Bridging BIG BOX: Small City Master Plan

By

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ABSTRACT

The increasing rates of consumerism and ever-changing trends in retailing over the past century have had a dramatic effect on the shape of cities in North America. Given the scale and locations at which most major retailers operate, Main Streets in smaller communities struggle to maintain a sense of place and vitality. They now compete not only with shopping malls but with big-box retailers and themed lifestyle centers.

This thesis examines the impact of retail trends on the economic vitality of small community. By developing a master plan for the revitalization of the city of Pembroke, Ontario, this thesis explores strategies for integrating large-scale retailing into the inherited fabric of the traditional Main Street. In addition to commercial uses, the plan for Pembroke incorporates expanded recreational, institutional and residential components. While specific to Pembroke, the proposal capitalizes on the generic structure of many small towns to create a template for similar redevelopments across North America.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE : Main Street Versus the Strip- Small Town Dash.....	3
1. The Image of Main Street: an era for artisans.....	3
1.1 Arterial Disruption the effects of Post-War Economy.....	5
1.2 The Business of re-Routing.....	6
1.3 Main Street moves roadside.....	7
1.3.1 Roadside Architecture.....	8
1.4 Live, Drive, SHOP Suburbia.....	11
1.5 The Forgotten Market present day Canada.....	14
1.6 Prevention.....	15
CHAPTER TWO: Big Box Nation: Evolution + Economic Dependency.....	19
2. Malls OUT Big-Box IN.....	19
2.1 'Boxing' Main Street Evolution of Big Box.....	22
2.2 BIG BOX Corporation Domination.....	24
2.2.1 Category Killers.....	26
2.2.2 'Power Centre'.....	27
2.3 Character + Architecture.....	29
2.3.1 'One-Stop-Shop'.....	31
2.3.2 Low-Cost.....	32
2.3.3 Design.....	33
2.4 Location.....	37
CHAPTER THREE: Pembroke, Ontario.....	40
3. History of Pembroke.....	40
3.1 Location.....	40
3.2 1828.....	41
3.3 Growth + Town Establishment.....	42
3.4 Industry.....	48
3.4.1 Lumber.....	48
3.4.2 Pembroke Electric Light Company.....	50
3.4.3 Present Day.....	51
3.4.4 Retail.....	52

3.5	1990: Fall of Main Street.....	59
3.5.1	Pembroke Downtown Development Commission.....	59
3.5.2	Heritage Canada Main Street Committee.....	61
3.5.3	Pembroke Heritage Murals.....	63
3.6	Current State of Affairs.....	64
3.6.1	Effects of 2008.....	68
3.6.2	'Agglomerated Pembroke'.....	69
3.7	Current City Initiatives +New Development.....	71
3.7.1	<i>Renaissance Square</i> - New Algonquin College Campus.....	73
3.7.2	Petawawa- CFB expansion.....	75
CHAPTER FOUR: Future Vision :		
	Bridging BIG BOX: Small City master plan	77
4.	Introduction.....	77
4.1	Factors Masterplan.....	79
4.2	BIG BOX.....	90
4.2.1	Design.....	96
4.2.2	Precedents.....	97
4.2.3	Sustainability + Structure.....	101
4.2.4	Program.....	105
4.2.5	Parking: Feasibility + Logistics.....	108
4.3	Recreation Convention Centre.....	112
4.3.1	Site.....	112
4.4	Program.....	114
4.5	Student Housing.....	117
4.6	Infill.....	121
4.6.1	Residential.....	121
4.6.2	Commercial.....	123
4.6.3	Accommodation.....	123
4.6.4	Green Space.....	124
4.7	Connectivity.....	124
CONCLUSION.....		128
Bibliography.....		130
.....		

INTRODUCTION

The early development of North American cities is epitomized by Main Street. These streets were the armatures around which towns developed. Characterized by their distinctive mix of uses and architectural character, Main Streets personified communities through which they ran. Despite their significance, however, these streets have fought to survive for the past sixty years. Among the challenges, they continue to focus on personal transportation and the development of communities on the suburban periphery. With the expansion of consumer culture in the post-WWII period, retailing both expanded and decentralized. Main Street faced increasing competition from the regional shopping mall. While larger cities were able to reinvent themselves as centres for business, small towns were not so successful.

Consumerism has become so integral to our way of life that shopping has transformed urban infrastructure. Main Street gave way to the strip centre which was eclipsed by the enclosed shopping centre. In the past decade, we've witnessed an explosion of mass merchandisers. New forms of retail, known as big-box stores, now dominate global markets with strategic locations and unbeatable low prices. Globalization and the recent recession have only increased the average consumer's dependence on this type of retailer.

Small towns are the most affected from these megastores, which are strategically constructed in rural communities and in the suburban periphery of larger cities. The victims of mass merchandisers, Main Street merchants have been forced to abandon their businesses. The financial outflow from traditional shopping districts is evident with increasing numbers of empty storefronts and deteriorating townscapes.

The city of Pembroke, Ontario is one of many Main Street communities losing the battle with the big-box. Having struggled to adapt to the construction of development in the nearby municipality of Laurentian Valley, Main Street merchants must now compete with a big-box. This thesis proposes a comprehensive revitalization plan for Pembroke's central business district as a means of negotiating current challenges and leveraging new opportunities. With major emphasis on retail, the plan includes commercial, institutional, recreational, and residential components. It is my hope that the revitalization strategies, as proposed, will change the perception of Pembroke from a dying town to a vital and growing one.

CHAPTER ONE : Main Street Versus the Strip- Small Town Dash

1. The Image of Main Street: an era for artisans

For more than a century, main streets have symbolized small towns in North America. Most settlement towns were built around an arterial road, mirrored by long stretches of building blocks to either side. These roadways are referred to as 'main streets': crucial business districts designated for trade and commerce. In most cases, founding communities were built in close proximity to waterways, which were used for the transportation and distribution of goods. In Canada, most towns adhered to mixed-use urban template. Commercial and public buildings were grouped along the main corridor and at major intersections. Private homes were built at both ends of the commercial strip, distinguishable by planted setbacks. As towns grew the commercial corridor spawned a grid of smaller streets.¹

While Main Street development can be found across Canada, variations exist based on location, local materials and local culture. In Ontario and Quebec, the commercial blocks along many Main Streets were constructed of stone while in the Atlantic Provinces (aside from Newfoundland which does not have a strong Main Street tradition) they consisted of detached wooden buildings.

¹ Deryck Holdsworth; with a foreword by Pierre Berton. *Reviving Main Street*, Toronto: Published in association with the Heritage Canada Foundation by University of Toronto Press, c1985. (8)

Main Streets in the western provinces however, were constructed in a less traditional form. Prairie towns, for instance, developed rapidly with the arrival of the railway. Western Main Streets are exceedingly wide, spanning of sixty-six to ninety-nine feet. Single-storey buildings were fitted with high parapets to make them appear substantial.²

Traditional 'Main Street' buildings consist of a storefront at grade, one or two upper stores for office or residential use, and a cornice at the roofline.³ The storefront was the most important and most architecturally articulated element of the façade. Since most ground floors were used for retail, storefronts were embellished to attract customers. Main Street buildings are typically built to the sidewalk and directly adjacent to the each other to form a continuous wall of shops. The regular pattern of windows in the upper portions of the façade creates a visual cohesiveness along the length of the strip. The cornice too, unifies the retail-row.⁴ In many cases, artisans carved and corbelled the various component of the façade creating works of art.

Commercial main streets, in tandem with public infrastructure like town halls, post offices, and banks, provided the armature around which towns grew. Large sidewalks, initially boardwalks, facilitated pedestrian movement, and all services were in close proximity. The range and mix of uses guaranteed a

² (Holdsworth 13-15)

³ Dono, Andrea L., and Linda S. Glisson. *Revitalizing Main Street : A Practitioner's Guide to Comprehensive Commercial District Revitalization*. Washington DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation/National Trust Main Street Center, 2009. (112 - 122)

⁴ Ibid.

built-in customer base.⁵ This image of Main Street is relatively consistent North America and is symbolic of the cities evolution.

1.1 **Arterial Disruption | the effects of Post-War Economy**

There was a major shift in the development of North American cities after the Second World War. Post-war economic prosperity and transportation innovations enabled new forms and scales of urban development across North America. By the mid 1930s, guaranteed government loans made new suburban housing affordable.

Federal funding for highways introduced in 1956 accelerated the spread of cities⁶. The expanding network of freeways and the development of low-density residential enclaves on the urban periphery, severely affected the economic viability of urban centres. Many retailers followed residents to the suburbs. American historian Lewis Mumford observed that: "As more residents and businesses headed for the periphery, the suburbs were turning cities from creative centers into discarded parcels of a 'disordered and disintegrating urban mass.'"⁷

Young families flocked to the suburbs in search of the 'American Dream', consisting of a single-family home in a low-density residential enclave. Returning soldiers and veterans lured to the periphery. *Life* magazine, epitomized the American Dream as owning a detached home on a landscaped lawn, replete with

⁵ (Holdsworth 14)

⁶ Holcomb, Briavel H. and Robert A. Beauregard. *Revitalizing cities*. Washington, D.C. : Association of American Geographers, c1981. (9)

⁷ Kotkin, Joel. *The city : a global history*. New York : Modern Library, c2005. (118)

modern fixtures and lavish kitchen appliances.⁸ This idealized standard of living became a driving force for residents, immigrants and particularly developers.

Increased demand coupled with longstanding housing shortages pushed developers to build large amounts of low-density suburban housing, the mortgages on which were lower than the cost of renting in the core. The rush to the edge left many urban neighbourhoods to lower-income families, or abandoned altogether. The city's tax base declined along with the number and economic profile of its residents. By 1947, suburbs in America were growing four times faster than central cities.

1.2 The Business of re-Routing

The automobile-oriented suburbs of the post-war era neither looked nor functioned like residential areas within the traditional urban core, nor like the transit-based communities built before WW1. In contrast to apartments and tightly packed houses, generous suburban lots accommodated driveways and deep backyards. The layout of subdivisions was characterized by curving streets and cul-de-sacs.⁹ House designs were characterized by simple, "modern" layouts and a limited palette of materials. To keep costs down, homes were generic and duplicated.

⁸ Bauman, John F., Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szyvian. *The Ever-Changing American City: 1945-Present*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012. (35)

⁹ Lorinc, John. *Cities*. Toronto, Ont.: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2008. (36)

Affordability was rarely an issue, since government agencies (Federal Housing Administration, Veteran Administration and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) made low -interest, long-term mortgages available with no money down. Moreover appliances – even televisions – could be folded into the mortgage.

The 'American Dream' helped the US and Canada to make the transition from a wartime to peaceful economy. In addition to the house itself and the car needed to access it, every new home required furnishings, appliances, and décor and living essentials. Suburbanization ushered in an era of "mass consumption", the new home being the consummate commodity.¹⁰ Larger properties gave residents a sense of status and social identity. Personalization of the house was achieved through the purchase of material goods (and 'conspicuous consumption'), eventually resulting in a nationwide dependency on retail establishments.

1.3 Main Street moves roadside

Growth on the periphery coupled with increasing consumerism; put tremendous pressure on pre-existing roadways. Bypasses were constructed to take pressure off of routes through cities, including many of the Main Streets of the streetcar era.¹¹ While intended to relieve congestion on Main Street, these car-friendly bypasses began to compete with

¹⁰ (Bauman, et al. 36)

¹¹ (Holdsworth 24)

it. New routes were seen as new business opportunities and gradually attracted garages, gas stations, motor courts and snack bars.¹²

Also referred to as 'approach strips' or 'miracle miles', commercial developments along bypasses were set back from the roadway to provide space for parking. Parking was a key asset for businesses at this time. In addition to being increasingly inconvenient to access, historic downtowns could not keep up with the demand for parking. A writer from the 1950 *Architectural Forum* observed:

'When wide-spread automobile ownership liberated the customer from the fixed path of the mass transit lines... the shopper could be pulled almost everywhere... by what the downtown district so signally lacked - a place to park the car.'¹³

Suburbanized society became dependant on personalized transportation; freedom was tantamount to access to an automobile. No longer forced to negotiate congested business districts, residents could drive to shopping plazas. As the strip developed and businesses multiplied, fewer and fewer citizens depended on downtown merchants.

1.3.1 Roadside Architecture

Commercial by-passes neither looked nor functioned like central business districts. Unlike the building blocks of Main Street, which were built with

¹² (Holdsworth 26)

¹³ (Holdsworth 28)

pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, new 'approach strips' catered to customers with automobiles. Instead of pedestrian-oriented storefront displays, the 'miracle mile' depended on large signs to flag down potential customers.

Signage became the most important factor after, of course, parking. As the primary means of attracting (or even distracting) drivers, oversized signs were planted along the length of the strip. One could compare the multitude of advertising on a typical commercial strip to the famous Las Vegas strip, an excessive explosion of neon signs, quirky giant figures and statues advertising places and products.¹⁴

The architecture of the strip could not be further from the traditional commercial blocks of Main Street. Downtowns evolved as social networks of business owners and residents within which the quality of buildings reflected their position and the people who cared for them. With neither pedestrians nor sidewalks, roadside commercial retailers, no longer relied on the architecture to attract customers, but rather on signage and on advertisements for the products they were selling.

The great approach strip, route 99
North Fresno, California
Source: Liebs

The ground-floor shops along Main Street were unable to accommodate the new demands of retail space. Because "the retail economy now

¹⁴ Dunham-Jones, Ellen, and June Williamson. *Retrofitting Suburbia : Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009. (62-63)

depended on distributing output from factories rather than merely showcasing a trickle of wares crafted by artisans, the legions of new shopkeepers needed commercial structures that could be built in a variety of sizes and internal configurations while adhering to prevailing aesthetic sensibilities".¹⁵

A new generation of retail structure was introduced to meet the demands a new era. Buildings appeared industrial, breaking away from traditional building materials such as brick, stone and marble, and especially any form of ornamentation. Buildings along the commercial strip were low-slung, sleek and in character with the motorized clientele to whom they were appealing.

With competition from the strip, modern materials and signage began appearing in historic downtowns. In an effort to keep up with new retailers, Main Street merchants covered old facades with industrial siding and advertisements, disrupting the traditional character of the street.¹⁶ Surface alterations, however, were not up to the challenge. Furthermore, the downtown corridor was landlocked and increasingly inconvenient for growing population on the periphery.

¹⁵ Liebs, Chester H. *Main Street to Miracle Mile : American Roadside Architecture*. John Hopkins Paperbacks ed. ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. (40)

¹⁶ (Holdsworth 40)

1.4 Live, Drive, SHOP Suburbia

The scale of suburban shopping centers increased over time, first taking the form of the open-air strip centre. The International Council of Shopping Centers describes the strip center as:

an attached row of stores or service outlets managed as a coherent retail entity, with on-site parking usually located in front of the stores. Open canopies may connect the storefronts, but a strip center does not have enclosed walkways linking the stores. A strip center may be configured in a straight line, or have an "L" or "U" shape.¹⁷ The connecting-canopies proved to be more inviting to residents instead of weather-permitting downtowns.

One of the reasons for the success of suburban centers was that many of those who owned and operated stores in downtown moved their businesses to the suburbs. With a similar relationship of storefronts and the same essential character, these new centres were larger, intensified clusters of the old downtown.¹⁸

Shopping in the suburbs is depersonalized. Most retailers, department stores and specialty shops prior to World War II were community based and a source of social engagement.¹⁹ Not only would one

¹⁷ ICSC SHOPPING CENTER DEFINITIONS :Basic Configurations and Types. International Council of Shopping Centers , 1999

¹⁸ Bruegmann, Robert. *Sprawl: a compact history*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c2005. (72)

¹⁹ Beauregard, Robert A. *When America Became Suburban*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. (127)

interact with storeowners, but pedestrian interaction diminished as walking was replaced by driving.

Architect Victor Gruen wrote:

“Shopping” is an entirely different type of activity than “buying”. Buying is the result of a predetermined and exactly defined aim. A decision to buy a specific article leads the buyer to one specific store or even to one specific counter... The activity of shopping is approached with a certain degree of aimlessness and usually with a generous supply of professional vocation. It involves the comparing of price, style and quality, but it is also influenced by the desire of spending some time for sociability and a wish for exposure to human experiences and entertainment.²⁰

Gruen took suburban strip centres to the next level when he designed the first enclosed suburban shopping mall. Referred to as Regional Malls, these intensified retail centres were interior gathering spaces devoted entirely to the act of shopping. Built on acres of land surrounded by even more acres of parking, these malls were condensed retail districts with multiple intersecting main streets compressed into one structure. Each mall had an inventory of smaller retailers inserted between one to three larger anchors, most often department stores. Solid perimeter walls were punctured only by a few entry points. Stores faced inward with their backs to the

²⁰ Silberberg, Ted, and Don Garrett. *A Guide for the Revitalization of Retail Districts*. Toronto: Project: Saving Small Business, 1976. (26)

parking lot, a major change from earlier forms of the retail strip. Interior streets, frequently sky-lit like century-old European arcades, could be climate-controlled. Furthermore, the new shopping malls were activity-filled spaces, replete with fast-food restaurants and entertainment venues.²¹ Regional Malls reinterpreted Main Street at a regional scale. People drove to it, got out of their cars and walked through it as they would through any downtown.

Regional malls were built to accommodate the most prized commodity of late 20th century, the automobile. This is most evident with the site selection, frequently in close proximity to highways interchanges on the suburban periphery. Malls spread across the United States after WWII, arriving into Canada in 1949. The first centres were the Dorval Shopping Centre near Montreal, inspired by a development in New York, and Park Royal in West Vancouver modelled after a mall in Seattle.²² There were a total of 7,600 centres in the United States by 1964, and 13,174 by 1972. Construction continued with some 16,000 enclosed shopping centres built between 1980 and 1990. The Savings and Loan crisis in 1989 and reduced credit put a halt on new shopping mall construction causing a 70% decline in new development.²³

²¹ (Silberberg, Garrett 32)

²² (Silberberg, Garrett 32)

²³ (Dunham-Jones, Williamson 63-66)

1.5 The Forgotten Market | present day Canada

The rise of the enclosed-suburban mall hit small towns extremely hard. Central cities were no longer compatible with new lifestyles promoted in suburban communities. The wide range of amenities available on the periphery, including shopping centres, progressively trumped what was available both downtown and along the Main Street corridors leading out from the core. Regional shopping malls competed directly with traditional Main Streets as magnets for economic and social activity.²⁴

Main Street repeatedly fought to re-capture its former vitality. Having failed to mimic the aesthetics of the car-oriented strip, without compromising itself in the process, it now had to challenge the controlled climate, convenience and broader range of retail choices available in the enclosed mall.

Main Streets were designed to function at a local scale at a time when people had limited transportation options. Choice, and the freedom to shop anywhere, made it increasingly difficult for Main Street to compete. Buildings along Main Street were demolished to create parking lots in order to court drivers. With fewer stores operating, Main Street became even less desirable as a retail destination.²⁵

²⁴ (Holdsworth 25)

²⁵ (Holdsworth 31)

Diminishing tax revenue in city centres further affected the physical character of the streetscape. As residents decamped to the suburbs, smaller privately-owned retail businesses, and multi-unit residential buildings disappeared. The quality of the streetscape eroded. Monetary shortages and the increasing number of building vacancies contributed to an overall sense of neglect. A study by George Sternlieb, on (property) abandonment in Newark, New Jersey in 1964 noted that the quality of a property's maintenance, the level of neighbourhood vacancy and the condition of neighbourhood housing units were the basis for the desertion of neighbourhoods in city cores.²⁶ It was a vicious cycle.

1.6 Prevention

In response to the precipitous decline of Main Streets across North America, government and voluntary systems appeared in the late 1970s. These organizations focussed on the revitalization and recovery of historic downtowns.

In 1973, Heritage Canada launched the *Main Street Canada* program with the goal of revitalizing Canadian downtowns. The "Main Street Approach" is a downtown revitalization methodology that uses 'heritage' as a tool for economic development, generally over a three-to-five year period.

²⁶ Bourne, L. S. *Internal Structure of the City : Readings on Urban Form, Growth, and Policy*. 2nd ed. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. (475)

The typical Main Street process uses a four-point approach: a combination of design, economic development, marketing and promotion, and organizational development.²⁷ Revitalization projects are led by a fulltime project coordinator hired by the community who settles into Main Street and works intensively with local leaders, merchants and business people to diagnose problems and agree on strategies.

The Main Street Approach has proven to be effective, with a track record of creating new jobs and businesses, rehabilitating older and historic buildings, and attracting new investment to communities that have strong emotional, social and civic connections.²⁸ Main Street Canada has benefitted the downtowns of towns across Canada, especially in Québec. Despite its effectiveness, however, the program was eventually dismantled due to shortage in government funding. Similar organizations have appeared since, including *La Fondation Rues Principales* (Québec Main Street), *Villes et Villages d'art et de Patrimoine*, *Alberta Main Street*, and *Main Street Ontario* (an online self-help guide for municipalities).

Many studies have chronicled the diverse opportunities and strategies available to address the economic failure of small towns. The National Trust Main Street Centre, for example, was developed in the United States to help communities revitalize their traditional and historic commercial districts with a

²⁷ "The Main Street Program: Past and Present" Heritage Canada Foundation.
March 2009

²⁸ (Holdsworth 11-14)

preservation-based, community-driven economic development program. The organization published a consultant's guide outlining the basic four-step strategy for successful turn-around, with examples of case studies across the United-States.

While many projects have used the popular four-point approach, especially in the United States, it is important to look at other forms of small town revitalization particularly in recent years. An example of a successful revitalization is Almonte, Ontario. The community is located in the Ottawa Valley, on the outskirts of the Ottawa Greenbelt. The town was a significant contributor to the textile industry and was a rest-point for train commuters in the 20th century. The town experienced several economic setbacks with the commercial development of large retail operations in the nearby town of Carleton Place.

Many consumers now travel outside of town for essentials and Almonte suffers from a financial outflow. Many attempts have been made to maintain the town's economy and historical significance with numerous community projects. The community is very involved with town beautification projects, fundraising and events to attract visitors and new residents. Recent infill projects have added to the town's historical fabric and numerous adaptive reuse projects have injected personality and modernity into the town.

Local architect, Peter Mansfield, has made several contributions, specializing in heritage preservation and recycling architecture. His work has improved the streetscape and has progressively raised awareness of the importance of adaptive reuse projects.

CHAPTER TWO: Big Box Nation: Evolution + Economic Dependency

2. Malls OUT | Big-Box IN

This chapter will explore trends and changes in consumer behaviour that have transformed retail architecture over time. Commercial spaces in cities have evolved from the traditional market square to Main Street, to the suburban mall, and, most recently, to big-box stores. Big-Box retailing will be examined from a variety of standpoints, with an emphasis on the physical character and retailing strategies that have made this form of shopping so successful. An understanding of the big-box phenomenon is essential to comprehending the challenges facing Pembroke and more importantly the solutions I will propose.

Shopping and retailing trends are sensitive to a range of economic, social, technological and environmental changes (e.g., the seasons). Both are in a constant state of reinvention. Retail practices are continuously reformatted and reshaped in response to evolving consumer needs and preferences. No other form of social activity so closely follows (and shapes) cultural, social and urban patterns.²⁹

²⁹ Chung, Chuihua Judy, et al. *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*. Köln ; New York: Cambridge, Mass: Taschen; Harvard Design School, 2001. (131)

Artist and author Sze Tsung Leong identifies the origin of modern retailing with the emergence of the arcade in the early 19th century.

“The skylight enabled the arcades, by allowing the interiors of city blocks to be opened to the public by creating environments for nurturing consumerism. The sidewalk liberated the street to the incursion of growing quantities of shopping, by encouraging a leisurely and appealing mode of pedestrian activity. Air conditioning freed new depths for interior space to shopping, by wrapping the consumer in comfortable environments. The escalator gave the shopper a means to traverse without effort the increasing heights of commercial buildings, by putting all levels on the same easily accessible plane.”³⁰

The shopping mall, the most conventional, popular and exploited form of retailing half a century-ago, has experienced an epidemic failure in the last decade. Across Canada and the United States, a growing number of smaller regional malls have closed and/or filed for bankruptcy. Dependant as they are on anchor stores, malls began suffering with the demise and consolidation of department stores in the 1980s. A further indication that this form of retail was about to change was the introduction of online shopping in the mid '90s. As products can now be purchased over the internet and delivered directly to one's home, consumers have an incentive to shop from home instead of driving to and from a mall.

³⁰ (Chung, et al. 294)

A retail survey conducted in 1995, predicted the demise in the future patronage of shopping centres, with "38% of respondents (saying) they planned to shop at malls less often this year than they had in the past." The survey opined that "Regional Malls clearly have a life cycle, and a lot of them are in their last throws... (By) 2010, 55% of the nation's shopping (is predicted to) be conducted in non-store venues – online services, direct mail, catalogues, 800 numbers, and the like."³¹

As expected, the mall is out. These failed retail outlets are described as "dead malls". According to deadmalls.com, these malls suffer from high vacancy rate, low consumer traffic level, or are "dated or deteriorating" in some manner.³²

More recently retailers have suffered from the global recession of 2008, which hit the United States particularly hard. Reduced economic activity from rising un-employment and the debt crisis further impacted retailers. A May 2009 article in *The Wall Street Journal* entitled "Recession Turns Malls into Ghost Towns," predicted that the inventory of dead-malls in the US would "swell to more than 100 by the end of this year."³³

³¹ Kenneth Labich, "What will it take to Keep People Hanging Out at the Mall?" *Fortune*, 29 May 1995, (103)

³² [Deadmalls.com](http://deadmalls.com) ©2000-2012 deadmalls DOT

<http://www.deadmalls.com/>

³³ Mark Dery "Dawn of the Dead Mall: The landscape is littered with the giant carcasses of failed retail emporia. Ideas for what's next are no less visionary. But are they any more practical?," *Change Observer*, November 12, 2009. <http://www.changeobserver.com/2009/11/12/dawn-of-the-dead-mall/>

While smaller, regional malls across America are facing extinction, the 50 largest malls (those with retail areas of 1.5 million or more square feet) have fared better.³⁴ The vulnerability of the once-mighty regional mall is just the most recent example of instability in the ever-changing retail industry. Daniel Herman concludes that "The Death of the mall is but one moment in the never-ending story of the Next Best Thing."³⁵ The architecture of consumption (the size, quality and location of the retail environment) follows the logic of the Next Best Thing. Ironically the architecture (the shape and quality) of the retail environment seems to make little difference; it is just one of many factors at play. More importantly the retail environment must be new, must be big, and must be replicable. It must be a trend.³⁶

Abandoning the mall, consumers have moved on to the next Next Best Thing, namely the Big- Box Store.

2.1 'Boxing' Main Street | Evolution of Big Box

The past decade has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of discount mass merchandisers in North America. These retailers include discount general merchandisers, membership warehouse clubs, 'category killer' stores, factory outlet malls and specialty mail order houses.³⁷ Retailers of this kind are referred to as 'big-box stores'. Categorized by their common physical character - the large box-like

³⁴ (Chung, et al. 532)

³⁵ (Chung, et al. 470)

³⁶ (Chung, et al. 531-532,538)

³⁷ Stone, Kenneth E. *Competing with the Retail Giants: How to Survive in the New Retail Landscape*. New York: Wiley, 1995. (13)

enclosures in which they operate - they are the newest form of shopping architecture.

The big-box phenomenon can be described as an explosion of super-sized chain stores. Retail chains have existed for over a century, beginning with department and grocery stores and spreading to all types of markets. Prior to the post-WWII suburban build-out, these chains played a modest role in major streetscapes. After recognizing new potential in the suburbs, department store chains dominated the retail scene, especially in enclosed malls where they functioned as anchors for smaller businesses.³⁸

The most successful and recognized chain store of our time is Walmart. Sam Walton opened the first store in 1962 in Rogers, Arkansas. Prior to doing so he operated a small variety store in downtown Bentonville, AR. Lacking the resources to become a shopping center developer, he opted to open his first department store, "Wal-Mart Discount City." The store was located half a mile west of downtown and spanned sixteen thousand square feet. The building became a prototype for later stores: it was a cheap, single-storey structure with a large-floor plate. Like most retail centers at the time, Walton designed Walmart for the automobile, locating his store at the intersection of two major roadways and surrounding it with parking. The store sold a variety of merchandise from clothing to electronics, house wares and automotive supplies³⁹ Two years later Walton opened a second store and by 1969, operated eighteen across Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Walmart continued to expand at an incredible pace. The company preferred to saturate one region with

Sam Walton's original Walton's 5-10 Store, Bentonville, Arkansas

Source: *Wal-Mart History Timeline*,
http://www.walmart.com/about-us/2014/01/01/2014-01-01

First discount store in Rogers, Arkansas

Source: *Wal-Mart History Timeline*,
http://www.walmart.com/about-us/2014/01/01/2014-01-01

³⁸ (Mitchell 5)

³⁹ (Mitchell 7)

stores before leapfrogging to another. Most stores were built well outside of larger urban centres, since smaller towns were more easily dominated.⁴⁰

2.2 BIG BOX Corporation Domination

Walmart is unlike any other business. Starting as a mediocre discount-store-turned-chain, it went on to become a mass merchandiser and worldwide brand. The success of Walmart coincides with its domination of the retail sector, its growing inventory of stores and store locations, and the total amount of land occupied by Walmart stores and parking lots.

The fact is people shop at Walmart. With increased net sales of 3.4%, totalling \$419 Billion in 2010, Walmart was ranked first on the 2011 *Fortune 500* list of the world's largest companies in terms of revenue. As of January 2012, Walmart Stores Inc. operated a total 10,130 stores, 5,651 of which were outside the United States in 26 different countries. It operates in a variety of sizes and formats, from smaller *Neighbourhood Markets* to its signature *Supercentres*. In addition, Walmart is one of the largest private employers in the world with 2.2 million associates. Not every store operates under the iconic Walmart brand; about 90 percent of international stores, including Walmex in Mexico, Asda in the UK, Seiyu in Japan, and Best Price in India, operate under other names.⁴¹

Walmart Neighborhood Market Store

Photo © Walmart Neighborhood Market

Photo © Walmart Neighborhood Market

⁴⁰ (Mitchell 8)

⁴¹ "About Us" Walmart Corporate, © 2011 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. August 2011

<http://www.walmart.com/about-us>

Walmart, like most chain stores, reinvents itself every ten years or so. While in some cases it renovates existing buildings, stores more frequently relocate to brand new structures, abandoning their previous boxes. Most 'standard' format stores are transformed into larger supercenters, doubling the square footage to 200,000 square feet. Larger stores are designed to include groceries and privately run businesses.

The abandonment of former buildings has, itself, become an epidemic across the continent. Stacey Mitchell, the author of *Big Box Swindle: the True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses*, explains:

"No one knows exactly how much retail space currently sits idle, but the tally is somewhere in the neighbourhood of several hundred million, perhaps approaching one billion square feet. That's not even counting the acres of parking that surround many of these lifeless properties. Retail vacancy is a fast-spreading epidemic and, in absence of intervention, it will only get worse."⁴²

⁴² (Mitchell 119)

Whether buildings are in use or not, Walmart consumes a vast amount of land. Unlike department stores and retail buildings in central business districts, stores are laid out on a single story. The evolution of store design has only increased the amount of asphalt used for parking spaces.

Walmart has steadily dominated big-box retailing, rising above competing mass merchandisers and wiping out smaller businesses everywhere. The 2005 Walmart Annual report reveals that a standard U.S. Store is designed to average \$418 in sales, per square foot, totalling \$84 million a year.

2.2.1 Category Killers

Big-Box retailing comprises a variety of retail categories. Walmart is a general merchandiser with a large inventory of products, an adaptation of the traditional general store once found on Main Street. A variation, however, is the 'Category Killer', a store committed exclusively to the sales of one type of product (e.g., toys or electronics). This type of store is named for its ability to put smaller competitors out of business by offering a greater range of products at lower prices,⁴³ i.e., for its ability to kill and dominate. Category killers exist for an increasing number of product categories. Among the better-known examples are Home Depot and Lowes (for building supplies), Best Buy and Future Shop (for electronics), and Toys R' US (for children's entertainment).

⁴³ (Mitchell 121)

Category Killers are rarely built alone, but are grouped with several other categories. These clusters are comparable to a department store that has been dissected, divided and super-sized.

2.2.2 'Power Centre'

The newest forms of neighbourhood retail development in Canada are 'Power Centres'. Sometimes referred to as 'lifestyle centres', these developments are 'groupings' of mass merchandisers, mostly killers, which form oversized blocks of retail. Each store is built in a standard big-box size, but is attached to one or two similar retailers. The cluster of shops is similar to the strip centres that began appearing along arterial roads in the 1930s – with storefronts lined up along a sidewalk separated from the street by parking. In this regard the strip center is a transformation of the historic Main Street.

Facades are divided in the same way with storefronts (the upper reaches of which are windowless) capped with a cornice. Power centres are generic, fast and cheap to build. Constructed of pre-fabricated panels, templates for these centres are largely independent of their location, contributing to a "postage-stamp" effect. It is presumed that all construction costs and building expenses are paid for by tenants over the period of the lease. Each development is planned using a guaranteed repetitive roster of tenants. These centres are not filled with specialty shops or private businesses, but chains, and even better, noted category killers.

In some cases, massive retail conglomerations are designed to simulate town centers. *Legacy Village*, a shopping district in Cleveland, Ohio, is an example of this genre of development. Buildings are filled with shops and restaurants, each with a street-level storefront and architectural style. The developers included old-fashion lampposts, trees and park benches to replicate the historic atmosphere of Main Street. Unlike century-old business districts, however, these buildings were erected in a few months-time by a single developer rather than by talented masons over decades. Comparable to 'movie set' design, artifice is deployed to make materials look like wood or stone. This technique is famously recognized at Disney World Theme Park.⁴⁴

Ironically having broken away from traditional town centers, post-war suburban developments are recreating, simulated retail districts. In other words, downtown Main Street is moving to the suburbs.

There is nothing environmentally smart about Power Centres. Due to their overwhelming size and location, the only time-appropriate solution of getting to them is to drive. A complex can be spread across acres of land forcing shoppers to depend on their cars to get from one retailer to another within the same centre. By driving from store to store, individuals further isolate themselves – and the traditionally social act of shopping – from society.

Smart Centres is the largest developer of unenclosed shopping centers (power centres) in Canada. The company has developed and/or manages over two

Site Plan: Legacy Village: Cleveland, Ohio

source: <http://www.legacyvillage.com>
<http://www.legacyvillage.com>
<http://www.legacyvillage.com>

Legacy Village, shopping District

source: <http://www.cleveland.com>

SmartCentres National Logo

source: <http://www.smartcentres.com>

⁴⁴ (Mitchell 101)

hundred centres with major tenants such as Canadian Tire, Loblaws and of course, Walmart. Like most retail developments Smart Centres pride themselves on "Bringing Value to Canadian Communities."⁴⁵

2.3 Character + Architecture

The physical character of large-scale retailers has been widely criticized. These structures/centres do not – resonate with their surroundings or traditional retail landscapes, especially given the sea of parking that surrounds every establishment. In fact, big-box stores are oversized homogenous structures.

Early Model of a Walmart Storefront

source: <http://www.timesigns.ca.com>

Roberta Brandes Gratz, author of *Cities back from the Edge: New Life for Downtown*, describes the diminishment of 'place' in terms of present-day manmade (retail) environment:

"The loss of sense of place, the sterility of our road culture, the repetitious 'stripscape' devouring the countryside, the repetitious 'mall-scape' replacing downtowns, the frustration of our traffic congestion, the bankruptcy of our culture of commerce, and the homogenized aesthetic that passes for design."⁴⁶

Each chain has one or two standard formats, the design and layout of which have been carefully engineered to maximize efficiency and promote sales.⁴⁷ Corporate Walmart, in fact thrives on the ideal store environment:

⁴⁵ "What We Deliver" SmartCentres © SmartCentres Inc. www.smartcentres.com

⁴⁶ (Gratz 38)

⁴⁷ (Mitchell 108)

"Our stores feature wide, clean, brightly-lit aisles and shelves stocked with a variety of quality, value-priced general merchandise."⁴⁸

In the retail world, size does matter. According to Reilly's Law of Retail Gravity, "all other factors being equal, shoppers will patronize the largest center they get to easily."⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this puts traditional downtown merchants at a disadvantage. Together, they form a large retail cluster, but individually, they cannot compete with freestanding megastores.

parking lot for a supercenter (17 acres)

(Fig.) Retail Size Comparisons
Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance 2006 www.bigboxtoolkit.com

⁴⁸ "About Us" Walmart Corporate, © 2011 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. August 2011

⁴⁹ <http://www.bigboxtoolkit.com>

⁴⁹ (Chung, et al. 324)

2.3.1 'One-Stop-Shop'

The leading reason that stores such as Walmart dominate the retail economy is that they provide close to the maximum selection of merchandise a suburban household might need for 'everyday life'. Throughout the years Wal-Mart has accumulated a growing inventory of over 80,000 products from apparel, health and beauty, home décor and furnishings, appliances and electronics to (in recent years) groceries and produce. In addition to the assortment of products sold, Wal-Mart now offers a long list of services. Varying with location, these smaller businesses include pharmacies, vision and hearing centres, medical clinics, hair and nail salons, photo processing and portrait studios, travel agencies, licensees, real estate services, dry cleaners, garden and automotive centres and outlets for two of the largest fast-food chains in North America: Tim Horton's and McDonalds.

Supercentres were introduced in 1988 to meet a growing demand for convenient, one-stop shopping. On average, stores exceed 185,000 square feet. Walmart Corporate strategizes: "We save you time and money by combining a full grocery and our general merchandise under one roof."⁵⁰ All the essential services and products one would need are located in one facility. In addition to providing everyday products, Supercentres offer extended hours. Most of the Walmart's 3,029 US stores are open 24 hours.⁵¹ While unlimited hours of operation is ideal for any customer base, it makes it that much more difficult for smaller business to compete.

⁵⁰ Walmart Corporate, © 2011 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. August 2011

⁵¹ Walmart Corporate, © 2011 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. August 2011

Figure 1 Early Model of a Walmart Supercenter

2.3.2 Low-Cost

Big box stores are designed to provide lower-cost items to customers. Lower-priced items are magnets for customers, because everyone wants a better deal. Sam Walton's vision has set the standard for all stores since the beginning:

"If we work together, we'll lower the cost of living for everyone, we'll give the world an opportunity to see what its like to have a better life."⁵²

Competition is a given when it comes to any retail business. Mass Merchandisers compete with each other to advertise and gain low-price leadership. Low-cost products and volume sales are the reason for Walmart's leading role in retail and the reasoning behind the physical character of the store. A lesser quality aesthetic and cost of construction, requires fewer expenses and fewer price mark-ups.

⁵² Walmart Corporate, © 2011 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. August 2011
"Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. 2011 Annual Report"

2.3.3 Design

The ability to control the interior environments of retail spaces are key to the way in which they are designed. Commercial spaces were previously controlled by the storefront, windows being necessary for natural ventilation. Mechanical ventilation permitted greater flexibility for design and enabled larger footprints. In 1941 Theo Larson, associate editor of *Architectural Forum*, observed that:

"It goes almost without question that the main driving force in the changing architecture of today is air-conditioning... You get that in the form of discussions as to whether the building should be windowed or windowless, a discussion never heard until air conditioning put in its appearance... In the post-war building market, it is very clear, I think, to almost everyone in the building industry, that air conditioning becomes the number one requirement."⁵³

Post-War enclosed shopping malls were the first to experiment with this new technology, proving air conditioning to be a successful driver of consumerism. While enclosed malls borrowed heavily from the iconography of Main Streets (individual storefronts, skylit promenades etc..) big-box stores have developed a different approach to retailing. Structures are largely windowless and connections between inside and out are kept to a minimum so as not to distract shoppers.

⁵³ (chung, et al. 114 cit.51)

This model of enclosed retail architecture was predicted by a group of Architects in a 1950 issue of *Architectural Forum*. Victor Gruen, Morris Lapidus, Kenneth Welch, and Daniel Schwartzman all agreed that "air conditioning alone can be said to have reshaped every element of the modern store beginning with the building front and ending with the display case." "Without air conditioning, the modern store would never have been built. Modern Lighting would be impossible without an air conditioning system to offset the heat load. The open front would impossible -- yesterday's designer had to use a large part of the front ventilation."⁵⁴

One might presume that consumers would find warehouse-like buildings uncomfortable compared to malls, which invest heavily in their appearance and in the overall comfort of the shopper. Instead of designing for customer experience, big-box stores are focused on the quantity, variety and most importantly the low-price of their products. The large scale of buildings, with products lining aisles, can effectively distract a customer from the pre-fabricated retail box in which they are shopping. The unambiguous lack of design takes the focus off the environment and focuses the shopper's attention on the products themselves.

It can also be debated that the goal of this particular design 'convinces' shoppers that price mark-up has been kept at the absolute minimum. Whereas in small businesses and regional shopping malls, common-area costs must be included in the sale price of an item.

⁵⁴ (chung, et al. 114 cit.54)

The principal facilitator for the “success” of many shopping experiences is again, air-conditioning. If retailers can provide a comfortable atmosphere, (e.g., weather), shopping experiences can be further prolonged.

Present day mass merchandisers represent the largest form of the individual stores ever seen. Scale is the crucial turning point for contemporary retailers. Size is essential to accommodate both large numbers of products and the large number of shoppers required to support the inflated inventory. To negotiate down the cost of items, retailers must purchase in larger and larger quantities. To support the inventory and per-item quantities, retailers require an abundance of space for shelving and overstock. Large quantities of products, in turn, imply droves of shoppers, wide aisles, etc. – further inflating the footprint of the retail space. The target number of shoppers for any one big-box is reflected in the scale of the parking provided.

Since opening its first store in 1962, Walmart has remained heavily dependent on personal automobile use. Every store in the United States has been both located and designed on the assumption that customers will drive. The availability and affordability of land coupled with distribution of population in Canadian and U.S cities has favoured the large-scale retail outlet on the suburban periphery. Moreover the paradigm of buying in bulk (and buying a large number of items in one place at one time) effectively necessitates a car. Even where it is possible to walk to a Wal-Mart or Sam’s Club, one would need to a car to cart home one’s purchases.

Outside of North America, however, things are different. When Walmart began expanding internationally, the standard big-box template could not always be applied. In China, for instance, Walmart stores have been built into a much finer grained urban and retail fabric. Stores are multi-level, accessible from public transit services and located within dense urban landscapes.⁵⁵

Neighbourhood Market in China

Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/walmart-store-fronts-china-2011-11/>

Parking for big box retailing has long been controversial. Despite the negative environmental impacts and unnecessary land consumption, surface parking lots continue to be a given for American retailing. In 1978, decades after the first enclosed mall appeared, futurist, visionary and leading architect of American consumer culture, Victor Gruen, recalled a visit to one of his old malls. He recoiled at “the ugliness...of the land-wasting seas of parking” surrounding it, and the soul-killing sprawl beyond.⁵⁶ In fact his first shopping center, surrounded by acres of parking, became a symbol of consumerism in America. It has been taken and even packaged with every subsequent form of retailing.

There have been, however, design alterations to Walmart stores, only in locations which land is a scarce resource. A Seiyu store in Japan, for example, uses roof-top parking as a strategy to accommodate motorists, a more conscientious use of land.

Seiyu Storefront in Japan

Source: <http://www.earthvision.net/2006/06/07/seiyu-storefront-japan/>

⁵⁵ Lecavallier, Jesse. “All Those Numbers: Logistics, Territory and Walmart.” *The Design Observer Group*. Observer Omnimedia © 2003-2012. Online: <http://www.designobserver.com/entries/all-those-numbers-101/>

⁵⁶ (Dery 12 Nov 2009)

2.4 Location

Location is a key consideration in the success of large, discount merchandisers. The strategy behind early Walmarts was to locate a dominant store amidst a constellation of small towns in order to capture a greater proportion of the local market. Given its success, Walmart expanded its locational strategy to include suburban areas surrounding larger cities.⁵⁷

A 1993 study by Kenneth Stone on the impact on Walmart on Iowa towns concluded that "the outlying small towns that do not have Wal-Mart stores were among the hardest hit. On average, the small towns within 20 miles of a Wal-Mart store suffered a cumulative 25% reduction of sales after five years."⁵⁸

At first it was very easy to build on rural land because it was less expensive and land could be purchased in large swaths. City centers are dense, something Walmart is not. Proposals have been made to incorporate Walmart into urban centres and only recently has the company introduced a condensed model, the *Neighbourhood Market*, which is approximately a tenth of the size of a traditional store.

Other retailers such as Loblaws and Canadian Tire have begun constructing large-scale stores in denser urban areas. The Loblaws store on the corner of Nelson Street and Rideau Street in Ottawa, ON, was built into the streetscape to respect the surrounding context. The store is pedestrian-oriented with close to no setback from the street. The store is not surrounded by acres of

⁵⁷ (Stone 16)

⁵⁸ (Stone 89)

parking like typical big-box stores; parking is contained within the building in a parking garage.

Figure 2 Loblaws Store at the corner of Rideau St and Nelson St
Ottawa, Ontario

Another example in Ottawa, is the new Canadian Tire store on Carling Avenue. The store is further away from Loblaws but has similar context of a denser commercial fabric. The store is constructed at the edge of the street, with smaller businesses (like Walmart) at either side of the store front. A parking garage is another component of the structure.

Figure 3 Canadian Tire store, Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario

Small towns, unlike larger urban centres, tend to shy away from the idea of big-box retailing in the downtown. Set aside the corporate strategy of luring consumers away from Main Street, the standard Walmart store would seem ill-suited for the town's infrastructure and overall historic character. There is an instinctive sense that large scale retailers are incompatible with small towns, even natural enemies. Small-scale retailing on Main Street and large-scale retailing on the periphery is the current paradigm of retailing.

If big-box stores are increasingly integrated into the existing streetscape of larger urban centers, who is it to say that large-scale retailing cannot be integrated into the smaller urban fabric of small towns? *Would the effects of mass merchandisers like Walmart be so detrimental to small towns if they were built into existing townscapes?* Perhaps the amalgamation of small and large retailers can help Main Street turn the tide.

While Main Street might want to remain Main Street, Big-Box may not be content to remain on the periphery of small towns. Walmart has adopted its format to further expand into city centers. Why not small towns?

This thesis will propose this, namely bringing large-scale retailing to Main Street. As a part an overall revitalization plan for downtown Pembroke, big-box will be integrated into a standard Main Street community. Pembroke, like many small towns, has fallen victim to big-box domination. The union of these vastly different scales of retailing will be explored with the goal of having competitors begin to complement each other.

CHAPTER THREE: Pembroke, Ontario

3. History of Pembroke

Pembroke is a small, historic community located along the Ottawa River about 100 miles northwest of Ottawa. While at its peak in the 1960s the city's population numbered close to 17,000, it is currently home to about 14,500 residents. Founded as a settlement town in 1828, Pembroke played an important role in the development of the surrounding Ottawa Valley and is the largest regional center between North Bay and Ottawa. Its major industries included lumber and, later, power generation. The city's historical significance and picturesque setting are very still much evident in its century-old buildings, architectural details and numerous outdoor murals.

3.1 Location

Comprising 14.35km², Pembroke is seat of Renfrew County. The city is surrounded by the municipality of Laurentian Valley and the Township of Petawawa, home to a major Canadian Forces Base, lies approximately 20 km to the east. Pembroke is located where the Indian and Muskrat Rivers meet the Ottawa River. Waterways have been major contributors to the city's infrastructure and have been aesthetically integrated into the cityscape.

Pembroke is serviced by all major transport routes within Renfrew County. The Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 17) runs parallel to the Ottawa River about 3 km south of downtown. The province of Quebec is also accessible across the water, via Highway #148. Pembroke is conveniently located between Algonquin Park and Whitewater country; two magnets that attract thousands of national and international visitors each year.⁵⁹

3.2 1828

The best known of Pembroke's early settlers was Peter White, a Scot from Edinburgh. In 1821, In search of a homestead in the Upper Ottawa region, White moved his family by canoe from Bytown (Ottawa) to the present site of Pembroke. The town was officially settled in 1828.

White's sons, Hon. Peter(Jr.) and A.T. White established lumber as the town's chief industry.(p.930) ⁶⁰ Other lumbermen joined the Whites in an area called Lowertown, or Lower Miramichi (later renamed Campbelltown), where the lumbering business was established. The community of Miramichi developed further west of Muskrat River. It was named for the Miramichi region in New Brunswick from which its settlers came.⁶¹

Pembroke Early Settlement

Source: Patterson, Jackie. *Pembroke: Glimpse into the Past*

⁵⁹ *Discover the Unique Cultural Heritage of Pembroke* The City of Pembroke.
<http://www.renfrewcountycanada.com/culture/heritage/index.html>

⁶⁰ Middleton, J.E., and Landon, F., *The Province of Ontario, A History*. Toronto: The Dominion Publishing Co., Ltd., 1927. (930)

⁶¹ Patterson, Jackie. *Pembroke: A Glimpse into the past*. Pembroke, Ont.: J. Patterson, 2008.(4)

3.3 Growth + Town Establishment

Alexander Moffat, another Scotsman, established Pembroke's first gristmill and dam in 1842, later becoming the town's first Postmaster. Most importantly, Moffat is credited for the layout of the village.⁶² He chose the name Moffatville for the land around the mouth of the Muskrat River. The area was later named Sydenham and finally in 1956 the entire area was joined and named Pembroke.⁶³

Moffatville

Source: Patterson, Jackie. *Pembroke: A Glimpse into the past.*

" By 1887 the town had reached a population of 4,500 and had become the major town of the area, having 70 stores doing an extensive wholesale and retail trade, seven churches, two banks, two telegraph offices, several insurance agencies, a grist mill, a flour mill, a woollen mill, two foundries, several saw mills, and a few wood-working factories." (p.25) ⁶⁴

On January 1st, 1971, the municipality became the City of Pembroke.⁶⁵

Over the years, the city has experienced fluctuations in population. The number of residents has fallen in the past thirty years with the gradual decline of the lumber industry. In recent years, however, Pembroke has experienced both population growth and new residential construction as a result of the expansion of CFB Petawawa. In 2011, Pembroke's population

⁶² Patterson

⁶³ "History of Pembroke" The City of Pembroke, 2012
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/city-hall/history-of-pembroke/>

⁶⁴ Morris, William A. *Pembroke, a Study of the Town and Its Industries.* Hamilton, Ont: McMaster U, 1956. (25)

⁶⁵ *Pembroke, Our City.* City of Pembroke. *Directory.* 1988 (4)

reached 14,360, a 3.1 % increase over the previous five years.⁶⁶

Like many cities in North America, Pembroke is laid out in relation to local geographical features. Street grids are oriented at different angles according to the curvature of the Ottawa River. The town expanded outward from Pembroke's main street, Pembroke Street, a former portage road. It was laid out to follow the banks of the Ottawa River as closely as possible.⁶⁷

(fig1.) The Town of Pembroke 1880-1882

(fig1.) Aerial view of Pembroke, Ontario 2009

⁶⁶ Statistics Canada. 2012. *Pembroke, Ontario (Code 3547064) and Ontario (Code 35) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released February 8, 2012. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?lang=f>

⁶⁷ (Morris 76)

Earlier downtown was divided into three zones moving south from the Ottawa River. The area between the river and the railroad was an industrial zone, the area between the railroad tracks and Pembroke Street (including Lake Street) was a commercial zone while the area to the south, beginning with Renfrew Street was residential. This area is easily distinguishable by a river terrace (heightened topographic area), located south of Pembroke Street. The use of land has changed over time. Presently, the land north of the railroad tracks is used for institutional and recreational purposes. The area north of Lake Street continues to support light industry including boat builders, welding and auto-repair shops, and wholesale warehouses.⁶⁸ Lake Street is less dense and more automobile-oriented than Pembroke St. The areas designated commercial and residential have remained unchanged.

The central retail area consists of five major blocks comprised of three- and four-storey buildings. With the exception of several institutional buildings, Pembroke's "Main Street" fabric is comprised of traditional mixed-use buildings incorporating commercial uses at grade. These are divided between retail establishments, restaurants, theatres, and banks. Upper floors are used for apartments and office space.

There is no one type of housing in Pembroke, but rather a mix of Victorian mansions, single-family homes, cottages, bungalows, low-rise apartments and condominiums. With a few exceptions the most architecturally significant residences are located east of the Muskrat River. The Muskrat River also

Pembroke Street West- Ulrich's on Main

source: by author

Victorian Mansion, Built in 19th century
Mackay St. / Alfred St. Pembroke, ON

source: by author

New Residential Construction
Sydeham Street Pembroke, ON

source: by author

⁶⁸ (Morris 80)

represents a kind of east-west demographic divide – the more prominent families having settled east of the river. New residential neighbourhoods have been constructed well east of downtown. These suburban enclaves are comprised of relatively large single-family houses on large lots. They are in close proximity to the Pembroke Mall and Walmart.

(fig .) Downtown Pembroke- Current Ground Plan 2011

(fig.) Downtown Pembroke- Current Ground Plan 2011- Major Roadways

(fig .) Downtown Pembroke- Early Land Uses

(fig .) Downtown Pembroke- Current Land Uses

3.4 Industry

Pembroke's primary industry was the retrieval and distribution of lumber, having become the center for the logging in the Ottawa Valley. In the early years of settlement Pembroke was classified as a 'mill-town'. As noted, first grist mill was built in 1843 by Alexander Moffat on the bank of the Muskrat River. Approximately twenty years later, he established the town's first woollen mill. In 1844, John Supple, from Armagh, Ireland, built the first saw mill on the east bank of the Muskrat River.⁶⁹

The city's industrial areas were divided into three major zones. The most heavily industrialized was the stretch of land along the river, north of downtown. The second site extended to the west end of the city where it was occupied by the Shook Mills and the Steel Equipment Company. The third area, used primarily for light industry, was along the banks of the Muskrat River south of Pembroke St.⁷⁰

3.4.1 Lumber

Since first being settled, Pembroke has been associated with lumber.

'At that time no licenses to cut timber were granted. The lumberman went into the woods, prospected and located his grove of pine, blazed the trees around it, marked the blazes with his initial, and starting his lumbering operations.'⁷¹ (p.3)

⁶⁹ (Patterson, 50)

⁷⁰ (Morris 87)

⁷¹ Morris, Desmond D. *Pembroke, Canada's Next City*. Pembroke, Ont: D.D. Morris, 1915. Print. (3)

Trees throughout the upper Ottawa Valley were cut and floated down the Ottawa River to the mills of Pembroke where they were sawn into lumber and sent onward to be used for construction and other forms of manufacturing.⁷²

Pembroke's ability to attract and support industry was due mostly to its location, plentiful resources and raw materials. Materials were easily accessible and transported along the Ottawa River. Industry further benefitted from coming of the locomotive in later nineteenth century. The Canadian Pacific Railway ran a line through the town, with tracks in close proximity to the waterfront and industrial sites. With the availability of rail, materials could be more efficiently and widely transported.

The Ottawa Journal of May 30th, 1955, states:

"for years in the early days of Pembroke, the town was almost solely dependent on the lumber industry and probably would never have survived, had it not been for the almost limitless natural forest resources practically on the doorstep."⁷³

The Colonial Lumber Co. Advertisement
Pembroke, ON

source: Morris, Desmond D.
Pembroke, Canada's Next City
Pembroke, Ontario, D.D. Morris, 1915, Print

⁷² (Morris 28)

⁷³ (Morris 27)

3.4.2 Pembroke Electric Light Company

In addition to lumber, power generation has been an important industry in Pembroke. The Pembroke Electric Light Company (PELC), established in 1884, was the first commercial power company in Canada. Power generated by water from the Muskrat River provided light to most of the stores and factories in town. The first plant was located along the Muskrat River just across from the present-day City Hall.⁷⁴ By 1956, the company supplied electricity to the Town of Pembroke, Camp Petawawa, Chapeau, Waltham, Fort Coulonge, and Allumette Island.⁷⁵

In 1967 the municipality purchased the distribution system and all 'in-town' assets, becoming the Pembroke Hydro Electric Commission. In 2000 Pembroke Hydro and surrounding hydro companies amalgamated to form the Ottawa River Power Corporation.⁷⁶ PELC's history is documented in the Pembroke Hydro Museum, located in the company's original diesel room at the corner of Pembroke St. West and Frank Nighbour St.

⁷⁴ "History of Pembroke" The City of Pembroke, 2012
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/city-hall/history-of-pembroke/>

⁷⁵ (Morris 47)

⁷⁶ "Pembroke Electric Light" Ottawa River Power Corporation, 2012
http://www.orpcorp.com/orpc/museum_history/electrical_light.html

3.4.3 Present Day

As a result of technological advancements and environmental restrictions, Pembroke's lumber industry has diminished in importance. The city's leading employer is now the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) in nearby Petawawa. The next leading industry is Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), headquartered approximately 40km west in Chalk River, ON. The AECL research and development laboratory employs over 1,900 administrative, trade, technical and scientific staff.⁷⁷ Recent investments and expansion of the Pembroke Regional Hospital and the French School Board have also increased local job opportunities in Pembroke, to a combined 1950 positions.⁷⁸

Local Industry	Product	Employees
CFB Petawawa	Armed Forces Base	5050 [4400 military]
AECL- Chalk River Laboratories	Research & Development	1939
Renfrew Cty. Board of Education	Public Schools	1200
Pembroke Regional Hospital	Regional Health Services	750
KI Pembroke	Steel Office Furniture	250
OLS Pembroke	Customer Lifecycle Solutions	305
Herb Shaw & Sons	Lumber, Poles, Piling	75
Commonwealth Plywood Plywood	Commonwealth Plywood Plywood	45

Figure 4 Pembroke Local Industry 2008

Source: City of Pembroke Economic Overview 2008, The City of Pembroke
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/economic-development/site-selection/economic-overview/>

⁷⁷ "History of Pembroke" The City of Pembroke, 2012
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/city-hall/history-of-pembroke/>

⁷⁸ "City of Pembroke Economic Overview 2008" The City of Pembroke
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/economic-development/site-selection/economic-overview/>

3.4.4 Retail

Downtown Pembroke has been a center for trade since the first general store was established in 1835 by Irish-born Daniel O'Meara. Pembroke Street, from Christie St. (w) to Mackay St.(e) is the town's traditional retail corridor. As noted, It consists of five blocks of attached buildings, filled with general and specialty shops.

Pembroke was a major market town for surrounding farmers. One of the earliest market squares was located southwest of Pembroke Street, at the corner of Christie and Mary Streets (the current site of a gas station). In 1889, the market moved to another location downtown and a new market building was constructed. This marketplace, located between Albert and Victoria Streets, operated for forty years until it closed in the mid-1930s because of the Depression.⁷⁹

The Farmers' Market was a key contributor to the local economy and one of Pembroke's biggest social centres. It was re-established in the 1950s-60s on Bennett Street (south of the city, just north Highway #17) then moved back downtown to Lake Street in the 1980s. In 1992 the market moved to its current location at the corner of Victoria and Lake Streets, close to where it originally began.⁸⁰ It opens every year on May 27th.

⁷⁹ Downtown Update , The Pembroke Business Improvement Area

⁸⁰ (PBIA)

In 1956, downtown Pembroke Street was the main retail area for all of Renfrew County:

"The retail function of Pembroke might be said to be fully developed, that is, there is nothing that retail stores of Pembroke do not provide to the inhabitants of the town and the retail trade of goods, plus the fact that it serves a trading area population of over 28,000, it is profitable for the merchants to carry a line of goods and a quality of goods which is abnormal for a town of this size and location near a larger center... The variety and class of goods offered for sale on the Main Street of Pembroke compete almost equally with any goods (excluding luxury goods) sold on Sparks Street in the city of Ottawa."⁸¹

Classification	No.	Sales
All stores total	152	15,740,400
Food and beverages group		
Total	59	4,775,400
Grocery & Combination	40	2,984,600
General merchandise group	6	1,472,300
Automotive group		
Motor vehicle dealers	7	2,556,900
Garages	3	137,600
Filling stations	7	387,600
Total	24	4,613,800
Apparel & accessories group	20	1,717,300
Building materials & hardware group	6	639,800
Furniture, appliances, radio & home furnishings	9	997,400
Drug & health appliances		
Total	6	425,300
Drug Stores	6	425,300
Second hand group	-	-
Other retail stores group	22	1,099,100

(fig) Retail Merchandise Trade, 1951

Figures shows the significance of the towns retail as contributor to the local economy and community

Source: 1951 Dominion Bureau of Statistics
Morris, William A.

⁸¹ (Morris 54)

New retail competition appeared in October 1973, when a new enclosed shopping mall was constructed just east of the Pembroke on the border with Laurentian Valley. The East End Mall was the first (and for a long period the largest) enclosed shopping mall in the Ottawa Valley.

(fig.) Plan of Retail Competition:
East and West End Malls (Grey) and Downtown (Orange)

Officially known as the Pembroke Mall, the shopping centre is a single-storey structure with a total gross leasable area of 214,427 sq. ft. The building can support up to 46 retail stores, 16,000 sq. ft. of office space and provides parking for more than a thousand automobiles. Larger anchor stores, about 25,000 sq. ft., are located at both ends of the centre. The mall is also the home to Pembroke's only functioning movie theatre, Algonquin Cinemas.

(fig.) Pembroke Mall Plan 2011

Only a few years after the construction of the Pembroke Mall, a second enclosed shopping centre opened west of downtown. Like its eastern counterpart, the West End Mall was constructed just inside the border with Laurentian Valley. The structure is more modest in size, with a retail space of 176,235 sq. ft. The West End Mall has fewer small businesses but large food and department store anchors. Situated directly off Pembroke Street, both malls are equally accessible to residents of Pembroke and surrounding municipalities.

In the 1970s the Ontario Government introduced a funding project to provide low-interest loans to municipalities for the purpose of upgrading downtowns, increasing parking areas and purchasing larger lots of land. The program was created in response to the deteriorating tax base in many Ontario downtowns caused by the rise in the number of shopping malls on their outskirts. Government funding gave struggling downtowns the means to compete with suburban retailers for new businesses.⁸²

Under this initiative cities would lease the land they'd acquired to developers for the purposes of new construction. Anticipating the negative impact its two enclosed shopping centers would have on retail activity downtown, the city partnered with the P. Richardson Development Group of North Bay and Group R from Toronto to construct a new enclosed shopping facility in the central business district. The new retail centre was to be located on the stretch of land between Lake St. and the CPR tracks; one block north of the main retail area on Pembroke St. spanning from

⁸² 'Pembroke Downtown Revitalization' *The City of Pembroke*. Pembroke Observer 11 Jan 1980

Pembroke Memorial Center (w) to the Muskrat River (e)
the new shopping centre was to include:

- A major department store, SEARS
- SEARS auto centre
- 35⁸³ stores and services
- 1200 surface parking spaces
- 760 covered parking
- spaces in a parking structure

The proposal included the widening and upgrading of Lake Street, including landscaped pedestrian walkways connecting Lake and Pembroke Streets and an enclosed pedestrian link over Lake St. to the Woolworths department store (present-day Giant Tiger). The design was intended to benefit downtown merchants with increased pedestrian traffic, parking, and Lake Street expansion. The project would have created over 650 jobs for residents, 350 of which would have been permanent.⁸⁴ The design was intended to bring 'new dimensions in shopping' to Pembroke. For better or worse, the project was never realized.

⁸³ Similar type of quality retailers in Ottawa's Bayshore Mall. Top stores will increase inflow of money and convenience; residents will refrain from travelling to Ottawa to shop. Better stores will increase retail competition from suburban shopping malls.

⁸⁴ 'Pembroke Downtown Revitalization' *The City of Pembroke*. Pembroke Observer 11 Jan 1980

DOWNTOWN PEMBROKE

TODAY

TOMORROW with SEARS

...at no cost to the taxpayer

Plan 1980

PICTURE YOURSELF HERE IN 1982!

- A FIRST LINE SEARS DEPARTMENT STORE
- TOP NATIONAL RETAILERS AND GOOD INDEPENDENT RETAILERS FOR IMPROVED SHOPPING
- FREE PARKING FOR OVER 1200 CARS
- IMPROVED TRAFFIC FLOW THROUGHOUT THE DOWNTOWN INCLUDING THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF LAKE STREET
- NEW AND BEAUTIFUL PEDESTRIAN WALKS CONNECTING PEMBROKE STREET WEST AND LAKE STREET
- 350 NEW PERMANENT JOBS
- NEW ATTRACTION FOR INDUSTRIES
- ALL AT NO COST TO THE TAXPAYER!

1980

Downtown Pembroke: Overhead View

on Plan 1980

3.5 1990: Fall of Main Street

Since enclosed malls appeared more than half a century ago, retailing in small towns across North America have struggled. While each scenario is different, all have one thing in common: consumers have moved on from Main Street.

Until the early 1970s, Pembroke Street was the area's primary retail centre; this changed in 1973 with the opening of the East End Mall. Downtown retailers suffered a further blow when the West End Mall opened a few years later. Not only did the malls accommodate large anchor stores but their smaller retailers competed directly with those on Main Street. These strategies/initiative were in addition to the efforts to open a mall downtown.

Merchants unable to meet the lower prices offered by larger retailers rely on their longstanding reputations, customer bases and personalized service to survive. When it noticed a drop of the number of shoppers on Pembroke St., the city established recovery and prevention programs to counteract the effects of the suburban retail outlets.

3.5.1 Pembroke Downtown Development Commission

Most established communities across Canada have created municipal organizations focused on the physical improvement and economic (re)development of their central business districts. These are commonly referred to as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

Managed by Business Improvement Associations, the City of Pembroke's BIA is called the Downtown Development Commission (PDDC).

The PDDC's promotional management board consists of local business and property owners and city staff. Together they organize, finance and carry out physical improvements and promotional business functions within the downtown core. The organization focuses on the area from McKay Street to Christie Street and Lake Street to Isabella Street.⁸⁵

(fig.) Pembroke Business Improvement Area

The goal of the organization is "to revitalize and maintain a dynamic local neighbourhood and to promote the area as a business or shopping destination, to maintain the market place, it is also to encourage both local residents and others to spend their shopping dollars within the local commercial district. Revitalization efforts and building maintenance create a cleaner, safer and more congenial atmosphere that benefits all local businesses."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ "About Historic Downtown Pembroke" Pembroke Downtown Development Commission, 2011 <http://www.downtownpembroke.ca/about/>

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Central business districts experience fluctuations as a result of changing economic and social trends. The failure of small businesses negatively affects the physical and commercial vitality of the downtown area. The PDDC works at stabilizing this environment, especially the maintenance and survival of its historical streetscape.

3.5.2 Heritage Canada Main Street Committee

In April 1991, the municipal council of the City of Pembroke endorsed the Heritage Canada Main Street Revitalization Program. When the program was approved in June 1991 the Pembroke Business Improvement Area partnered with Heritage Canada to form the Pembroke Main Street Committee. The organization uses a self-help approach to encourage the community to reach its economic, social, cultural and environmental potential. The program was active for a period of three years, ending March 31, 1994.⁸⁷

Community services and strategic planning were coordinated by Chairman, Ron Griffith. Within a year, a range of seminars and workshops were being offered to business owners on topics ranging from new business plans, budgets and advertisements to visual merchandising and restoration and renovation. The PBIA published a monthly newspaper, the 'Downtown Update', to involve the community and inform the public about the programmes and services being implemented in the city. Each issue listed community events, businesses joining and leaving the BIA, and included an insert entitled *Downtown Pembroke Past* to

Downtown Pembroke Past

One of the earliest photos available on downtown Pembroke, this picture most likely dates from the late 1870s. Subsequently, the street scene has changed so much that it is hardly recognizable. The large building in the center of the photo was later occupied by E. W. Gordon, a chemist dealing largely with lumber groups and, after extensive renovations, the Grand Hotel. The building was demolished in the early 1960s. Directly to the right of the photo, across the street, is the Pembroke Milling Company. One of the buildings along Pembroke Street was destroyed, most having been destroyed by fire. One that is still standing is the 14-story Tower, Adventure View, Hotel. The building which was a public structure until the early 1980s. The ground and four chimneys are to be seen peering over the rooftops. The domes visible in the right foreground belong to the Gathway Towers which was known at the time as the Mackay House.

Moving up to Randolph Street, the St. Columbkille Cathedral can be seen quite clearly. At the time it was a brand new building and it still looked like the fine stone which made it such a prominent feature of the Pembroke skyline today.

East of the cathedral is the Convent of Mary Immaculate, with the distinctive cupola covered with a statue of 175 monasteries removed during renovations in the early years of this century.

The first building on the site of the present is the First Church, built c. 1880 on lands donated by Alexander Moffat and the immediate predecessor of Christ United Church.

Dr. Moffat's office, at the time a residence of the Moffat family, was built c. 1880, being influenced since then the County Courthouse for many years.

Moving east along Randolph Street, the long low roof was Moffat's stable, replaced in 1910 by Victoria Hall, and, on the site of the library, the original Alexander Moffat home.

Downtown Pembroke Past Article

Source: Downtown Update, May 1989

⁸⁷ Heritage Canada Pembroke Main Street Committee. *The Heritage Canada Main Street programme means business...* Annual Report. Pembroke, Ontario, 1993.

educate residents on the history and evolution of Pembroke's downtown.⁸⁸

In support of the Pembroke BIA's mission to '...strive - together to improve the aesthetic looks of the area and through mutual efforts aim to achieve high ethical standards in business',⁸⁹ the Main Street Committee launched a façade improvement initiative. Storeowners were given access to professional consultations to identify possible improvements to building façades, including signage and painting.⁹⁰ The overall quality of the downtown is very important, especially when shoppers have alternatives. Because small downtown businesses cannot compete with big-box pricing, they depend on a unique shopping experience to encourage residents and tourists to spend money.

To encourage residents to shop downtown, the PBIA introduced 'PBIA Downtown Dollars'. The promotional dollars were to be used just as normal money, but could only be used within the BIA's designated area.⁹¹

I am interested in discussing:
____ Façade Improvements ____ Signage ____ Painting ____ All Items
Name: _____
Address: _____
City or town: _____
Phone: _____

alot

⁸⁸ (Heritage Canada Pembroke Main Street Committee)

⁸⁹ Pembroke Business Improvement Area. *Constitution for the Pembroke Business Improvement Area (PBIA)*. Document. Pembroke, Ontario, 1993.

⁹⁰ Heritage Canada Main Street Committee. *Invitation to PBIA Members and Building Owners*, 1993.

⁹¹ Downtown Update, Pembroke Business Improvement Area. Pembroke Ontario.

3.5.3 Pembroke Heritage Murals

Every small town has some form of character or tradition that makes it unique from others. Proudly expressed through outdoor art, Pembroke's heritage is displayed in over 28 murals painted throughout the downtown. The mural project, active for over a decade, was developed to attract tourists. The paintings depict important scenes and 'tell the story' of Pembroke's past. The murals are painted on the walls of many historic buildings by nationally renowned artists.⁹²

The PBIA explains:

*"The influx of tourists will provide a considerably higher profile for the city, and it will help build Pembroke as a center for the arts and artisans, and as a prime tourist destination. These activities will build a more vibrant downtown, and a more positive outlook among the city's residents and business persons. Murals won't change the downtown—they'll just make our blank walls look better - - but they'll highlight the history that's already there. We have learned that in other cities local residents are just as appreciative of murals as the tourists. The murals become an important part of the cityscape and a daily source of pride for the citizens of the community. Imagine walking around town and having these murals to look at."*⁹³

Swallow Walk

Source: Pembroke, Our City, City of Pembroke, Directory, 1988

Heritage Mural,
Pembroke Street/Prince Street

Source: by author

⁹² PBIA Downtown Update May 1990 p 1

⁹³ PBIA Downtown Update May 1990 p 1

The City expects a return on the investment, anticipating that the murals will help attract tourists:

"Ultimately, Pembroke will experience more commercial and industrial growth as tourism brings in yet more people. In fact, growth of tourism will build, and be further reinforced by economic growth of the Ottawa Valley as a whole."⁹⁴

However beautiful and informative, these murals have not cushioned the downtown from economic downturns, arguably the money would have been better spent on small business plans. The City of Pembroke has made a significant financial commitment the Pembroke Heritage Murals program, the annual budget for which is approximately \$20,000.

3.6 Current State of Affairs

Pembroke's Main Street continues to struggle, with approximately one third of the shops and businesses closed. Ongoing economic challenges couple with the recent appearance of big box stores (including Canadian Tire, Home Depot, and a Walmart Supercentre) at the city's eastern edge, have made things especially difficult for downtown retailers.

At first glance it appears that the finer grain of the historical downtown would be unable to accommodate the standard 200,000 square foot format of the typical big-box store. In Pembroke these retail mega stores were built just on the municipal boundary in Laurentian Valley, a township of Renfrew County. Not only do they not contribute to the city's

⁹⁴ PBIA Downtown Update May 1990

tax base, but they have lured shoppers away from downtown. Increasingly shoppers from Petawawa, Pembroke and surrounding municipalities in the Ottawa Valley rely on these larger stores for their shopping rather instead of Pembroke's downtown market.

At present, Pembroke's Business Improvement Area is in a state of abandonment and is rapidly decaying. The number of empty storefronts and 'FOR SALE' signs detracts from the potential charm of Main Street. It is shunned by a large percentage of consumers. Declining revenues mean that owners and commercial tenants lack the financial means to maintain their buildings. The neglect and abandonment of properties, especially storefronts, has put a number of structures at risk to the point that they have needed to be demolished. The growing number of empty lots, in turn, erodes the area's primary appeal, namely its unique 'sense of place'.

Figure Pembroke Street, Oct 2011 *Storefront Vacancies*

*downtowns do across North America when mall development happened."*⁹⁶

Unfortunately little of the new construction in the city in the past three years has occurred within the Business Improvement Area. New construction has been largely directed to the city's aging population rather than youth or younger families. Because the greater part of the population is over the age of 45, the city has focused development on hospitals, retirement homes and churches. Pembroke alone has twenty-six churches and seven retirement and care homes. A combined \$81,000, 000 was spent on the expansion of Pembroke Regional Hospital and the construction of Miramichi Lodge Retirement Home, both situated outside the core.⁹⁷

The lack of investment in the downtown core is abetting the growing number of vacant lots. While limited parking was once a problem in downtown Pembroke, now parking lots have all but taken over. Ironically, while the lack of parking was once a reason to avoid shopping downtown, there are now many more parking spaces than places to shop.

Downtown Pembroke Parking

Source: PBIA

⁹⁶ Algonquin expands in Pembroke and Perth. *Ottawa Business Journal*.
<http://www.obj.ca/Other/Archives/2008-11-19/article-2281264/Algonquin-expands-in-Pembroke-and-Perth/> 19 Nov 2008

⁹⁷ *City of Pembroke Economic Overview December 2008*, City of Pembroke. © 2012
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/economic-development/site-selection/economic-overview.w/>

Jane Jacobs, renowned urban planning critic and author of *Downtown is for People*, emphasizes on the importance of small businesses for the downtown economy:

*"We are apt to think of big cities as equalling with big enterprises, little towns as equalling with little enterprises. Nothing could be less true. Big enterprises do locate in big cities, but they find small towns as congenial. Big enterprises have great self-sufficiency, are capable of maintaining most of the specialized skills and equipment they need, and they have no trouble reaching a broad market. But for the little specialized enterprise, everything is reversed; it must draw on supplies and skills outside of itself; its market is so selective it needs exposure to hundreds of thousands of people. Without the centralized city it could not exist; the larger the city, the greater not only the lumber, but the proportion of small enterprises."*⁹⁸

3.6.1 Effects of 2008

The recession of 2008 affected many regions of Canada, including Pembroke. The forestry sector was severely injured by a drop in global demand. Pembroke's local lumber industries, Commonwealth Plywood, Smurfit MBI and ATC panels all experienced layoffs and closures.

⁹⁸Jane Jacobs 'Downtown is for people'. The Exploding Metropolis Garden FORTUNE . City, N.Y. : Doubleday, 1958 (147)

3.6.2 'Agglomerated Pembroke'

The new retail development in 'Agglomerated Pembroke' (Pembroke and Laurentian Valley) is a leading contributor to the current decline of the Business Improvement Area. The organized collection of big-box stores began over a decade ago with the arrival of Walmart. Deemed controversial from the start, the development raised additional concerns when the store proposed an expansion.

In 2008, the city and PDDC opposed a proposed expansion of the standard size Walmart store to a larger Supercenter. The retailer applied to add an additional 70,000 sq. ft. to its 108,000 sq. ft. store. Concerns were raised about the impact of additional motorists roads and the effect of additional retail space on local merchants. Because the proposed expansion included a grocery store, local supermarkets feared they would be put out of business.

Pembroke Mayor Ed Jenko stated:

*"It's a pity when a municipality is in close proximity with other municipalities, they don't work more closely to ensure major planning issues don't adversely affect the neighbours."*⁹⁹

After a five week hearing, the city reached a compromise with the retailer. Walmart agreed to limit its expansion to 46,000 sq. ft., of which the grocery department would be no larger than 38,000 sq. ft. Walmart also agreed to make a \$50,000 contribution to a community initiative benefiting the downtown core and to partner with the Pembroke Downtown

⁹⁹ "City Challenges Wal-Mart approval: Appealing Laurentian Valley's decision to allow expansion." *Peterborough Examiner* 2008

Development Commission to construct a sign on its property promoting the downtown.¹⁰⁰

In the last decade, Wal-Mart has been joined by a number of other superstores including Canadian Tire, Home Depot, Boston Pizza, the Brick, Reitman's, Staples, Shoppers Drug Mart, and Value Village. Most retailers are part of a growing *Smart Centre* development, which currently occupies fifteen acres with a combined retail area of over 400,000 sq. ft. The largest anchor after Walmart is Canadian Tire. The site has two national tenants, Boston Pizza and Reitman's.¹⁰¹

(fig.) Smart Centre in Pembroke, Ontario

Note. A&P is not part of the development, but an anchor store in the Pembroke Mall. Source: smartcentres.com

These big-box developments have furthered the flow of cash out of downtown. The retail growth has turned Pembroke into a car-dependant community and has fuelled tensions between small businesses and large corporations.

¹⁰⁰ Uhler, Stephen 'Wal-Mart OK- city' *The Daily Observer* Oct 2008

<http://www.thedailyobserver.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?archive=true&e=2120145>

¹⁰¹ Smartcentres.com 2011 http://www.smartcentres.com/site_summary/loadflash.html

3.7 Current City Initiatives + New Development

Similar issues of consumer decentralization challenge most towns, especially the rapid growth of competitive big-box stores located outside traditional business districts. The ongoing changes in consumer behaviour and shopping architecture have put Main Street planning at a disadvantage.

Susan Ellis, Manager of the Economic Development, Recreation and Tourism department stated in 2011:

*"The only constant change here is change - downtowns evolve... all across North America. (Pembroke) is ready for some significant changes."*¹⁰²

The City of Pembroke and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) are working together to develop a new Downtown Revitalization Strategy. OMAFRA's *First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE)* program was developed to educate (rural) communities about their strengths and challenges. Created by the Ontario Government in 2005, FICE uses a different approach than Heritage Canada's Main Street Program, drawing on the 'first impressions' conveyed by outsiders (i.e., information gathered from visitors) to promote changes and improvements.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Catherine Lathern, *Pembroke wants to attract people back downtown*. Bell Media 2012
http://ottawa.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110912/OIT_pembroke_downtown_110912/20110912?hub=OttawaHome

¹⁰³ 'About FICE' Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.
<http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/fice/fice-about.htm> © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 10 January 2012

One of three versions of FICE programs (and the strategy selected for Pembroke) is the *First Impression's Full Picture*. This program is designed as a "comprehensive guide" for visitors to evaluate all aspects of the city from (city) entrances, housing, education health services, businesses and environment, etc.¹⁰⁴ OMAFRA's involvement is critical in understanding issues that may not be obvious from a resident's point of view. To date, however, no development or major changes have resulted from the FIFP initiative or the resulting Downtown Revitalization Strategy.

Communities in Bloom is a national civic pride and beautification program. The program has encouraged community involvement in the beautification of the city of Pembroke. Volunteers create street banners and flower displays throughout the city. Pembroke was named "the prettiest little city in Ontario" after earning four blooms in the provincial competition in 2001. Three years later, the city competed at the national level and earned five blooms, the highest bloom ranking possible, with 82 points or more.¹⁰⁵

The *Communities in Bloom* project has been very successful in raising the aesthetic profile of the city, and has helped camouflage vacancies and neglected properties. Rather than addressing the larger issues at play, however, the initiative helps hide them.

¹⁰⁴ "About FICE" Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.
http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/fice/fice_about.htm © Queen's
Printer for Ontario, 10 January 2012

¹⁰⁵ Pembroke: the heart of the Ottawa Valley Community Profile

The city's only major downtown initiative is a new Algonquin College Campus being constructed on the waterfront. The college established a branch campus in Pembroke in 1967, located east of the PBIA district on the corner of Pembroke Street East and Peter Street. Geographically, the current facility lies on the border of downtown where the business district devolves into a drive-in commercial strip. The facility is small and can only accommodate a limited number of students and programmes. The new campus has the potential to make a significant impact on the city.

3.7.1 *Renaissance Square-* New Algonquin College Campus

Pembroke's younger residents frequently leave the city for further education or work opportunities because of the limited selection of courses and jobs in the Ottawa Valley. *Renaissance Square*, Algonquin's College expanded Campus, is scheduled to open in fall of 2012, will accommodate a greater number of students and programs.

Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley (ACOV) is an engine of economic growth. In the fiscal year 2004-2005, a total of 1797 full-time and 'continuing education' students attended the college. Close to 84% of these students pursued careers in the region post-graduation, contributing to the local economy. It is estimated that Renfrew County's present-day workforce has benefitted from some 853,000 credit hours of combined ACOV training.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ *Economic Impact of Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley*, CCbenefits, Inc.
May 17, 2006

The new campus is a design-build project undertaken by the Giffels Corporation and NORR Ltd. architects, engineers and planners. The facility is four storeys and over 100,000 square feet. The facility includes classrooms, offices, computer labs, automotive shops, nursing simulation labs, science labs and a "learning commons" comprising a main library, study halls, study rooms and an information technology group. The complex will accommodate a total 1,016 full-time students. The campus will also have supplementary student-run facilities that include a lounge and gymnasium.

Renaissance Square is a certified LEED gold building with high efficiency mechanical systems and a high performance envelope. The college also has a unique sustainable element, a constructed wetland that runs along the south side of the building with rainwater harvesting and day-lighting strategies.¹⁰⁷

Figure 6 New Algonquin College- Architectural Renderings
Source: algonquincollege.com

¹⁰⁷ Williams, Patricia. "Construction starts on \$29-million Algonquin College campus in Pembroke, Ontario." *Daily Commercial News and Construction Record* 11 May 2011. Online: http://www.dcnonline.com/article/q444311?search_terms=Algonquin+College+new+Building.

The contemporary aesthetic of the building complements that of nearby Miramichi Lodge. While significantly different than the traditional 19th century architecture in the adjacent business district, the structure is respectful of its surroundings and of Pembroke's history. The use of wood is significant to the lumber industry and reinforces the building's environmental aspirations.

The L-shaped complex is located between the waterfront and the former Canadian Railway Lines, a block north of Lake Street. A long curved band of surface parking runs between the tracks and the building. The complex has been strategically designed to be adapted for future expansion.¹⁰⁸

3.7.2 Petawawa - CFB expansion

The Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa is the largest employer in the Ottawa Valley with approximately 5,000 soldiers and 900 civilians. About 60% of soldiers live off-base in surrounding communities including Petawawa and Pembroke. Only 10km west of CFB, Pembroke the closest and most developed regional center. The recent return of troops stationed in Afghanistan has fuelled new growth in Petawawa and surrounding communities.¹⁰⁹

Comparable to the economic boom after WWII, Petawawa is expanding. In 2011, Petawawa's population reached 15,988, a 9.1 percent increase

¹⁰⁸ (Williams)

¹⁰⁹ Butler, Don. 'In booming Petawawa, no sign of postwar slowdown'. *Post Media News* 27 February 2012
<http://www.canada.com/booming+Petawawa+sign+postwar+slowdown/6217474/story.html>

over the 2006 figure.¹¹⁰ According to Petawawa's Mayor Bob Sweet, the city's population is expected to grow to about 19,000 by the year 2020.

Along with returning soldiers, the base will expand to accommodate additional military personnel. The new Canadian Fleet of fifteen Chinook Helicopters will be based in CFB. Once in full operation, the squadron will bring 400-500 soldiers and their families to Petawawa and surrounding areas. The military foresees an \$835 million investment in new buildings and infrastructure between now and 2020.¹¹¹

Unlike Pembroke, the town of Petawawa does not have an established downtown. Don Butler describes Petawawa Boulevard, the main arterial, as 'nondescript array of strip malls, convenience stores and fast food outlets with a shortage of stores and services'.¹¹² Most residents make a twenty-minute drive to Pembroke to shop. Nevertheless, there are new plans for a 350,000 square foot shopping center to be built in 2013, which could both deter residents from making out-of-town trips and affect some businesses in Pembroke.¹¹³

While needing to address competition from large-scale retailers in the Laurentian Valley, downtown Pembroke is also in a unique position to benefit from regional growth. The question is how.

¹¹⁰ Statistics Canada. 2012. *Petawawa, Ontario (Code 3547076) and Ontario (Code 35) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released February 8, 2012. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 29, 2012).

¹¹¹ (Butler)

¹¹² (Butler)

¹¹³ (Butler)

CHAPTER FOUR: Future Vision :
Bridging BIG BOX:
Small City master plan

4. Introduction

The design portion of this thesis proposes a new master plan for downtown Pembroke. The goal is attract retail activity into the city's Business Improvement Area (BIA) and, in particular, to the city's Main Street (Pembroke Street). Having struggled for decades, the paucity of commercial activity in the BIA is evident in the decaying and disappearing townscape and in the number of failed businesses. Downtown Pembroke has fallen victim to competition from retailers on the periphery, most recently from superstores in adjacent municipalities.

The proposed plan will address policies, incentives, infrastructure and sustainable design. When considering new approaches to infill, respect for existing buildings and blocks structure is key to leveraging the community's well-established 'sense of place'. The focus will be on bridging the gap between big-box retailing on the periphery and the small-scale retail fabric in the downtown core. The integration of larger commercial retailers into the core will provide economic stability and attract pedestrian traffic to the central business district. While downtown big-box may be an unconventional proposition where traditional Main Street revitalization programs are concerned, the goal is to retrofit the retail infrastructure of Pembroke's Business Improvement Area to meet the needs of

present day consumers without sacrificing the character of its historic fabric.

Of particular interest is the need to attract a more diverse demographic, specifically youth and young families. It's important to create new employment and lifestyle opportunities for residents. Author Derek Gregory notes that urban revitalization "changes not only the physical form of the urban environment but also transforms the image of the city – the way in which it is perceived and experienced, and the psychological and emotional relationships between humans and urban places" (p.51).¹¹⁴ Crucial to the redevelopment of Pembroke is to change image of the city, coloured by the current state of disinvestment, emptiness and deterioration.

The renewal plan for Pembroke deploys five strategies to encourage growth. Adaptability is crucial in assuring the future success of the downtown area.

¹¹⁴ Gregory, D. *Ideology, Science and Human Geography*. New York: St. Martins. 1978.
in Holcomb, H. Briavel, and Robert A. Beauregard. *Revitalizing Cities*.
Washington, D.C: Association of American Geographers, 1981.

4.1 Factors | Masterplan

With the goal of augmenting the vitality of downtown Pembroke while respecting both its historical character and grain, I have identified five key initiatives: 1) the introduction of big box retail, 2) a new recreation and convention centre, 3) student housing, 4) mix-use residential development geared to young families, and 5) better connections through the city – especially between Pembroke St. and the waterfront. Each of these is future-conscious, in support of new generations of residents and new approaches to building. My proposed initiatives coincide with the construction of the new Algonquin College Campus in downtown Pembroke and the growth of the Canadian Forces Base in nearby Petawawa.

Like most revitalization schemes, the goal is to draw residents and visitors downtown. In addition to pedestrian traffic, this project aims to create new interest, engage the community by offering new activities for residents, reduce disincentives (e.g., lower taxes) and promote new investment in the Business Improvement Area. Author Charles Sutton states that “nothing is going to ensure the rejuvenation of downtown so much as the return of the middle and upper classes as shoppers, users, and residents.” (p. 30) ¹¹⁵

The large parcels of vacant land within the Pembroke Business Improvement Area will be the initial area of focus. Particular attention will be given to Pembroke

¹¹⁵ Sutton, c. 1980 “creative Financing Gives long beach a head start,” planning 46,8: 12-5. in Holcomb, H. Briavel, and Robert A. Beauregard. *Revitalizing Cities*. Washington, D.C: Association of American Geographers, 1981. Print.

Street (from the Pembroke Memorial Center to the current City Hall), and to the same portions of Lake and Renfrew Streets – one block north and south of Pembroke St. respectively. With a focus on pedestrian movement, vacant lots must be used for more than just excess surface parking. Furthermore, the new program must appeal to tourists, which are contributors to the local economy. Programs that address year round usage would be most appropriate.

The City of Pembroke Official Plan identifies the downtown as the Central Commercial (CC) Area. In section 4.3, the Plan states that the CC should comprise a mix of commercial, residential and Institutional uses, which together promote a people-oriented, healthy and vibrant community core. Architectural heritage and visual landmarks are to be preserved and improved. The Official Plan recognizes that the improvement of commercial façades, the conservation and renewal of the building stock, streetscaping and beautification measures, and the improving parking all encourage the development of people places.¹¹⁶ These factors will be taken into consideration when formulating a vision of the downtown Pembroke.

Pembroke's downtown fabric has eroded over the years creating a number of voids in the streetscapes. The current ground plan demonstrates the areas most affected, namely between Christie and Alexander St. Of the dense aggregation of commercial buildings that once occupied this lot, only a few remain; most lost are vacant and/or used as parking. The vast amount of asphalt opens the way for new construction

¹¹⁶ City of Pembroke Official Plan 2008 "The City of Pembroke, 2009
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/userfiles/file/official%20plan/2227bPembrokeOfficialPlanAdopted.pdf>

downtown. The portion of land north of Pembroke Street between Alexander and Christie Sts. will be the site of the first phase of development.

New development will be comprised of a series of commercial, recreational and residential infill projects. In the first phase, the commercial development will include 1) new big box retail on the two lots of land between Alexander St. and Frank Nighbour St., 2) a re-located Farmers' Market on a lookout point between the Pembroke Memorial Centre and the Hydro Museum, and 3) small-to-medium infill projects along Pembroke Street West to restore the image of the street.

The parcel of land on which the PMC sits (excluding Ottawa River Power and the Hydro Museum) will be significantly intensified. Among the proposed buildings are including a convention facility, expanded recreational infrastructure and a parking garage.

Phase One will also include a number of different residential projects. New single-family homes and family-friendly row houses will share a new private laneway, on the north side of Lake St. between Alexander and Frank Nighbour Sts. A thin strip of land on the south of Lake St, (extending to the expanded PMC) will accommodate row house-style student housing and condominiums.

The second phase of the master plan will focus on the area from Alexander St. to Victoria St. It will also include commercial, residential and institutional infill projects.

The corner lots where both Albert and Victoria streets meet Lake Street will be redeveloped with big box retail. Surrounding vacancies will be in-filled with other forms of commercial development or retail.

The site currently occupied by the Farmers' Market, on the corner of Victoria St. and Lake St. will accommodate a new hotel to serve visitors and tourists in downtown Pembroke.

The second phase will continue the residential development (single-family and row homes) on adjacent lots between Alexander and Albert Streets. This will complete a residential 'corridor' in the downtown, changing the face of Lake Street from industrial uses and strip centers to a residential boulevard.

Depending on the success and potential future expansion of Algonquin College, the area between Frank Nighbour and Christie (south of the tracks, north of Lake Street) will be the site of student dormitories. This development will add to the importance of Frank Nighbour St as a significant student-oriented connection between the waterfront and Pembroke St.

Commercial
 Recreational | Institutional
 ■ Residential

- BIG BOX
- Farmers' Market
- Commercial Infill

Recreation | Convention Centre
Accomodation

PHASE ONE

4.2 BIG BOX

Unlike typical Main Street Revitalization programs, whose focus is on re-purposing heritage buildings and are largely driven by community involvement, this project will introduce new buildings into the central business district. Leveraging the abundance of vacant lots, the plan proposes space for larger 'big box' retailers between Pembroke and Lake streets. This area, spanning between Frank Nighbour Street and Alexander Street, will be referred to as *Main Street's backyard*.

Figure Downtown Plan- Big Box Selected Site- Phase One
"Main Street's Backyard"

4.2.1 SITE + Surrounding Context

Running one block north of Pembroke St., Lake Street has long functioned as a bypass route for motorists. Like much of the automobile-oriented development that appeared after WWII, businesses along Lake St. occupy simple roadside buildings encircled by parking. The land between Lake St. and the CPR tracks was formerly an industrial site. The city's bus terminal was

later built on the portion of land east of Alexander Street.

Figure 1 Site Plan - Lot A - Lot B

LOT A - Frank Nighbour Street to Agnes Street

Over the years, LOT A (see image above) was occupied by several small- to medium-size buildings, which have since been removed. Today, two medium-size buildings occupy the north section of the block. While the architecture is of no historical significance; three murals have been painted the Ontario Provincial Police Station on the corner of Agnes and Lake Sts.

The most significant feature of the block is the First Presbyterian Church. The church sits at the corner of Frank Nighbour and Pembroke Street with a large area of green space to the east. This area was the former site of Pembroke's Grand Theatre, also known as the O'Brien Theatre. The building was demolished in the late 1990s.

LOT B - Agnes Street to Alexandra Street

The site was previously used by the Thomas Pink Company, a foundry famous for producing lumbering and agricultural tools. The company's building was built in 1918 to replace an earlier structure destroyed by fire. The foundry sat across the street from the Woolworths Department Store (currently the Giant Tiger) until the foundry moved to Southern Ontario. The site was later occupied by a Canadian Tire store that was destroyed by fire in the early 1970s.¹¹⁷ There are no records of properties being constructed on the site following the fire. The land was purchased in 1978 by the Pembroke Parking Authority¹¹⁸ and continues to be used as parking for downtown shoppers (primarily serving the Giant Tiger store on the southeast corner of Alexandra and Lake Sts). Records indicate that buildings once occupied the western edge of Lot B, fronting Agnes. A modest portion of the east side, however, is used by St. Jean Flooring. The shed building it occupies has no heritage significance and does not contribute to Pembroke's streetscape.

Figure 7 View of Giant Tiger Parking lot, looking towards Pembroke Street

In the past year, LOT B has been further enlarged as a result of the demolition of the headquarters of the Pembroke Daily Observer. More surface parking has been added.

¹¹⁷ PBIA Downtown Update Oct 1993

¹¹⁸ Jankowski, Paul. 'Pembroke Council Critical of some buy-sell policies' *Ottawa Citizen* 7 Jun 1978

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=L0yAAAAI8AJ&sjid=A4FAAAI8AJ&dq=pembroke%20canadian%20tire%20downtown&pg=3690%2C3074504>

Woolworths
Closed in 1972,
after 20 years
of business in
Canada
http://www.woolworths.com

The remaining retail blocks face Pembroke Street with no setbacks. To the rear they face the parking lot. The block of commercial buildings is divided by an alleyway, through which the vacant portions of the block can be easily accessed. Facing Pembroke St. in this block is the Centre Theatre. While vacant for decades its deco facade contributes to the character of the street.

4.2.2 WHY BIG BOX?

Since World War II, the rate of consumerism has exploded. This could explain the continuous changes in consumer habits and shopping architecture. An increase in the number of products available, coupled with a general reduction in prices due to changes in manufacturing, retailing and distribution, have resulted in the availability of more styles and variations of products than ever before. Furthermore, the price reductions associated with big-box retailing allows/encourages shoppers to purchase more. As Walmart's slogan states: "Save Money. Live Better."

"Shopping is an important part of 'American' life" says Dell Dechant, a religious professor at the University of South Florida. "We are not workaholics, but shopaholics who work so we can consume. Even during economic downturns, American's shop, particularly, special occasions, because the associated activities and rituals make us feel good." ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ (Dono, Glisson 104)

To better understand the changes within Pembroke's district, it is essential to understand why residents have chosen the larger big box retailers versus smaller merchants.

Why is Walmart so successful in Pembroke?

As Walmart is not necessarily more accessible to area residents than other retail locations, location alone cannot be the answer. Residents from Petawawa and Pembroke's west end must drive through the city centre to reach the store. Nor is "one-stop shopping" the reason. Downtown merchants offer similar types of products and businesses, albeit in separate buildings. The amount of walking required to shop in a standard 200,000 sq. ft. superstore is equivalent to that required for downtown shopping. An average small business is 2,000 sq. ft, therefore, the size of the Walmart is comparable to one hundred Main Street merchants. Also, the acres of parking at the front of a superstore demands further walking.

Figure 8. Aerial view of big box development (left) and the Pembroke Main Street district (right).

Source: smartcentres.com

The most obvious reason for the success of the superstore is the lower prices of products. Residents in the Pembroke area are financially dependent on this type of retailer. Average salaries tend to be 10 to 20 percent lower than those in other parts of Ontario. The

average disposable income per household is about \$38,181, with a flexible spending income (minus food and shelter) of \$11,524.¹²⁰ In other words, due to the financial constraints and limited purchasing power, product pricing figures significantly in residents' decisions about where to shop.

Smaller businesses are unable to match big-box price tags for many reasons. Property taxes in downtown districts are higher than those in rural areas. Also, modest-sized businesses are restricted from large stock orders, which are generally cheaper. Pembroke and surrounding municipalities rely on mass merchandisers and the downtown marketplace depends on residents and downtown consumers.

4.2.3 Logistics

Pembroke is in need of both physical and economic revitalization. This type of renewal can be achieved by adjusting to consumer demands within the market area.¹²¹ Holcomb and Beauregard, authors of *Revitalizing Cities*, state:

'The most common component of revitalization is the shopping facility. A commercial focus will attract shoppers into the CBD and thus, allow the city to compete with outlying suburban shopping malls.' (p. 28)¹²²

The most appropriate solution, in this case, is to incorporate the big-box development into the core. It is very uncommon to find large-retailers on Main Street. For many reasons – mostly corporate strategy, land cost, accessibility, and lack of space – big-boxes are

¹²⁰ Pembroke: The Heart of the Ottawa Valley: Community Profile (23)

¹²¹ (Holcomb, Beauregard 34)

¹²² (Holcomb, Beauregard)

most often found on the periphery. Because of the growing number of voids in downtown, however, Pembroke's CBD can support larger-floor-plate retailers. The vacant lots downtown are ideal for future commercial development.

Pembroke's Business Improvement Area is within 40 km of 72,400 residents. Its retail pull factor is five times greater than that of surrounding regions. With retail sales 128% above the national average¹²³, Pembroke's clientele can support a new retail facility.

The new big box will act as a catalyst for economic stability and encourage traffic in the central business district. Integrating larger mass merchandisers in the commercial core will level the playing field and encourage sensible competition with small businesses.

4.2.1 Design

Since Pembroke is comprised of many historic and architecturally significant buildings, the new design must respect the cultural context of the townscape. It must meet the targets and regulations that the city has set for redevelopment. The Official Plan states that change within the central commercial area should respect the massing, profile and character of adjacent and nearby buildings and landscapes (especially if they are heritage), should maintain the average height, profile and setbacks of existing buildings, should increase parking whenever possible, should be compatible with adjacent land uses in terms of the scale, intensity and type of use. It also states that all

¹²³ Pembroke: The Heart of the Ottawa Valley: Community Profile (21-22)

areas not occupied by buildings and parking areas should be landscaped.¹²⁴

As proposed, the commercial components of the master plan will adhere to the guidelines and respect the surrounding context. More importantly, redeveloped parcels will maximize the use of available land to restore continuity within the streetscape.

This thesis explores design strategies to bridge between big box and Main Street. The standard suburban store will be reinterpreted, and used as a model of retail architecture. The new design will reverse many of the undesirable qualities associated with megastores by introducing more natural light, decreasing the visual impact of parking and rescuing it from placelessness.

4.2.2 P r e c e d e n t s

As a key component of this project is large-scale retailing on Main Street, it is important to look at precedent, many of which exist as proposals. Because this project uses Walmart as the standard reference for big-box stores, it is helpful to look at proposals involving new Walmart store designs.

The section examines projects in three categories: 1) Big-box into the urban context, 2) Mixed-use developments incorporating big-box and residential, and 3) the reinterpretation of big-box architecture.

The first example is the proposed Urban Walmart in Washington, DC. The project is a five-storey mixed use building built on four-acre site on the corner of First

¹²⁴ * City of Pembroke Official Plan 2008 * The City of Pembroke, 2009 (40)
<http://www.pembrokeontario.com/userfiles/file/official%20plan/22276PembrokeOfficialPlanAdopted.pdf>

and H Sts, a few blocks from the Capitol. Small shops line H Street with a 76,000 sq. ft. Walmart on the second floor. The building includes underground parking and over 300 apartments on four levels. The design includes three major residential amenities; two internal courtyards and a dramatic pool deck and lounge in the southwest corner above the Walmart Anchor Store.¹²⁵ The exterior is unlike any Walmart. It is urban, and pedestrian-friendly. The brick façade is broken up by piers and mullions.¹²⁶ The new Urban Walmart in DC, is one of the leading positive, environmentally and contextually conscious designs of big-box retail. The project is one of six Walmart stores to be constructed in urban Washington neighbourhoods. The project is schedule for completion in 2014.

Figure 9 New urban Walmart in Washington, DC.
Source: <http://newurbandesigner.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Urban-DC-Walmart.jpg>

¹²⁵ Mixed Use Projects: 77 H ST, NW. MV+A Architects. ©Mushinsky Voeltzke Associates. 2012
<http://www.mva-arch.com/projects/mixed-use/mu4.html>

¹²⁶ Abrams, Amanda. The Wal-Mart Effect, DC Style. *Urban Turf: the DC Real Estate Guide*. © UrbanTurf LLC. 8 Dec 2010
http://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/the-wal-mart-effect_dc_style/2746

The second example is a mixed-use development in Vancouver, British Columbia called the RISE. The building is divided between retail on the ground and first floor levels and residential on the upper floors. The project is described by its parameters as a 'Contemporary Urban Village.' It includes 90 urban-inspired townhouses and condominiums varying from SkyFlats, Garden Homes and View Lofts. The residential portion also includes a fitness facility and a 20,000 sq. ft. green roof that serves as a park and community garden.¹²⁷

The residences sit atop 212,000 sq. ft. of retail space. This retail area accommodates a Starbucks, a 'Save on Foods' grocer, a Home Depot and a Winners|Homesense store. The development also incorporates sustainable design elements which use 31% less energy, 67% less potable water and generate 52% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than standard buildings.¹²⁸ The RISE is located near downtown Vancouver, minutes from the new Olympic Village and Granville Island.

The RISE green roof + community garden space

Source: (Takemato, Neil 16 Nov 2009)

Figure 10 The RISE Vancouver, Storefront Vancouver, BC
Source: (Takemato 16 Nov 2009)

¹²⁷ THE RISE Vancouver. SDM Realty Advisors. 2012

<http://www.therisevancouver.com/index.html>

¹²⁸ Takemato, Neil. 'Living above the big box'. Cooltown Studios: The official Blog for crowdsourced placemaking. 16 Nov 2009

<http://www.cooltownstudios.com/site/living-above-the-big-box>

The final example is important for the re-interpretation of big-box architecture. This thesis proposal attempts to incorporate large-scale retail in a traditional Main Street context, it is appropriate to look at proposals that depart from the standard suburban model. The project is called 'Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart.' It was developed by a design studio at the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC). The studio undertook typological investigations of a Walmart store, with a goal to develop "community-based design solutions that are ecologically, socially, and economically responsive to this recent form of urbanism."¹²⁹

The challenge was to combine the public realms and with the shopping methods used by discount retailers. The studio developed a site transect, consisting of "eco-tones" (transition areas between two ecological communities).¹³⁰

Design Perspectives Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart.

Source: University of Arkansas Community Design Center
<http://uacdc.uark.edu/project.php?project=24>

Design Perspectives Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart.

Source: University of Arkansas Community Design Center
<http://uacdc.uark.edu/project.php?project=24>

Figure 11 Design Perspectives Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart.
 Source: 'Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart' University of Arkansas Community Design Center <http://uacdc.uark.edu/project.php?project=24>

¹²⁹ 'Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart' University of Arkansas Community Design Center
<http://uacdc.uark.edu/project.php?project=24>

¹³⁰ 'Big Box Urbanism: Study for Walmart' University of Arkansas Community Design Center
<http://uacdc.uark.edu/project.php?project=24>

4.2.3 Sustainability + Structure

Pembroke's downtown big box will be designed with the future in mind. An issue is not only its immediate impact but the long-term success of the central business district. For this reason flexibility and adaptability are important.

Neil Peirce writes:

"The concern is that big boxes, like dinosaurs, may rule the earth for a time, but then like all fads, be gone. And that their rotting hulks will be left for the rest of us (i.e. tax payers) to clean up and remove."¹³¹

Changes in shopping architecture and consumer behaviour are ongoing. While mass merchandisers are heading the pack today, this might not continue to be the case. Sustainable development must be able to adapt if and when demand and trends change.

Parking, which takes the form of large expanses of asphalt in most cases, will be hidden in a large underground garage, that extends the length of LOT A + B, with entrances on both Alexander Street and Frank Nighbour Street. This will encourage Agnes Street (the road which separates these lots) to be more pedestrian friendly.

Most big-box stores are constructed of steel on concrete pads. Steel provides maximum flexibility with respect to windows and cladding systems. Steel structures are easily adapted and/or demounted should the building need to be altered or removed. In downtown Pembroke, however, I am recommending heavy timber

¹³¹ (Gatz 160)

construction to reflect the city's history and contribution to the lumber industry. Like steel, timber can be easily erected, demounted and recycled. It can also be exposed, which is important to the aesthetics of the proposed buildings.

Building heights will vary across Lots A+B, to maximize solar orientation and distinguish program. The portions of the buildings facing Lake Street will be uniform in height at approximately ten meters. This is consistent with most of the buildings in downtown Pembroke, including the adjacent Giant Tiger store.

The new structures proposed in *Main Street's Backyard* will include big-box retail, small shops (types linked to standard big box stores), student housing and semi-private courtyard spaces.

Student housing backing on to the mid-block Big-Box will take the form of row houses and rooftop condominiums, with small retail spaces at the corners, providing access to the larger retail spaces behind. An elevated, semi-private courtyard space runs the length of the rooftop condominiums, separating the residences from the big-box store and providing them residences with outdoor space and south light.

The proposed big-box structure is similar to that of a traditional lumber mill. While this approach is particular to Pembroke different materials and forms could be employed in other cases. The prototype itself was designed to "blend in" to the existing fabric - to appear 'hidden' so that it would not only not put Pembroke St. merchants at a disadvantage but would become part of the fabric of Main Street. While the large, mid-block

Design Alternative: Long section from Pembroke Street to Lake Street

Source: City Architect

Design Alternative: Short section, from 107 to 118

Source: City Architect

retail spaces on LOTS A+B are designed to adapt to their sites, they will connect to both Pembroke St. and Lake St. in numerous locations. Where vacant lots exist along Pembroke St., the new retail infill will extend to meet the street.

In LOT A, for example, the current garden area next to the church will be in-filled with an entrance that connects to the large, mid-block retail space behind . The structure will extend into the service way and corner lot (Agnes Street and Pembroke Street W.)The infill projects will restore the street wall along Main Street, and permit direct access from Pembroke St. to the big-box retailers in the center of the block.

Figure 12 LOT A- View North, Pembroke Street.
Source: author

Figure 13 LOT A- View North, Pembroke St/Agnes St
Source: author

A similar strategy will be used in LOT B, where new retail infill will occupy a section of land on the corner of Agnes St. and Pembroke Street, as well as the service corridor at the center of the block. These retail infill projects will aid in revitalizing and restoring the commercial streetscape. The multiple access points will encourage a pedestrian-friendly shopping experience, as opposed to the standard, car-dependant wastelands that characterize strip centres.

Figure 15 LOT B- View North, Pembroke St/Agnes St

Figure 14 LOT B- View North, Pembroke St.
Service Lane at the center of block

4.2.4 Program

An important part of this process is the transformation of the typology of the big-box, with the goal of breaking away from current megastore architecture and to permitting big-box retailing to adopt to new environments.

Fortunately the big box is fundamentally generic. The big-box I am proposing for Pembroke was designed to accommodate a variety of programs while adapted to the site to make the best use of the available land. While the structures on Lots A and B are similar they are not identical. A single tenant could occupy both (e.g., Walmart) or they could be leased separately to two or more retailers (e.g., Bed, Bath & Beyond, Winners etc.). Where a single tenant is concerned, the structures are connected with an enclosed bridge, above Agnes St, and also through the underground parking.

Figure 9 - Interior View of Bridge

Each structure will include potential sites for smaller businesses, which have become standard in big-box stores like Walmart (e.g., opticians, pharmacies, dry cleaners, etc.). The Pembroke Model locates the smaller businesses at the corners of each lot so they can be accessed both from the larger the larger

spaces and from Lake Street. This makes them more convenient for the new residential development across the road and the adjacent student housing.

Since a major part of the master plan is to re-direct attention back to Main Street, the main entrances to the structure are on Pembroke Street. Varying in size and type, there are two separate entrances on each lot – one which is larger and enclosed, and the other of which is a smaller, sky-lit laneway. These entrances present a pedestrian friendly face to Main Street and maintain the crucial connection between big-box and Main street merchants.

The flow of pedestrians, and connections within downtown is vital. A secondary, through-block connection has been made on both lots, which makes a path from Alexander St and Frank Nighbour St. This east-west passageway changes form as it moves through the blocks, varying from exterior spaces, to skylight arcade-like spaces between the buildings on Pembroke St. and the large, mid-block retail spaces.. This pathway will add to the fluidity of pedestrian traffic in the downtown, as well lure residents to both big-box and Main Street.

Figure - Interior View of Retail
Source: By author

Figure 9 Lots A+B Big Box Retail Development

Figure 9 Lots A+B Big Box Retail Development
Source: by author

Figure 10. LOTS A+B- ground floor
Source: by author

Figure 11. Lots A+ B Top View
Source: by author

4.2.5 Parking: Feasibility + Logistics

A key concern with absorbing any large-floor-plate retailer into the fine-grained structure of a historical town centre is the issue of parking. Pembroke currently has a surfeit of surface parking, which contributes to the feelings of emptiness downtown. A solution to this problem, and a future investment for the city, would be to construct an underground parking garage. The most suitable location would be in the heart of downtown, in particular the area between Frank Nighbour St and Alexander St. (LOTS A+B). As proposed the underground parking would be located beneath both parcels of land with entrances at the east and west ends.

Pad-type construction in suburban strip centres can accommodate vast amounts of parking in surface lots. This is possible because the cost of rural land is lower than that of land in denser urban cores. In Pembroke's case however, due to the growing number of vacancies in downtown, the overall value of land has dropped precipitously. Only a few of Pembroke's myriad surface parking lots even charge for parking. The promise of plentiful 'free parking' is used to lure residents back downtown.

Diminishing land values lowers the disincentive for big-box merchants to move downtown. Furthermore, since Pembroke would be experiencing a new 'life' with several other complementary developments there is more of an incentive for retailers to move into downtown.

Where retailers need further encouragement, the city could offer long-term low or no-cost leases and tax forgiveness (retailers/developers would be able to offset the additional cost of providing underground parking by being granted tax relief from the city). Alternatively the City might appeal to other sources, like the Province, to offset the cost of an underground parking structure.

4.3 Recreation | Convention Centre

Recreation centres serve an important social function as public gathering spaces. They are incubators of community involvement. Pembroke is a growing therefore a larger venue in downtown is appropriate to offer a larger different scale of events and positively contribute to the city's revitalization plan. The proposed master plan includes an expanded recreation complex that accommodates a wider range of uses. The project will further contribute to the physical revitalization of the city.

4.3.1 Site

The site for this complex is the Pembroke Memorial Centre. This facility houses the city's main hockey rink, which figures prominently in Pembroke's history and identity. Pembroke has branded itself Canada's '*Hockey Town*' in recognition of having produced several NHL hockey players. The rink is home to the Pembroke Lumber Kings, and hosts of the largest annual amateur hockey tournaments in North America, The Silver Stick.

Site

Figure 17 View South- Pembroke Memorial Centre from Lake Street

The Memorial Centre is dated and unattractive. The facility is surrounded by acres of parking, which, in off-seasons, remain vacant except when used by shoppers for over-flow parking. More often than not, the site appears abandoned.

Pembroke Memorial Centre: Parking lot
Entrance

Source: by Author

The Ottawa River Power Corporation and the Pembroke Museum sit to the east of the site, with a couple smaller businesses southwest, at the edge of Pembroke Street West. The site extends from Frank Nighbour Street to Christie Street.

The site is at the western edge of the BIA, separating commercial from residential usages. The site slopes about 5% from Pembroke Street West to the corners of Frank Nighbour St and Christie Street. The change in level streets creates a natural barrier.

Pembroke Memorial Centre: Entrance
Facing Pembroke Street

Source: by Author

The proposed recreation centre is envisioned as a mixed-use building focused on health and wellness. The city currently lacks facilities for fitness or physical activity. Pembroke's only fitness centre is located in front of City Hall in a small strip mall. New municipal facilities in town and suburban communities frequently include fitness facilities, offering a wide choice of physical activities and classes, such as hot yoga, group fitness classes, swimming, weightlifting and cardio. Such facilities are especially attractive to young families.

An expanded recreation centre would greatly benefit the towns of Pembroke and Petawawa, where many new families are relocating. Such a centre would also benefit students at Algonquin College, whose new facility will be located directly across from the PMC. As

re-envisioned, then, recreation facilities on the PMC site would be used year-round and by a greater range of users.

Convention facilities will also be included in the program. Conventions have been major contributor to Pembroke's economy over the years. As the largest regional center between Ottawa and North Bay, Pembroke is an ideal area to host events. The city's main conference centre is currently located in the Best Western Hotel at the intersection of the Trans Canada Highway (17) and Highway 41 – outside of the BIA. The downtown area would benefit greatly if conventions facilities were available in the core. The hotel is built at the official entrance of the city, a drawback for smaller business owners who could profit from visiting conventioners. The city is more than capable of accommodate visitors with twelve other hotels, motels and bed & breakfasts, the majority of which are located along Pembroke Street.

4.4 Program

Traditional recreation centres aggregate a variety of programs within a single structure, frequently surrounded by parking. The proposed centre will make better use of site, distributing programmatic elements into a small cluster of infill structures. Because 'missing teeth' (vacant lots) are endemic downtown, the build-out of the site will focus on the continuity of the streetscape. While the existing rink will remain, its exterior shell will be redesigned to better showcase the arena, which is a significant part of Pembroke's history.

The current parking entrance will be reconfigured into a drop-off area adjacent to a large outdoor gathering space. The program has been organized around two intersecting pathways. Envisioned as *routes through the city*, these paths are visible in the master plan and help overcome current topographic barriers.

The first of these connections begins on Frank Nighbour St. and continues west past the Pembroke Hydro Museum. Crossing through the new Farmers Market to the parking garage, it then moves around the south side of the arena before exiting onto Christie Street. This exterior pathway is designed to encourage pedestrian movement through the site and eliminate the need to walk through the facility. The second pathway connects Pembroke with Lake Street, travelling north through the community centre.

New recreation components include a swimming pool, fitness studios, a weight room, gymnasium, and indoor tennis court. In addition to this the centre will incorporate daycare services, conference facilities and an enclosed parking garage.

The expanded PMC is designed to attract youth and young families both from Pembroke and the surrounding region. The facility will also create new jobs for residents, further aiding the economic revitalization of downtown.

Figure 18 Design Process- Program
Proposed recreation/convention center (design in process)

Figure 19 View of new Recreation/Convention Centre
Source: By Author

Figure 20 View North from Pembroke Street Recreation/Convention Centre and Farmers' Market
Source: by author

4.5 Student Housing

Since the new Algonquin College campus will serve a larger student body, the proposed master plan includes student housing. Appropriate rental housing, currently lacking in the city, will give both local and out-of-town students the option of residing in close proximity the college. This housing will be constructed along the Lake Street edges of both LOT A and B. These properties will back onto and lap over the proposed mid-block big-box development.

Frontage parcels on Lots A and B will be divided into separate housing blocks, each comprised of row houses. The units will be brought directly up to the sidewalk similar to surrounding traditional buildings. Units will also be constructed on top of smaller retailers below. Sidewalks along Lake Street will be widened, both to enhance their pedestrian-friendliness and to protect the privacy of residents. Rows of trees will be added to transform the overall character and atmosphere of the street. Facing the student housing across Lake Street will be a new residential development for young families. From its current state as an abandoned automobile-oriented commercial strip, then, Lake Street will be reborn a residential boulevard.

Located between Main Street businesses, the new Recreation Centre, the new Algonquin College and the waterfront, students occupying this housing will have direct access to a wide (and expanding) range of shops and services downtown, obviating the need to depend on automobiles. Enhanced pedestrian traffic

will contribute to the actual (and perceived) vitality of the core.

The corner of land between Frank Nighbour and Lake Street (just south of the CPR tracks) has been designated for future student housing. As the college expands, more housing will be needed.

Figure 21 Aerial View, looking
South
Source: by Author

4.6 Infill

4.6.1 Residential

Although residential gentrification figures prominently in most downtown revitalization programs, the renovation of its Victorian housing stock is less important to Pembroke's success. Pembroke's economy demands smaller, affordable residential units. Given the demographic changes in the region, housing suitable for young families is necessary to encourage new life downtown.

An important part of this thesis is to change the physical state of downtown and change the perception that Pembroke is a tired city. A leading area of concern is Lake Street. The streetscape is bare, dominated by surface parking and vacant lots, with the exception of few small- to medium-sized commercial buildings. This thesis proposes residential infill in the parcel of land between Lake Street and the CPR tracks. The site is currently occupied by the Pembroke Lakeside Medical Walk-In Clinic, an auto parts and battery shop and a local television broadcaster. None of these businesses is overly site-dependant nor are the buildings they occupy of any architectural or heritage significance.

The proposed residences will be constructed with close to zero setbacks to respect the tradition of street-oriented buildings within the downtown core. The units will also mirror the student housing facing them across Lake Street. A private street will divide the complex to enable the site to be developed to a greater density. The vision is to create a new, medium-density, kid-friendly neighbourhood within the downtown core.

This development will be designed in such a way as not to block views from Lake St. to the waterfront to the north. Linear patterns and landscaping elements will contribute to the continuity of the street.

New residential development along Lake Street will significantly change its character. The redesigned street will permit street parking while accommodating additional traffic associated with retail intensification in the blocks between Pembroke and Lake Streets. A landscaped median will separate the widened street, adding to the new character and surrounding context.

The lots between Alexander Street and Albert Street will be developed as a phased expansion of this new residential district centered on Lake Street. An inner street from Frank Nighbour to Albert will become a private neighbourhood access way. As envisioned, Pembroke's commercial core will be framed by residential neighbourhoods, contributing to a more pedestrian-oriented downtown and a growing number of residents.

4.6.2 Commercial

Several sites on the south side of Pembroke Street were left vacant when the buildings occupying them were destroyed by fire. These will be repurposed for commercial use. The lot sizes are large and can accommodate new forms of retail or institutional use. The lot at the intersection of Pembroke Street West and Agnes could easily be build out as a parking garage with retail at grade. Infill projects would contribute to the community's "sense of place," counteracting the current feeling of emptiness and neglect.

The new plan will also include a solution for the abandoned movie theatre on Pembroke Street. While of major historical significance to the city of Pembroke, the *Centre Theatre* has been vacant for a number of years. Were it restored, the theatre could attract more residents to the core and promote pedestrian interaction on Main Street.

4.6.3 Accommodation

A key goal of this project is to attract people downtown. As tourism is crucial to the city's economy, it would be in Pembroke's best interest to build a hotel in the downtown core. In the proposed master plan, the current site of the Farmer's Market (at the corner of Lake and Victoria Streets) would be the site of a hotel. The site has views of both the Muskrat and Ottawa Rivers. Guests would be within walking distance of shopping, the new Recreation/Convention Centre and the Marina. The new hotel will allow tourists to explore Pembroke on foot, unlike the accommodations located in the city's east and west ends.

4.6.4 Green Space

An important component of physical revitalization is landscaping. Pembroke is surrounded by nature, from the forests in Algonquin Park and the Laurentian Mountains to the Ottawa River and nearby White Water region. While blessed with plentiful resources and picturesque views, Pembroke itself is mostly covered in asphalt. The new master plan will maximize the potential for landscaped areas to further enhance and compliment the geographic region.

4.7 Connectivity

The interaction between residents and visitors is necessary to promote community to bring people together. The proposed master plan includes multiple connections through the city, including pedestrian walkways, terrace spaces, courtyards, and elevated boardwalks designed to promote the flow of people between Main Street (Pembroke St.) and the downtown waterfront.

The most significant connection is the proposed elevated boardwalk. This walkway will be constructed on either side of the railway tracks that run parallel to the Ottawa River north of Lake Street. The railway system is no longer in use and most regions in the Ottawa Valley have removed the tracks. The railway was a very important part of Pembroke's past and should remain part as a symbol and historical representation of Pembroke's history. The walkway will connect the Muskrat River with the Recreation/Convention Centre and will be accessible from the proposed residential development to the

south and the riverfront park to the north. The boardwalk can be expanded in the future for citywide access, much like the present Kiwanis Waterfront Walkway.

A large paved public space will be constructed directly behind Main Street stores in both Lots A and B. The area will serve customers from both traditional shops and the new big box development. The exterior portion of the pathway will be landscaped and offer outdoor seating for shoppers and pedestrians.

The path continues west to Frank Nighbour Street, under the Pembroke Hydro Bridge and continues to the new Farmers' Market. The market has been moved to higher ground on a site that is presently abandoned. The proposed new location is closer to the Pembroke's original market square and to the residential areas of town. The Farmer's Market is very important to Pembroke and the economic revitalization of downtown.

Gratz states that:

"Farmers' Markets are the first and the most successful tool for economic regeneration of a community center. They do more to sustain and strengthen surrounding regional small farm economic than any government subsidy program. If done right new local businesses spontaneously emerge around them."¹³²

The more centrally located the market, the greater opportunity to attract residents and shoppers downtown.

¹³² (Gratz 45)

Figure 22 MasterPlan: Aerial view
looking south
Source: by author

Figure 23 Masterplan Aerial View
Looking south
Source: by author

CONCLUSION

Cities have transformed significantly over the course of twentieth century. Post-war prosperity, coupled with widespread automobile ownership in North America, fuelled a mass migration to the suburbs and spawned a culture of consumerism. The appearance of enclosed regional shopping malls in the post-war period changed the nature of retail competition. The ongoing search for the 'next best thing' generates new forms of retailing and retail architecture, creating ever-greater competition between urban and ex-urban retailers.

Larger urban cores have maintained their status by reinventing themselves as business districts for suburban office workers. Increasingly they are finding ways to accommodate newer, larger retail formats, previously available only on the far periphery.

Small towns, on the other hand, continue to struggle to compete for shoppers against an ever-increasing array of retail options. Perhaps the solution for Main Street's future is to embrace the evolution in retail architecture and accommodate competitors within the existing fabric. This, however, presents challenges.

As retail trends and formats continue to evolve, downtown Pembroke must identify innovative strategies to reclaim its significance as a regional centre for trade and commerce. An important strategy might be to accommodate box-box retailers behind the fine-grained, historical facades of Pembroke Street (in what I call *Main Street's backyard*). Big box retailing will be both accessible from and expand into the vacant shopfronts along Pembroke St.

As retail development will be engine of economic renewal, the plan also proposes an expanded marketplace – with the goal of making downtown Pembroke the ‘go-to’ shopping district for residents of Pembroke, Petawawa and the larger Ottawa Valley. This is crucial to the city’s success and stability.

In addition to expanded retail usages, this thesis proposes an expansion of recreation, convention and hospitality infrastructure in downtown Pembroke. Residential intensification in the downtown core would include both student housing and a neighbourhood for young families. Pembroke need to capitalize on population growth in the surrounding Laurentian Valley.

Recovery is possible in small towns. A successful plan must address the problem areas, engage the community and be flexible enough to adapt to the inevitable changes that lie ahead.

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