of combining residential and cultural space. There is an opportunity to have a green roof space, which would also help with the energy use of the space. The building should not dwarf the church steeple. Shading the rest of the village would not be good. If you can maintain the site’s leafiness, people are going to be more interested in it. The corner of River and Osborne should be kept open, especially now that it is mirrored across the street [in the round seating in front of the liquor store].”

“I like the stepped massing, while maintaining the courtyard. Allowing too many other uses would lose the essential focus that the Gas Station brings to the neighbourhood. The courtyard must be maintained. I believe there should be greenspace outside. If the events are there to bring people in, it will happen. More space for art is desirable.”

“Maximum four or five storeys is allowable by the secondary plan - 49’ is the height limit. Residential can be up to five storeys provided the upper storey is set back and do not cast significant shadows. You can apply for a variance to go higher with a shadow study. The plaza should be on the corner close to Osborne and be a smaller focal point. We would want the ground level to come up to the street as much as possible. A smaller courtyard could be more successful as a higher quality space more highly defined. People like to feel enclosed.”

“It is important to set the building back from the street and maintain the courtyard, either in the back, near the Villa Cabrini. It would be a great loss to no longer have the courtyard.”

“No matter what, [the GSAC] have to build underground parking. The alley between Villa Cabrini belongs to the GSAC - it can build right up to Villa Cabrini. The parking lot is great but the land is far too valuable. If we built multiple levels of underground parking we could finance the whole project and would provide an ongoing income.”

“I like the stepped approach, but keep the courtyard on the corner and keep the southern exposure. Perhaps put the entrance on the corner. Maintaining the plaza to match the [liquor store] situation makes sense. [Concept] number 6 is too tall. Overshadowing the church steeple does not make sense. Nine or ten stories is high enough.”

“It is important to maintain an outdoor courtyard space and include parking.”

“I like the high density but keep the courtyard.”

“The larger the building, the more parking is needed and that is the difficulty. The courtyard might be a flexible space that could be opened during the summer months and closed in the winter, like the building with [nearby breakfast restaurant] in it. In the winter the courtyard is dead space. Developing a relationship with another arts organization could be a good resident for such a building - for example, before [local theatre group] moved to the Forks and built their own space. As [the festival tenant] grows, could it be housed onsite?”

The following optional questions were not posed to every respondent.

Question 12. (optional) What are some of the GSAC's biggest challenges?

“Financial stability.”

“Parking. A stable source of revenue. Public relations - breaking down old perceptions of who they are. Rebranding themselves as more multi-cultural. Keeping ticket prices low for seniors.”

“Competition in their size category niche. Can the demographics of the village support it? What would the community support? Finding the money is a big challenge these days.”

“Financial stability. They are not included in the Centre Venture plan. Public money is a challenge.”

“I think it is very difficult for them financially. They have a great board right now, but attracting a solid volunteer core is an ongoing challenge. They are challenged by their lack of equipment.”

“Their challenge is funding. Their designation as a roadhouse dictates the funding they can apply for, though that may have changed. Now everything seems to be for the [festival], and everyone else seems to be a second priority. They need more funding to get help for [staff, who] work very long hours. They need someone to answer the phone, and be in the office especially when something's being delivered. It would be great to have a cleaner.”

“Getting enough rental income is always tough. They've done well to retire their debt. They have very solid management right now with [executive director] - there was a time when there was a lot of turnover in management.”

“It is a place that people have a connection with, and have a sense of ownership over. It has a lot of supporters. Long-term fiscal stability - the theatre needs to become self-sufficient in the long-term. Green building design could be part of that.”

“Helping people connect with parking spaces would help get suburbanites in. Partnering with [the grocery store] may address some of these challenges, especially after hours.”

“Public perception - anything will require a significant capital campaign. The GSAC is removed from cultural district planning, which happens [elsewhere in the city], St. Boniface, the rail yards, the western Exchange. You don't hear much about development in Osborne Village. The challenge is to develop a compelling vision that will get the decision-makers and the public's attention. It is a tough climate, the province has a flood to pay for, the feds have tightened their belts - it is a challenging time. But it gets done - people still do it. It's about who you know, so develop your board of directors.”

“Ensuring community support adds time to the project, but is essential.”

Question 13. (optional) What would it mean for the GSAC if it no longer had to pay property taxes?

“It would be great for an arts centre and would affect their long-term viability.”

“Could the courtyard be retained as a public space, so the GSAC no longer had to pay tax?”

“Their tax bill is very small. It looks like they are receiving a considerable break on their school tax portion of the bill.”

“I’m going to guess about \$40,000 / year. [Local arts service organization] doesn’t pay property taxes here and it is a big part of its stability - it is a big deal.”

Question 14. (optional) How significant is it to a non-profit to be a part of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation?

“It is a provincial crown corporation that runs the concert hall, [major theatre], the museum, focused around a geographic area, developed for 1967. Since then, two other properties have been added – [local arts service organization] and [regional film production facility] on Logan. The advantage is no property taxes - that’s the only benefit. It’s a very different arrangement for the Centennial Concert Hall, which is actively managed by them. It is a not for profit. That translates to no property tax. If you talk to anybody they’ll say there is no way the province or the city would go down that road again, but there are all kinds of other arrangements that have been made to eliminate property tax. The city has the power to do it, if there’s a will. 389 Main Street - the Millennium Centre - was rebranded in the year 2000 - was gifted from a private owner to a newly-formed not-for-profit, to take care of the building. Somebody knew [the mayor] and the deal got made.”

“Organizations that are part of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation enjoy stable support.”

IV. Cost Estimates

These estimated sample costs are for comparison purposes only.

Use	Area (Sq.ft.)	Total Cost
Concepts 4 + 5 “Hybrid”		
Retail (street level)	6,000	
GSAC (street and second level)	7,000	
Residential (includes common areas)	32,000	
Total	45,000	x \$225 /sq.ft = \$10,125,000
Residential Unit Breakdown for “Hybrid”		
10 x 600 sq.ft	6,000	
10 x 800 sq.ft	8,000	
10 x 1000 sq.ft	10,000	
Common areas	8,000	
Total residential area:	32,000 (30 units)	
Use	Area (Sq.ft.)	Total Cost
Concept 5 “Mirroring the Villa Cabrini”		
Retail	5,000	
GSAC (currently 6000 sq.ft)	9,000	
Commercial	3,000	
Residential	43,000	
Total	60,000	x \$225/sq.ft = \$13,500,000
Residential Unit Breakdown for Concept 5		
15 x 600 sq.ft	9,000	
12 x 800 sq.ft	9,600	
10 x 1000 sq.ft	10,000	
Common areas	14,400	
Total residential area:	43,000 (37 units)	
Underground Parking		
estimated	\$30,000 - 40,000 / stall	

V. Conclusions

This study was commissioned to explore the feasibility of redevelopment of the Gas Station Arts Centre site at the corner of River and Osborne.

The Gas Station Arts Centre has made noticeable and significant progress in recent years. Measures taken to control activities in its “courtyard” have paid off, and many stakeholders said that it has improved greatly over the past few years. However, the courtyard was also identified by some as an “unwelcoming place”. As part of a redevelopment scheme, the GSAC should consider carefully its role as caretaker of the space, and take measures to monitor user safety. Bringing positive activity to the site around the clock will considerably improve perceptions of safety.

1. Feasibility / Demand

There is a considerable amount of interest and attention focused on the corner of River and Osborne recently. The fact that businesses are choosing to invest in the area is a further vote of confidence in an area nationally-recognized as “Canada’s Great Neighbourhood”.

Osborne Village continues to be in demand as a residential neighbourhood, in line with the continued city-wide demand for housing, especially affordable rental units.

2. Parameters and Challenges to Developing the Site

The Gas Station Arts Centre site is subject to a number of planning documents that govern development in the city, such as the City of Winnipeg’s *Our Winnipeg, Complete Communities* and the *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan*. The *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan* supports and encourages:

- Mixed-use development in Osborne Village; with retail and entertainment uses on the ground floor, and offices, residential or live / work units above;
- Walkable, pedestrian-oriented development;
- Conservation and enhancement of mature-canopy green spaces;
- Entertainment uses in public spaces.

As such, it is deemed to be very supportive of the Gas Station’s proposed direction.

As a brownfield site, mitigating the damaging effects of soil contamination is necessary for site redevelopment.

Lack of financial stability, an economic downturn, lack of suitable partnerships, cuts to government spending, an increase in interest rates, other competing fundraising projects within the city or region – all may have an effect on the Gas Station’s efforts to fundraise towards a new project.

3. Private Sector Perspective

Deciding whether or not to include housing on site is a key decision for the Gas Station’s future. What kind of housing tenure is most appropriate is an important decision that could have long-term implications for the Gas Station’s future. In recent years, condominium developments have dominated the market, but this is changing, due to a serious shortage of rental vacancies in the Winnipeg market. It has been suggested that the tide is turning, and developers are becoming more positive about building rentals again. Given the waiting list of people wanting to live in the neighbouring property, Villa Cabrini, there certainly appears to be an unmet demand.

4. Community Support

The study found that among interview subjects there is strong interest and long-term commitment to the Gas Station Arts Centre specifically, and to Osborne Village in general. Many community leaders felt that the Centre is uniquely placed to expand its presence within the community. As a launching pad for a large percentage of Winnipeg performing artists, its potential and existing network is far-reaching, especially amongst the creative community. Finding ways to engage this community is essential to future success. Similarly, many interview subjects identified that seeking out and building strong partnerships with either like-minded or complementary organizations would enhance long-term financial stability.

VI. Recommendations

Recent redevelopment activity at the corner of River Avenue and Osborne Street, and the resulting media attention it has caused, suggest that the time is right for the Gas Station Arts Centre to consider redevelopment of its site. The Centre has made excellent progress towards achieving fiscal stability in recent years. Community leaders and stakeholders recognize these achievements and are supportive of the current board and staff - continuing to build on that capacity is seen as an investment towards future success.

The Gas Station benefits from a long and rich (though sometimes troubled) history. It is well-known and well-loved within the performing arts community but its rebranding as an “Arts Centre” is still a work-in-progress – many people still refer to it as The Gas Station “Theatre”. Continuing to develop a broader focus, with more unique programming to bring more diverse events to the site, while honouring its great strength as a venue for dance, is recommended.

Continuing to build on its historical role as a gathering place within the community is essential – building healthy relationships with the diversity of local businesses and residents’ associations in community engagement processes is encouraged by the *Osborne Village Neighbourhood Plan*, and is important to ensure community support going forward. The importance to the community of “building what is promised” is very important in the context of this neighbourhood.

Some stakeholders suggested that a lack of understanding of neighbourhood history may be negatively impacting the identity of the village, leading to larger developments moving in. As a community gathering place, there may be an opportunity for the Gas Station Arts Centre to address this concern by becoming a nexus for community storytelling, neighbourhood events, film screenings, etc.

Its “courtyard” is recognized as a neighbourhood gathering place, that has had issues in the past, but has improved considerably by many accounts. It is a polarizing space - some people feel it is unsafe and disorienting, while others feel it is a place of refuge from the ‘concrete jungle’. Most people agree that bringing more people to the courtyard more often will improve safety. Options to renovate the physical space should be considered.

The Farmer’s Market is recognized as an important and innovative contribution to the Osborne Village community and a good fit with the centre. Presenting more regular events for diverse groups of local residents, would be highly desirable in order to continue to strengthen real community relationships. A more flexible and open courtyard space might enhance such opportunities.

Going forward, it is recommended that the Gas Station continue to actively build partnerships with like-minded community organizations that support its vision. Stakeholders have identified potential partnerships with education, youth, families, new immigrants, grassroots organizations, and affordable housing organizations as logical directions.

It is necessary to consider interior and exterior renovations, but there is much support for a complete redevelopment of the site. Mixed-use development would be well – supported. A larger redevelopment project would offer the benefit of economies of scale, especially regarding site remediation. However, how will the GSAC be able to accomplish this on its own?

This study suggests that a unique opportunity currently exists for the GSAC. Due to strong leadership by its board and staff, the organization is in a relatively stable position to take the organization to the next level. There appears to be an openness, indeed perhaps a desire by community leaders to see an appropriate mixed-use development of the site. At the same time, the local economy is hotter than it has been in a long time, as businesses are lining up to lease the little available space that is available.

In terms of housing, Osborne Village is still a popular choice among Winnipeggers and those who want to live in The Village have few options. Along with the rest of the city, Osborne Village is feeling the acute shortage of rental vacancies.

Should the Board of Directors of the GSAC decide that the time is right to further explore the possibility of redeveloping the site, the next logical step would be to consider inviting a “partner” to the table, some person or organization which has a successful track record in making mixed-use developments happen in an urban environment. The best way to do this would be through a structured call for Expression of Interest / Qualifications from those in the development industry.

VII. References

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VIII. Appendices

1. List of Primary Research Interview Participants:

Subject Name	Role	Date & Time Scheduled
Tim Babcock	Chair – Theatre and Film Department, University of Winnipeg	9am, June 15, 2012
Susan McCain / Elizabeth Wagner	Osborne Village BIZ, ED and Streetscaping Committee Chair	11am, June 15, 2012
Linda Caldwell	Director of Programs and Services, Villa Cabrini	11am, June 22, 2012
Reverend Donald Ross	Emeritus, St. Augustine United Church	2pm, June 22, 2012
Basil Lagopoulos	Owner – Bistrot by Basil	5pm, June 25, 2012
Donna Lagopoulos	Owner - Desart	6:30pm, June 26, 2012
Geof Langen	Board President - GSAC	8am, June 27, 2012
Robin Fontaine / Brenda Bras / Jana Larsen	Grant Park High School teachers	9am, June 29, 2012
Hugh Conacher	Board Member - GSAC	2pm, June 29, 2012
Charlene Kulbaba	Office Manager, School of Contemporary Dancers	4pm, June 29, 2012
Rea Kavanagh	Theatre Projects Manitoba	9am, July 6, 2012
Kevin Nixon	Active Transportation Coordinator - City of Winnipeg	3pm, July 9, 2012
Randy Joynt	Executive Director - Artspace	4pm, July 10, 2012
Michael Robinson	Osborne Village Neighbourhood Planner, City of Winnipeg	4pm, July 11, 2012
Craig Kitching	Franchise Owner - Subway	10:30am, July 12, 2012
Jenny Gerbasi	City of Winnipeg Councillor	8am, July 13, 2012
Bill Menzies	Manager – Service Development, Winnipeg Transit	1:30pm, July 13, 2012
Jennifer Howard	MLA for Fort Rouge	2pm, July 27, 2012
Todd Drader	Technical Director, GSAC	5pm, August 1, 2012
Victor Enns	Publishing and Arts Consultant, Manitoba Arts, Culture and Heritage	3pm, August 3, 2012

2. Stakeholder Interview Survey Form:

GSAC Preliminary Study: Stakeholder Interview

1. What do you like about Osborne Village the way it is now?

2. What do you like least about Osborne Village the way it is now?

3. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important changes that would make Osborne Village a better neighbourhood?

GSAC Preliminary Study: Stakeholder Interview

4. What do you think of the following ideas to improve Osborne Village?

	Very Important	Important	I'm not sure	Unimportant	Very unimportant
Close the street to vehicular traffic more often	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve safety for cyclists, scooters and wheelchairs	<input type="radio"/>				
Make more free parking available	<input type="radio"/>				
Make more paid parking available	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve the mix of essential services (banks, physicians, shoe repair etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve building accessibility (eliminate stairs, include lifts, widen doorways)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ensure affordable housing choices remain available	<input type="radio"/>				
Widen the sidewalks on Osborne	<input type="radio"/>				
Slow / reduce vehicular through-traffic	<input type="radio"/>				
More events for families	<input type="radio"/>				
More events for seniors	<input type="radio"/>				
More special events in general	<input type="radio"/>				
Create a destination for "outdoor eating" in summer with more kiosks / food trucks	<input type="radio"/>				
A bicycle rental service depot, connecting the area with downtown	<input type="radio"/>				
Heated sidewalks in key areas to make walking safer	<input type="radio"/>				
Create a "scramble crossing" for pedestrians at the corner of River and Osborne	<input type="radio"/>				
Increase overall density of the area (Vancouver style)	<input type="radio"/>				

GSAC Preliminary Study: Stakeholder Interview

5. What do you like best about the way the Gas Station is now?

6. In your opinion, what are the three most important changes that would help the Gas Station Arts Centre better contribute to the vibrancy of Osborne Village?

7. What do you think about the open space / courtyard in front of the Gas Station Arts Centre?

8. What do you like least about the Gas Station Arts Centre the way it is now?

GSAC Preliminary Study: Stakeholder Interview

9. What do you think of the following ideas to improve the Gas Station Arts Centre?

	Very important	Important	I'm not sure	Unimportant	Not at all important
Include Onsite Underground Parking	<input type="radio"/>				
Include a larger lobby / event space	<input type="radio"/>				
Cover the courtyard space	<input type="radio"/>				
Include artist studio / rehearsal space	<input type="radio"/>				
Include onsite living space	<input type="radio"/>				
Include multi-family residential units onsite	<input type="radio"/>				
Add more retail space onsite	<input type="radio"/>				
Add more commercial space onsite	<input type="radio"/>				
Include a dedicated drop-off point	<input type="radio"/>				
Include specific retail (cafe, bakery, diner, ATM)	<input type="radio"/>				
Include artist live/work space	<input type="radio"/>				
Retain the courtyard as exterior public space	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

10. Have a look at the concept images showing potential redevelopment of the Gas Station Arts Centre site. Please rank them in order (1 being the best).

	1	2	3	4	5
Concept 1: Status Quo (not allowed as a selection)	<input type="radio"/>				
Concept 2: Two Storey Mass	<input type="radio"/>				
Concept 3: Three-Storey Mass	<input type="radio"/>				
Concept 4: Stepped Pyramid	<input type="radio"/>				
Concept 5: Mirroring Villa Cabrini	<input type="radio"/>				
Concept 6: The Tall Tower	<input type="radio"/>				

GSAC Preliminary Study: Stakeholder Interview

11. Why did you respond the way you did?

12. (optional) What are some of the GSAC's biggest challenges?

13. (optional) What would it mean for the GSAC if it no longer had to pay property taxes?

14. (optional) How significant is it to a non-profit to be a part of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation?

3. Consent to Record the Interview:

As only one researcher was involved in conducting the interviews, it was determined that recording the interviews would ensure that no important details were missed, and responses would be captured as thoroughly as possible. This form was completed by all interview subjects in advance of beginning the interview.

CONSENT TO AUDIO- OR VIDEO RECORDING & TRANSCRIPTION

Gas Station Arts Centre Preliminary Study

Andrea Spakowski, University of Manitoba

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. Only the researcher will make use of the recordings.

The purpose of the recording is to ensure that we correctly understand your thoughtful ideas, opinions and comments and are able to re-communicate them effectively, in the spirit in which they were given. We want to avoid paraphrasing your words inaccurately, as this could lead to a change in their intended meaning, which would be unfair to you, and could make the outcome of this research less useful.

The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Excerpts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. **Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used alongside your words, in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.**

“By signing this form, I am allowing the researcher to record me as part of this research. I also understand that this consent for recording is effective for five years until the following date:”

June _____, 2017. On or before that date, the recordings will be destroyed.

Participant's Signature:

Date: _____

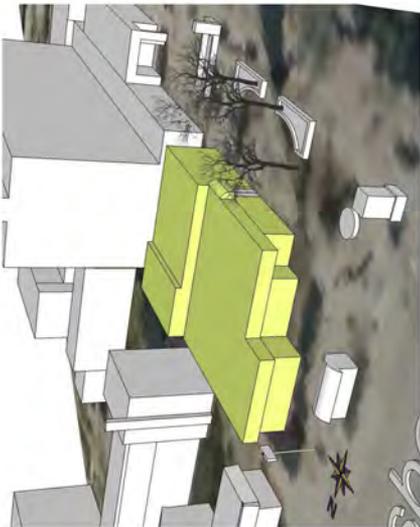
The researcher may be contacted at:

Andrea Spakowski

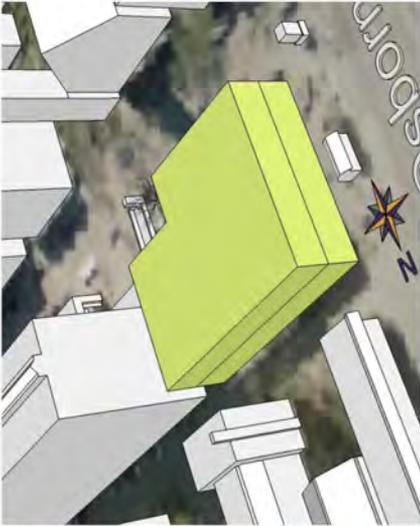
Andreaspakowski@gmail.com

(204) 774-0427

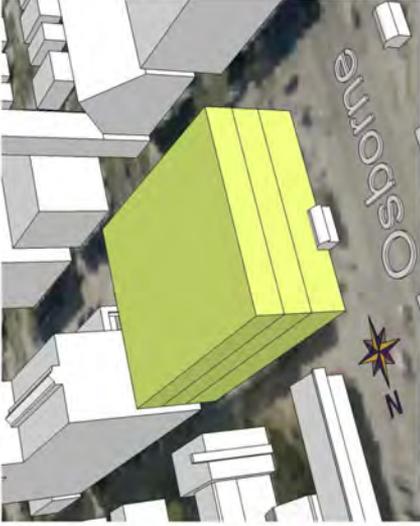
4. Concept Images, As Shown to Interview Subjects:



Concept 1: Current



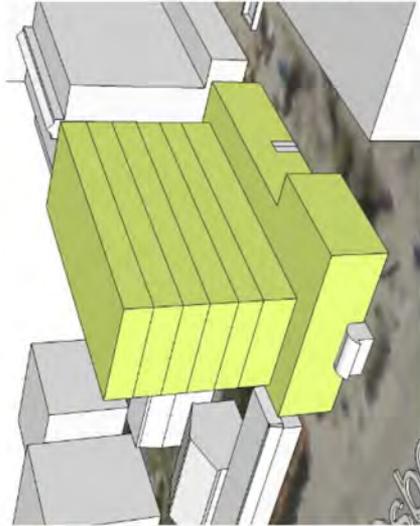
Concept 2: Two Storey



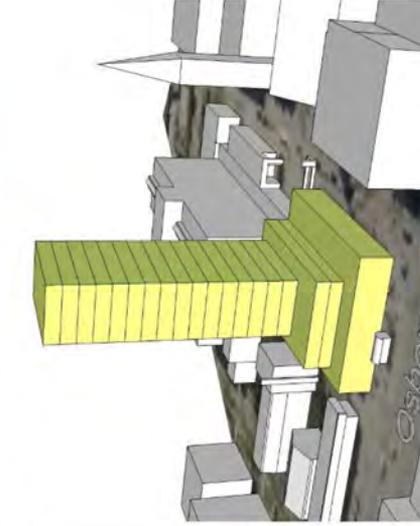
Concept 3: Three Storey



Concept 4: Stepped Pyramid



Concept 5: Mirror the Villa



Concept 6: Tall Tower

Gas Station Arts Centre Preliminary Study: Summer 2012
Harry Finnigan | Andrea Spakowski

5. Think Tank Invitation:



6. Think-Tank Attendance:

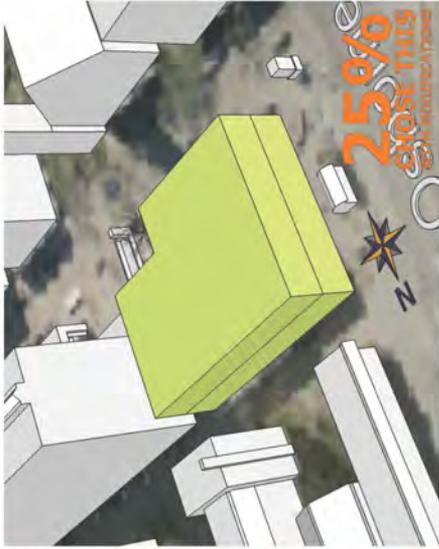
Thirteen people attended the Think Tank event, held on September 5, 2012, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

Guest Name	Role
Jim August	CEO, North Portage Development Corporation
Wayne Bollman	Vice-President, Lakeview Management Inc.
Linda Caldwell	Villa Cabrini Program Director
Hugh Conacher	GSAC Board member
Terry Dannelley	architect
Elise Finnigan	planner
Shaun Finnigan	planner
Shirley Grierson	GSAC Board member
Ashlyn Haglund	Planning student
Jess Irvine	GSAC Board member
Craig Kitching	business owner and area resident
Mykola (Nick) Kowalchuk	Gas Station Arts Centre Executive Director
Geof Langen	GSAC Board President
Janice Miller	planner
John Silver	GSAC Board member

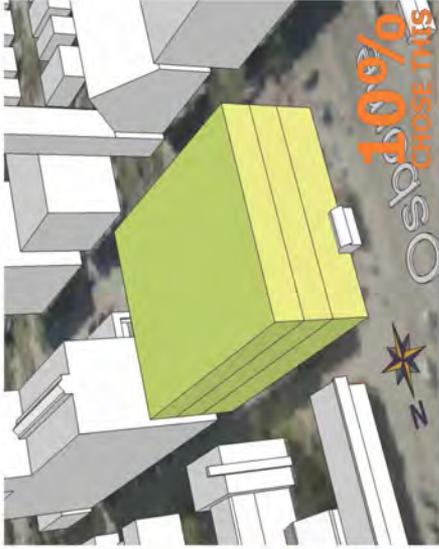
7. Concept Images with Results:



Concept 1: Current



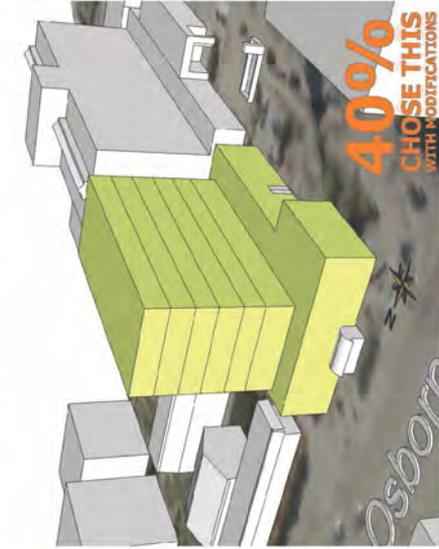
Concept 2: Two Storey



Concept 3: Three Storey



Concept 4: Stepped Pyramid



Concept 5: Mirror the Villa Cabrini



Concept 6: Tall Tower

Gas Station Arts Centre Preliminary Study: Summer 2012

Harry Finnigan | Andrea Spakowski

8. Think Tank Presentation:



Gas Station Arts Centre
Feasibility Study: Summer 2012

Harry Finnigan
Andrea Spakowski

GSAC's Vision:

"The Gas Station Arts Centre seeks to build a National reputation as an innovative home for multidisciplinary artistic development. We support and facilitate innovation and creativity in the arts, guided by the vision of artists from all mediums and at all stages of their career, with a special focus on being an artist's "first stage". The Gas Station Arts Centre continues to raise the profile of Winnipeg by being a hub of urban arts activity in Osborne Village, the city's most densely populated neighbourhood".

The Project:

The project is a preliminary study looking at possible development directions for the Gas Station Arts Centre's site at 445 River Avenue. The Centre would like to examine how it can continue to serve its membership and audience in the changing context of Osborne Village.

The Current Situation:

- The building is getting old and renovations are needed
- Site remediation: there are fuel tanks in the ground
- Significant redevelopment would require complete sitework to remove the tanks.
- Financial stability is a challenge
- Is housing a possibility on this site?
- There is a need for affordable housing in Winnipeg
- What kind of housing?
 - Condominiums
 - Market rate rentals
 - Rent-geared-to-income (RGI)
 - Co-operative
- Zoning – C2 Community
- Zoned V-CC: Village Character Commercial (Osborne Village neighbourhood plan)
- How to solve the parking issue?
- Is underground parking cost-effective? (\$50,000/stall)



Gas Station Arts Centre
Stakeholder Interview and Survey

The Interview Process:

23 stakeholder interviews were held.
20 surveys were completed.

Respondents included:

- Clients
- Elected officials
- Rental tenants
- Neighbourhood leaders
- Local business people
- Neighbours
- Funders

What people said:

Q.1. What do you like about Osborne Village the way it is today?

- The Village has a soul and a rich history
- Density = walkability = a great lifestyle and unique place
- Diversity – people of all kinds live, work and play here
- Location - walking distance to downtown
- Transit connections. You don't need to drive
- It has a diverse and engaged population
- In Winnipeg, it offers the most urban experience you can find
- The community atmosphere - everybody is accepted
- People here are passionate about this area
- Small-scale, independent businesses make the village special
- It is busy around the clock
- Many business people who work here live in the neighbourhood, so there is less of an us / them mentality

What people said:

Q.2. What do you like least about Osborne Village the way it is today?

- Crumbling pavements are not pedestrian (or wheelchair) friendly
- Perception of safety - panhandling and vagrancy makes people feel unsafe
- There is not enough usable green space. For some reason, the park on River is not well used
- The BIZ could function at a higher level
- Large-scale development has led to less foot traffic. You don't notice the individual changes but the effects are felt

What people said:

Q.3. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important changes that would make Osborne Village a better neighbourhood?

- More green space and trees
- Gathering / meeting / office space is needed
- Businesses and residents need to connect / communicate better
- More paid parking
- A really great gathering place is needed
- More affordable, decent housing
- A return to small, independent business
- A visible security presence on the street – police or the BIZ patrol
- Refresh the crumbling infrastructure
- Perceptions of safety - but vibrancy creates safety

What people said:

Q.4. What do you like best about the GSAC the way it is today?

- Todd is always great to work with - he's a real asset
- It is an incubator for young talent
- The theatre is a great size and has great sight lines
- It is a centre for dance
- The board is determined and persistent in challenging times
- They bring audiences from all over the city
- It has a competent, consistent and seasoned technical staff - Todd!
- It has rebranded and re-energized itself over the last few years.
- Nick is a dedicated and energetic administrator
- Almost every performing artist in town has performed at the GSAC and views it as home
- The bar is great!

What people said:

Q.5. What do you like least about the GSAC the way it is now?

- Air conditioning is hard to control
- Parking is always an issue for audiences and performers
- Backstage and support spaces are not big enough for larger productions
- Lighting equipment is old and very basic
- The exterior is not very noteworthy
- The courtyard attracts vagrants and drug dealers (also the bus shelter, especially in winter)
- New finishes (carpet, paint) will be needed soon
- The lobby doesn't really accommodate a full house
- The new sign is too small, hard to read, and poorly located
- The old marquee is missed on River Avenue
- Financial viability is an ongoing challenge

What people said:

Q.6. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important changes that would help the GSAC better contribute to the neighbourhood?

- The BIZ could help GSAC connect with business
- They need to look at how they can continue to generate revenue
- You can build excitement and a sense of ownership by integrating community groups
- More support spaces for rehearsal, coat check, a wood shop
- Including artist space onsite would further develop the arts centre mandate
- Instead of Subway, introduce something thematic that would draw a like-minded crowd
- Strengthening nearby connections is a logical direction (ie. the Church, schools)
- Classroom and rehearsal space would really build on existing strengths
- Expanding the vision from the current role as a roadhouse, to present unique programming that involves multiple forms
- Generate more regular programming

What people said:

Q.7. What do you think of the open space / courtyard in front of the Gas Station?

- It is an important meeting and social place
- The farmer's market is great!
- All kinds of people like to gather there
- It would be great if the space could be used more
- Having more events onsite brings people to the space
- It is important overflow space in good weather

What people said:

Q.7. continued (features)

- A permanent stage would be a nice addition
- I would love to have a sophisticated café there – an inviting place to linger
- A place with purpose is an easier place to manage than a place that doesn't have a purpose
- There is no sense of entrance
- It would be nice to have some additional seating outside in the summer
- The Subway is an important source of income, though it would be great if it were a better fit with the theatre

What people said:

Q.7. continued (safety)

- The situation has improved a lot in the last few years
- It has improved a lot recently
- The redesign has helped with crime prevention
- The courtyard is a welcoming space, it just does not always welcome the right kind of people
- Keeping the courtyard safe for nearby residents is important
- It's a matter of chasing away the people you don't want

What people said:

Q.7. continued (the fence)

- The fence is confusing - it obscures the main entrance
- The fence is an obstruction for loading and unloading
- I think the fence upsets patrons as much as it keeps the troublemakers away
- The fencing is disorienting – there might be a better solution
- Being able to walk diagonally across the site was great
- The fencing excludes as well as protects
- It's hard to monitor a space when you're not there 24/7

What people said:

Q.7. continued (landscaping)

- The foliage and fencing makes it feel like private space
- It is the green space of the village
- I suggest thinning the trees in order to have clear views through the site, so you can see the building and the signage
- It could be made more attractive
- I'm all for trees but those are too heavy - the architecture should be more prominent
- Maintain as much green space as possible
- This green space is very important
- I love the trees!

What stakeholders said:

Q.7. continued (building exterior / signage)

- It needs a refresh – new paint,
- The graffiti looks a bit "shabby"
- The "marquee" sign is missed – some signage on River is needed
- The tall sign is not a good idea, since it is of a type designed for a suburban strip
- The electronic sign on Osborne is not very effective
- The architecture is uninspiring
- The building is set back too far from the street
- It doesn't look like an exciting place

Identified Priorities:

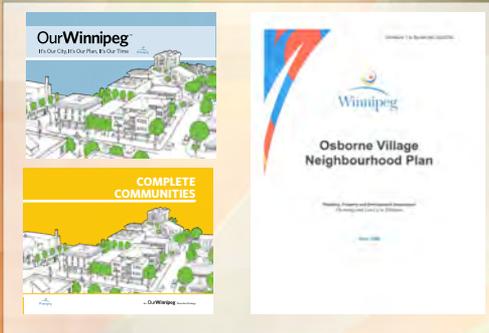
- Mixed use development
- The tradition of small-scale, independent business is what makes the village special
- Maintain a public gathering space
- High quality design is essential for success
- Work together with existing businesses and residents
- Improving parking is essential, especially if residences are added,
- A variety of parking solutions are needed
- More retail could be accommodated on this site
- Educational uses would be desirable – bring more kids and young people to the village
- Include more “thematic” uses on site (supporting arts/entertainment/community)
- Build what is promised!



Gas Station Arts Centre

Massing Concepts

The Plans



Concept 1: Current



Concept 1: Current



Concept 2: Fill the site - 2 storey



Concept 2: Fill the site – 2 storey



- Where could a smaller courtyard be located? (at the corner),
- Who might potential partners be? (community, children and youth, education, arts groups, crafts, local business)
- This is potentially a renovation project, approximately doubling the floor area (6000 sq.ft x 2 = 12,000 sq.ft)

Concept 3: Fill the site – 3 storey



- Three storeys that mirror the McKim Building across River Avenue (the "traditional building line and height") to give a dense feeling ("up to 25% of a façade may be set back for amenities" – more is allowed on River).
- A dense, big city feeling
- The courtyard should be retained, but where?

Concept 3: Fill the site – 3 storey



- Three storeys that mirror the McKim Building across River Avenue (the "traditional building line and height") to give a dense feeling ("up to 25% of a façade may be set back for amenities" – more is allowed on River).
- A dense, big city feeling
- The courtyard should be retained, but where?

Concept 4: A 'Stepped Pyramid'



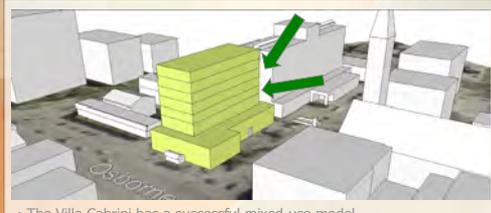
- To avoid shadowing the neighbours
- Matching the height of Villa Cabrini (or lower)
- Lots of rooftop exteriors – roof garden, solar/green roof, restaurant, lounge, etc.
- 6000 sq.ft x 8 = approximately 48,000 sq.ft. (modified to maintain courtyard)

Concept 4: A 'Stepped Pyramid'



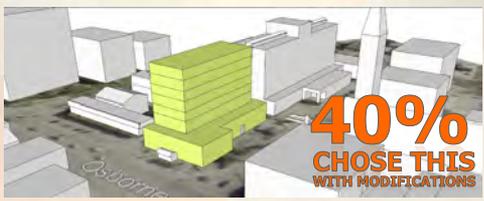
8,000 sq.ft. retail
 12,000 sq.ft. GSAC
 10,000 sq.ft. commercial
 18,000 sq.ft. residential
48,000 sq.ft. total x \$225/sq.ft = \$10,800,000

Concept 5: Mirror the Villa Cabrini



- The Villa Cabrini has a successful mixed-use model
- This would allow a maximum number of housing units onsite
- Includes rooftop exterior space for gatherings
- Shading might be a concern; underground parking is essential
- Could the laneway between buildings become a feature? ←
- Where is the courtyard? (if the corner is the preferred location)

Concept 5: Mirror the Villa Cabrini



8,000 sq.ft. retail
 12,000 sq.ft. GSAC
 10,000 sq.ft. commercial
 30,000 sq.ft. residential (600, 800, & 1000 sq.ft units)
60,000 sq.ft. total x \$225/sq.ft = \$13,500,000

Concept 6: The Tall Tower



- 'A new building should respect the church spire';
- 'Retain the courtyard at the corner';
- Secondary plan stipulates new development and additions have minimum 2 storeys and maximum 4 storeys, along Osborne, but more along River;
- Underground parking is essential
- A 'blue sky' exercise to get people thinking

Concept 6: The Tall Tower



- "Should respect the church spire";
- "Retain the courtyard at the corner";
- Ensure adequate onsite parking;
- Secondary plan stipulates new development and additions have minimum 2 storeys and maximum 4 storeys, along Osborne, but more along River;
- Underground parking is essential

25%
CHOSE THIS
WITH MODIFICATIONS

The Favourites!



8,000 sq.ft. retail
 12,000 sq.ft. GSAC
 10,000 sq.ft. comm.
 18,000 sq.ft. residential
48,000 sq.ft. total x \$225/sq.ft = \$10,800,000



8,000 sq.ft. retail
 12,000 sq.ft. GSAC
 10,000 sq.ft. comm.
 30,000 sq.ft. residential
60,000 sq.ft. total x \$225/sq.ft = \$13,500,000

A Hybrid of the Two



8,000 sq.ft. retail
 12,000 sq.ft. GSAC
 10,000 sq.ft. comm.
 24,000 sq.ft. residential
54,000 sq.ft. total x \$225/sq.ft = \$12,150,000

The Modified Tower



Next Steps

- What do you think?
- What (if anything) did you find surprising?
- What potential partners come to mind?
- Going forward, what are some alternative approaches which should be considered?
- What are the next steps?

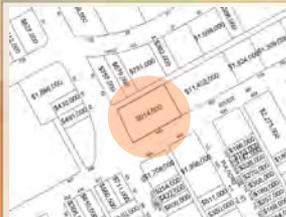


Gas Station Arts Centre

Feasibility Study: Summer 2012

Harry Finnigan
Andrea Spakowski

Assessed Value



Property taxes paid:
\$12,073.80

School tax: \$1721.00

Market value (2006):
\$1,100,000

Interior Area: 6000 sq.ft.
(includes leased tenant)

Name	Class	Address	Assessed Land Area	Zoning	Assessed Value
Gas Station Arts Centre	Institutional / Other	455 River Avenue	21,572 sq.ft.	C2 -Com - Community	\$745,000 / \$150,000 = \$914,000
Villa Cabini	Institutional / Other	433 River Avenue	26,400 sq.ft.	Rmf1 - Res - Multi-family	\$9,920,000 / \$1,254,000 = \$11,402,000

9. Thinktank Meeting Notes:

September 5, 2012, 3-5pm

Agenda

Introduction – Nick Kowalchuk

Background – Harry Finnigan

Presentation – Andrea Spakowski

Initial Discussions – Wayne Bollman and Jim August

Open Discussion

Presentation – (please see Powerpoint presentation)

Discussions:

- There is a concern about the economics of a ‘stepped-back’ [Concept 4] building form and whether it is an economical use of space – there may not be the density needed to finance the project.
- Environmental factors / Site contamination – it can be costly to put housing on a brownfield site.
- Nick Kowalchuk – the fuel tanks, have now been confirmed to have been removed from the site, but the soil is contaminated.
- Underground parking will cost minimum \$40,000/stall. A mixed-use building would be desirable and appropriate on this site.
- There are likely to be developers interested in being involved.
- The current courtyard is not really dangerous but not particularly pleasant and does not live up to its potential.
- \$225 / sq. ft. is a more appropriate cost estimate to work from.
- A ‘lightweight building system’ using steel studs is a way to save on materials and labour, and it’s quicker than the typical hollowcore construction. “It’s quick so you save on labour and the materials are cheaper”. Consider other ways to keep costs down.
- If you exceed 7 storeys in height – it becomes a more expensive kind of construction - known as ‘high rise measures’.
- A maximum building height of “not more than 5 or 6 storeys” is suggested.
- There is a big need for affordable housing in Winnipeg right now.
- CMHC does lending for this kind of affordable housing project – they will lend up to 85% of the costs.
- Consider minimizing the “affordability” aspect to ensure the project remains financially viable.
- The need / desire for commercial office space to be included in a mixed-use development is questioned – it may be a problem. Further study should be considered.
- Housing allows 24 hour activity on the site.
- Consider allowing less than the typical amount of parking onsite.
- Consider live / work spaces for the young professional demographic. A focus group or market study might be useful.

*“It is an **incubator**
for **young talent**”*

*“The **theatre** is a **great size** and has
great sight lines”*

*“There are lots of **shopping**
and **food choices nearby**”*

*“The **Farmers’ Market** is **great**”*

*“It is the **green space** of the **Village**”*

