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# Winnipeg Free Press

March 16, 2011

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Winnipeg Free Press > Business > WHAT'S UP DOWNTOWN?

## BUSINESS

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

### What's up downtown?

#### CentreVenture unveils plan for sports and entertainment district

By: Murray McNeill

Posted: 03/16/2011 1:00 AM | Comments: 37

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CentreVenture Development Corp. lifted a curtain edge on its plans for downtown Winnipeg, disclosing for the first time Monday the scale and cost of several new developments planned for the emerging entertainment district around the MTS Centre.

The downtown development agency's vision for the revitalization of the area now includes an outdoor public square/gathering place near the MTS Centre, likely south of Portage Avenue.



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It also includes one, and possibly two, new parkade/commercial developments within the proposed Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District (SHED) – one north and one south of Portage – and cost estimates for two other much-talked about projects.

One is the redevelopment of the former A&B Sound/Mitchell Copp properties on Portage into a mixed-use commercial development that could include a boutique hotel and office or retail space. The agency estimates the cost of that at \$40 million.

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### OUR COMMUNITIES

DAVID LIPNOWSKI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS MTS Centre downtown Winnipeg aerial.



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MIKE.APORIUS@FREEPRESS.MB.CA - shot of the A & B Sound Building on the northwest corner of Portage and Donald and the Mitchell-Copp Building next door to it (immediately west of it). - for Murry McNeill story CentreVenture has acquired the A & B Sound building and it and the North Portage Development Corporation are now negotiating with a development group that is interested in redeveloping the two properties together as one development. It could involve keeping the existing buildings and refurbishing them, or tearing them down and building new, or a combination of those two options. WINNIPEG FREE PRESS February 18/2010



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Winnipeg- The Metropolitan Theatre The Met. CentreVenture Centre Venture Submitted rendering 2011.

the right direction."

It was reported last summer that Longboat, owned by Winnipeg's Chipman family, wants to build a mixed-use commercial development on the two properties that could include a boutique hotel and office or retail space.

The Longboat development is one of two new projects planned for the block between Portage and Ellice avenues and Donald and Hargrave streets. The other is a \$15-million parkade/commercial complex that would be built on several properties CentreVenture recently purchased on Hargrave.

McGowan said CentreVenture is talking to a private developer about that project, as well. It hopes to have a deal nailed down within the next month and a half.

The other parkade/commercial development on CentreVenture's wish list would be on a surface parking lot located west of Cityplace Shopping Centre. The shopping centre, the Carlton Street parking lot, and another surface lot south of St. Mary Avenue between Hargrave and Donald are owned by Manitoba Public Insurance.

MPI spokesman Brian Smiley said Monday the Crown corporation has been approached by a number of parties interested in redeveloping the two lots. It plans to issue a request for expressions of interest within the next month.

McGowan said CentreVenture would also like to see a mixed-use development on the Carlton Street lot that includes a hotel, an exhibition hall, some office space, and a 1,000-stall parkade.

[murray.mcneill@freepress.mb.ca](mailto:murray.mcneill@freepress.mb.ca)

Other plans for downtown

HERE are two more projects or initiatives included in CentreVenture Development Corp.'s three-year business plan:

The other is the redevelopment of the former Metropolitan Theatre on Donald Street, which Canad Inns hopes to transform into a rock 'n' roll-themed "destination centre," for \$16 million.

CentreVenture president and CEO Ross McGowan said Monday the agency hopes to complete plans for the A&B Sound/Mitchell Copp project within four to six weeks.

But the Metropolitan Theatre project remains stuck in neutral, with CentreVenture and the owner of that property -- Winnipeg-based Canad Inns hotel chain -- waiting to see if the provincial and federal governments will help fund the project.

McGowan said it is envisioned that CanadInns would cover 75 to 80 per cent of the cost, and the three levels of government would cover the rest.

Details about those and a variety of other downtown initiatives are contained in CentreVenture's 2011-2013 business plan, which goes before the city's executive policy committee on Wednesday and then to city council on March 22.

The plan, requiring city approval, includes a request to boost the agency's 2011 operating budget to \$1.1 million from \$848,012 in 2010.

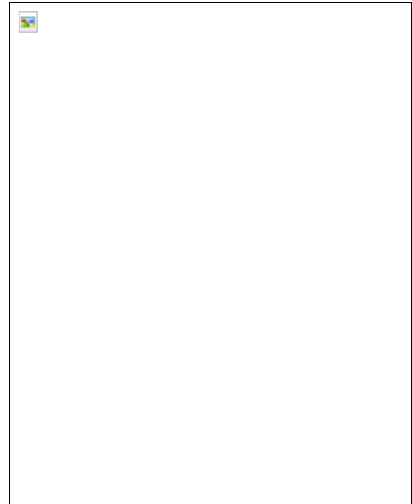
Just under 80 per cent of the money would be eaten up by administration costs, which are expected to climb to \$803,379 from \$649,919 last year.

McGowan said some of the extra money would be used to hire another development officer to work on some of the agency's initiatives.

The business plan is shy on details about the public square proposal, other than the projected cost of about four million dollars.

McGowan said other details, such as the size, location, and how much would be enclosed versus outdoor space, will be spelled out in the master development plan for the SHED. And that should be ready within the next two to three months.

McGowan said it will likely be another four to six weeks before CentreVenture completes plans for the redevelopment of the A&B Sound/Mitchell Copp site. He said negotiations are ongoing with Longboat Development Corp. and "it's moving in



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9. Fire, shooting deaths leave northern community in shock
10. Bypass around Portage la Prairie closed after semi hits overpass

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**" I guess the school district isn't worried by Nicholas Carr's "The Shallows", which presents great evidence and decent neurological research showing that hyperlinked technologies of learning hinders deep thinking, promotes shallower styles of reading, and seems to inhibit critical processing of information... Invest the money in top of the line teachers and smaller classes; you'll get better results. "**

Posted by: ProudofWinnipeg  
Article: Not texting in class? You'd better get started

**EVENTS**

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Retail development: The agency wants to see a new manager hired within the next year to spearhead efforts to attract new retailers to the downtown. The new position would be part of a Portage Avenue mall management plan, and would be a joint undertaking by CentreVenture and the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone. The BIZ group's executive director, Stefano Grande, said the manager's role would be to help recruit new retailers to fill vacancies in the downtown, and to work closely with the property owners "to make sure everybody buys into the vision" for the types of retailers they want to attract to different areas within the downtown, including the proposed Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District.

University Expansion: CentreVenture wants to see the downtown skywalk system extended west to connect the University of Winnipeg campus with Portage Place Shopping Centre.

"This single action would... potentially add 16,000 people in support of retail, entertainment and residential development," the plan states. "With the connection in place, a portion of Portage Place (west of Kennedy Street) could be converted to classroom or lab space... providing the mall management with the opportunity to focus retail uses east of Kennedy Street."

It could also encourage the mixed-use development of the two roof-top "pads" at each end of the mall, it says.

Republished from the Winnipeg Free Press print edition March 8, 2011 B3

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POSTED BY: Francine MARCH 9, 2011 AT 7:54 PM

Having been a downtown resident for the last 12 years and watched its painful deterioration, I'm always interested in a new plan to revitalize the downtown. After reading the article in yesterday's Free Press, although your plan has merit, I seriously doubt that it will revitalize the downtown - we need people living downtown. We have a vacancy rate of less than 1% - we need more apartment/condo complexes, not more hotels, stores and certainly no more parkades. Look at an aerial of downtown Winnipeg, it is littered with parking lots. We keep encouraging people to drive instead of focusing on rapid transit and lowering the number of vehicles on the road. Regarding retail, we can hardly keep the stores we have now (unless they are Dollar Stores or Giant Tire) - I just learned that Laura's at Portage Place is leaving - one of the few decent women's clothing stores in the downtown, except for the Bay. We have the U of W and Red River Campus filled with students looking for housing, yet we are not capitalizing on that fact. Once we have people living downtown (not just working downtown or coming to the concerts or hockey games), then we'll be able to support the stores, restaurants, etc. I just don't get it.

4 0 REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT

POSTED BY: expatpegger MARCH 8, 2011 AT 10:49 PM

Sounds like a lot of potential stakeholders lurking, with the possibility of an NHL return. The plan for the Metropolitan Theatre sounds pretty vague on its own. But if it is meant to dove tail with an NHL franchise on the scene, it sounds very reminiscent of Flames Central in Calgary -- which happens to be a converted turn-of-the-century theatre owned by the Calgary Flames. It's a very nice place to go and catch a game after work. The Met would be a great spot for something like that.

1 0 REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT

POSTED BY: been there done that MARCH 8, 2011 AT 6:53 PM

Wow and where are they getting the money for this? Hmmm maybe it is from the city's plan to hike frontage levies by \$1.20 a foot to help raise an additional \$14.4 million this year.

Details about those and a variety of other downtown initiatives are contained in CentreVenture's 2011-2013 business plan, which goes before the city's executive policy committee on Wednesday and then to city council on March 22. The plan, requiring city approval, includes a request to boost the agency's 2011 operating budget to \$1.1 million from \$848,012 in 2010.

Just under 80 per cent of the money would be eaten up by administration costs, which are expected to climb to \$803,379 from \$649,919 last year.

Just wondering if one has to do with the other, that is all

0 1 REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT

POSTED BY: Spence Furby MARCH 8, 2011 AT 3:30 PM

March 16, 2011

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Screening of Black Field

Manitoba-shot film Black Field will play Winnipeg's Cinematheque Theatre on March 12th, 16th and 17th. Nightly at 7pm. Writer/director Danishka Esterhazy will introduce the film each night. ...

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Calendar grid showing dates WED 16, THU 17, FRI 18, SAT 19, SUN 20, MON 21, TUE 22.



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A "rock 'n' roll-themed destination centre," wow, that project sounds a lot like the world's first ever taxpayer-funded "Hard Rock Cafe."

6 1

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **kmc**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 3:20 PM

"A rooftop at Portage place sounds cool. As a U of W student I would go there."

As much as I would also go to a rooftop patio there, they are referring to using the rooftop structural pads that were built on portage place that support building towers at each end.

Although they bring up building some residential towers every couple years or so on those pads, I wish they would just do it. With the improvements and the connection to U of W, it would make sense now more than ever.

4 0

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **Lobaholic**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 3:08 PM

@bett

If you remember, the group like Goldwater that you wish we had was named Thin Ice....remember?....they were successful as hopefully Goldwater will be.

2 0

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **Lobaholic**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 3:06 PM

The WHA Hall of Fame is looking for a place to set up shop...Winnipeg?...hello?....last Avco Cup Champs and one of if not the most successful WHA city. Put it near MTS Centre!

3 1

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **das709**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 3:02 PM

I think the issue of public safety should be paramount to any downtown development. If you want people to come down there they have to feel safe and to be quite honest Portage Avenue downtown is the last place I want to be.

1 5

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **PeggerBoy**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 2:03 PM

Wasn't Ledhowsky the guy that stated he could build us a brand new stadium without any government money?? I didn't believe him then - and he's sat on the Metropolitan development for several years, now stating he wants money from all three levels of government before proceeding. This just confirms he's much more talk than action.

Have you been past the Health Sciences Centre on William Avenue? Construction on his new hotel was to have started over a year ago .... still nothing there either

5 0

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **bett**  
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 1:38 PM

I wish we had a Goldwater inst. here in Winnipeg protecting our tax dollars from being gifted to people like Chipman and Ledohowski.

2 12

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