



# THE FORKS

## NORTH PORTAGE PARTNERSHIP



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PROGRESS REPORT  
**1997**





The Forks North Portage Partnership  
Board of Directors 1997

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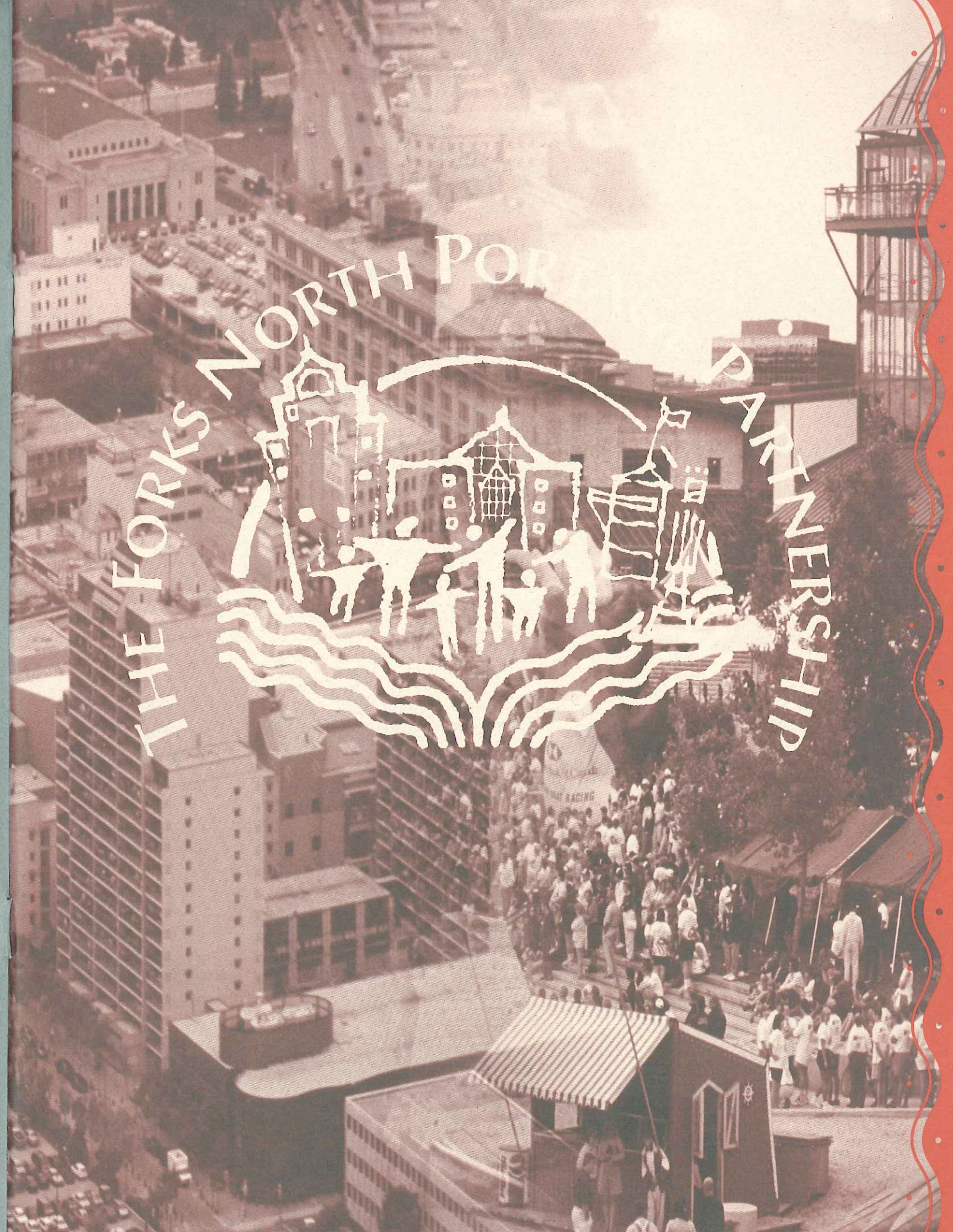
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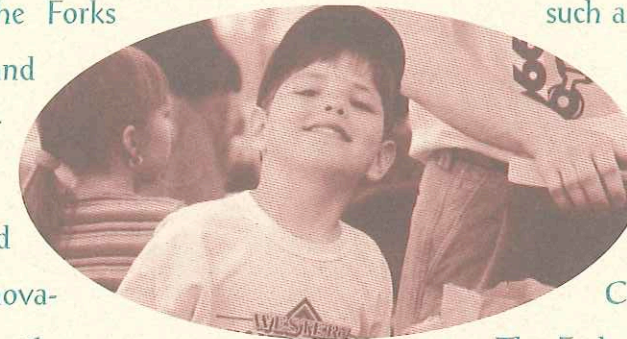
The North Portage Neighbourhood and The Forks draw an estimated 13 million annual visits. The success of these two diverse sites can be attributed to the unique mix of uses, designed to provide visitors with opportunities to work, live and play in the downtown. The results of public consultations and surveys over the past four years provide evidence of the public's keen interest in renewal efforts in the downtown and of their strong sense of ownership of The Forks as a public attraction of historic significance.

It is within this context that The Forks North Portage Partnership devoted significant attention to preparing the five year Business Plan, maintaining the original "meeting place" theme and balanced mixed-use approach to renewal of both sites. Long range planning for the effective management and maintenance of the Partnership's assets is also critical to the continuing success and viability of The Forks and the North Portage Neighbourhood. North Portage operations show positive financial trends for the future and provide a source of



revenues towards operations at The Forks. Our challenge is to continually improve financial results at The Forks in order for the site to become fully self-sustaining.

In order that The Forks remains vibrant, fresh and among the most popular attractions in the city, a Proposal Call was issued in June 1997, seeking innovative and unique projects with a



family oriented entertainment or recreational focus. The Proposal call emphasized design excellence and invited private sector investment. New development will provide much needed contributions towards the significant costs of maintaining public amenities such as The Forks Historic Port and plaza areas for the leisure and enjoyment of visitors. This new commercial development will be complemented by the new bridge to South Point (page 27) and our newest gathering place: Oodena - Celebration Circle (page 30).

The Partnership assumed an active role in CentrePlan resulting in an action plan to improve Portage Avenue, and participated in a working group to examine alternative uses for the downtown Eaton's store. The Partnership also acted as negotiator on behalf of the City of Winnipeg in reviewing Mr. Canada's proposal

for renewal and use of three downtown theatres. While not all efforts have met with success to date, they have served to underscore the need for a downtown development agency,

such as the Partnership, to address broader downtown issues.

One of the more important events of the year was the Red River Relief Concert in May. Once again

The Forks was the location of choice for an outpouring of community spirit. The Partnership was proud to play a role in hosting the event.

The Forks will be on the world stage when it becomes host to the celebratory events of the 1999 Pan American Games. It is anticipated that upwards of 50,000 people may visit the site each day of the Games. Improvements to Festival Park are part of the Partnership's public amenity enhancement program aimed at preparing the site for the Games and ensuring a legacy for continued use by festivals for years to come.

The commitment and attention of our shareholders have made the many achievements of the past decade possible. We look forward to further successes with their continuing support. Partnerships forged with businesses and organizations in our community will also be critical in meeting future challenges.



Approval of the Partnership's Business Plan by the three shareholders (Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada) was finalized in February of 1997. The Business Plan calls for self-sustaining developments that complement the downtown and reflect the unique character of The Forks and the North Portage Neighbourhood.

The five-year plan supports the original "meeting place" theme through a balanced, mixed-use approach to continued renewal of the two sites. In recognition of the broader potential of a strengthened downtown, the Partnership has adopted "Making Connections" as the theme for the Business Plan.

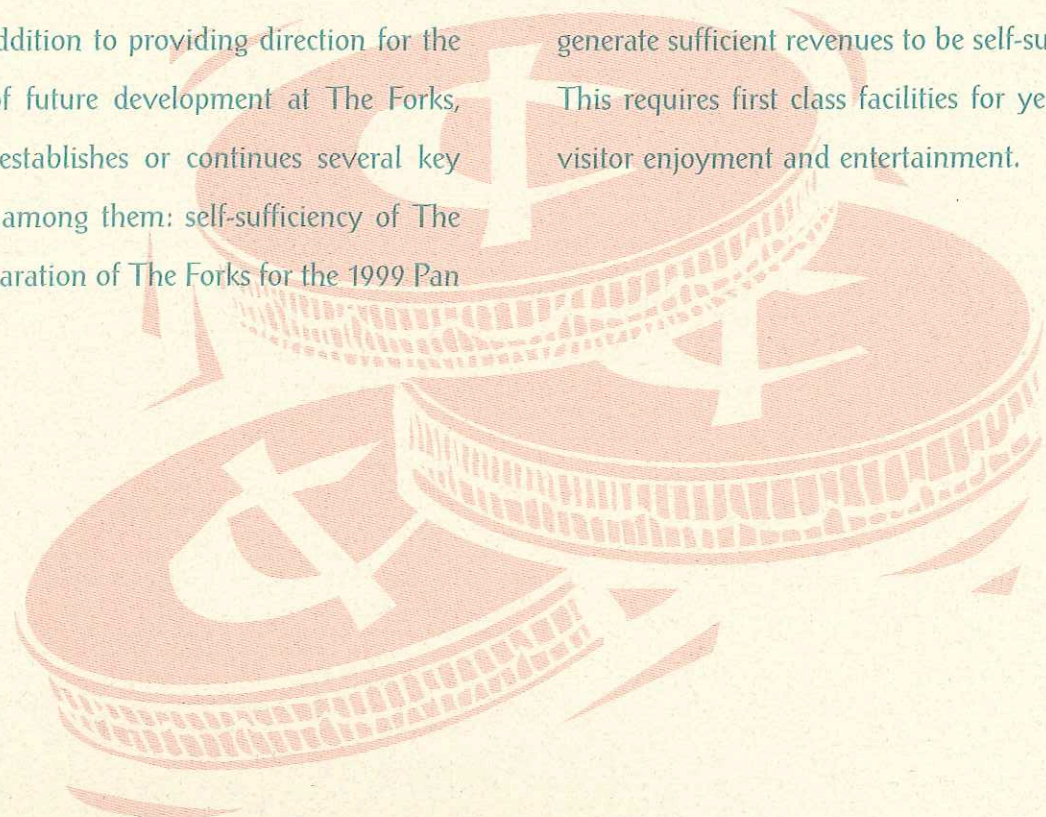
In addition to providing direction for the approval of future development at The Forks, The Plan establishes or continues several key objectives, among them: self-sufficiency of The Forks; preparation of The Forks for the 1999 Pan

American Games; infrastructure renewal; and strengthening connections to the downtown and neighbouring districts. The Business Plan identifies a lead role for the private sector in financing and operating new projects.

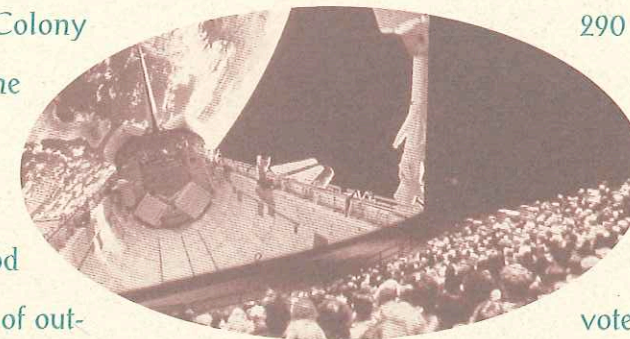
The Plan does not require any government subsidy of operating costs. The Partnership has been instructed to update the Business Plan to incorporate the results of the Call for Proposals, Pan Am legacy projects and the disposal of assets.

An estimated 13 million visits are made to The Forks and North Portage Neighbourhood each year. The Partnership's challenge is to maintain public interest in the two sites and generate sufficient revenues to be self-sustaining.

This requires first class facilities for year-round visitor enjoyment and entertainment.



The North Portage Neighbourhood is a mixed-use urban development occupying more than 11 acres of property in the heart of Winnipeg's downtown. Bounded by Portage Avenue, Colony Street, Notre Dame Avenue and Hargrave Street, the North Portage Neighbourhood offers a dynamic blend of out-



standing commercial, residential and recreational facilities. Contemporary apartment blocks are located on The Promenade behind Portage Place and include skywalk links to the rest of downtown as well as heated indoor parking. The community includes two seniors housing facilities and the Raleigh Apartments, a three storey brick walk-up apartment building, circa 1930's. Both the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba Continuing Education Divisions are situated here. Parks, medical centres, social agencies, and businesses round out this gathering place in the heart of our city.

Approximately 2,700 people are employed in the Neighbourhood and it has become a popular place for helping agencies - 5 United Way agencies are now resident in North Portage properties: the YM-YWCA and

the Family Centre of Winnipeg at Portage Place; the Canadian Mental Health Association in Fred Douglas Place; Taking Charge!, and the Immigrant Women's Centre at 290 Vaughan Street.

Consolidated Properties, a local company, has purchased significant interest in Portage Place, a strong vote of confidence for downtown

Winnipeg. More than 165 stores and services are located here in Winnipeg's premier downtown retail mall. As with other retail projects across the country, Portage Place has faced several challenges in the past number of years. Vacancies, however, are currently less than 10% and visitation is estimated to have increased by half a million over the past year. Home also to a variety of social service organizations, a live theatre company, cinemas and Winnipeg's only IMAX® theatre, Portage Place continues to play an important role as focal point of a robust downtown community. The centre is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year, a reflection of the renewed health of this vibrant retail and entertainment facility.





The **IMAX® Theatre** continues to offer its unique brand of world class entertainment to Manitobans. Located on the third level of Portage Place, Winnipeg's **IMAX® Theatre** features wraparound digital sound, a 5-1/2 storey screen and state of the art **IMAX®** technology. With the dynamic range of subject matter it offers, **IMAX®** attracts an ever expanding audience. Several new films and innovative program initiatives increased attendance in the reporting period by more than 42,000 viewers.

Known for its outstanding fitness and recreation facilities, the Downtown **YM-YWCA** provides an impressive range of services to the Winnipeg community. Directly

linked to Portage Place and the Skywalk System the **YM-YWCA** offers some of the finest health, fitness and recreation facilities in the city.

**Prairie Theatre Exchange (PTE)** approaches its 25th season continuing a strong tradition of theatre for all ages. Located on the third floor of Portage Place, **Prairie Theatre Exchange** offers fabulous live theatre in a welcoming environment. Sell-out performances are an increasingly frequent occurrence and a variety of classes and workshops continue to attract theatre arts enthusiasts from executives to youngsters. In addition to its main stage season, **PTE** operates year-round as a community resource centre for arts education, play writing



and professional theatre, boasting one of Canada's oldest and most renowned theatre schools for children, teens and adults.

One of two charming private streets behind Portage Place in the North Portage Neighbourhood, **The Promenade** is home to several commercial and residential properties. The street level commercial spaces along **The Promenade** are fully leased and house the **University of Manitoba Continuing Education Division**, a café, an independent grocer and others. Education is a



growth industry in the downtown and over the past two years every major downtown educational institution has expanded operations. Located on **The Promenade**, the **University of Manitoba Continuing Education Division Downtown Campus** continues to meet the demand for life-long learning in downtown Winnipeg. In 1996 the **Winnipeg Free Press** estimated that more than 21,000 students attend classes in the downtown, creating employment for more than 1,400 people.



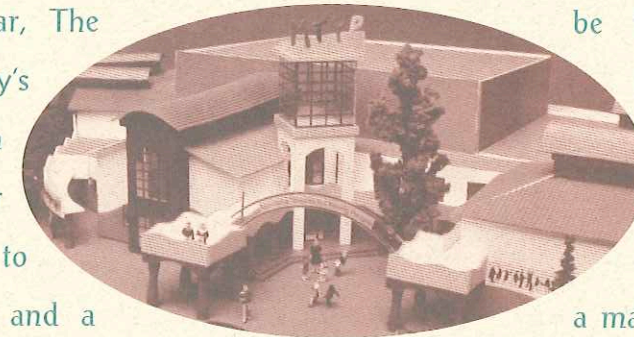


A residential population is critical to the vitality of the downtown. One of the most important ingredients in the North Portage Neighbourhood is the residential component and the community it supports. Five dynamic properties: Kiwanis Chateau, Fred Douglas Place, the Raleigh Apartments and the twin towers of Place Promenade provide homes to more than one thousand residents, greatly enhancing the environment of the city's centre.

Seniors' housing is an important part of the North Portage Neighbourhood. The Partnership has been active in the Fred Douglas enriched housing for seniors feasibility study, investigating residential possibilities for the top floors of the YM-YWCA downtown. The objective of this project is to extend the independent living of aging seniors through the design of barrier free suites and community programming. The Partnership has agreed to commit financial support to this project if it is approved to proceed.



Winnipeg's popular "meeting place" at the junction of the rivers, The Forks, continues to foster pride in the community. Attracting an estimated 5 to 7 million visits each year, The Forks has become the city's flagship tourist attraction and a popular place for the local population to enjoy strolling, dining and a wide range of community celebrations.



The Forks offers visitors a unique shopping experience with many one of a kind items in **The Forks Market** and **Johnston Terminal**, as well as a kaleidoscope of activities and festivals on the site throughout the year.

Following considerable effort to find a use for the **steam plant** at The Forks, an agreement was signed with MTN TV to redevelop the building as their Winnipeg studios and construction has begun. A public proposal call was issued in 1995 to find a private use for the north portion of **The Pavilion on The Market Plaza**. Planning has begun for a 50 seat family restaurant to occupy a portion of The Pavilion. The remaining space will continue to be used as a change area for skaters.

A Letter of Intent was signed with **Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP)** to develop a children's theatre and school facility at The Forks. The new family attraction will be located across Pioneer Boulevard from the steam plant, next to Festival Park. The proposed \$4.6 million facility will house a mainstage, touring programs,

the theatre school and production facilities. The project has received financial contributions from the City of Winnipeg and the Canada Manitoba Infrastructure Program and construction is expected to begin in the fall of 1997.

The Partnership works closely with Canadian Heritage, our neighbours at **The Forks National Historic Site**. In 1996, discussions began to explore a number of cooperative management opportunities. This collaboration continued in 1997 and was expanded to include a more cooperative approach to advertising, marketing of Theatrical Walking Tours and other visitor services. Travel Manitoba also became a partner in these efforts and services were offered from the **Manitoba Travel Idea Centre** as well.



## It Came, We Sod and Conquered!

Over the past three years higher water levels have interrupted normal access to the rivers, the Riverwalk and The Forks Historic Port. In the summer of 1996, the water did not recede until the last days of June, but due to the dedicated efforts of site staff, the walkways were cleaned and readied for Canada Day activities.

In 1997, the rivers rose twice. The spring inundation, dubbed the "Flood of the Century," brought the highest water levels seen since the flood of 1950. This offered Winnipegers an opportunity to reflect on past events and thousands came to The Forks to view the rising water. Ultimately the rivers equalled another flood past, that of 1852.

The Forks was the first choice for many of the local, national and international media that converged on Winnipeg to record this natural – and historic – phenomenon. Reporters from around the world representing more than 120 radio and television stations and newspapers were here to tell the story of the flood.

Throughout Winnipeg, community spirit rose with the waters as volunteers sandbagged, monitored dikes and collected goods for distribution to flood victims. As a precautionary measure at The Forks, temporary dikes were constructed behind the Manitoba Children's Museum and along Fort Gibraltar Road. New sewer back up protection was also installed. Until the rivers crested, it was wait and watch.



On May 18, the Red River Relief fundraising concert was held at The Forks. Organized by Tom Jackson and broadcast live from coast to coast by CBC TV and Radio, this free concert presented top Canadian entertainers (some former Winnipegers) and attracted an estimated 35,000 people to the site. Two million dollars were raised for victims of the flood.



The clean up began at The Forks as quickly as receding waters would allow. One and a half feet of silt were removed from terraces and walkways, the Historic Port dredged, and finally the docks were installed. The Port had been underwater for more than a month and new sod was needed throughout the terraces. Once again, extraordinary efforts made everything ready in time for Canada Day celebrations along the rivers.

Then in late July, heavy rains to the south filled the rivers, and water again overflowed the walkways and lower terraces of the Historic Port. A month later, as the water receded, the Riverwalk was being cleaned and new sod laid in the Port for the second time in the season. Once again, docks and walkways were ready for visitors within a few days.

Flood related clean up and repair in 1997 were approximately \$45,000, the highest since the opening of The Port and walkways in 1991. The shift in visitation patterns during periods of high water underscored the importance of the Riverwalk as a means of access to the downtown.





## Making a New Mark

Several past floods are well recorded in local history. In the spring of 1826 the water rose more than 10 feet in one day, destroying early settlements at The Forks and in surrounding areas. Later, the flood of 1852 had a profound effect on the more established and growing community. Of course, the spring of 1950, when rivers rose 30.5 feet (above datum), was well documented in film and photographs and many local residents have personal memories of that time.

The 1997 flood was equal to that of 1852, exceeding 1950 flood levels by four feet. Manitoba's flood water diversion system, including the Red River Floodway, saved Winnipeg from certain devastation.

At The Forks, markers along the Wall Through Time and an interpretive plaque on The Market Plaza identify the heights of the flood waters in both 1826 and 1950. New markers will be installed to commemorate the 1852 and 1997 floods.



## Parking! Lots!

Indoor parking in the North Portage Neighbourhood can accommodate more than 1000 vehicles for the visiting public, with another 600 designated for residents and employees. Approximately 100 spaces are available outdoors in addition to on-street City metered parking. Repairs were made to the Portage Place parking garage and asphalt paving and landscaping were undertaken on the parking lot at 377 Colony.

There are 1800 free outdoor parking spaces at The Forks. A second exit was added to lot P2 and the lot was enlarged, creating 100 new spaces. This will ensure no parking is lost when construction of MTYP proceeds in the future. Convenience meters were installed in proximity to facilities at The Forks ensuring availability of short term parking for quick visits.



## On the Beat

In 1995 the Partnership introduced a Bicycle Patrol for evening and night surveillance of The Forks throughout the summer. Provided by Innertec Security Services, the Patrol operates in pairs and is outfitted with radios, uniforms and other professional equipment. The Patrol is in direct contact with facility security and works closely with police and other emergency units when necessary.

The Winnipeg Police Service continued to restructure services to the community. A Community Constable was assigned to a local area including The Forks. This has resulted in closer consultation between security forces and organizers of major events on the site. It has also allowed for businesses within the area to meet to discuss a variety of safety and security matters on a regular basis.

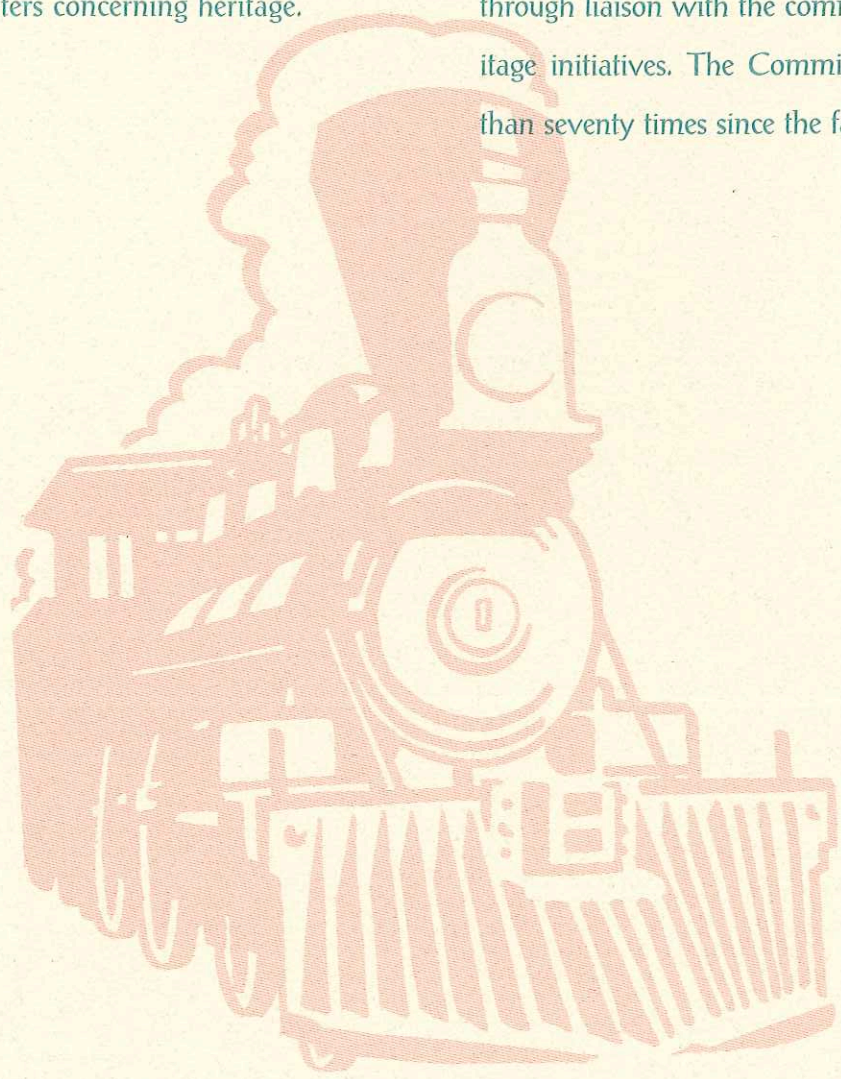




## Past Presence

The Forks Heritage Advisory Committee is an all-volunteer advisory body with a mandate to protect and preserve heritage resources at The Forks on behalf of the community. The Committee reviews physical developments proposed for the site, programs and other issues, and provides advice and guidance to the Board on all matters concerning heritage.

The Committee provides liaison with other heritage groups and organizations and consults with professionals in a variety of heritage disciplines on the Board's behalf. It has been called upon to test ideas and initiatives (eg. public archaeology, architectural restoration, historical interpretation, heritage programming) and through liaison with the community, invites heritage initiatives. The Committee has met more than seventy times since the fall of 1988.



Archaeological investigations are conducted in conjunction with all new development at The Forks. Investigative test trenches are dug prior to the start of most projects and monitoring continues throughout the work. Most recently, excavation during the construction of Oodena - Celebration Circle was carefully observed and recorded. Research is also being conducted as work progresses on widening of Pioneer Boulevard.



The public must continue to have confidence in the future of the site. A persistent focus and investment in heritage will maintain the current high level of public trust and guarantee a viable future. The Committee anticipates involvement in many projects in the near future, including on-site interpretation, development of new facilities and amenities, establishment of an Aboriginal and Métis presence on the site, heritage tourism and the creation of a Heritage Foundation.





The Forks North Portage Partnership participates in many initiatives to enhance the entire downtown. Both sites are within the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) and the Partnership supports several BIZ programs directly. The Partnership provides an annual financial contribution to the Downtown Flyer, a connector service provided in cooperation with the BIZ and the City of Winnipeg. Out To Lunch Concerts are hosted at each site and The BIZ Patrol and the Downtown Watch, frequent visitors to both sites, are also supported by the Partnership.

Public perception about such critical issues as safety and business conditions along Portage Avenue has a direct impact on the vitality of the downtown, including the North Portage Neighbourhood and The Forks. Through participation in CentrePlan, the Partnership has assumed a leadership role in initiatives outside the mandate areas: chairing the Portage Avenue Working Group, seeking to revitalize the street,

with the Eaton's Working Group, considering alternate uses for that landmark building, and on the residential working group, encouraging a large downtown residential population. The Partnership is proud of the results achieved.

In 1996, on behalf of the City of Winnipeg, the Partnership negotiated with Mr. Canada's Touring Network for redevelopment of the Metropolitan, Capital and Pantages theatres. Since then, a new entertainment strategy for the downtown has been pursued by various downtown organizations such as Tourism Winnipeg, the Exchange District BIZ, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and the hotel industry. The Partnership joined this collaborative effort to enrich the downtown as an entertainment centre for the city.



In the spring of 1996, a new Visitor Services Program was introduced at The Forks. Capitalizing on the training and enthusiasm of students emerging from the Tourism diploma program at Red River Community College, this initiative established a foundation for visitor services on the site.



Uniformed representatives conducted orientation sessions with merchants and their staff, prepared information materials about facilities and programs at both sites, greeted visitors and led site tours. Direct marketing initiatives with tour operators and other industry partners were undertaken and liaisons with other downtown agencies were forged. Ambassadors welcomed more than fifty tour buses and thousands of individual visitors to The Forks in a six week period.

The contacts established in the first year were expanded in the summer of 1997 and further direct marketing opportunities with industry partners were pursued. Participation by tour operators expanded and despite a spring plagued by flooding, overall visitation to The Forks increased. By late August, it was clear that out of province visitation had risen dramatically over the previous year. A portable kiosk on The Market Plaza assisted the Ambassadors in more than doubling direct contact with the visiting public.

In addition to welcoming visitors, the Ambassadors greeted incoming passengers trains at the VIA Station and visited downtown hotels. All four members of the Ambassador team assisted in the coordination of events, such as Canada Day and the Provencher Bridge reopening celebrations.





Throughout the summer, steps were taken to more closely integrate the Ambassador program with visitor services offered by Travel Manitoba in the Travel Idea Centre and the theatrical walking tour offered by Parks Canada. In addition, the possible future development of a Junior Ambassador program was initiated in cooperation with Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

### ¿Habla Español?

The Ambassador program will continue to develop relationships with other industry partners. A Volunteer Ambassador component of the program is planned to meet the influx of visitors expected for the 1999 Pan American Games. Volunteers with ability to speak other languages will be encouraged to participate.



## Bright Lights, City Nights

**F**estival Park, The Forks Market Plaza and The Forks Historic Port are premiere venues for activities. These amenities serve a variety of festivals and events in support of local charitable causes and have become the favoured location for many of Winnipeg's most significant events. Music, food, hands-on activities and cultural celebration are all important elements of successful activities at The Forks.

Approximately 100 community festivals and events are held at The Forks each year and people enjoy the spontaneity and variety offered on the annual calendar. These include winter activities such as New Year's Eve and Winter Solstice celebrations, annual summer events such as the Winnipeg International Children's Festival and Aboriginal Family Day, and many smaller celebrations and impromptu visiting presentations. Several seminal events have taken place at The Forks in the past few years. Among these were the Save The Jets Rally, the Rally for Canadian Unity, VE Day 50th anniversary recognition activities, and most recently, the Red River Flood Relief Fundraising Concert hosted by Tom Jackson and broadcast nationally by the

CBC. The Forks is also known as the place for fireworks and there is a broad public assumption that all major pyrotechnical displays are held on the site.



A variety of activities and events take place in the North Portage Neighbourhood. The eastbound lanes of Portage Avenue are closed for Young Artists On The Avenue, an annual festival of the Downtown BIZ. The Promenade, a scenic cobblestone street behind Portage Place, is a popular venue for concerts, buskers and other events such as the 1997 Super Cities Walk for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Skywalk to the Beat of Your Heart, another BIZ initiative, takes teams through Winnipeg's unique, 2km enclosed skywalk system in support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba.





## Showing Our Pride

In 1996, the Partnership brought together more than a dozen organizations to present a multi-neighbourhood, community celebration of Canada Day. This unprecedented event, called Bridging Our Communities, received national accolades and saw over a quarter of a million people visiting The Forks, Osborne Village, St. Boniface and other venues along the rivers in downtown Winnipeg. At a time when national unity was still in question, this collaborative effort was intended to serve as an example of communities working and playing together successfully in harmony.

This extraordinary effort was repeated in 1997 with even greater community involvement in the planning and preparation of events. The flood now behind them, people of Manitoba had all the more reason to celebrate. Activities planned for the evening were disrupted by rain and high winds, forcing cancellation of concerts and fireworks. Although gone with the wind on the 1st, the pyrotechnic display finally lit up the sky on the 5th of July to the delight of approximately 50,000 people at The Forks and as many again in surrounding areas of the downtown.



## Let Us Entertain You!

The Busk Stop Program was created in 1991 to encourage local talent and provide high quality, spontaneous, family entertainment at The Forks. Now expanded to allow entertainment in the North Portage Neighbourhood as well, it has developed into an award-winning year-round program that sees as many as 120 individuals and groups vying for a much coveted Busk Pass through annual auditions. The five days of auditions in May have grown to be an annual festival at The Forks over the Victoria Day long weekend. The audi-

tions conclude in the North Portage Neighbourhood the following week.

In October of 1996, in Dallas Texas, the Busk Stop Program received an Award of Merit in the Cultural Arts & Entertainment category from the International Downtown Association. This award is conferred upon exemplary and innovative activities that contribute to the economy and vitality of the downtown. Several other cities have shown keen interest in developing similar programs.







Activities of the Partnership and events at the two sites command considerable attention from the media in all seasons. National and international interest increases each year, and reports in various Canadian newspapers, magazines and broadcasts are now the norm. In addition to more than 1500 mentions in local broadcast and print media in the past year and a half, a number of significant national coverage opportunities were of particular note.

In its recently published *Great Journeys of the World*, the National Geographic Society related the pleasures of travelling across Canada by train. Delightfully, The Forks was profiled in both text and photographs as one of the featured stops along the way.

MUCH MUSIC is the cable music station of choice for many people, especially youth. The Partnership's Busk Stop Program was recently featured in a special report. Young buskers were interviewed and recorded in action at The Forks. The segment was later broadcast across Canada.

The Busk Stop Program also received national attention through CBC Television. Two series: *On The Road Again* and *It's A Living*, produced and broadcast features about this unique program for street performers.

Most recently, Credo Entertainment filmed and produced a segment of *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes* at The Forks. The series airs nationally on YTV, the cable channel for youth programming. Bravo!, a part of the Arts and Entertainment Network, has also filmed at The Forks.

Following on the success of a previous production, *Frolic at The Forks*, CBC Radio and Television continue to select the site for the production and broadcast of national program specials. CBC MIDDAY broadcast live from The Forks in March 1997 and CBC Newsworld did the same in May. For two years, the celebration of the Summer Solstice, in conjunction with National Aboriginal Family Day, has provided an opportunity for the CBC Radio to feature Canadian talent. The 1997 broadcast focussed on an Aboriginal theme, showcasing several Manitoban performers. It was hosted by Tom Jackson and broadcast twice on national radio.

Tom Jackson also figured prominently in the Red River Relief Concert in May 1997. Jackson organized the event and worked with CBC TV and Radio to secure national broadcast of the concert. This coverage succeeded in raising \$2 million for victims of the flood.

Throughout the flood of 1997, The Forks was the venue of choice for many local, national and visiting international media covering the inundation. With a rooftop camera aimed at The Forks Historic Port, a minute by minute status of the situation was available to the public through community television. A second camera across the Red River, also trained to a view of The Forks, updated an Internet website every minute with still pictures and information.



In other media, The Forks has been featured in three CD ROM productions. The Canadian Geographic Magazine has produced an educational map package on *Rivers of Canada*. The Red River and The Forks are featured in this beautifully executed CD ROM. Both the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) and WHERE Magazine have produced CD ROMs targeted to tourism industry operators. The Forks is a featured attraction on both these pieces. The CTC is using the technology for overseas markets.





## And The Winner Was...

Over the past five years the Partnership, its two sites, and projects within the mandate areas, have won several significant awards recognizing the importance and contribution of these two downtown places to the urban fabric of our city. The list below highlights some of those awards.

### 1997 - Downtown Promotion Reporter (New York, NY) Honourable Mention Award

For the Partnership's newsletter. Submissions received from across the US and Canada were judged on content, readability, appeal and effectiveness in educating the public about the downtown.

### 1996 - International Downtown Association Award of Merit, Cultural Arts and Entertainment Category

To the Busk Stop Program for exemplary and innovative programming contributing to the vitality of the downtown.

### 1995 - Canadian Society of Landscape Architects National Honour Award

For the design of Oodena – Celebration Circle at The Forks.

### 1994 - Heritage Winnipeg Award

To the Manitoba Children's Museum for restoration of the historic B & B Building at The Forks.

### 1993 - Heritage Winnipeg Award

For the Bank of Montreal Building restoration in the North Portage Neighbourhood.

### 1992 - Heritage Winnipeg Award

For restoration of the downtown YM-YWCA building in the North Portage Neighbourhood.

### 1992 - International Downtown Association Special Achievement Award

For The Forks Historic Port at The Forks.

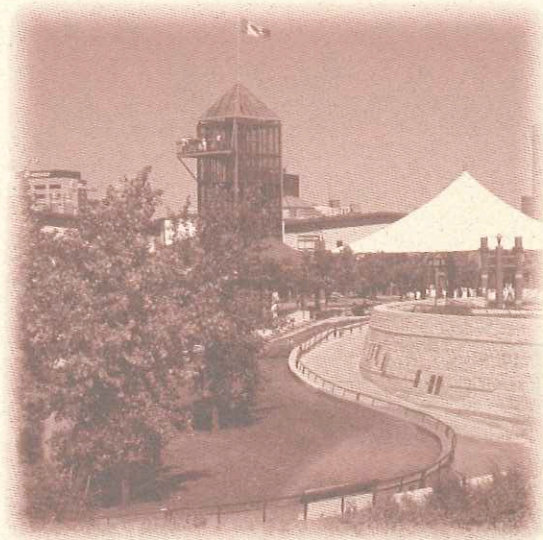
### 1992 - Waterfront Centre (Washington D.C.)

#### Honour Award for Excellence on the Waterfront

For The Forks Historic Port and Assiniboine Riverwalk.

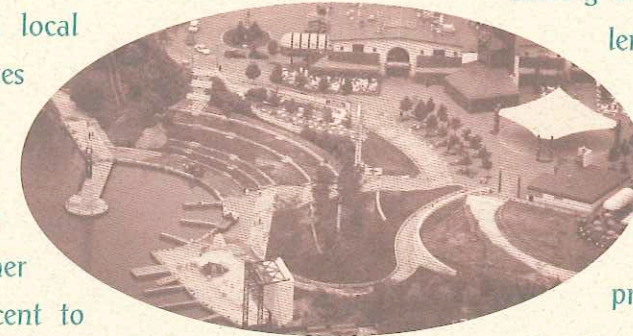
### 1992 - Canadian Society of Landscape Architects National Honour Award

For design excellence in The Forks National Historic Site at The Forks.



## An Open Invitation

On June 1997 the Partnership made a formal Request for Proposals for new attractions at The Forks. The Request solicited recreational and entertainment development and was made through national and local newspapers. Three sites were identified for immediate consideration: riverside property north of the Provencher Bridge, a parcel adjacent to the Cobblestone Roundabout near the Manitoba Children's Museum, and use of the Heritage Rail Cars near The Forks Market. A marina, entertainment facilities, and other commercial uses are encouraged. The partnership hopes to negotiate Letters of Intent with successful proponents over the next year.



## On The Drawing Board

The Partnership's vision for The Forks reflects a number of principles: connecting The Forks to surrounding areas, both physically and through partnerships; continuing a commitment to design excellence in renewal efforts; maintaining a sensitive balance and blending of mixed uses; capturing the site's historic significance; and preserving and promoting an awareness of the natural environment.

The need to develop easy access and egress, and to strengthen recreational movement through the site is also recognized.

Consultation with the public clearly showed that amenities such as cycling and walking paths are the most popular choices for enhancements. As development opportunities arise smaller parking gardens will be created to enhance the character of the site and support a pedestrian and cycling environment. Lighting improvements will add character and ensure safety. A child friendly environment with interesting shapes and colours will offer opportunities to participate, observe and learn.

The VIA Rail Station is another important potential gateway to The Forks and the Partnership has discussed development and program opportunities with VIA officials.

The Partnership is pursuing creation of a charitable foundation to support heritage programming and development at The Forks.



## Way To GO!

**E**nsuring ease of access to The Forks was identified as a planning principle in Phase One and continues to be seen as an important element of all future development. Access includes all means of entrance and egress, gateways or portals to the site and ease of movement around the site, especially through amenities for pedestrians, the disabled, and cyclists. Both sites are very popular with wheelchair visitors.

### Under . . .

Improvements to the York Avenue entrance to The Forks were identified as critical to the future success of the site in the original 1989 Phase One Plan. Late in 1996, The Forks Access Project was approved by City Council, setting out the process for improvements to this important entrance to the site.

The scope of the work includes replacement of the railway bridges and the widening of York Avenue to four lanes. In addition, the two lane section of Pioneer Boulevard will be upgraded to four lanes and extended as a river road to Lombard Avenue. Work to be undertaken will also include cycling and lighting improvements, replacement of the

primary dike, and underground infrastructure improvements.

The work, already under way, is expected to continue for a period of 14 months or more. Although all other entrances to the site will remain open, the construction will disrupt normal activities at The Forks. Plans to mitigate the forced changes in traffic patterns are underway.

### Over . . .

Bridges figure prominently in access to The Forks and three were of immediate importance over the past 18 months.

The Main and Norwood Bridges project brought a change in traffic patterns during the 1996 reconstruction of the east side of Main Street and the subsequent alterations to Fort Gibraltar Road. The east side reopened to traffic in November and the public was invited to renew their use of the Main Street entrances to The Forks.

At the height of the 1997 flood, the Provencher Bridge was closed. The pressure of the fast moving water had made the structure unsafe. While pedestrians and cyclists continued to use the bridge, the closure had a marked and immediate effect on visitation to The Forks.



Refurbishment of the Historic Rail Bridge at The Forks was undertaken through the Winnipeg Development Agreement in partnership with the City, the Province, and the Pan Am Games Society. The \$783,000 project included restoration of the bridge ensuring suitability for pedestrians and cyclists, lighting improvements, and pathway connection through the South Point to Main Street. Employment was provided to members of the Aboriginal community through a partnership between the contractors: PCL and Peguis First Nations.

The Aboriginal Planning Committee intends to decorate the large concrete counterweight with a work of Aboriginal art and launched a design competition in June.

### Through . . .

Pathway improvements were completed, linking The Forks National Historic Site and The Forks Market Plaza through the Archaeological Preserve. Another pathway through Festival Park connected overflow parking with developed areas adjacent to The Forks Market. The Historic Rail Bridge opened to the public in late August, 1997 and now serves as a major pedestrian connection to South Point, the wedge of land at the junction of the rivers.

The Historic Rail Bridge will also be a critical link in the future development of the continuous cycling path. A project of the City of Winnipeg, the pathway will extend from south Winnipeg through The Forks, north to Kildonan Park.





## Room For A View

A variety of landscaping and amenity improvements were undertaken at The Forks in 1996 and 1997. These not only brightened the landscape but had practical benefits. The Heritage Rail cars received a fresh coat of paint and repairs were made to the roofs of the passenger cars. In July of 1997, a request for proposals was issued for suitable use of the rail cars.

Improvements were made to the lighting around The Forks Market and The Market Plaza. In addition to highlight lighting on The Market and The Pavilion, twinkle lights were added to windows and trees. Decorative lighting was also installed in the Port adding to the fun of evening skating along the River Trail. Further lighting improvements are planned. New skate changing facilities were constructed and used on the River Trail.

A new dock was erected to allow direct service to St. Boniface Hospital facilities by the Splash Dash Water Bus Service. Despite interruption from high water, the dock was well used throughout the summer.

The concept of developing a market garden as an urban ecology demonstration project has emerged from early discussions with the University of Manitoba. Preserving the natural landscape at The Forks is important and continuing attention will be given to preserving river bottom forest and landscaping the site with trees and prairie grasses. Green space in The Forks Historic Port will be enlarged in the spring of 1998.

In the North Portage Neighbourhood, fencing and landscaping of a small area behind Portage Place were completed and Place Promenade was painted.



## Facelifts

In addition to many new projects, the Partnership invests in infrastructure upgrading and maintenance of facilities and amenities on both sites.

### A New Chapter

In the spring of 1998 work will begin on an addition and upgrading of the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre (Isbister School), the oldest public school in Manitoba. The project is to be funded through Winnipeg School Division No. 1 with support from the Province of Manitoba.

Removal of temporary classrooms will allow landscaping of the main entrance on Vaughan Street. The Partnership will provide a financial contribution of \$80,000 for landscaping and to assist with renovations to the building.

### Stop the Presses

The Public Press Building at 290 Vaughan Street is a heritage building owned by the Partnership with 80% of available space leased- currently to a variety of non-profit tenants. These include an employment training centre for single parents, complete with day care facility; a centre for immigrant women; and a community financial counselling service. Physical improvements included extensive interior renovations and renovations to the building

have been assisted through the support of the Winnipeg Development Agreement Heritage Program. In 1997, the program matched the Partnership's \$90,000 contribution towards installation of new windows.

### To Market, To Market

Upgrades and repairs in The Forks Market represented a significant investment of the Partnership's financial resources. In 1996/97 \$306,550 was spent on upgrades for The Market including installation of a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. A comprehensive sewer back up system was installed as a flood protection measure. Other work on energy management controls is in progress.

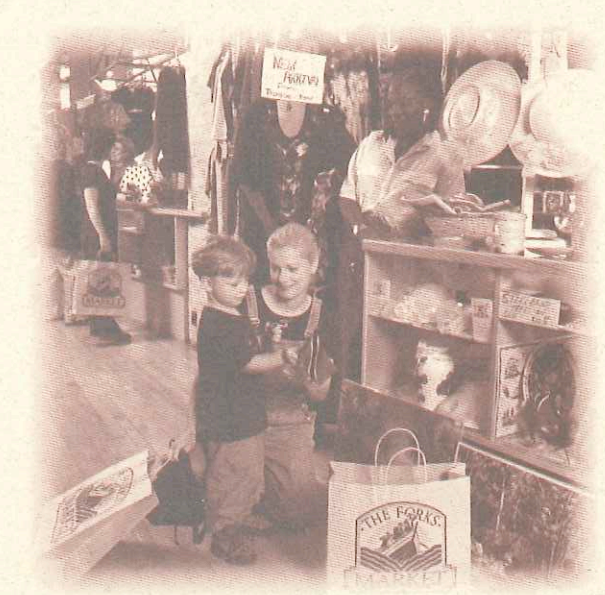


Photo credit: Doug Dealey



## Look Up, Look Way Up...

Some larger projects have been supported through public sector partnerships and initiatives. The first Canada/ Manitoba Infrastructure Program provided \$1.2 million toward development of Oodena - Celebration Circle. This \$1.7 million project combines an outdoor astronomical observatory with performance space. The design incorporated natural elements to prompt reflection of a time long past when people lived in harmony with nature, respecting the earth and gazing in awe at the heavens.

The lowest portions of the grass lined bowl were paved with cobblestones - historic materials reclaimed from other areas at The Forks. The bowl is geometrically aligned to the sunrise and sunset of the Autumnal and Vernal Equinoxes, Summer and Winter Solstices and Polaris - the North Star. It symbolizes the richness and vulnerability of "Mother Earth".

The bowl is defined by limestone monoliths. Light systems were installed and four strong lights shine upward meeting in the dark sky overhead, creating visual interest and enhancing special performances and ceremonies in the bowl below. Hollow steel armatures, sighting devices for naked eye astronomy, will be installed next. The very centre of the bowl offers a platform for performances and can also

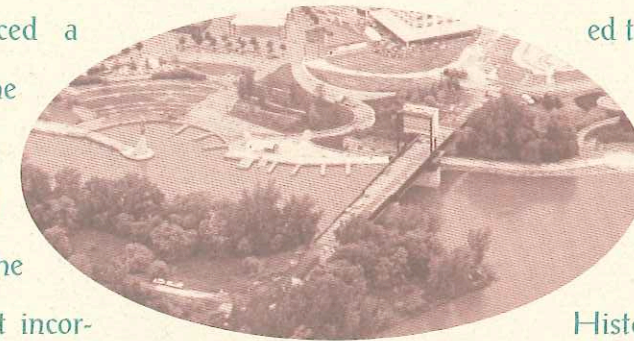
be used as a sundial where you are the shadow caster. In winter a fire pit will provide warmth for tellers of tales and watchers of the night sky.

This project won the National Honour Award for design excellence presented by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects in 1995. The name Oodena - Celebration Circle was selected following review of contest submissions by the Aboriginal Planning Committee and the Heritage Advisory Committee. It combines two sentiments: that this is a place for celebration and joyful gathering, put forward by Winnipegger Carol Adair, and that it is the Oodena - the heartbeat of the city, and the heart of the site. Oodena is an Ojibway word suggested by Barbara Nepinak, also of Winnipeg.



## Get To The Point?

Discussion and planning of potential facilities and activities on the South Point have been underway for several years. The Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee has produced a vision document for the long term development of this 2.5 hectare (6 acre) parcel of land between the rivers. A modest concept incorporating experiences of past Aboriginal life and depictions of various tribal groups at specific time periods and seasons is envisioned. An open air arbor to be used for Pow Wows, Jigging and



other Aboriginal and Métis celebrations is proposed as the lead project. These developments are to take place in time for the 1999 Pan American Games. The South Point is expected to be a venue for Aboriginal celebrations during the games.

The concrete counterweight of the Historic Rail Bridge was repaired in conjunction with the restoration of the steel structure. The Aboriginal Planning Committee plans to engage Aboriginal artists to decorate the counterweight.





## It's Often In-tents!

In preparation for the celebratory events of the 1999 Pan American Games, significant improvements will be made to Festival Park at The Forks. Underground services to provide technical support for festivals and a permanent bandshell are at the heart of the improvements. This development will also provide for a protected walkway, landscaping, a sculpture in Arrival Square, and lighting.

The refinements to Festival Park are intended to attract high quality entertainment to the site and meet the long term needs of festival organizers. The \$1.7 million project is partially supported through the Canada/ Manitoba Infrastructure Program. The improvements will include a gateway to Festival Park, a stage service area and will be integrated with cycling paths.



## Field of Dreams

As an adjacent development within The Forks mandate area, the proposed baseball park is a matter of much interest to the Partnership. City Council approved the terms of a 25 year lease of lands immediately north of The Forks, close to Portage and Main and the Exchange District, for development of the baseball facility, to be constructed in time for the 1999 Pan American Games.

As was the case when a new arena facility was considered for that site, the Partnership and the City will jointly review design plans to ensure a complementary approach to development within the mandate area. Other matters requiring attention will include roadway configuration, parking management, and the development and use of the river front and other surrounding areas.











# THE FORKS NORTH PORTAGE PARTNERSHIP



*Where The Two Rivers Meet.*