

Message from Chairman of the Board

On behalf of the board of directors of Renaissance Brandon it is a pleasure to provide this Annual Report. 2010 has seen a number of important changes for our organization. Now into our third full year of operations, we continue to work toward creating positive development and opportunity in Downtown Brandon.

Through our ongoing funding partnership between the City of Brandon and the Province of Manitoba, our board has been pleased to expand programming and assist in the renewal of the heart of our community. Throughout this report you will find highlights of this year's new programs and partnerships including the Kristopher Campbell Skate Board Plaza, project grants, continued support for the Strand Theatre project and branding of the Downtown HUB. This year's new projects expand our ongoing initiatives such as the redevelopment program and Wednesdays by the Fountain and Caroler's in the Park concert series.

In addition, Renaissance Brandon is pleased to have the Downtown Development Specialist become a full time position. This has enabled Renaissance Brandon to broaden its scope of revitalization efforts to a greater capacity.

Finally, we would like to thank our outgoing board members. Dave Burgess, Vince Barletta, Doug Patterson, and Rod Ficek served our organization well and I thank them for their time, energy and efforts. I know our new board members will continue to carry forward the vision for creating a destination neighbourhood that supports new opportunities for living, working and entertainment.

Thank you for taking the time to review our report and we welcome your feedback as we look ahead to 2011.

Corey Roberts
Interim Chairman
Renaissance Brandon

1.0 PURPOSE:

This report is the third, annual report reviewing the achievements and challenges facing our downtown (The Downtown HUB). Its purpose is threefold: to provide an overview of the prior year's highlights, to assess the current state of the downtown, and to propose strategic initiatives to help ensure the ongoing health of The Downtown HUB.

2.0 WHAT HAS HAPPENED in 2010:

The Renaissance District was branded The Downtown HUB in October, 2010 as part of Renaissance Brandon's visioning workshop, internal strategic planning, and consulting work conducted by Mars Hill Group out of Winnipeg. As part of a 2011 brand roll out plan, visual enhancements were implemented in the area of 10th Street and Rosser Avenue, which included new street signs, a new bench, Downtown HUB window signs, and paint refreshments on garbage cans, fire hydrant and bike rack. These enhancements will be expanded within The Downtown HUB in early spring 2011.

The CMHA/ Brandon Friendship Centre/Habitat for Humanity partnership is nearing completion of the renovation of the Massey Harris building. The McKenzie seeds building is going through development cost estimates and architectural design being conducted by Resland out of British Columbia. The CPR building is still on track to begin renovations in 2011, and the former Perth's property is being planned for an international market. The Convergys building has been sold with the Brandon Sun taking ownership in 2011. The sale includes the City of Brandon taking ownership of the old Brandon Sun property on Rosser Avenue. With the relocation of fire hall number one to Maple Avenue, comes potential opportunities for the building on Princess Avenue. The Kristopher Campbell Skateboard Plaza was opened in October, 2010 and the YMCA is finalizing their expansion plans. The Community Futures building has completed the construction of a 12 office space knowledge based incubator at 10th and Princess Avenue. The Kitchen Gallery opened a satellite location and two new to the HUB, dance studios were opened in September, 2010.

Renaissance Brandon continued their support for community functions and events aimed at positioning the Downtown HUB as a destination neighbourhood in 2010, including Wednesday's by the Fountain, Caroler's in the Park, "Cruisin the Dub", Rock the Block, Words Alive, the Son Lantino multi-cultural summer festival, and a Downtown Business promotion during the Memorial Cup.

In addition, Renaissance Brandon has commenced work on the implementation of a Wireless HUB (wireless Internet network), and a secondary plan for the downtown area.

3.0 RENAISSANCE BRANDON HIGHLIGHTS:

Organization:

Two new Renaissance Brandon board members were appointed by City Council and began their duties in November, 2010. A half-time Downtown Development Specialist was converted into a full-time position. Day to day management of the Downtown Development Specialist is provided by the Economic Development Brandon department. Renaissance Brandon moved office locations to the Community Futures Incubator on 10th Street and Princess in November, 2010. Through a partnership with Community Futures Westman, Renaissance Brandon will not be paying rent for the office space.

Strategic Planning:

The second of two internal, strategic planning sessions was conducted in January, 2010, which led to hiring a consultant to conduct a vision workshop as part of the branding and logo development. The resulting logo “The Downtown HUB, a place for people” was well received by the Board as well as organizations and businesses located within the HUB. To meet the Board’s desire for a proactive planned approach to downtown revitalization, MMM group was selected through the RFP process to research and complete a secondary land use plan for the downtown area. Once completed, the secondary plan, will include analysis and recommendations for such things as active transportation, parking, safety, urban design standards, housing, parks and recreation, Downtown HUB boundaries and historical and cultural facilities.

The Downtown HUB:

By utilizing PCensus, a data resource housed with the Economic Development Brandon office, a **demographics** package has been compiled for the Downtown HUB. These demographics are from the 2006 census and establish a benchmark for measuring key indicators of growth and/or decline within the District. This data will also allow Renaissance Brandon to identify residential/population trends when subsequent census data is available.

2006 Census Data	Renaissance District	
		%
Total Population	792	
2006 Population by Age	792	
0 to 24 years (24 years)	222	27%
25 to 34 years (10 years)	152	19%
35 to 54 years (20 years)	206	26%
55 years and over (30 years)	228	28%
Average age of population	41.2	
Median age	37.6	
Families	138	
Children per family	0.9	

2006 Census Data	Renaissance District	
Households	496	
Average household income	\$27,918	
15 years and over – individual income Under \$10,000	217	32%
15 years and over – individual income \$10,000 - \$19,999	204	30%
Occupied Dwellings	500	
Owned Dwellings	48	10%
Rented Dwellings	448	90%

Dominant building type	Apartments	
Dominant period of construction	Before 1946	33%
Average value of owned dwelling	\$90,718	
Average gross monthly rent	\$469	

In addition, in 2009 Renaissance Brandon compiled a complete property inventory database for the District, which enabled staff to determine the existing **commercial mix** in The Downtown HUB. The results from the commercial mix study clearly indicate a large percentage of downtown businesses are service, destination orientated, which leads to less pedestrian traffic.

According to the American Planning Association, “the goal should be to assure that key areas, such as downtown business districts provide a variety of uses that serve local residents and visitors, as well as various income levels. Furthermore, one of the most significant features of vibrant downtowns and central business districts is diversity, or a robust mix of land uses, whether local, national, small or large. In many cases, the businesses contributing to an ideal mix are the smaller, locally serving and locally owned. Ultimately, the identity of a community comes from not only the history, architecture and the built environment generally, but from the businesses located within the district. Local governments are beginning to use zoning regulations as a powerful tool to create a balanced mix of land uses downtown and in business districts. In doing so, they are correctly recognizing a vital component of creating and maintaining a vibrant and sustainable downtown.”

This data will serve as a benchmark for identifying the ideal commercial mix for The Downtown HUB and influence the development of a secondary land use plan.

2009 Survey Data	Renaissance District	
Total Number of Businesses	169	
Food/Entertainment	16	9%
Other	2	1%
Public	15	9%
Retail	33	20%
Service	103	61%
Comparison	36	22%
Convenience	10	6%
Destination	106	63%
Food/Entertainment	16	9%
Free Parking Spaces	78	
Metered Parking Spaces	552	
Monthly Parking Spaces	61	
TOTAL	691	

Downtown HUB Web-Site

Renaissance Brandon enhanced their interactive web-site to serve as a multi-purpose tool/resource. The appearance of the web-site was changed to incorporate the Downtown HUB logo and colors along with a more visually appealing home page. The web-site provides information, collects survey data from downtown merchants and Brandon residents, showcases downtown businesses through their business directory and provides communication tools for the general public. In addition, Twitter and an EBrandon forum is being utilized to engage the public and to make it easier for people to communicate their ideas, concerns and questions to the Downtown Development Specialist.

Renaissance Brandon Projects

- Renaissance Brandon was pleased to contribute funds to the redevelopment of a highly underutilized downtown building. Through this redevelopment, the building located at the corner of 10th Street and Princess Avenue now houses a knowledge based incubator. The primary focus of the knowledge-based incubator is technology entrepreneurs. Brandon has several small companies that have high growth potential that are, as of now, operating in isolation from each other, in spaces that are not conducive to creative thinking and in spaces that discourage customer and investor contact. Additionally, there are students at Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College with commercially viable ideas whom, provided the right environment, would choose to stay in Brandon rather than seek out startup assistance in another city. Through the redevelopment of this key downtown space and the support of knowledge based entrepreneurs Brandon economy continues to diversify.
- Officially named the Kristopher Campbell Memorial Skateboard Plaza, the 26,000 square foot skate plaza on a vacant lot located at the south-west corner of 9th Street and Princess Avenue was opened in October, 2010. Formerly the home of the stately Prince Edward Hotel, the site had succumbed to default use as a gravel parking lot since the hotel's demolition in 1980.

The need for a formal skate plaza was driven by the growth of what was commonly considered a renegade activity. With no defined place to partake in the sport, the entire City of Brandon became a glorified skate park. Use of public and private property that was not built to skate park standards, resulted in ongoing property damage. Of greater importance was getting skateboarders out of harm's way and off the street where they would often compete with vehicular traffic.

The years that passed saw a plan developed in conjunction with community stakeholders and most notably, the skateboarders themselves. Through widespread consultation, a design was developed that is intended to replicate desirable features that skateboarders enjoy riding, only now they will be found in a safe, attractive and resilient setting.

Funding for the \$1.05 million project was acquired through contributions spanning individuals at less than \$100 through major contributions including Kerry Campbell/C&C Construction (\$75,000), Renaissance Brandon (\$75,000), City of Brandon (\$125,000) and the Province of Manitoba/Government of Canada Building Canada Fund (\$700,000).

- Provided an extension of Renaissance Brandon's conditional approval of the Strand Theatre project to the end of April, 2011. The agreement includes \$474,000 in funding over two years to

help the Brandon Folk Music and Arts Society (BFMAS) transform the dilapidated movie theatre into a multi-use community and performance arts centre.

- The funding from Renaissance Brandon is contingent on the Strand Project successfully receiving funding from the provincial and federal governments.
- BFMAS submitted a community spaces, federal application for \$1.4 million. The decision making process is anticipated to take approximately 6 months. If approved, the Provincial government will decide if they will contribute the remaining, approximately \$1 million. The anticipated federal deadline for completion of the project would be spring of 2011.
- Renaissance Brandon partnered with the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and contributed \$16,000 to the Storefront and Graffiti Program in 2010.
 - By contributing dollars to this program Renaissance Brandon leveraged its financial contribution against an additional \$16,000 from Neighborhoods Alive and BNRC staff resources. 90% of the total funds were spent in the Downtown HUB.
 - The two most notable graffiti projects were the clean up of the Youth for Christ building on 13th Street and Rosser and the Meighan Haddad building on Eleventh Street.

Renaissance Brandon Incentive Programs

- Rent Abatement Program

2 applications were received resulting in one approval.
Gain(s): An ethnic food grocer, which includes basic necessity goods, including bread and milk. The business will also provide additional services to the immigrant population and they have plans to open a bakery.
- Redevelopment Program

Three applications were received and ratified by the Renaissance Brandon Board.
Gain(s): The program assisted The Kitchen Gallery on 9th Street. This is a 15 year old company that opened a satellite location in the HUB. Their head office is in Neepawa. The other two projects supported by the Redevelopment program are two dance studios on 9th Street and 10th Street creating a hub of arts and culture. These two dance studios bring approximately 600 families downtown per week.
- Cultural Grant Program

Five applications were received and approved in 2010
Gains: Renaissance Brandon continued their support of Cruise Night by funding live, local entertainment, retention of the highly successful Rock the Block event, organized by BUSU, the Words Alive, literacy festival was hosted within the HUB, the Son Lantino Band hosted a summer, multi-cultural festival in Princess Park, and a group of downtown businesses implemented a downtown promotion during Memorial Cup week.

Seasonal Concert Series

Renaissance Brandon made a significant operational change in 2010 by contracting MacDonald Marketing to oversee the organization and operation of Wednesdays by the Fountain and Caroler's in the Park. This arrangement was extremely effective in reducing the workload of the Downtown Development Specialist by reducing the billing and payment responsibilities.

Wednesdays by the Fountain held ten events during the summer of 2010 utilizing local artists and bands for entertainment. Unfortunately, only three of the ten event days had good weather, which impacted attendance numbers. The total number of people attending the event in 2010 was 1,869.

In addition, a highly successful initiative was implemented in 2010 by providing horse and carriage rides with a guided tour during Wednesday by the Fountain events. The carriage ride was so popular it was extended by two weeks after Wednesday by the Fountain events were completed.

Caroler's in the Park was held in conjunction with the Santa Day Parade and featured Caroler's from Vincent Massey, food and fireworks. It was a pretty cold day, but approximately 500 people attended the event.

4.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Renaissance Brandon received \$250,000 from the City of Brandon, and \$231,534 from the Province of Manitoba, of which \$125,534 was deferred from 2009. An additional \$144,000 was requested from the province in 2010, but has yet to be approved. A financial audit will take place in the first quarter of 2011.

INCOME:

Province of Manitoba – Unconfirmed	\$144,000
Deferred Province from 2009	\$125,534
Province of MB 2010	\$106,000
City of Brandon	<u>\$250,000</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$625,534

EXPENSES: (as of December 6, 2010)

Seasonal Concert Series	\$30,720
Secondary Land Use Plan	\$47,532
Wireless HUB	\$7,500
Brand Roll Out	\$2,668
Visioning/Branding	\$28,942
Redevelopment Grants	\$75,000
Administration	\$3,327
Arts and Culture Grants	\$8,200
Meeting Expense	\$3,016
Payroll	\$53,915
Professional Fees	\$300
Web-Site Enhancement	<u>\$656</u>
Total Expense	\$265,148

NET INCOME:	<u>\$360,385</u>
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5.0 LOOKING FORWARD

2010 was a significant year in the transformation of Downtown Brandon. The completion of the Kristopher Campbell Skateboard Plaza, the Community Futures Westman Knowledge Incubator, the Kitchen Gallery on 9th, Steppin Time Dance Studio, and the Brandon School of Dance all contribute to bringing people downtown.

Renaissance Brandon's internal projects and strategic planning, such as the brand development of the HUB, the secondary land use plan, and the wireless HUB network are key foundational pieces to guide the future transformation of downtown into a destination neighborhood.

Substantial downtown projects have made forward progress (YMCA, McKenzie Towers, Massey Harris Project, CPR and the Strand Theatre). These projects confirm the atmosphere of opportunity and optimism that exists within the Downtown HUB.

In 2011 Renaissance Brandon intends to capitalize on the growth that occurred within the HUB in 2010. A slight shift in priorities will see communication and promotion become a focal point for 2011. A communication plan that proactively promotes the progress being realized in downtown, Renaissance Brandon incentive programs, downtown assets, and the wireless HUB will be implemented.

Recommendations from the secondary land use plan process will be evaluated and prioritized according to potential impact and resources required. An implementation schedule and action plan will be created to determine estimated completion time frames.

The completion of the Wireless HUB, the secondary land use plan and the full brand "roll-out" are expected to be completed by the summer of 2011. The brand roll out will include enhancing and replacing visual elements in the Downtown HUB. Visual elements will include items such as street signs, **signage at major gateway entrances** to the HUB, benches, bike racks, painting of fire hydrants, trash receptacles and the addition of picnic tables in Princess Park. A visual "refresh" is important to establish and protect the HUB identity. It also, instills confidence in downtown stakeholders and the general public that positive change is happening, which creates optimism in the future.

In order to ensure maximum utilization, Renaissance Brandon will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of current incentive programs while simultaneously developing and implementing new incentive programs that are reflective of market conditions and development trends. In addition, by working with the province, Renaissance Brandon can understand and evaluate the possibilities of establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) area within the secondary plan boundaries to further incent real estate developers and investors and create additional opportunities for strategic partnerships.

6.0 COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Three (3) media releases were issued in 2010, the downtown forum on EBrandon was monitored and utilized, a Renaissance Brandon Twitter account was created and Google Alerts were implemented to allow the general public a medium for sharing their thoughts, ideas and concerns about their downtown and to monitor public "chatter" about downtown Brandon. In addition, the web-site address was changed

to <http://downtownhub.ca>. All media releases and the online forum can be accessed via the web-site. People can follow Renaissance Brandon announcements at <http://twitter.com/RenBrandon>.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The evolution and transformation of downtown Brandon saw significant forward progress in 2010. Short term results were gained through the Redevelopment Program (Kitchen Gallery, Steppin Time and Brandon School of Dance), significant projects were completed (Skateboard Plaza and CF Westman Incubator), large scale projects are moving closer to completion (Massey Harris Building, McKenzie Towers, YMCA expansion project and CPR building), the support of the Strand Theatre project was extended to allow more time to secure federal and provincial funding, and two more large properties become opportunities for the Downtown HUB in the Brandon Sun, and the old fire hall on Princess Avenue.

Significant Renaissance Brandon internal progress was made in 2010 by establishing a vision, core values and strategies for developing a fresh and exciting brand for downtown Brandon, a long range plan that will guide the transformation of downtown into a destination neighborhood, and a technology building block in the wireless HUB network.

2011 is shaping up to be one of the most exciting years for downtown Brandon in many, many years. However, once all the planning is completed and more and more projects come “online” one of the biggest challenges Renaissance Brandon will face is securing the needed funds and strategic partnerships to implement the secondary plan recommendations and capital improvement projects to truly turn the Downtown HUB into the destination of choice in the region.