

FACEBOOK

Like us on Facebook to stay in the know and win exclusive prizes

[VIEW ALL FEATURES](#)



[Winnipeg Free Press](#) > [Opinion](#) > [Columnists](#) > GOOD THINGS IN SMALLER PACKAGES

COLUMNISTS

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

Good things in smaller packages

Winnipeg retailers find a bigger store isn't always better

By: **Murray McNeill**

Posted: 11/22/2010 1:00 AM | [Comments: 3](#)



[PRINT](#) | [E-MAIL](#) | [REPORT ERROR](#)



RUTH.BONNEVILLE@FREEPRESS.MB.CA | [Report Error](#)

Retail leasing specialist Michael Stronger outside Cabela's hunting and fishing store on Ellice Avenue. Cabela's decided it shouldn't be another mega-store.

Middle-age homeowners aren't the only ones downsizing these days -- retailers are also getting into the act.

"The trend now is to try and do more with less," according to Michael Stronger, a retail leasing specialist with Winnipeg's Shindico Inc. "Bigger is not always better. Sometimes it is, but not always."

'Under-demolished'

SOME local property owners are also warming to the idea that bigger isn't always better.

A case in point is the owners of the St. James Street property that is now home to Winnipeg's first Pro Hockey Life Sporting Goods store.

Michael Stronger, a retail specialist with Shindico Inc., said the property's owner

John Prall, a retail leasing specialist with Colliers Pratt McGarry, agrees, saying retail giants like Walmart and Real Canadian Superstore aren't as stuck on the big-box concept as they once were.

"They're willing to be much more flexible."

Stronger said Cabela's is another example of a retailer that's adopting a more flexible approach to development. When the U.S. hunting, fishing and outdoor merchandise retailer entered the Canadian market three years ago by acquiring the S.I.R. mall store and the outdoor sports store at 100

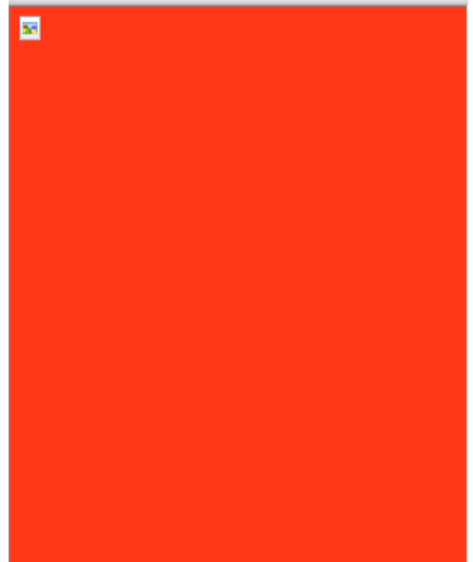
A A A Make text: [larger](#) | [smaller](#)

TOP JOBS

[PREVIOUS](#) | [NEXT](#)

[All Jobs](#)

OUR COMMUNITIES



POLL

In light of recent reports of violence in Mexico, would you holiday there?

- Yes, I love Mexico.
- No, I'd choose a different destination.
- I don't take sun holidays.
- I'd go anywhere to get out of this cold.

[View Results](#)
[View Related Story](#)

Omniaco Inc., said the property's owner demolished a 40-year-old, 28,000-square-foot building on the site last year and replaced it with a 22,000-square-foot one because it created more space for parking and was a better fit for Pro Hockey Life.

He said Winnipeg still has a large inventory of older, functionally obsolete retail buildings, and he wouldn't be surprised to see more of them being replaced with new, higher-use facilities.

"We're not overbuilt, we're under-demolished," Stronger said.

Ellice Ave., most industry observers thought it would eventually replace the 38,000-square-foot S.I.R. outlet with one of its trademark mega-stores, some of which are more than 200,000 square feet. And they expected any other new stores it builds in Canada would also be supersize.

"But since the recession they've done a complete rethink of their store model," Stronger said. "Now they're working on a 70,000-square-foot store in Edmonton."

The two realtors said several factors are causing retailers to rethink the bigger-is-better strategy that dominated retail development in Winnipeg during the last 10 years.

One of them is the dwindling supply of new, development-ready land. That's making it harder for retailers to simply buy a large chunk of land in a new development and build as big a store as they like. Instead, they're having to stick with an existing development, and that sometimes means downsizing to make the new store fit the available space.

"It's the same concept generally," Stronger said. "It's just maybe 25 per cent smaller."

Another factor is the tougher lending practices that were implemented after the financial market meltdown. That's making it harder and more expensive for some retailers to raise the capital needed to finance a big expansion.

A third factor is changing consumer buying patterns.

"For a lot of consumers, time is valuable," Stronger said. "Walking into a 200,000-square-foot store involves a major commitment of time because it takes longer to find things. And as more and more people become busier and busier, they're looking for quicker retail experiences."

Prall said this change in thinking is also providing a new lease on life for some of the existing big-box stores in Winnipeg, such as the Real Canadian Superstore at Grant Avenue and Kenaston Boulevard and the Walmart on Empress Street near Polo Park.

Walmart is getting into groceries in a bigger way and Real Canadian Superstore has been putting more emphasis on clothing. But there's no room to expand either of those stores to accommodate the new product lines.

The old way of thinking would have been to find a new site and build a bigger store. The new way of thinking is to do an "in-store conversion," where they rework the space and product offerings to make room for the new products.

Stronger said in Superstore's case, they've already made the changes. In Walmart's case, that's the direction most industry observers expect them to go.

But even if they do, that doesn't mean they're abandoning the large-format prototype, Prall said, noting Walmart plans to add on to two other Winnipeg stores where it does have room to expand.

He and Stronger said there'll also be some new big-box stores built in the next round of retail development, which should get underway within the next year or two.

For example, there will likely be several of them in the IKEA/Seasons of Tuxedo development being built at Kenaston Boulevard and Sterling Lyon Parkway. In fact, the IKEA store will be about 350,000 square feet.

Stronger said some of the names being bandied about include Target (a U.S. department store chain), Lowe's (a U.S. home and building supplies chain) and Marshalls (another U.S. department store chain), and J. Crew, a U.S. casual-clothing retailer.

Know of any newsworthy or interesting trends or developments in the local office, retail, or industrial real estate sectors? Let real estate reporter Murray McNeill know at the email address below, or at 697-7254.

murray.mcneill@freepress.mb.ca

Republished from the Winnipeg Free Press print edition November 22, 2010 B4

[Recommend](#) [Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.](#)

[PRINT](#) [E-MAIL](#) [REPORT ERROR](#)

3 Comments

Sort by: [Newest to Oldest](#) | [Oldest to Newest](#) | [Most Popular](#)

POSTED BY: 15
NOVEMBER 22, 2010 AT 4:54 PM

Yeah, too bad the NDP acts as developer on farmland in the south of the city and wants to turn Point Douglas, right next to downtown, into a park.

0 0 [REPORT ABUSE](#) [COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: Man of the Hour
NOVEMBER 22, 2010 AT 4:43 PM

[MOST VIEWS](#) [MOST COMMENTS](#) [MOST EMAILS](#)

[TODAY](#) | [WEEK](#) | [MONTH](#)

1. [Facing life with father now gone](#)
2. [Neighbours ignore pleas as woman dies](#)
3. [Putting brakes on elderly drivers](#)
4. [Foreign Affairs asking Mexico to investigate allegations tourist raped in jail](#)
5. [In light of recent reports of violence in Mexico, would you holiday there?](#)
6. [Barber says he personally favours death penalty but won't reinstate it](#)
7. [Owner flip-flops: MS River Rouge will cruise river again](#)
8. [Get the message out: you're single](#)
9. [New stone cladding worse, another big building fix](#)
10. [Man in works to subsidize cost of installing sump pumps, backwater valves](#)

[TOP COMMENT](#) [TOP RANKED COMMENTS](#)

Don't tick off seniors or you will just cause a real problem on the roads. Remember we have the time to band together then drive as a group, at the speed limit, on any major artery during any rush hour we want and for as many days as we want.

Posted by: [LWoodie](#)
Article: [Putting brakes on elderly drivers](#)

EVENTS

January 19, 2011 [Submit an Event](#) [Search Events](#)

[PREVIOUS](#) 1 OF 8 [NEXT](#)



Brief Encounter

After a chance meeting with a doctor evolves into a spell-binding romance, a married woman must choose between the family she loves and the man who has reawakened her passion for life. Laura and Alec ...

[View Full Event information](#)

WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
19	20	21	22	23	24	25

Bring it on...drop the prices!

0 0

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

POSTED BY: **The Orange Rod Blog**
NOVEMBER 22, 2010 AT 12:41 PM

The less big box stores , the better

0 1

[REPORT ABUSIVE COMMENT](#)

The comment period for this story has ended.

FOLLOW



BREAKING NEWS ALERTS

Sign up for our new Breaking News Alerts



EDITOR'S BULLETIN

Sign up for daily bulletins



WINNIPEG ROAD CLOSURES

Check if your commute is affected



BLOGS TO WATCH

We pick our favourite local blogs for you to follow



BREAKING NEWS WIDGET

Create and embed a Winnipeg Free Press breaking news widget on your site or blog



TWITTER

Follow our reporters and news feeds on Twitter

ADS BY GOOGLE

[Back to Top](#)

Return to [Columnists](#)

General: [Contact Us](#) | [History](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [PressCard](#) | [Sponsorship](#) | [Subscribe](#)

On-line: [RSS Feeds](#) | [E-Editions](#) | [Archives](#) | [Photo Store](#)

Related: [Newspaper in Education](#) | [Autos](#) | [Homes](#) | [Stuff](#) | [Celebrations](#) | [Careers](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [FP Newspapers Income Fund](#) | [Manitoba Press Council](#)

Winnipeg Free Press

© 2011 Winnipeg Free Press. All Rights Reserved.

powered by
 Clickability