

**Downtown Revitalization: The Hamilton Experience**

by

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**Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of this thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

The role and function of downtowns have changed over time. Traditionally, downtowns were the social and economic hubs of a city. Downtown decline has been attributed to many interrelated factors including the construction of suburban areas, increased automobile use, and suburban shopping malls. Since the 1950s, several strategies have been used in North American cities in order to try and reverse downtown decline. Hamilton, Ontario, like many other North American mid-size cities, has attempted several revitalization projects in an attempt to renew the core.

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of factors that have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area within a mid-size city. This is explored through a case study of Hamilton, Ontario from the time period of 1955 to 2005. To address this question, a qualitative approach was used. This involved a literature review, the use of archival data, and key expert interviews on revitalization in downtown Hamilton. Firstly, this study identifies and reviews the history and trends of urban renewal in downtown Hamilton. Secondly, this study reviews whether there has been a gap between planning proposals and their implementation and if a gap exists, if it can be bridged.

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the character of downtown Hamilton was influenced by a series of plans and proposals aimed at core area renewal. The findings of this study indicate that large scale projects to demolish and rebuild tracts of the downtown, compete with suburban areas, or accommodate the automobile rather than pedestrians were not successful in the long-term at revitalizing the core area. Efforts that aided in downtown renewal included: public-private partnerships, private development, brownfield development, and creating a framework for future plans and renewal efforts through the Downtown Secondary Plan. Previous efforts failed because they relied too heavily on government funding, they were too large scale, they did not involve true public participation, and there was no solid framework backing the planning process.

This research also indicates that there is a gap between planning proposals and their implementation and that there is room for this gap to be narrowed. The conclusion that this gap cannot be bridged is clear, however, working towards narrowing this gap is important. Narrowing this gap would involve a less reactionary approach to planning and continuing with small scale incremental changes that build confidence in the downtown area and encourage a sense of place. These initiatives should be part of a larger vision and should continue to include public participation.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Downtowns are distinct urban areas. This is due to their traditional pedestrian-friendliness, historical character, mixed-use, and street-oriented environment (Filion, Hoernig, Bunting, & Sands, 2004; Robertson, 1995, 1999a). Downtown is synonymous with city centre and central business district (CBD). Other terms such as “core areas” and “central cities” are also often used when referring to downtowns and are used interchangeably in academic discussion and study (Filion, 1987; Ford, 1994, 1998). Downtowns are often described as the heart of a city, providing an identity and a sense of place in the greater community (Faulk, 1996; Paradis, 2000; Robertson, 1995, 1999a). The downtowns of many North American cities, however, are in a state of decline and have been for many decades (Filion & Gad, 2006; Leinberger, 2005).

Within the context of policy planning there are many inter-related factors that must be considered. These factors affect the planning process and its desired outcomes. Such factors include the economy, demography, and policy; as well as technology, the environment and socio-cultural changes. These inter-related factors play a role in planning process and must be addressed when reviewing downtown decline and renewal efforts. Key trends and shifts related to these factors are evident throughout the history of downtowns.

### **1.1 Downtown Decline & Revitalization**

The dynamics of decline in downtown areas are complex and multi-faceted. Downtown decline has been marked by: a lack of pedestrian-based activities, closure of major businesses, increased crime, decreasing social and human capital, lack of green space, crumbling infrastructure, abandoned or deteriorating buildings, increasing slum areas, high vacancy rates, and negative public perceptions (Jacobs, 1961; Robertson, 1995, 1999a, 1999b). Downtown

decline is attributed to many interrelated factors, including: the construction of suburban areas on the periphery of cities, increased automobile use, and the creation of suburban shopping malls (Burayidi, 2001; Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Gad, 2006; Leinberger, 2005; Rybczynski, 1995). These three factors have decentralized urban core activities and changed the location of social gatherings (Weaver, 1995).

In an effort to reverse this process, cities turned to urban renewal projects to revitalize their downtown core. Revitalization refers to various planning strategies aimed at reversing either absolute or relative activity loss in the CBD (Bunting & Millward, 1998). Defining a successful or unsuccessful downtown area is challenging both conceptually and empirically. Therefore, the measure of a successful downtown is broadly defined as: an active, street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly environment that is attractive to tourists and residents alike (Seasons, 2003). Successful downtowns are perceived as safe areas that have low vacancy rates and stable property values. These core areas have retained their cultural landscape and have a mix of commercial and residential land use (Robertson, 1995, 1999a). It is important to note that the image of a successful downtown changes over time. While decades ago a successful downtown consisted of new buildings and a downtown shopping mall, it now consists of lively pedestrian-oriented commercial streets (Kemp, 2000).

Revitalization strategies have taken many forms in an attempt to accommodate the automobile and compete with suburban shopping malls. Surface parking lots in the downtown core became widespread in an attempt to accommodate the automobile. Some cities also converted two-way streets into one-way streets in order to increase traffic flow and adapt to automobile use (Filion et al., 2004). As the automobile became more prevalent and public transit was no longer the primary form of transportation, many cities implemented road widening

strategies in an effort to accommodate the automobile (Filion et al., 2004). These revitalization strategies failed to renew the core and they made the downtown core less pedestrian friendly.

Downtown shopping malls were another revitalization strategy that took place in order to improve the core area. This approach was utilized in an effort to compete with suburban shopping malls (Faulk, 2006; Filion & Hammond, 2006; Filion et al, 2004; Lederer, 2007). This type of renewal took place from the late 1950s to the early 1980s (Filion & Hammond, 2006). When first built downtown malls appeared to do well however, a decade later this was no longer the case. There were visible signs of decline. It was at this time that lease renewals would have taken place and tenants did not renew their agreements (Filion & Hammond, 2008).

## **1.2 Downtown Decline in Mid-Size Cities**

Although renewal attempts within mid-size cities have been made, persistent challenges remain in these downtown areas. Some of these challenges are: social problems such as homelessness and poverty, poor aesthetics and design, business decline, economic uncertainty, and an aging infrastructure (Lederer, 2007). A mid-size city in this research refers to an urban area (census agglomerations (CAs) and census metropolitan areas (CMAs) with a population between 70,000 and 700,000 (Filion & Hammond, 2006).

Little research has been completed on mid-size cities in Canada and most research focuses on either large urban areas or smaller rural municipalities (Lederer, 2007). Mid-size cities do not have the assets that larger cities have such as world-class attractions and extensive public transportation systems (Filion et al., 2004). Mid-size cities have a more difficult time managing decline.

### **1.3 Study Rationale**

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of factors that have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area within a mid-size city. This will be explored through a case study of downtown Hamilton, Ontario from the time period of 1955 to 2005.

### **1.4 Significance**

While research on downtowns has received considerable attention, research on mid-size cities is lacking. Literature on downtown revitalization largely focuses on the experiences of larger urban areas (Burayidi, 2001; Lederer & Seasons, 2005; Seasons, 2003). It is important to consider the experiences of mid-size cities as they generally have a more difficult time managing decline (Filion et al., 2004). Solutions for larger cities do not guarantee that the same results in economic or social stability will occur for mid-size or smaller cities (Robertson, 1999b). Mid-size cities need research that contributes to the body of knowledge on downtown issues. This research will contribute to this body of knowledge. In addition, there is currently very little research examining the history of urban renewal strategies of downtown Hamilton. Cities are continually attempting to revitalize their urban cores with the intent of enabling the growth of a healthy viable downtown. This research is significant as it will attempt to explain why such urban renewal projects have largely failed in the past. The practical significance of this research is that recommendations can be put forth to the City of Hamilton on revitalization strategies for its downtown, based on the findings of this research.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the factors that have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area within a mid-size city. The literature review examines the importance of downtown areas, as well as the evolution and decline of downtowns over time. Further, it discusses revitalization efforts and trends that have been put forth throughout the years. The literature review concludes by reviewing case study information on Hamilton, Ontario.

### **2.1 The Importance of Downtowns**

This research focuses on the belief that downtowns are important unique areas. Downtown centres offer a diversity of activities (Filion & Gad, 2006; Rypkema, 2003) which differentiates the core from all other parts of the city. Downtown areas operate in a different manner than most other parts of the city (Rypkema, 2003). Traditionally, core areas have been transportation, entertainment, commerce, leisure, and retail hubs (Filion & Gad, 2006). An important aspect for commerce, the downtown core enables the continued ability to have face-to-face interactions amongst businesses and firms (Filion & Gad, 2006). Close proximity to key businesses allows for and promotes this type of interaction.

Successful downtown areas are built at a human scale, with street-level activity that allows for the concept of ‘eyes on the street’ (Jacobs, 1961). Having ‘eyes on the street’ allows for interaction among people and reduces the fear of real and perceived crime through the presence of people (Jacobs, 1961). People will walk 1500 feet or more, if they have an interesting and safe streetscape with a variety of sights and sounds along the way (Leinberger, 2005). Downtown areas are unique in that they are able to foster such walkable urbanism.

Another important aspect of downtowns is that they are the only part of a city that offers a wide variety of transit options which includes automobile use, mass transit, walking, and bicycling (Filion & Gad, 2006). The walking environment is a major asset to downtown areas and provides an alternative to other parts of the city that are dominated by automobile use (Filion & Gad, 2006; Leinberger, 2005).

Downtowns also provide an opportunity for tourism through sporting events, concerts, and other festivals and events (Robertson, 1999a). This aids in attracting what Richard Florida (2004) has termed the ‘creative class.’ These are individuals who value a rich street life and add economic value through their creativity (Florida, 2004). Such individuals include scientists, university professors, poets, architects, as well as those involved in art, design, music, or entertainment (Florida, 2004). Lastly, another important factor of downtown areas is that the prosperity of a city’s downtown has a positive impact on the city’s overall image (Robertson, 1999a).

## **2.2 The Evolution of Downtowns**

In order to understand the contemporary core area and how to effectively address its current problems, it is important to recognize the historical circumstances that have resulted in its current land use. By the 1850s, downtowns were identifiable as concentrations of stores, wholesale warehouses, artisanal ‘manufacturers,’ bank buildings, lawyers’ offices, courthouses, and city halls (Filion & Gad, 2006). Shortly after this, due to the concentrations of these establishments, residential components were added to the core (Filion & Gad, 2006). This occurred from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1890s (Filion & Gad, 2006). Urban development flourished from 1900 to 1930 (Robertson, 1997).

### **2.2.1 Economic Prosperity**

The economic prosperity during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century led to an overall increase in purchasing power (Robertson, 1997). This prosperity continued to fuel growth. The formation of corporate capitalism fuelled large business organizations in manufacturing, mining, transportation and finances to establish their head offices downtown; which, in turn, promoted the growth of stock exchanges, stockbrokers, and accountant offices downtown (Filion & Gad, 2006). Noticeable office districts were firmly established in the core (Filion & Gad, 2006) and retailers were able to expand and specialize as their market had increased (Robertson, 1997). The three main factors that aided in the establishment of these office districts included: maximum accessibility to a diversified labour force, agglomeration economies favouring a central location, and the prestige that came with having a downtown address (Filion & Gad, 2006). A strong identification to the downtown area, which represented major hubs of activities and social interactions, was evident (Filion & Bunting, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Changing Retail Sector**

A great number of shops and specialty stores chose to locate in the downtown core in order to benefit from the accessibility and the high number of shoppers (Filion & Gad, 2006). This increased accessibility and demand became important building blocks in the rapid growth of department stores (Robertson, 1997). Buildings were in close proximity, residential density was high, and shopping facilities were easily accessible within the core (Jacobs, 1961). The growth of department stores such as Eaton's aided in the transformation of retailing during this time (Filion & Gad, 2006). Department stores began to mass produce goods and no longer specialized, encouraging a diversification of goods for customer convenience (Hendrikson,



1979). Innovations such as electric lighting and elevators were a large part of this transformation (Filion & Gad, 2006). Close to these retailing activities, entertainment clusters with cinemas and theatres also began to grow after the 1900s (Filion & Gad, 2006).

### **2.2.3 Decentralization**

While downtown cores were vibrant and viable places in the early twentieth century, they reached their peak by 1930, just before the Great Depression (Hodge & Gordon, 2008). Decline happened gradually over the next three decades until large scale decentralization began to occur in downtown cores during the mid-1950s (Robertson, 1997; Filion & Bunting, 2006). This was largely due to the increased use of automobiles, which was the preferred method of transportation; suburbanites settling outside of the city boundaries, due in part to population growth; and suburban shopping malls becoming more prevalent (Burayidi, 2001; Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Gad, 2006; Hodge & Gordon, 2008; Leinberger, 2005; Robertson, 1997; Rybczynski, 1995). Distance decay describes the effect of distance on spatial or cultural interactions. By the mid-1950s, distance decay had taken its toll on downtown areas. Population and building density dropped (Filion & Bunting, 2006). It is at this time that downtowns spiralled into a continued state of decline.

### **2.3 Downtown Decline**

Many factors have contributed to the decline of downtowns throughout North America. Downtown areas have historically had the highest intensity of land use, were praised for their accessibility in terms of location in the city, and were naturally the CBD of the city (Filion & Gad, 2006). This has not been the case for many mid-size cities for decades. The decline of downtown areas can be attributed to many interrelated factors. As stated previously, some of these factors include increased automobile use, suburbanization, and the addition of suburban

shopping malls (Burayidi, 2001; Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Gad, 2006; Hodge & Gordon, 2008; Leinberger, 2005; Robertson, 1997; Rybczynski, 1995). In many cities, changes in retailing trends, suburbanization, as well as social, environmental, and economic forces stresses the viability of downtowns (Robertson, 1997; Seasons, 2003). A deteriorated core negatively impacts the quality of life within a city (Filion & Rutherford, 2000).

### **2.3.1 Transportation Trends & Suburban Sprawl**

The automobile created an environment where people could go further distances with greater ease (Filion & Gad, 2006). Transit ridership decreased during the 1950s which further impacted retailing in the core (Hodge & Gordon, 2008; Robertson, 1997). As automobile use became more prominent, public transit ceased to play the primary role in transportation and the clustering of services no longer became necessary (Bratt, 2010). The automobile provided a private, convenient, and fast alternative to public transit. This, in turn, allowed people to build on the city periphery where land was inexpensive and abundant (Filion & Gad, 2006). As more people moved to the suburbs, less people frequented the downtown core. Everywhere in North America, suburbanization has caused a relative and, in many cases, absolute decline of downtown areas (Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Rutherford, 2000; Leinberger, 2005). The lure of suburban areas included green surroundings, more space, and the freedom to travel by car (Leinberger, 2005). When compared to the suburbs, downtown areas appeared ill-suited to a lifestyle centered on both raising children and a high level of family consumption (Filion, 1987). Suburbanites did not want to mingle with the diversity of people that frequented the downtown core (Robertson, 1997). Increased car ownership and use were inextricably linked to single family home ownership in suburbia (Filion & Hammond, 2006).

### **2.3.2 Suburban Shopping Malls**

Shortly after suburbanization occurred suburban shopping malls were erected. As suburban settlement became more commonplace, retail services, entertainment, and select employment also relocated to suburban areas (Faulk, 2006). This catered to the convenience and efficiency that suburbanites were looking for (Robertson, 1997). Furthermore, it contributed to downtown decline because people were no longer going into the core for entertainment or retail. The decline of downtowns in smaller metropolitan cities or mid-size cities has often been more severe compared with the downtowns of larger cities (Filion et al., 2004) due to these factors. Downtowns of mid-size cities do not have assets comparable to those of larger cities in order to attract and retain people into the core. Such assets include important employment and retail concentrations, world class-attractions, and elaborate public transit networks (Filion et al., 2004). Also, suburbanites appreciate the perceived safety, predictability, and convenience that suburban shopping malls provide (Robertson, 1997). Suburban shopping malls are a controlled environment free of vehicular traffic, pollution, and outdoor weather (Robertson, 1997).

## **2.4 Downtown Revitalization**

### **2.4.1 Three Generations of Urban Renewal Policies**

Decline has brought about many urban renewal projects throughout the decades, some of which temporarily aided in the renewal of downtown areas, but for the most part, have largely failed to revitalize the urban core (Filion et. al., 2004). Research indicates that there are identifiable trends within revitalization throughout time. Carmon (1999) discusses *Three Generations of Urban Renewal Policies* which includes the era of the bulldozer, neighbourhood rehabilitation, and the revitalization of downtown areas.

### **2.4.1.2 Bulldozer Era**

The era of the bulldozer addresses the emphasis that was put on demolishing and rebuilding entire sections of the downtown. This form of urban renewal in Canada took place from 1950-1970 (Carter, 1991; Hodge & Gordon, 2008). A significant part of this phase involved slum clearance in order to make 'better use' of the urban land and tear down old rundown housing stock (Carmon, 1999; Hodge & Gordon, 2008). Areas of downtown that were seen as obsolete were razed with the expectation that rebuilding would fuel downtown growth (Anderson, 1964). Nevertheless, this form of urban renewal became very unpopular as it displaced residents and caused destruction of close-knit communities. Oftentimes, displaced residents of razed areas were forced to relocate in public housing, typically in another district (Hodge & Gordon, 2008). Changing the physical environment without consideration for social behaviour and social ties was not a successful avenue in the revitalization of downtown areas. Within Canada, criticisms regarding the construction of roads and commercial buildings in place of housing were voiced (Carter, 1991). Due to the long-term economic and social costs of the displacement and demolition policies, as well as public protest, the bulldozer approach as a key revitalization strategy was abandoned (Carmon, 1999).

### **2.4.1.3 Neighbourhood Rehabilitation**

The neighbourhood rehabilitation phase emphasized a broad approach to social problems. Public opinion became more favourable and public programs aimed at improving the existing housing stock rather than continuing to demolish it became popular (Carmon, 1999; Hodge & Gordon, 2008). Social services were also improved and the goal of creating a better quality of life for all became important (Carmon, 1999). In several Western countries this form of urban renewal took place from 1965 through to the 1990's (Hodge & Gordon, 2008). Canada's

Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), was approved in 1973. This program focused on renovating the existing house stock, demolishing only select derelict housing, and allocating funds to social and community services (Lyon & Newman, 1986; Carter, 1991). This program ensured that the participation of residents would be included in the decision making process (Lyon & Newman 1986; Carter, 1991). This form of urban renewal became less popular as governments and citizens of several Western countries were dissatisfied by the results of research (Carmon, 1999). Studies were unable to identify if significant positive change had resulted from the social programs implemented (Carmon, 1999). Second generation social programs were cancelled and a new phase in urban renewal took place (Carmon, 1999).

#### **2.4.1.4 Revitalization of Downtown Areas**

Lastly, the revitalization of downtown areas emphasized a business-like approach whereby the focus was on economic development. This phase of urban renewal involved the creation of many public-private partnerships enabling the creation of shopping malls, convention centres, and hotels (Carmon, 1999). Partnerships were largely focused on the opportunity to create economic benefits for cities (Carmon, 1999). These large scale projects attracted local businesses, local customers and tourists, and added to the local tax base (Carmon, 1999). While public-private partnerships have transformed the nature of city development practices, some criticize this type of urban renewal. The ‘trickle down’ theory, whereby benefits from rapid economic developments filter down to all levels of society, has not been the case in this phase of downtown redevelopment. Instead, downtown areas in the 1980s and 1990s became known as ‘divided cities’ and ‘cities of conflict’ (Marcuse, 1993), thus, increasing the divide between the rich and the poor.

Carmon's *Three Generations of Urban Renewal Policies* have been applied to cities in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and cities in Western Europe. In light of these past failures, or partial successes, lessons can be learned and, along with current trends in the political economy, successful approaches to urban renewal can take place. First generation slum clearances were detrimental to the residents and communities alike. Moreover, the timeline to complete slum clearance projects was typically 20-40 years, putting a heavy economic burden on both public and private bodies (Carmon, 1999). The social programs put in place during the second generation proved to be beneficial to residents to a certain extent, and did reduce the gap between the poor and more affluent groups; but it did not succeed in raising the low status of those neighbourhoods (Carmon, 1999). While the third generation of urban renewal, neighbourhood revitalization, resulted in rapid improvement of the neighbourhood, it failed to help the neighbourhood residents (Carmon, 1999).

#### **2.4.2 Adaptation to the Automobile**

Downtown revitalization in North America according to Filion et al. (2004) can be grouped into three phases: adaptation to automobile accessibility, head-on competition with the suburbs, and the accentuation of a distinct core identity. Early strategies of the 1950s and 1960s aimed at maintaining the prestige of the downtown within a changing transportation environment (Filion et al., 2004). Attempts within this phase included widening arterial roads and the creation of radial expressways to channel flows of cars into the downtown (Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Hammond, 2006). However, it soon became clear that adapting to new transit uses alone would not renew the downtown core (Filion et al., 2004).

### **2.4.3 Competition with the Suburbs**

Policymakers became convinced that they needed to tailor downtowns to the shopping tastes of the day (Filion et al., 2004). This phase lasted from the late 1950s to the early 1980s (Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Hammond, 2006). The focus was on razing blighted areas and creating up-to-date buildings. This strategy was grounded in the theory that by providing downtowns with shopping malls and replicating conditions found in suburban shopping centres, downtowns could successfully compete with the suburbs (Filion et al., 2004). The design of downtown shopping malls enabled a controlled environment in an attempt to alleviate fears of the middle-class regarding safety in the downtown core (Robertson, 1997).

Poor retail performance, however, caused malls to lose their stores and seek other functions (Filion & Hammond, 2006). Costs in the downtown core are generally higher than the suburbs in terms of land, labour construction, and operation costs (Robertson, 1997). Vacancy rates became much higher than expected (Filion & Hammond, 2006; Winter, 2003). In many places redevelopment projects continued for decades and for much of that time, empty buildings and vacant lots became commonplace in the city centre (Carmon, 1999).

Downtown shopping malls created a sterile and artificial environment representing the opposite of what the city centre had historically been (Robertson, 1997). This caused vast social and economic damage. The reliance on a revitalization strategy focusing on downtown shopping malls and their ultimate failure was due to a misconception that downtown shopping malls could compete with suburban shopping malls. Downtown shopping centres tended to be smaller in size and generally did not provide free parking (Filion & Hammond, 2006). This type of public sector intervention rarely reached the standards of suburban shopping malls (Filion & Hammond, 2006).

#### **2.4.4 Core Identity**

As Filion et al. (2004) discuss, during the 1970s policymakers realized that urban renewal to date, had not enabled downtown growth, and instead, focused efforts on creating a distinct core identity. This shift was provoked by the growing recognition that previous efforts at reversing CBD decline were unsuccessful (Filion et al., 2004). Enhancing the uniqueness of the core became important. Downtowns no longer tried to compete with the suburbs and focused instead on their distinction from the suburbs (Filion et al., 2004). This was done in terms of the nature of their activities, a more compact built environment, and the predominance of pedestrian movement in the downtown (Robertson, 1995).

#### **2.4.5 Factors that Affect the Planning Process**

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, community design and infrastructure issues re-emerged in the form of smart growth, new-urbanism, and transit-oriented-design. Several factors have changed the context of planning policy. Strategies have more recently targeted intensification, re-urbanization, new urbanism and smart growth (Bunting, Filion, Hoernig, Lederer, & Seasons, 2007). North American mid-size cities display trends suggestive of low density and dispersed land-use and travel patterns (Bunting *et al.*, 2007). In response to this, future trends will likely be driven by demographic and global economic forces (Filion, 2010). These driving forces largely impact the type of planning that is carried out in Canada.

Economic turbulence can make planning and revitalization efforts more difficult. It is important to consider the steep decline in manufacturing due to global economic changes. This has been evident in cities across North America. Globalization has had a devastating effect on manufacturing employment in Canada (Filion, 2010). Canadian cities have had to shift from a manufacturing-based economy to a more service-based economy. Due to a decline in



production, there is a reliance on innovative and knowledge-intensive activities to compete on a global level (Filion & Bunting, 2008). This explains the importance given to attracting a ‘creative class,’ on a local level (Florida, 2002).

Demography also plays a key role in planning. Attracting and retaining immigrants to mid-size cities is important to increase density. Smaller and mid-size cities have a more difficult time attracting immigrants (Fiedler, Hyndman, & Schuurman, 2006). From a policy perspective it is more difficult for a small or mid-size city to attract new immigrants to create this expanded labour force. This is because new immigrants tend to settle in areas based on friends, family, employment, and lifestyle (Fiedler, Hyndman, & Schuurman, 2006). Current policy has had limited success in attracting new immigrants to mid-size cities for these reasons.

Also, there is an increased political influence at a national scale, while there is a decrease in political impact (Filion, 2010). It has become more difficult to secure conditions to improve the future of the economy. The economic restructuring of industry, the dispersion of jobs, and shifts in immigration policy have changed the political urban system (Walks, 2009).

Governments have become so complex and so costly to maintain that the recent trend has been to downsize governments and to privatize public facilities and services (Filion & Bunting, 2008).

Table 1 summarizes the contextual planning issues for Canadian cities. It reviews the three key inter-related factors that have an impact on the planning process and how these factors have impacted planning for Canadian cities.

Table 1: Contextual Planning Issues for Canadian Cities

Factor	Trend
Economy	Planning follows cyclical changes relating to the turbulent, globalized economy. Decline in manufacturing. Shift to service sector.
Demography	Reliance on immigration for population growth, new immigrants favour larger cities
Policy	Neoliberal approach, downsizing of responsibilities within the service sector. Shift to privatization of public services & facilities, financial restrictions

(Rubino, 2016)

## 2.5 Case Study: Hamilton, Ontario

### 2.5.1 History of Hamilton

Hamilton, Ontario has a rich and distinct history. It is one of the oldest regions in Ontario and is defined by its geographic features and its key location as a main transportation hub (Arnott et al., 2008). In 1785, Loyalists began settling in what was then called the Head of the Lake, now known as Hamilton, Ontario (Wesley, 2001). Most were United Empire Loyalists who had fled the United States during the American Revolution (Arnott et al., 2008; Hamilton Public Library (HPL), 1999; Peace, 2008; Proulx, 1971; Wesley, 2001). By 1791, 31 families were recorded as living in Head of the Lake (Arnott et al., 2008; HPL, 2000). By 1815, George Hamilton, a wealthy merchant and politician laid out streets for a town site in Barton Township where he purchased 257 acres of land, beginning the development of the city named in his honour (Arnott et al., 2008; Wesley, 2001). George Hamilton donated a piece of triangular land at King and James called ‘The Gore’ (Arnott et al. 2008; HPL, 2000; Proulx, 1971). This piece of land was to be matched by Nathaniel Hughson to make a square, but this donation was never made and ‘The Gore’ (Gore Park) remained as it is today (Arnott et al., 2008; Proulx, 1971).

During the 1830s, the opening of the canal through the sandstrip which separates Lake Ontario from Hamilton Harbour was completed (HPL, 2001; Wesley, 2001). With the canal completed, Head of the Lake became a lake port and the transshipment of goods necessitated the building of wharves, warehouses, and other dock facilities in the area and became known as Port Hamilton (Henley, 2009). Head of the Lake was incorporated as a town in 1833 and as a city in 1846 (Arnott et al., 2008; HPL, 2000; Wesley, 2001). At this time, the population was 6,832 (HPL, 2000).

By 1854 the Great Western Railway (GWR) opened in Hamilton, linking the city to United States (U.S.) markets via the Niagara Suspension Bridge (Arnott et al., 2008; HPL, 2001; Wesley, 2001). This was crucial in getting the steel industry established in Hamilton. By the end of 1855, the Hamilton-Toronto line of the GWR also opened (HPL, 2001). Following the completion of the GWR, Hamilton became a dominant population and commercial centre at the Head of the Lake. At this time Hamilton's population increased from a few thousand to twenty thousand very quickly, creating one of Canada's largest population booms (Wesley, 2001).

While the 1870's were a time of economic downturn, industrial progress continued. In 1892, the first electric streetcar began operating in Hamilton with two routes, one along King Street East and the other along James Street North (Arnott et al., 2008; HPL, 2000). These electric cars would continue to be used on Hamilton streets until 1951 (HPL, 2000).

By the twentieth century, Hamilton became a more urbanized area rich with industry while still retaining valuable agricultural land. It included distinct small towns which added character and value to the area (Henley, 2009). At this point it was established as a working-class city built on heavy industry. In 1910, the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco) was formed. For many years, this became a major employer in Hamilton, contributing to the city's blue collar

image (Arnott et al., 2008). Shortly after the formation of Stelco, a new steel foundry Dominion Steel Castings Limited, later to be known as Dominion Foundries and Steel Limited (Dofasco), was established (HPL, 2001). Hamilton became an important iron- and steel-producing city because of its easy access to product: limestone came from the Niagara Escarpment; coal was mined in Appalachia; and iron ore was mined from the Canadian Shield (HPL, 1999).

In 1913, the North American economy went through a recession (HPL, 2001). Heavy industry was greatly affected leaving many unemployed. During World War I, Hamilton survived as Canadian metal manufacturers were needed to manufacture munitions (HPL, 2001). The industrial growth that followed the war resulted in growth and expansion within the city. Both Stelco and Dofasco worked to keep up with increasing demands (HPL, 2000). By 1926, Hamilton was the third largest manufacturing centre in Canada (HPL, 2001). By the end of the decade, trolley cars were being replaced by gas-powered street busses (HPL, 2001). In 1929, when the Great Depression started, Hamilton had 36,000 paid workers; however, during the worst of the Depression this number dropped to 22,000 paid workers (HPL, 2001). It would take Hamilton until 1937 for the number of paid workers to reach 36,000 again (HPL, 2001).

As World War II began, industrial production increased yet again as it did during World War I, concentrating mainly on manufacturing and textile industries (HPL, 2001; Wesley, 2001). By the late 1940's, the streets of downtown Hamilton were crowded with people. Relaxed liquor laws, entertainment, and a flourishing economy contributed to this period of prosperity for the city core (HPL, 2000). However, due to the freedom that automobiles brought, the 1950s saw phenomenal growth in building and services on the mountain (HPL, 1999; Wesley, 2001). Citizens were looking to move away from the smoke and crowded conditions of the bayfront and

downtown areas (Proulx, 1971). The population on the mountain from 1946 to 1954 increased from 8,000 to 33,545 (HPL, 1999).

As Hamilton expanded, it annexed portions of Ancaster Township to the west, portions of Saltfleet Township to the east, and portions of Barton Township to the east and south, eventually annexing all of Barton Township by 1960 (Arnott et al., 2008). These areas grew quickly due to their locations. In 1955, the Centre Mall opened on Barton Street. It was Canada's first shopping mall. Throughout the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's industry continued to progress and many projects were undertaken. Several projects were aimed at improving the downtown core. The 1970's saw the construction of Jackson Square and the new Art Gallery of Hamilton (HPL, 2000). Projects continued to be built, and in 1981 the Hamilton Convention Centre opened followed by Copps Coliseum in 1985 (Arnott et al, 2008).

During the 1990's continued attempts to revitalize the downtown core were undertaken, such as free parking during designated times in the downtown core. Volunteers even held Charrettes to generate ideas as to why the downtown core continued to be in decline (HPL, 2000). Most ideas were centred on the issues of parking, taxes, traffic, and one-way streets (HPL, 2000). In 2001, Hamilton and five surrounding municipalities, Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek, merged to form a new amalgamated City of Hamilton (Arnott et al., 2008).

### **2.5.2 Geography**

The City of Hamilton is located at the western tip of Lake Ontario midway between Toronto and Niagara Falls. It is bordered by the City of Burlington to the west, Grimsby to the east and travelling south of the city towards Lake Erie, the First Nations Reserve. Hamilton Harbour, at the western end of Lake Ontario, borders the city to the North (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Hamilton, Ontario



(Google Maps, 2015)

Present day Hamilton sits in an area referred to as the Niagara Peninsula (Arnott et al, 2008). A defining feature of Hamilton’s landscape is the Niagara Escarpment, locally known as the ‘mountain.’ It runs through the centre of Hamilton, effectively dividing it into ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ parts (Arnott et al., 2008; Wakefield and McMullan, 2005). The steep rock face throughout the Niagara Escarpment provides the city with more than 60 waterfalls (Arnott et al., 2008). Hamilton covers 1,117.2km<sup>2</sup> of land area (Arnott et al., 2008).

### 2.5.3 Demography

During the early twentieth century Hamilton became home to many new immigrants. New immigrants came from Britain, Scotland, Ireland, as well as from eastern and southern European countries (Arnott et al., 2008). During the late nineteenth century several Italian immigrants came to Hamilton to work on the Toronto, Hamilton, and Buffalo (TH&B) Railway and in the area’s foundries and quarries (Arnott et al., 2008). A second wave of Italian immigrants came to Hamilton following World War II (Wesley, 2001). They came mainly from southern Italy seeking better economic opportunities. Hamilton was able to offer good job

prospects in the construction and steel industries. By 1961, approximately six per cent of the City's population claimed Italian heritage (Arnott et al., 2008). The Italian community is still very much present in Hamilton. In 2001, Hamilton had the fourth largest number of Italian Canadian citizens in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). According to the 2006 Census, Italian was spoken by 32,120 Hamilton residents; the most other than English in response to language spoken most often at home (Statistics Canada, 2006). Italian was followed by Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish (Statistics Canada, 2006). Immigration following World War II was also seen from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, and elsewhere, which has helped shape the City's culture (Arnott et al., 2008). Immigration continues to shape Hamilton's culture, with immigration accounting for about 85 per cent of Hamilton's population growth (Arnott et al., 2008).

The current population of Hamilton's census metropolitan area (CMA) is 692,911 and is expected to increase by 81,000 households by the year 2031 (Arnott et al., 2008). Hamilton saw a population increase of 2.9 per cent from the 2001 to the 2006 census (Statistics Canada, 2006). This represents an overall decrease from the 4.8 per cent growth rate from 2001 to 2006. Hamilton has the eighth largest population of all Canadian cities and remains the fourth largest of all Ontario cities, preceded by Toronto, Ottawa and Mississauga (Statistics Canada, 2006). The population density of Hamilton is 451.6 people/km<sup>2</sup> (Statistics Canada, 2006).

#### **2.5.4 Economy**

Industry became an important part of the economy early on in Hamilton's history. Small industries thrived and the Industrial Revolution brought more industry to the Hamilton area (HPL, 2001). Stoves, used for both cooking and heating, were one of the first trades to interest Hamilton settlers (HPL, 2001). Manufacturing in Hamilton grew due to its proximity to the iron-

traders of New York. Several foundries emerged within Hamilton and by 1850 one third of the tonnage entering Burlington Bay through the canal was iron, much of it being shipped to the city foundries (HPL, 2001).

Hamilton's proximity to both Toronto and the United States (U.S.) border allows for easy access to ship and receive goods and materials. Steel dominated the City's economic landscape. Although steel has been at the heart of Hamilton's economy, it has been in decline in recent decades. The service sector is now increasing. McMaster University and the Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation have aided in the development of this sector. From the 1970s to the 1990s industries continued to progress into a new industrial revolution whereby companies advanced in computer technology (Wesley, 2001). They did so for precision, automation, and efficiency in the factories (HPL, 2000). An example of the move towards technology-based industry is well reflected in a company called Wescam Incorporated, founded in 1974 (HPL, 2001). Wescam Incorporated specializes in wireless visual information systems for government and commercial customers. As rapid changes in technology continue to take place, it is likely that the manufacturing sector will continue to decline.

### **2.5.5 Transportation**

Hamilton has an extensive transportation system. Goods and materials can be shipped and received via an established network of expressways, rail lines, water vessels, and by air. Hamilton sits on the mid-point of the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) – a major transportation highway running from Toronto to the U.S. border. The 401 highway is easily accessible via the 403 highway. This Canadian link to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) super highway connects Ontario to the I-75 serving Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and the I-90 connecting Ontario to the eastern seaboard (Arnott et al., 2008). Also,



because the U.S. border is only a half an hour drive from Hamilton, it allows for access to key major urban markets in the United States (Arnott et al., 2008).

Hamilton is home to the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport. For passengers, it was intended to offer competitive passenger carrier service, low airport fees, quick aircraft turnaround, little congestion, and low cost parking (Arnott et al., 2008) however; most of the airport's activity is centred on air cargo. Hamilton's international airport is Canada's largest courier and cargo airport. It has a 24 hour – 365 day cargo operation schedule. This coupled with its strategic location makes it Canada's largest integrated courier airport (Arnott et al., 2008).

The port in Hamilton is also an important asset to the City's economy. Its location in the centre of Ontario's Golden Horseshoe is vital to its success. It is the busiest commercial port on the Great Lakes (Arnott et al., 2008) and one of the busiest in the country. In 2007, almost 12 million tonnes of material moved through the port (Arnott et al., 2008).

### **2.5.6 Downtown**

The downtown area of Hamilton is the oldest part of the city and has undergone many urban renewal developments from the 1950s onward in an attempt to revitalize the downtown. During the late 1950s, efforts were made to minimize Hamilton's heritage as an industrial town in favour of a new modern image to try to renew the downtown core (Missett, 1995). Entire blocks of nineteenth century buildings were razed in order to make way for newer, more modern buildings (Missett, 1995; Wesley, 2001). While redevelopment was necessary, defining elements of the community were sacrificed including the Victorian style City Hall building and the original Gore Park Fountain (Missett, 1995; Wesley, 2001). Some large scale redevelopment projects that have taken place in the downtown core over the last 50 years include the erection of

the Lloyd. D. Jackson Square shopping mall, Copps Coliseum stadium, and the Hamilton Convention Centre.

Challenges that the downtown still faces include high commercial and residential vacancy rates and a non-pedestrian friendly environment. This was in part created by the addition of many surface area parking lots and street widening for vehicles (Arnott et al., 2008). These problems are not unique to Hamilton, as Hamilton's downtown struggles with many of the same challenges as other North American urban centres (Missett, 1995; Wesley, 2001).

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Qualitative Inquiry**

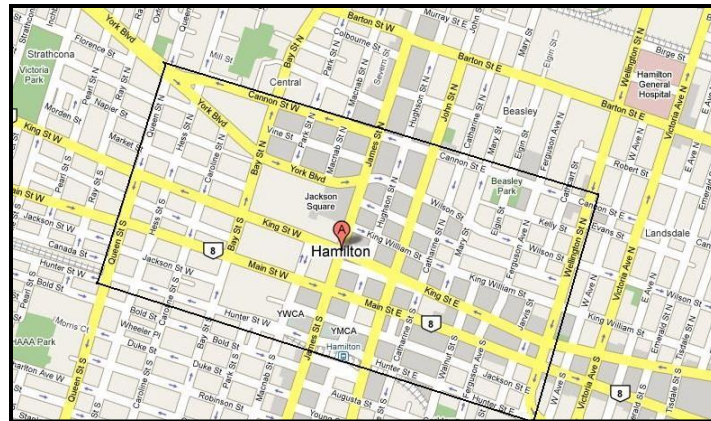
This research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is defined as “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (Babbie, 2004: 370). Research merits using a qualitative approach when a concept needs to be understood as little research has been done on it (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative inquiry appropriately addresses the research questions and objectives put forth in this study.

### **3.2 Case Study Approach**

This research uses a case study approach. Case studies provide an in-depth examination of one or a few instances of social phenomenon whereby the phenomenon is studied in context (Babbie, 2004). Case study approaches are bounded by time and activity, whereby various data collection methods are used to obtain detailed information over a continued period of time (Creswell, 2009). Hamilton, Ontario’s core area urban renewal schemes are examined from 1955 to 2005.

The street boundaries to delineate the downtown that are used in this research are in accordance with the boundaries used by the City of Hamilton’s Downtown Secondary Plan (DSP) created in 2001. The boundaries remain the same in the amended DSPs. The street boundaries are: Queen Street South, Cannon Street West, Wellington Street North, and Hunter Street West (See Figure 2). This research approach consists of a two-part strategy in which the completion of part one is necessary for the completion of part two.

Figure 2: Downtown Hamilton



(Google Maps, 2014)

### 3.3 Research Questions

The main research question that this study seeks to answer is:

What are the factors that have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area within a mid-size city using Hamilton, Ontario as a case study?

In addition to answering this main research question, sub-questions include:

- 1) What is the history of the downtown planning process in Hamilton?
- 2) What trends in urban renewal have taken place in downtown Hamilton?
- 3) For the urban renewal attempts that have failed, why have they been so unsuccessful?
- 4) Has there been a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and their implementation? If so, can this gap be bridged or should the status quo be maintained?

### 3.4 Archival Data

Firstly, archival data was reviewed. Key documents reviewed include municipal scrapbooks, city planning and consulting company reports, secondary plans relating to the downtown area, as well as aerial photos, bird's eye view maps, and fire insurance plans of downtown Hamilton. As Patton (2002:294) states, "... documents prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them, but also as a stimulus for paths of inquiry

that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing.” Municipal scrapbooks provide valuable information on the history of an area over time. The three scrapbooks entitled ‘Urban Renewal – Downtown’ were fully photocopied from the Hamilton Public Library (HPL) and then coded for analysis. The Urban Renewal scrapbooks were already divided into three time frames by volume: Vol. I 1951- 1982; Vol. II 1983-1994; and Vol. III 1995-2012. The initial phase of coding included a thorough review of all articles. Next the articles were again reviewed keeping the first two research questions in mind:

- 1) What is the history of the downtown planning process in Hamilton?
- 2) What trends in urban renewal have taken place in downtown Hamilton?

Text relating to the history and trends of urban renewal in downtown Hamilton were highlighted. With the relevant text selected emergent themes were established. Articles were then separated into eight main categories based on article content: North End, Civic Square, York Street, Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) & Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Gore Park, Private Redevelopment, Brownfields, and the Downtown Secondary Plan: Putting the People First. These themes were based on answering the first two research questions, addressing the history of urban renewal in downtown Hamilton and identifying key trends over time. Within each category articles were colour-coded by the original scrapbook volume: Volume I 1951-1982 red; Volume II 1983-1994 blue; and Volume III 1995-2012 black. This provided a timeline for renewal projects and trends. Once articles were grouped together prominent renewal strategies and patterns emerged.

Fire insurance plans are unique in their detail and display urban areas at a very large scale (Moulder, 1993). Fire insurance plans outline shape, placement on the lot, material of construction, height, occupancy or use for every building (Moulder, 1993). This is useful for

tracking land use patterns over time. The review of archival data aids in answering what the history of the downtown planning process has been in Hamilton, as well as what trends in urban renewal have taken place.

### **3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Secondly, three semi-structured interviews with a total of six participants were conducted with planners as well as other urban professionals involved in the urban renewal process for Hamilton's downtown core throughout the decades under study. Of the three interviews, two were individual interviews and one consisted of a group interview of four people, for a total of six respondents. These included: City of Hamilton employees, historians, politicians as well as academics.

The interview respondents all have extensive knowledge on downtown Hamilton having studied downtown renewal in Hamilton for several years. Their expertise on downtown renewal in Hamilton has allowed them to co-author books, articles, and planning documents on downtown Hamilton. These individuals have been involved and continue to be actively involved with many boards and groups relating to Hamilton's core. Several interviewees have also lived through earlier renewal efforts which give a well-rounded perspective on how renewal has progressed in the core.

Respondents have all worked in their respective fields for several years, many for decades adding to the credibility of their input. The diverse professional backgrounds that the participants have allows for a comprehensive perspective on past, present, and future renewal in the core. These backgrounds include: community planning, urban renewal, economic development, business development, urban design, architecture, politics, and history.

Qualitative research typically focuses in-depth on relatively small samples sizes, as it depends more on the purpose of the research, what will be useful, and what can be done with available time and resources (Patton, 2002). Interviews allow participants to provide useful historical information (Creswell, 2009). A sample size of three interviews and six respondents provides sufficient insight and information-rich data on planning practices and processes involved in downtown Hamilton from 1955 to 2005 without gathering an overwhelming quantity of data. Coding for the data was done manually without computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) as it is not necessary for small data sets. CAQDAS also encourages quantitative data analysis of qualitative data which can lessen the role of the researcher in the analysis, distancing the researcher from the data. The number of interviews was also manageable within the given timeframe to complete this research. The interviews are used to further discuss what was found in the archival data. Approval from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo was obtained in order to complete the key informant interviews.

### **3.6 Sampling**

The purpose of sampling is to collect information that clarifies and deepens understanding (Neuman, 2003). The method of sampling that was initially used is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is often used in exploratory research (Neuman, 2003). It involves selecting certain individuals with a specific purpose in mind, in this case selecting individuals who were involved in the planning processes of downtown Hamilton within the time period under study. The goal of purposive sampling is to select data-rich cases that will shed light on the questions under study (Patton, 2002).

The review of archival data aids in identifying these individuals and the revitalization efforts that are addressed during the interviews. As a result, information on the thoughts, hopes, and ideas of how these urban renewal processes would aid in the revitalization of the downtown and ways in which these processes did not meet the expectations of the interviewees is evident. The purpose of using this sampling method in this case study is not to generalize to a larger population, but rather to gain a deeper understanding of the study under investigation. This sampling method enables in-depth information and provides insight on the latter two sub-questions. These are:

- 1) Why have urban renewal schemes largely failed in the past?
- 2) Is there a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and the implementation of these plans? Key informant interviews provide insight on as to whether a gap can be bridged or if the status quo should be maintained.

Snowball sampling was also used once the interview process had begun. Researchers use snowball sampling in combination with purposive sampling (Neuman, 2003). Snowball sampling includes using the key informants to recommend other contacts. Snowball sampling was used to find candidates for the group interview. An interview respondent suggested inviting other individuals to create a group interview setting. The group interview with these individuals was decided upon to gain a well-rounded and thorough perspective on the history and the planning process of downtown Hamilton throughout the time period under study. A crucial feature of snowball sampling is that each person is connected with another through a direct or indirect linkage (Neuman, 2003), and chooses to provide the researcher with this connection.

All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed into Microsoft Word to be coded for emergent themes and factors contributing to the failure of revitalization efforts. In order to



enhance credibility, all participants were sent a summary document to review the data that would be used from the interviews in order to ensure its accuracy. Member checking enables the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific descriptions back to participants to make sure that the findings are accurate (Creswell, 2009).

### **3.7 Framework**

A theory's primary purpose is to explain, providing a logical argument for why a phenomenon is occurring (Palys, 1997). This research aims to explain why downtown revitalization efforts in Hamilton have been unsuccessful. In qualitative research theory is not something that one starts with; it is something that is built, recognizing that one theory will not necessarily account for all aspects of a problem (Palys, 1997). This research is exploratory and empirically based. It takes an inductive case-study approach in an attempt to understand the factors relating to the unsuccessful revitalization of Hamilton's downtown core on its own terms. It is based on observed and measured phenomena whereby knowledge is derived from experience, rather than from theory (Creswell, 2009; Palys, 1997).

### **3.8 Limitations**

The general research approach is based on qualitative methods. The qualitative method that supports this research is face-to-face semi-structured interviews in which participants answer questions with respect to what they think is significant. This research tool relies on participant honesty. A limitation however, is that this method cannot distinguish between fact and fiction. Other limitations to qualitative research include 'over identifying' with the subject or area of focus; the ambiguity of purely verbal descriptions; considerations for context; and difficulties with summarizing the data (Babbie, 2004; Palys, 1997).

A possible weakness in the methodology lies within interviewing individuals who have been involved in the planning process of downtown Hamilton. It was difficult to find contacts that were involved in the planning process of downtown Hamilton decades ago. Several individuals no longer resided or worked in the area, some individuals were deceased, and some individuals may not have recalled the various projects that they were involved in decades ago. This poses a problem in gathering data from the earlier decades within the study and to some extent, results in having to rely on participants' knowledge of earlier projects that they were not directly involved in. Also, due to the small sample size of this research, and its specificity to downtown Hamilton, opinions cannot be generalized to all mid-size cities in North America. These opinions are, however, still of interest. Despite these concerns, the interviewees were knowledgeable and credible individuals with an exceptional and extensive understanding of downtown Hamilton's past and current revitalization plans. This case study is too specific for broad generalizations. Planning recommendations for downtown revitalization can be made, but the success of implementing these recommendations in another city cannot be predicted as they are predicated in this case study.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from municipal scrapbooks, city planning documents, as well as consulting company reports. These findings outline a timeline for the revitalization efforts that have taken place in downtown Hamilton from 1955 to 2005. This review also reveals key trends in urban renewal that have taken place in downtown Hamilton. Key stakeholder interview findings are also discussed in this chapter. These findings outline why failed urban renewal attempts were so unsuccessful and if there has been a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and their implementation. Lastly, it highlights whether there is a gap, and if this gap can be bridged or if the status quo should be maintained.

Three semi-structured interviews with six participants were completed with individuals who have extensive knowledge on renewal in downtown Hamilton. Two of the interviews conducted were individual interviews while one interview consisted of a group. Municipal planners, historians, politicians, and city employees were the professions held by respondents. Below are the eight main urban renewal projects that have taken place in Hamilton between 1955 and 2005. These plans were found through archival data and the interview data supports these findings.

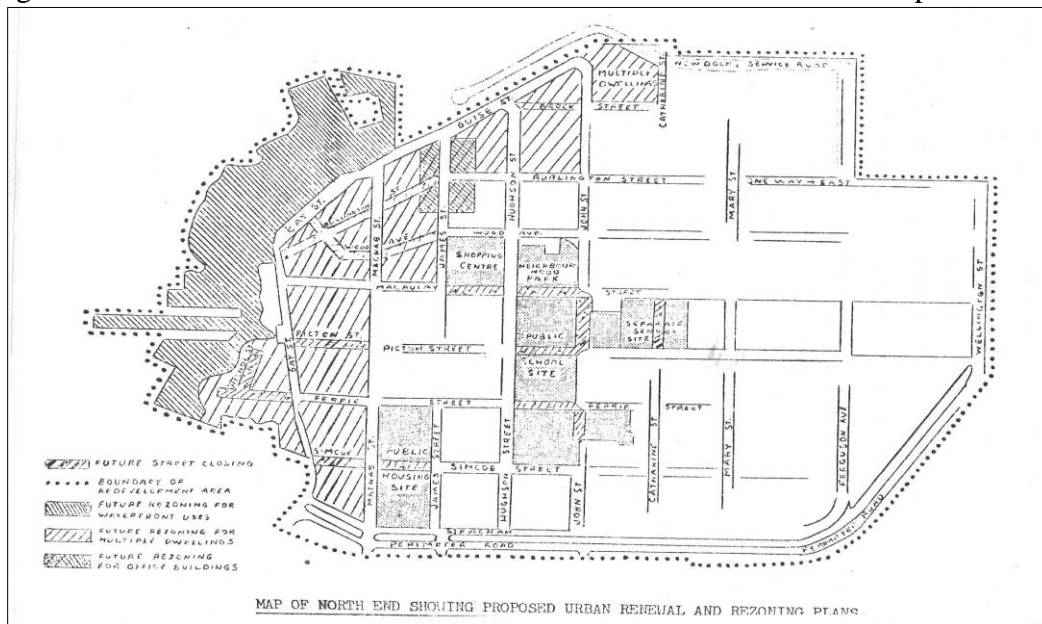
In 1958, an advisory committee for urban renewal laid out its main objectives in order to revitalize the downtown core. The committee itself was the result of a City approved expenditure of \$4000 towards a \$16000 redevelopment survey in order to recognize and respond to areas of blight within central Hamilton (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1958). The provincial government contributed 25 per cent and the federal government, via Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), contributed 50 per cent of the cost of acquiring and clearing land (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1958; Mar. 19, 1960). The municipal government

contributed the remaining 25 per cent. The plan was that the City and its provincial and federal partners would pay for this over a 10 year period. The main objectives of the study were to: identify areas of blight and grade those areas in the form of redevelopment for poor quality areas; rehabilitation for mediocre areas; and conservation for good quality areas (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5 1958; Nov. 18, 1960; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965a). The formation of the Urban Renewal Advisory Committee and the undertaking of the urban renewal study followed the general tendency across North America to study and attempt to prevent millions of people migrating from the cities to the suburbs during the post-war period.

#### **4.1 North End Urban Renewal Scheme**

In 1961, newspaper articles discussing the Urban Renewal Advisory Committee's first major project: The North End Urban Renewal Scheme were published. In line with the recommendations set out by the 1958 Urban Renewal Study, in 1961, the City of Hamilton designated a 257-acre area north of the city centre for redevelopment (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b; Henry & Pineo, 1973). The area was bounded by: the Canadian National Railway (C.N.R.) track on the south, Wellington Street North on the east, and Hamilton Harbour on the north and west (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b; The Hamilton Spectator, June 4, 1962; Nov. 17, 1962). See Figure 3 for a map of the North End project area. This redevelopment project was considered the first step toward eliminating slums and redeveloping rundown parts of Hamilton (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b; The Hamilton Spectator, June 17, 1961).

Figure 3: North End Urban Renewal Scheme Boundaries & Proposed Plan



(Henry & Pineo, 1973)

According to planning reports, the land use was primarily residential. The condition of the housing stock within the area varied greatly (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b; Kristofferson, 1996). Despite housing conditions, North End residents were a closely knit and proud working class community (Kristofferson, 1996; Manson, 2006; North End Residents' Organization, 1977). The North End neighbourhood was chosen to be the first studied because it was in the oldest section of the city, was largely residential, and had a high delinquency rate (The Hamilton Spectator, June 17, 1961).

By January 1962, a social survey of 800 North End residents had been conducted. Survey results indicated that the vast majority of residents wanted to remain in the North End (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 12, 1962). The survey revealed that most residents owned their homes, and that while many of the older homes looked run down on the exterior, that they were renovated and well maintained on the interior (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 12, 1962). The information gathered from door-to-door surveys was the first step in creating a master plan to

bring to council and, once approved, went to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for further approval. Approval for this plan was received by the OMB in June of 1963 (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b). While bulldozing the entire area was not planned, blighted areas within the North End were to be razed and rebuilt (Henry & Pineo, 1973). In order to decide what would be razed and rebuilt buildings were put into the following three categories:

- 1) Good – Buildings requiring modest levels of repair which could be undertaken privately
- 2) Fair – Buildings requiring repairs that were more major in nature and implied a need for public action in the field of rehabilitation
- 3) Poor – The most pertinent to the North End project, buildings which required outright clearance based on economic and social grounds

(Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b).

The following table (Table 1) depicts the basic land use categories and acreage for land use in the North End project (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b). It is evident that the project focused on keeping the area largely residential and adding amenities to the area for local residents.

Table 2: Land Use Categories & Acreage: North End Project

	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Approximate Net Area (acres)</u>
Residential	- single family	93.2
	- public housing (family)	14.9
	(senior citizen)	2.4
	- private apartment	21.3
Commercial	- shopping centre and offices	8.6
Institutional	- schools, churches and community centre	21.2
Open Space	- parks, playgrounds, walkways and waterfront	49.9
<hr/>		
Total	(exclusive of roads)	211.5

(Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b)

Land west of John Street and a pocket of housing east of James Street and north of Ferry Street were to be retained as single-family housing (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b). In this area spot clearance would be completed where warranted. Public housing for seniors and families was planned mainly in the area of the old cotton mill factory adjacent to James Street. A density of 20 units per acre would be used, with an exception to the senior citizens complex at James and Barton Streets, which would include 146 units (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b). Federal, provincial, and municipal governments spent \$400,000 to purchase homes and clear the land (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 17, 1962). In terms of private housing, a housing density of 85 units per acre was established (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968b). By 1963, the demolition of blighted housing had begun (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973).

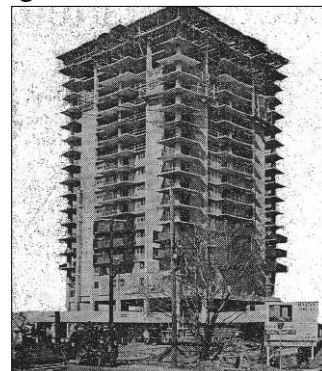
#### 4.1.1 North End Plan Progress

By 1965, over 300 homes were razed in order to make way for new development (North End Residents' Organization, 1977). By October 1967, 120 suites were complete and ready for occupancy in the Marina Towers apartments, which replaced the old Macassa Lodge (see Figure 4 & Figure 5).

Figure 4: Macassa Lodge



Figure 5: Marina Towers



(In: Manson, 2006 Photo Credit: HPL) (The Hamilton Spectator, May 1' 1967)  
(Reproduced with the permission of North Shore Publishing Inc.)

Marina Towers apartment complex, Ken Soble Apartments (for senior citizens) and three schools: Bennetto, Centennial, and St. Lawrence were built (North End Residents' Organization, 1977). Two parks and a recreation centre were also completed. At this point, work had also begun on the road design to divert traffic around the area.

#### **4.1.2 Impact of Relocation on Former Residents**

The Consequences of Relocation: A study of Hamilton's North End was at the time one of the most extensive studies in Canada on the effects of urban renewal (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973). It was completed by two McMaster University sociology professors, Franklin Henry and Peter Pineo. The study reviewed the effects of relocation throughout the relocation process (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973). Conclusions drawn from this study, as well as the North End Residents' Organization study, discuss that relocation housing was more expensive causing financial stress on families. Overall, residents were not satisfied with the prices paid by the City through the expropriation and relocation process (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973; North End Residents' Organization, 1977).

Recurring net costs such as increased rent and the cost of travelling to work negatively impacted family finances (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973). Appropriate relocation housing units in terms of cost and type were far exceeded by families in need of relocation (The Globe and Mail, April 4, 1973). Relationships with friends and relatives were affected as residents were reportedly further from friends and family and had decreased interaction with them (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973; Henry & Pineo, 1973; North End Residents' Organization, 1977). City Hall officials, however, have stated that in most cases the City went above and beyond what was required by law to try to relieve the potential stress of the relocation process (The Hamilton Spectator, June 22, 1973). Further, the City stated that the compensation



paid to expropriated owners was based on provincial laws at that time. City Hall officials indicated that adequate notice was given to vacate and lease extensions were granted in many cases (The Hamilton Spectator, July 5, 1973).

#### **4.1.3 Benefits of the North End Renewal Scheme**

The North End project included the provision of needed public services. City officials and residents alike agreed that children benefitted from the new school with modern classrooms. The recreation centre was another welcomed addition to the area by residents (North End Residents' Organization, 1997). The parks and recreation centre that were built were being used extensively (North End Residents' Organization, 1977). There were several activities to participate in within the new community centre (The Hamilton Spectator, May 1, 1967; North End Residents' Organization, 1977). Delinquency rates decreased after the relocation took place. This could be, in part, because there were more positive activities to engage residents. After the relocation, better living quarters in new homes were also evident (The Hamilton Spectator, June 25, 1965).

#### **4.1.4 Moving Forward from the North End Project**

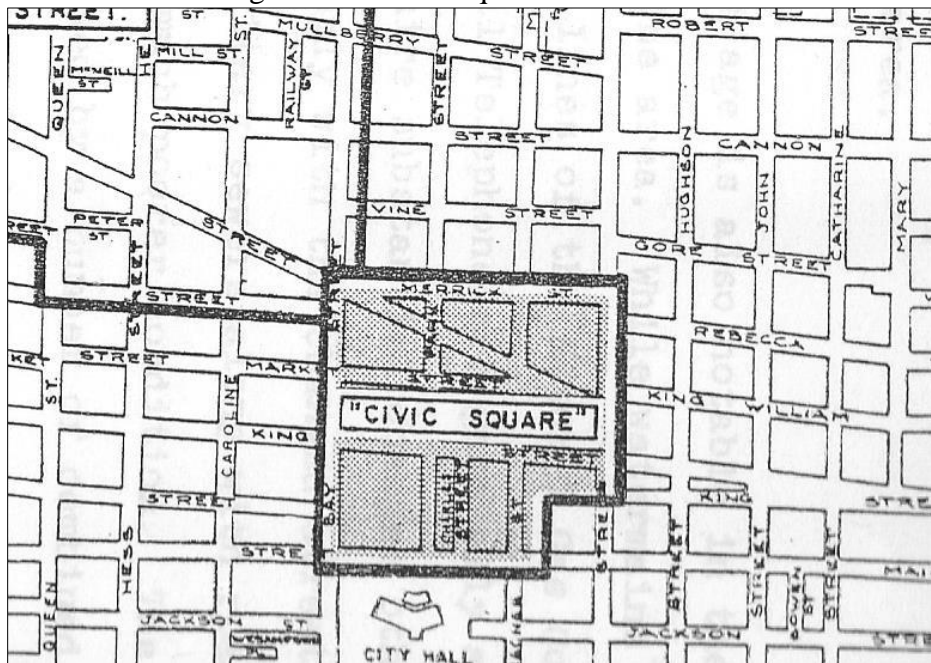
In future projects, the City would try to save older homes rather than raze and rebuild (The Hamilton Spectator, April 3, 1973). This was largely in response to the federal policy changes cancelling large-scale urban renewal projects (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 14, 1971; Dec. 24 1971). The Mayor at the time, Vic Copps, stated that there had been a change in philosophy since the North End project: the City now encouraged more rehabilitation of older houses rather than demolition, partly because of the difficulties experienced during the North End relocation (The Hamilton Spectator, April 4, 1973). The bulldozer approach applied in the North End was terminated by policy. The federal government officially changed its urban

renewal policy from the block approach to rehabilitation so if projects for redeveloping a large-scale urban area were presented in the future, lessons learned from the North End project would be used to help guide redevelopment (The Hamilton Spectator, April 7, 1973).

#### 4.2 Civic Square Urban Renewal Project

The Civic Square mega-project began in 1965. It called for a 43 acre area of the downtown core to be acquired by the City, demolished and cleared (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 7, 1983; Nov. 1, 1983). The area was comprised of 12 blocks varying in size and was adjacent to City Hall, Gore Park, and the main commercial district (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1965). The project area was bounded by Merrick Street on the North, James Street on the East, Main Street on the South, and Bay Street on the West (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b; 1967). Figure 6 below shows the Civic Square project boundaries.

Figure 6: Civic Square Boundaries



(Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b)

This does not include the entire frontage on James Street, as only one building on James Street was to be affected by the plans (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b; The Hamilton Spectator,

Sept. 6, 1967). The boundaries for the Civic Square area were chosen based on blighted conditions contained within its limits. Civic Square was located in the central core of the city and was served by five major arterial roads: King, Main, York, James, and Bay Streets (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1965). The plan was put together by Toronto consultant Murray Jones (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 26, 1965; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1967). The Civic Square Project was designed to create a focus for the central core.

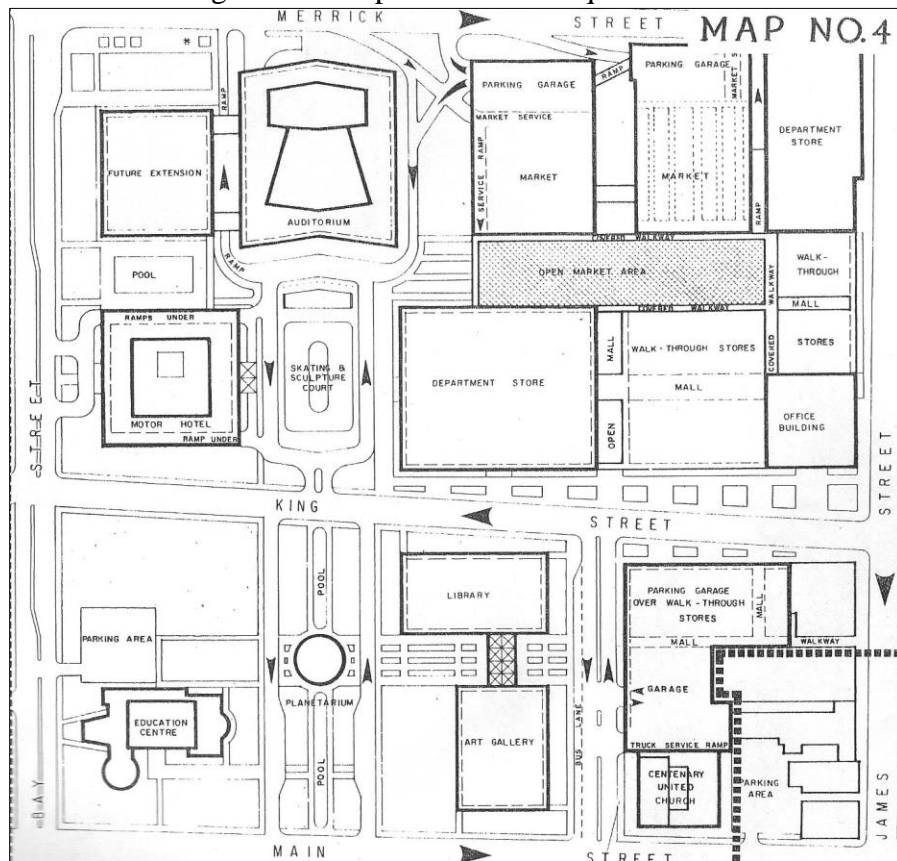
Before urban renewal, the area was generally of mixed use and contained mainly blighted commercial structures, but also warehouse, wholesale, manufacturing, and residential structures (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1965; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b; 1967). It was an old area of the city made up of two and three storey structures lining the streets with several scattered parking lots (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b; 1967). Substandard conditions that were reported included: poor aesthetics, overcrowded and inadequate housing, a lack of green space, too many mixed uses for one area, and an unnecessarily high proportion of land devoted to streets (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1967).

The Official Plan was amended to change the land use designation from commercial to recreational, civic, and cultural for the lands bounded by King, MacNab, Main, and Bay Streets (Jones & Assoc. Ltd, 1967). There was an established need for replacing or locating public functions such as an auditorium, library, and art gallery within the downtown at this time (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b). Large-scale removal to change the nature of the area was deemed necessary. There was an overall emphasis on redeveloping the central area to bring civic pride and life back into the downtown.

#### 4.2.1 Plan Details

A large area of the square was designated for car parking facilities. A new structure with a capacity of 400 vehicles was proposed to serve the new commercial complex (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b). The addition of parking throughout the new Civic Square area was also planned. This was due to an anticipated increase in vehicle usage as a result of new buildings and amenities. The plans for Civic Square included new stores such as a T. Eaton Co. Ltd. and Robinson's Department Store Ltd., a hotel, a shopping mall, an office tower, a planetarium, and space for the expansion of the Hamilton Market (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 28, 1969). Figure 7 shows the initial Civic Square Plan. Several changes to the original plan were made before its completion.

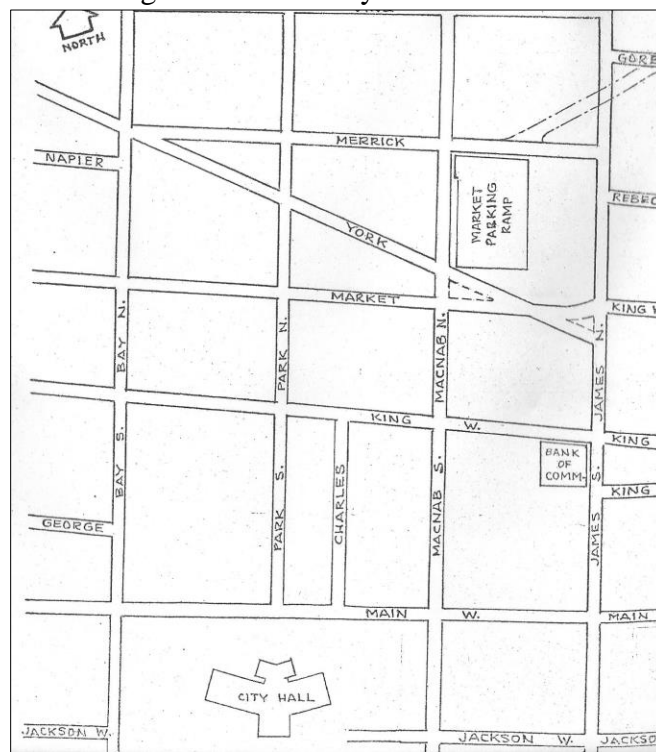
Figure 7: Proposed Civic Square Plan



(Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b)

The planetarium was taken out of the plans after its sponsor rescinded financial support. An auditorium, new art gallery, and a new library were to also be included within the Civic Square project. The road system was reorganized in the process of developing Civic Square in order to remove any roads that previously ran through the superblock. Figure 8 shows the road system as it was in 1967 before the project had begun. Several through roads were removed for the Civic Square project.

Figure 8: Road System in 1967



(Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1967)

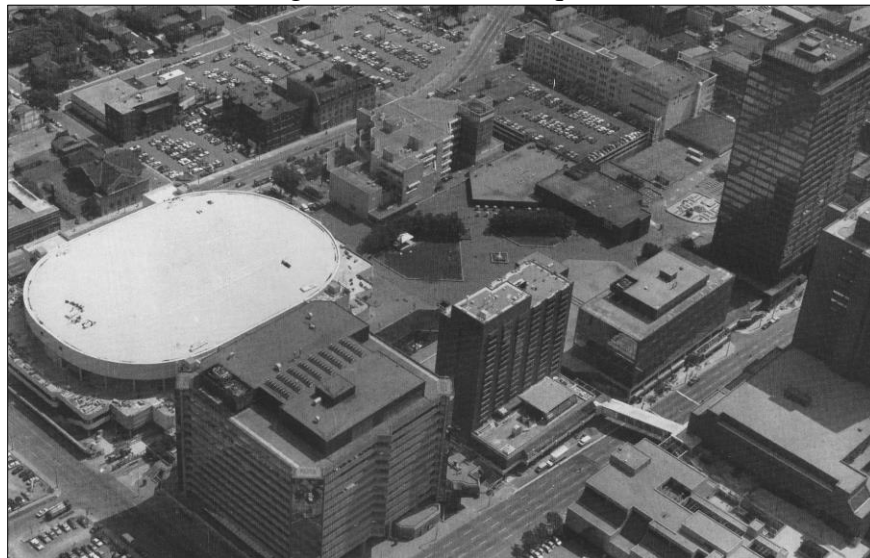
Changes were made to the direction and flow of traffic and roads were widened in order to accommodate traffic around the superblock (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b). The predominant east-west movement of traffic through the core was by the one-way arterial pair King and Main Streets (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b).

Newspaper articles regarding the approval of the project and the unveiling of the plans continued during the 1960's. Newspaper articles drew upon the success of suburban shopping malls, stating that the downtown had no other choice but to redevelop (The Hamilton Spectator,

Jan. 28, 1969; Feb. 2, 1969). Newspaper articles from the early 1980s indicate that Hamiltonians were pleased with what they saw take place within Civic Square. Hamiltonians saw a modern and comprehensive square in the heart of the city (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 25, 1983).

The revitalization efforts took place through the Civic Square project are extensive. The various components of this renewal project (and their completion dates) include: the arena Copps Coliseum (1986), the shopping mall Jackson Square (1972), the Hamilton Convention Centre (1981), the office tower the Standard Life Building (1984), the theatre Hamilton Place (1973), the Hamilton Art Gallery (1977), the new indoor Farmer's Market (1980), the Hamilton Public Library (1980), and the Sheraton Hotel (1985) (Peace & Burghardt, 1987; The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 18, 1986;). Below is an aerial photo that shows the modernization of the core through Jackson Square (See Figure 9). It also shows Copps Coliseum and the Standard Life Building on the left, the Hamilton Public Library (HPL) at the top, and the Sheraton Hotel and Stelco Tower on the right.

Figure 9: Jackson Square



(The Hamilton Spectator, 1995)  
(Reproduced with the permission of North Shore Publishing Inc.)

Jackson Square covers the length of 3 city blocks and is 2 blocks in width. A glass walkway over King Street (seen in the photo above) connects the hotel with the Hamilton Convention Centre, Hamilton Art Gallery, and Hamilton Place. Newspaper articles at the time of its completion discussed it as one of the best examples of bulldozer planning carried out to produce positive results (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 27, 1983; Nov. 1, 1983). It was also considered successful as several urban renewal projects within Canada had ended only partially complete (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 27, 1983). This type of planning was not uncommon across North America during the 1970s and 1980s.

#### **4.2.2 Funding**

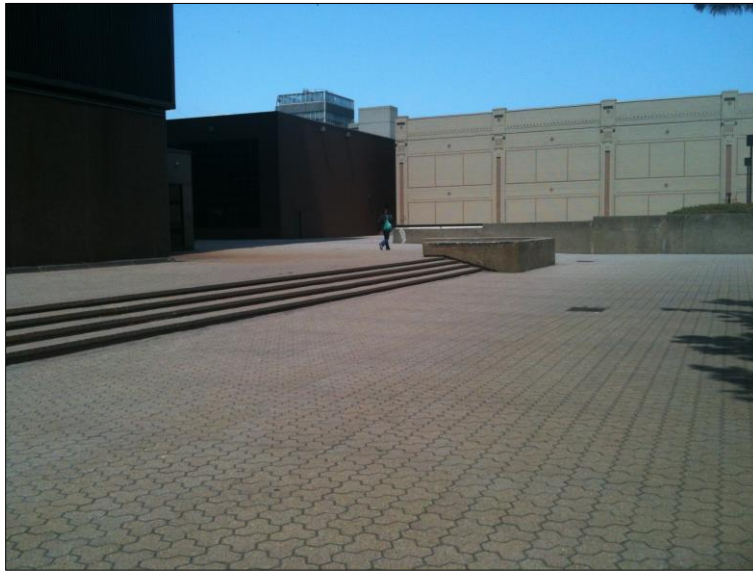
Civic Square was a costly project. Newspaper articles indicate that financing for the project, just under \$25,000,000, was paid by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Under the agreement 50 per cent was paid by the federal government while the province and city divided the remaining 50 per cent, similar to the North End project (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1965; The Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 23, 1961). Federal, provincial, and municipal governments spent \$30 million to acquire and clear the 43-acre site (The Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 1, 1983; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1965b) and by the end, in 1985, \$265,700,000 in private and public money had been spent (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 25, 1983; Nov. 1, 1983). It was discussed as an excellent joint venture between public and private interests. On a per capita basis, Hamilton received more federal dollars for urban renewal than any other Canadian city (Patterson, 1993).

#### **4.2.3 Criticisms**

Criticisms of the project include a barren second floor in Jackson Square that could have been used for green space, restaurants, or cultural activities, and that the space does not relate to

the community directly surrounding it (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 27, 1983; Jan. 18, 1986). The second floor was said to be dead space that poses real and perceived safety risks. Figure 10 captures the barren second floor space of Jackson Square. Criticisms specified that there was no blending of the urban fabric and that the plan did not encompass the downtown in its entirety (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 28, 1969; The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 29, 1994).

Figure 10: Jackson Square Second Level Outdoor Space



(Rubino, 2015)

Several storefronts on King, James, and John Streets became unoccupied when Jackson Square was built. Retailers, real estate agents, property owners and other officials offered a variety of reasons why buildings remained vacant (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 29, 1994). By this time, Civic Square had lost its new and exciting appeal from Hamiltonians. It was thought that since Jackson Square brought pedestrian traffic indoors, that this reduced pedestrian traffic on downtown streets. The Civic Square project was said to have taken life and vitality off the streets and brought it indoors to a more private space (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 18, 1986). It had effectively taken away business from King Street East Retailers (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 27, 1983; Nov. 1, 1983; Jan. 18, 1986; Oct. 4, 1988). Of further concern was that none of

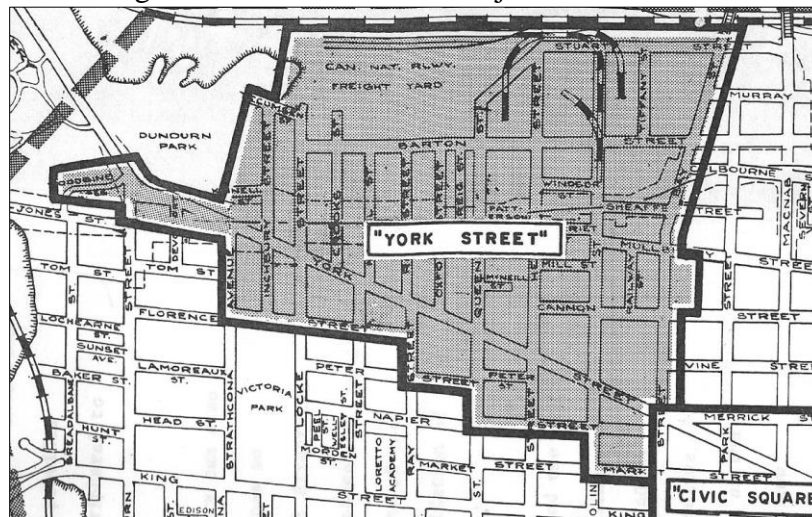


the merchants who were there before renewal relocated within Jackson Square (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 18 1986). Overall, the outcome of Jackson Square was that it worked well for the first decade, and then it started losing tenants when lease renewals came due.

### 4.3 York Street Urban Renewal Project

During the mid-1960s, newspaper articles discussed a plan to revitalize York Street in downtown Hamilton. The York Street Urban Renewal area was bounded on the north by the Grimsby-Oakville subdivision and the Canadian National Railway (CNR) freight yards. The western limit was bounded by Dundurn Park and Strathcona Avenue. The scheme boundary was extended westward to include the York Street frontage and existing development on Woodbine Crescent. On the south it was bounded by an irregular line following Florence, Ray, Peter, Queen, Napier, Caroline, and Market Streets and on the east by the rear lot line of the properties fronting the east side of Bay Street North (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966; Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). Figure 11 below outlines the boundaries for the York Street Project.

Figure 11: York Street Project Boundaries



(Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966)

The boundaries were set out in accordance to the 1958 urban renewal study by the Planning Department of the City of Hamilton (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966). The area covered

approximately 220 acres of land. It was a mixed use area consisting of: commercial, industrial, residential and institutional land uses (Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). The York Street Urban Renewal Plan was in accordance with the Civic Square Area Plan in the vicinity of Bay and Merrick Streets (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966).

Planning consultant Murray Jones & Associates put together the York Street Urban Renewal Plan. York Street had always been a main entrance to downtown Hamilton. Recognizing and building upon the function and aesthetic appeal of York Street as a means of access to the downtown core was the primary goal of the project (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971; Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966). Complimentary land uses to Civic Square were highlighted in the design (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966). Further objectives included: improvement to living and working conditions and allocation of land for the relocation of certain functions displaced from Civic Square (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966).

The housing stock within the area consisted of century old homes in need of repair. These were primarily two and a half story detached homes made of brick construction. They had narrow lots and minimal side yards as well as very little front yard space. These 70 to 80 year old buildings were in poor structural condition (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971). Newspaper articles state that only one building was of historical or architectural significance (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30, 1966). The area was home to close to 5,000 people in 1966 (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966; The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). It was home to many elderly people who could not afford to move as well as to recent immigrants (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30, 1966). Within these boundaries in 1966 were ten scrap yards, a

steel rolling mill, a tobacco products plant, a foundry, and several commercial properties (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966).

#### **4.3.1 Plan Details**

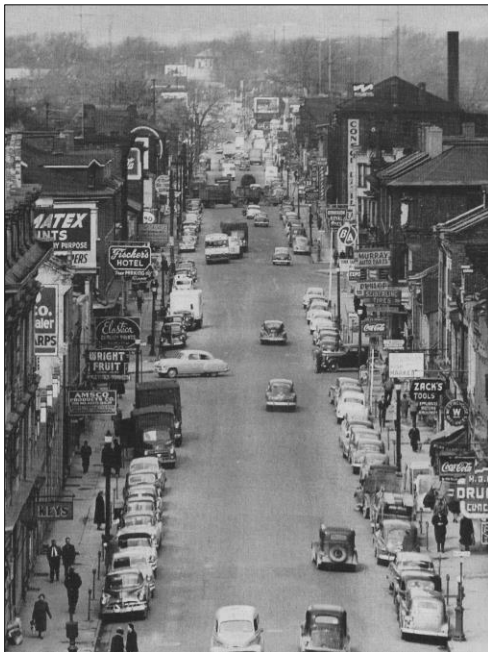
The proposal estimated that it would take 15 years to complete the project (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). By that time, the goal was to widen York Street, create high rise apartment towers, public and private housing, a shopping mall, a Masonic temple as well as other institutional buildings (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966; The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). The plan for York Street was formally approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 1967 (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a).

A shopping mall and motor hotel were planned in the area south of York Street and west of Queen Street. The area was proposed to be bounded by York, Queen, Peter, and Bay Streets (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). This was to replace the commercial properties that would be lost when York Street was widened (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). Other parts of the plan included: another commercial area on York Street between Locke and Magill Streets with Crooks Street to be closed south of the freeway; part of Woodbine Crescent cleared and used for a new Masonic Temple and a school for children with disabilities. Plans for the block on the south side of York Street between Hess and Caroline Streets was to be a training centre for adults with disabilities; and adjoining blocks to the east were recommended for private high rise apartments (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a; The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966).

The York Street Urban Renewal Plan included widening York Street. Shops and houses were demolished in order to widen the street during the mid-1970s. Figure 12 depicts York Street before urban renewal took place. York Street, in this 1953 photo, had a lively streetscape.

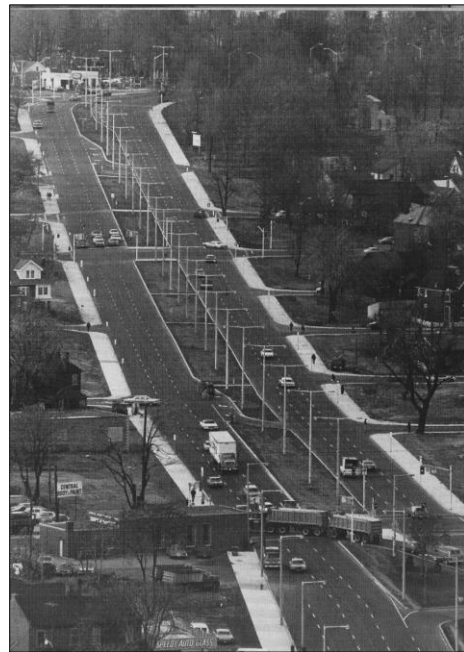
Figure 13, depicts York Street in 1976 during urban renewal. At this point demolition had taken place and the road had been widened. New buildings had not yet been erected on either side of the street. One can begin to see the differences in the streetscape due to the York Street Renewal Project.

Figure 12: York Street 1953



(The Hamilton Spectator, 1953)

Figure 13: York Street 1976



(The Hamilton Spectator Collection HPL, 1976)

(Reproduced with the permission of North Shore Publishing Inc.)

The renewal plan for the remaining frontage on York Street proposed a high rise apartment development in the area bounded by: Queen, Hess, and Peter Streets. This area would be opposite the island extension created by the extension of Cannon Street through York Street. The proposed island would be landscaped open space to serve as a focal point for the western entrance to Civic Square. The sense of arrival in downtown Hamilton would be accentuated by the one-way road system around this island (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30, 1966). The lands north of York Street and east of Hess Street were to be designated for public housing as well as a high rise building for senior citizens.

### **4.3.2 Demolition & Rehabilitation**

The conditions of buildings were graded with numbers 1 to 3 similar to the North End Project, 1 being good condition and 3 being uneconomical to rehabilitate (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). Structural examinations, the cost to rehabilitate, the physical condition, and the environmental condition of buildings were all taken into consideration (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). Several buildings were thought to have inadequate parking or lack of parking. The York Street area in general, was said to have too many land uses and a lack of green space (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971; Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). Another observation was that the area had several low quality stores and poor aesthetics. Substandard housing with narrow frontages and poor interior layouts were also discussed (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971; Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a).

The first stage of the plan extended from 1966 to 1980. This called for the redevelopment of approximately 60 acres. Of these, 23 were set aside for private redevelopment (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). Public housing was the lead use for public land with about 16 acres for other public uses, mainly the schools (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). The first stage included clearing the two blocks bounded by Bay, Cannon, Hess, and York Streets for a new downtown secondary school, with Bay Street being widened in the process (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). In 1976, York Street was closed, widened, and when it reopened later that year, was renamed York Boulevard.

The second stage was from 1980 onward. It addressed renewal measures of a lesser priority (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966). Plans for phase two were more general and included the removal of blighted or certain non-residential uses and their replacement with off-street parking

facilities and new housing generally in the North-West quadrant of the renewal boundary (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966). Similar measures were outlined for the South-West quadrant for the residential uses remaining after the York Street widening (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966).

The York Street plan aimed mainly to meet the needs of the local community whereas Civic Square was designed to give the city as a whole cultural and commercial focus. This plan recognized York Street as an entrance to downtown Hamilton and hoped to achieve community goals; while maintaining a visual appeal as people entered the downtown (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971; Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). Newspaper articles indicate that this goal was not achieved. Pedestrians and local residents were a secondary or tertiary thought, especially with the fast paced traffic patterns that were put in place.

### **4.3.3 Funding**

The urban renewal proposals by planning consultant Jones & Associates called for an expenditure of close to \$11,000,000 for land acquisition and clearance by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments prior to 1980 (The Hamilton Spectator, May 30 1966). Newspaper articles within city scrapbooks on downtown Hamilton do not discuss the plan in great detail and the discussion of York Street renewal ends by 1970. This is likely because in 1969, due to federal cutbacks, the York Street Urban Renewal plan would receive only \$2 million in federal funding. The initial agreement discussed a \$5 million commitment at the federal level. Provincial and municipal governments both committed to \$2.5 million in funding (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 18, 1969).

#### **4.3.4 Criticisms**

Opinions varied on widening York Street between Queen and Dundurn Streets. While this was an integral part of the York Street Renewal Scheme, residents and businessmen of the area were opposed to widening York Street. The very old and historic area was important to residents and businessmen alike. The Planning, Engineering, and Traffic Technical Committee, however, stated in their report that because abutting buildings were sub-standard and due to future anticipated traffic volumes, that the widening of York Street to six lanes must be completed (Department of Engineering: City of Hamilton, 1971).

Knowledge on public participation gained through the North End project was applied to both the Civic Square and York Street renewal projects. According to municipal scrapbooks, the projects were not successful in terms of public participation. Many residents of the North End were not satisfied with the project and the City continued with the plan despite resident concerns. Overall, while North End residents tried to preserve a sense of place, planning and rebuilding continued regardless of public opinion. Public meetings, informational brochures, formal and informal interviews, and newsletters were some of the public participation techniques used in the North End project, all of which were used in both the Civic Square and York Street renewal projects (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1967). Public participation widely focused on education and information rather than public input.

#### **4.4 Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) & Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)**

During the early 1970s, the Canada Housing & Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) task force proposed a new program whereby residents in a selected neighbourhood would be brought into the planning process for the area's recovery (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 23, 1971; Feb. 5, 1972). This was called the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP). The expected outcome

was that low-cost housing would be improved by renewal efforts (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1972). Areas were no longer to be razed and rebuilt as they were in the 1960s.

#### **4.4.1 Program Details**

In the early to mid-1970s the City of Hamilton's direction towards urban renewal changed. The City wanted to rehabilitate neighbourhoods. The City renamed the Urban Renewal Committee to the Rehabilitation Committee (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1972). This new way of thinking, along with National Housing Act amendments were expected to encourage home ownership (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1972; Aug. 16, 1972). Act amendments would also help neighbourhood rehabilitation through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) by providing loans and grants to homeowners and landlords to improve properties and enable low-income households to move out of public housing and into homes of their own (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1972; June 13, 1972; Aug. 16, 1972). Act amendments discussed the RRAP which gave financial assistance to families in NIP areas. Program guidelines stated that:

- Annual family incomes had to be under \$12,000 for the homeowner;
- No income caps in the case of absentee landlords – however landlords had to sign an agreement providing rent stabilization;
- This would not mean a rent freeze, however, the City had the right to determine the amount of the rent increase based on repairs;
- Homeowners were not allowed to take grant money to fix up and then sell their home or rent it out for a profit – this applied for up to three years after the renovations were complete, otherwise the grant money had to be paid back;



- Grants were approximately \$500 to \$2,000, although this was determined by the City.

(The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 23 1974)

The City of Hamilton had to create a property standards by-law in order to qualify for federal funding for neighbourhood rehabilitation. The by-law set out a series of maintenance and repair standards for all properties in the city – residential, commercial, and industrial (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 1, 1973). The minimum standards by-law would apply only to residential properties in urban renewal areas.

#### **4.4.2 Funding**

The City made half of the \$600,000 in funding available to homeowners or absentee landlords in outright grants and lent the rest at a low interest rate providing that it was not lower than three per cent. Interest rates and grant money were determined by the geared to income formula (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 23, 1974). This was the City's share of the \$10 million that the province made available to 23 municipalities. This money would not have been paid out unless Queen's Park had accepted the City's property standards by-law. This allowed for an additional \$2 million from the federal and provincial governments combined (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 24, 1974). Approximately half of what was paid out was expected to be returned to the City through payments of capital and interest (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 24, 1974). These funds then went back into the program. To qualify for the program, the house had to be in need of structural repairs, sanitary improvements, or exterior clean-up or paint (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 24, 1974).

#### **4.4.3 Corktown-Stinson NIP**

An example of an area that was impacted by NIPs in Hamilton is the Corktown-Stinson area which abuts the downtown core. It was bounded by: Main Street East to the north;

Wentworth Street on the east; the base of the escarpment on the south; and John Street on the west. The area was home to just over 10,000 residents and covered 445 acres of land (Department of Community Development: City of Hamilton, 1987). It was a mixed use neighbourhood including light industrial, industrial, commercial, residential, and parkland land uses (Department of Community Development: City of Hamilton, 1987). Goals for the area included: providing a higher quality of parks open space and recreational facilities; providing safe vehicular and pedestrian access; providing building and property compliance by means of the property standards by-law; and to ensure continued residential viability of the area (Department of Community Development: City of Hamilton, 1987).

#### **4.4.4 Gibson NIP**

Another example of an area impacted by these programs was the Gibson neighbourhood. The Gibson area was east of the city centre and was bounded by C.N.R. Mainline Tracks to the north, Sherman Avenue on the east, Main Street East to the south, and Wentworth Street on the west. The area's land uses included industrial, commercial, and residential land use (Department of Community Development: City Of Hamilton, 1978). The Gibson neighbourhood was home to over 8,000 residents and covered 286 acres (Department Of Community Development: City Of Hamilton, 1978).

The Gibson area was designated a NIP area in 1975 (Department of Community Development: City of Hamilton, 1978). Public meetings were held and five community members were elected to sit on a Neighbourhood Planning Committee for the area (Department of Community Development: City Of Hamilton, 1978). The committee had a total of 15 members. The remaining 10 members were chosen through nominations of candidates who had interests in the neighbourhood (Department Of Community Development: City of Hamilton,

1978). The purpose of the committee was to ensure that neighbourhood views were taken into consideration and to help to prepare the redevelopment plan. Also, the committee would continuously review cost estimates. The purpose of the plan was to guide future growth in the Gibson neighbourhood.

Concerns that were addressed by NIPs were: a lack of a neighbourhood park & open space facilities, deteriorating building conditions, land use conflicts, and a lack of parking facilities in residential areas. Objectives and actions were discussed in order to facilitate change. Instead of razing and rebuilding entire city blocks this new approach to urban renewal aimed to offer incentives to homeowners to make improvements as well as to revitalize neighbourhoods as a whole. Citizen committee groups in each area designated priority areas and discussed strategies to improve the neighbourhood. It was expected that these groups would work closely with city officials (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 23 1971). Overall, this type of renewal was thought to be socially and economically feasible. It was a means of including public participation, revitalizing blighted areas, and improving low-cost housing. The overall objective of this type of urban renewal was to raise housing standards.

#### **4.5 Gore Park Urban Renewal Plan**

Articles within municipal scrapbooks on downtown Hamilton discuss revitalization efforts during the 1980s through the Downtown Action Plan (DAP) in order to improve Gore Park, also known as ‘the Gore.’ Gore Park is a triangular piece of land located on King Street in the downtown core. Figure 14 is an aerial photo of Gore Park in 1960 looking to the east.

Figure 14: Gore Park 1960



(HAS Collection, 1960)

(Reproduced with the permission of North Shore Publishing Inc.)

Newspaper articles, however, do not discuss the 1970s renovations that were made to the park. During the 1970s, the central focus of the park became a new fountain with a 25 foot spray in the middle, surrounded by 25 smaller jets (Houghton, 1995). The fountain also featured coloured lights. The previous fountain in Gore Park was removed in 1959 due to its poor condition (Fountain Foundation, 1996).

#### **4.5.1 Plan Details**

A dominant feature of the DAP, developed by du Toit & Associates Ltd., was to ban cars and trucks on the south leg of King Street between Catharine and James Streets (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 16, 1982; Jan. 12, 1983). The plan, developed by du Toit & Associates Ltd., suggested a sunken amphitheatre in Gore Park for special events, widening sidewalks, planting trees and shrubs along the roadway, and special paving where pedestrians congregate (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 16, 1982; Jan. 12, 1983). The use of trees and shrubs was to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The park project was approved by city council in January 1983

and the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in June 1983. The aim was to make downtown more pedestrian friendly and shift the emphasis back from the automobile to pedestrians. Newspaper articles during the 1980s discuss this plan extensively.

The redesigned Gore Park was to be called Downtown Promenade. In April 1983, the south branch of King Street was temporarily closed to all traffic from Catharine to John Streets. Busses and delivery vehicles were permitted during certain hours (The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1983). A barrier at Catharine Street prevented all westbound traffic on King Street from entering the south side of King from Catharine to James Streets (The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1983; May 2, 1983). No left turns were permitted from King to James Streets. Motorists traveling south on James Street had three options:

- Go one block west to MacNab Street and turn left and get back onto James Street via Main Street;
- Turn south on Catharine Street, then west on Hunter Street to James Street;
- Use Cannon Street instead of King Street: a left turn from Cannon Street onto James Street was permitted.

(The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1983; May 2, 1983).

Traffic changes were implemented in order to review the feasibility of more permanent changes to the traffic system. The purpose of the traffic changes was to create a transit and pedestrian mall as part of the plan to beautify Gore Park. Sidewalks were to be widened on both sides of King Street from James to Mary Streets and be paved with rust-coloured brick stones (The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1983). Trees, benches, and better lighting were to be installed in the area as well as a new reflecting pool that could be used as a skating rink in the winter. The reflecting pool was never built.

#### **4.5.2 Criticisms & Benefits**

Newspaper articles within city scrapbooks discuss the concern of repeating errors of the plaza level of Civic Square in its approach to Gore Park. A main concern was cutting down large trees and too much pavement replacing green space (The Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 1, 1983; Oct. 3, 1986; Houghton, 1995). Cutting down shady mature trees in Gore Park changed downtown to a less pedestrian friendly area in the eyes of the public. The reason provided for cutting down these trees was that the park needed to be made an accessible 'people place' which required lowering the level of the park six to eight inches, which would have destroyed the tree roots (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 31, 1983). Another reason for cutting down the trees was because they were diseased and unable to be saved.

While du Toit & Associates Ltd. created the redevelopment plans for Gore Park, the first phase of renewal in Gore Park was turned over to City staff (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 11, 1984). The plan was taken over by the City rather than supervised by du Toit & Associates Ltd. in order to reduce supervising costs (Houghton, 1990). The project had, however, moved so far from its original plan while in City hands, that renewal plans had to be stopped and buildings torn down to take a new start (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 31, 1983; Jan. 11 1984; Oct. 3, 1986; Houghton, 1990). At this point, city council hired Toronto firm Moorehead, Fleming, Corban, and McCarthy in order to continue the project (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 19, 1984; Houghton, 1990).

Merchants in the core were still concerned about parking. They were weary that construction and reconstruction could compete with the free parking lots suburban shopping malls had to offer (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 15, 1983; Sept. 17, 1983; Dec. 10, 1983). A comparison with other cities shows that convenient, reasonably-priced parking was available in

the core. Generally, there is a high availability of parking within the core and in comparison with Toronto the cost of parking in Hamilton is lower, thus reflecting that when parking is at a premium, average costs are much higher (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 17, 1983).

### **4.5.3 Funding**

By November 1984, renovations to the park and the adjoining roadway were completed and the total cost of the project was \$2.5 million (Houghton, 1995). The estimated losses incurred while in City hands was \$715,000. A few months after installation, the interlocking bricks that were part of the project heaved and moved under the heavy traffic. The sand under the bricks washed into the drains, plugging them and raising water levels in the sewers (Houghton, 1990; The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 26, 1986). The cost of replacing all of the bricked crosswalks was \$51,000 which was paid for through the city tax base (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 26, 1986).

## **4.6 Private Development**

Newspaper articles beginning in the mid-1980s discussed private investments within the downtown core. These projects were said to be a spin-off from public renewal efforts. Public investment in projects such as Jackson Square and facilities such as Hamilton Place, the Art Gallery, and the Hamilton Convention Centre had provided the necessary catalyst for private investment in the surrounding downtown core (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 22 1984; Dec. 29, 1984).

### **4.6.1 Office Towers**

An investment project to help renew the downtown began in 1985. Private developers were to build a \$20 million, 16-storey structure to replace the old Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985). This building was located at King and

James Streets. This was to be followed by a second 16-storey building and an \$18 million investment at King and MacNab Streets (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985).

Newspaper articles discuss the importance of these buildings bringing construction activity to the city's main intersection. It depicted a growing community moving upwards and challenged the perception of a stagnant downtown area (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985). The buildings would provide new office space – which city officials believed was a profound statement of confidence in the future of the city's core (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985). This project would provide four to five years of jobs in construction and long-term jobs for people in the businesses that would lease space in the proposed buildings (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985). The hope was that the office towers would act as a catalyst for change in the downtown area, attracting investment and putting pressure for redevelopment on the rest of the James-King-MacNab-Main block (The Hamilton Spectator, Mar. 5, 1985).

The first tower opened in 1987. The second was to begin construction in 1989 and be completed by 1990 (The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1989). The second tower would have a commercial street level and 16 floors of office space. There would also be underground parking. At the time, there was already interest in leasing the office space and it was projected that the tower would reach 100 per cent occupancy within a year of completion (The Hamilton Spectator, Apr. 27, 1989).

#### **4.6.2 Condominiums**

In 1986, an architect proposed and was approved by council for a \$10 million condominium plan in downtown Hamilton (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 30, 1986). The architect stated that by the fall of 1987 people would be moving into the units of the Sun Life and Piggott buildings at Main and James Streets (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 30, 1986).



Although it was not Toronto, the belief was that there was still a viable market for condominiums (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 30, 1986). There would be underground parking, one and two bedroom models up to 1,100 square feet, and stores on the main level. Plans were also approved by the Local Architectural Conservation Authority Committee (LACAC) (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 13, 1987). The exteriors of the historical buildings were to remain unchanged. The Sun Life building was built in 1905 and 1906 on the old-world model of Florentine palaces. The Pigott building was one of the few Canadian buildings built just before the Depression in traditional and Gothic Revival detail (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 13, 1987). Figure 15 is a photo of the Pigott Building.

Figure 15: Pigott Building



(Rubino, 2015)

Both buildings held architectural and historical value. The buildings were purchased for \$1.7 million (The Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 20, 1986). Overall downtown Hamilton has seen some private investments do well but, has also seen private investment proposals fall through, leaving undeveloped areas as parking lots and empty buildings (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 22, 1984).

## **4.7 Brownfield Redevelopment**

Brownfield sites are generally abandoned or under-used industrial or commercial lands often found in older, built-up areas (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21 2000; Oct. 13, 2001). These sites can be difficult to redevelop due to real and perceived contamination as well as aging, or inadequate infrastructure (Economic Development Department: City of Hamilton, 2001). Tax arrears, environmental liability, and the cost of cleaning up possible contamination are obstacles that have impeded brownfield redevelopment (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 22, 2000; Oct. 13, 2001).

### **4.7.1 Funding**

During the early 2000s, the City discussed applying community-improvement plan (CIP) guidelines to industrial areas (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21, 2000). A CIP-designated area would involve owners and the City redeveloping the site. Hamilton offered municipal grants and protection from government orders to try and draw interest in revitalizing brownfield sites (Economic Development Department: City of Hamilton, 2001; The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 15, 2001b). The City would pay for one half of Phase One and Phase Two Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) to a maximum of two studies per property up to the \$10,000 maximum (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21, 2000).

Tax-increment financing (TIF) was also used which relied on the fact that vacant or underused sites bring in reduced taxes (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21, 2000). A site that has been redeveloped would generate more tax money for the City over time. With TIF, the City would return part of the tax increase to the owner-developer of a site over 10 years, which offsets some of the long-term financing costs on the site (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21, 2000). Grants were calculated as 80 per cent of the increase in the municipal portion of property taxes

when the land had been redeveloped resulting in an increased assessed value and property taxes (Economic Development Department: City of Hamilton, 2001; The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 13, 2001).

Grants in lieu of planning and development fees for: official plan or zoning by-law amendments, minor variances, zoning verification, site plan applications, revision of approved site plans, demolition permits, building inspection fees, and permits for change of uses are also available (Economic Development Department: City of Hamilton, 2001). Hamilton is one of several cities in Ontario trying to remediate brownfield sites. Brownfield remediation also pertains to sites such as the Lister Block (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 13, 2001). The program was designed to ‘erase’ brownfields by providing financial incentives to clean them up and to create productive land uses.

#### **4.7.2 LIUNA Station**

In October 2001, the Labourers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) Station, held a brownfield conference. LIUNA Station is an old CN railway terminal at James and Murray Streets in downtown Hamilton (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 18, 2001b; Oct. 15, 2001a). It was the first brownfield conference to be held in what used to be a brownfield site (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 15, 2001a). LIUNA Station was vacant for eight years and is a classic example of transformation from a brownfield site (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: LIUNA Station



(Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association, 2015)

Some projects such as LIUNA Station are on the perimeter of the area defined as downtown for all practical purposes. The terminal is now a conference centre and banquet hall and is occupied by agencies and businesses (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 18, 2001b). As more and more cities began to reuse brownfield sites, the province focused on brownfield redevelopment to avoid using green space, thus curbing urban sprawl.

#### **4.7.3 Bill 56**

The National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy consulted on financial and tax incentives for brownfield redevelopment. Bill 56, developed by the provincial government amended several acts aiming to reduce liability from regulations and orders (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 15, 2001b; Oct. 18, 2001a). Bill 56 set the framework for municipal grant programs as well as offered protection from provincial orders to developers and municipalities as they moved forward with brownfield redevelopment (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 18, 2001a). While speakers at the conference believe Bill 56 is a good start, they state that it does not address funding issues or civic liability, should contamination spread (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 18, 2001a).

## **4.8 Downtown Secondary Plan (DSP): Putting the People First**

In 2001, the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan: Putting the People First was first approved (Planning & Economic Development Department: City of Hamilton, 2005). This plan guides land use within the downtown core. Municipal scrapbooks on downtown Hamilton do not discuss this renewal effort; however it is significant to urban renewal in downtown Hamilton. The downtown municipal scrapbook containing articles from 1995-2012, holds significantly less newspaper articles than previous scrapbooks. It is likely that articles on downtown renewal efforts were not entirely archived during this time period. This is possibly due to the increasing popularity of online access to newspaper articles. It is evident that as time moves forward, fewer articles appear in the municipal scrapbooks.

### **4.8.1 Plan Details**

The objective of the DSP is to enhance the downtown core by allowing for mixed land use. These land uses include residential, commercial, and institutional uses (Planning & Economic Development Division: City Of Hamilton, 2005). Community workshops and planning processes aided in the development of several community visions. Many of these visions focused on the physical aspect of the downtown core. Hamilton City Council decided to incorporate these visions in a new overall strategy for the downtown. As part of the Official Plan (OP) it was mandated that the secondary plan guidelines be followed, which meant that City Council must adhere to and implement its policies. The plan very clearly outlines two main objectives: it states the community's views for the future of the downtown core in order to guide public and private decision-making and it outlines priority publically funded projects for the core. The overall vision is the creation of a vibrant downtown where people can live, work, and play. The plan also incorporates Hamilton's heritage and architecture and further states that

future buildings must be built at the human scale. Public safety through improved streetscapes must involve an interesting pedestrian experience which in turn provides ‘eyes on the street.’ ‘Eyes on the Street’ can deter real and perceived safety concerns. This vision is based on the goals for downtown Hamilton identified by the participants of a two day workshop held in 1998 (City of Hamilton, 1998).

The City of Hamilton was chosen for a pilot project by the Province of Ontario. It aimed to streamline review and approval processes for downtown projects. A single permit would replace the standard zoning, committee of adjustment, and site plan approvals which were required for most projects. Over time, the entire downtown area would follow this system. This new process would ensure that projects conform to the goals and objectives of the plan, thus streamlining the process and allowing for flexibility in new plan designs.

#### **4.8.2 Open Spaces**

The ‘Gore’ has been the most important open space and public gathering place in downtown Hamilton. The City intends to continue its support of the area by preserving the historic components of the park, while also retaining and enhancing the beauty and pedestrian friendliness of the park. The City will retain the ‘wall’ of buildings that surround Gore Park. Any new development or redevelopment must be consistent with the character of the space. Buildings at ground level must include doors and windows that allow the public to view indoors.

#### **4.8.3 Transportation**

Transportation within the area must conform to the Downtown Transportation Master Plan. This plan is the primary policy document for vehicular traffic, parking, and pedestrians. A priority within the master plan is access to public transportation into and within the downtown core. The support for accessibility and use of public transportation at the municipal level is in

line with provincial policy. Access is greatly improved through efforts devoted to street design and the introduction of a transit terminal. The terminal promotes efficiency and efficacy of public transportation.

Streets within the core have been divided into three categories in order to better address the downtown needs. They include: mobility streets, traditional streets, and local streets. Mobility streets connect major activity points within and outside of the downtown area. Main and King Streets are examples of mobility streets. Traditional streets focus on pedestrian use, providing an easy street design for pedestrian crossing, sidewalks on both sides of the street, and easy access for shoppers, residents, and employees. The key point is to balance pedestrian and vehicular traffic. King William and Jackson Streets are examples of traditional streets.

Lastly, local streets are the remaining streets that do not fit into the mobility or traditional street forms. Pedestrian movement takes priority on local streets. Local streets are generally residential streets. Where feasible, the City will reopen closed off streets and alleys ensuring that all new developments follow the grid like pattern. A portion of James and John Streets will be converted to two-way streets. This project is said to meet the needs of vehicles, pedestrians, and businesses.

#### **4.8.4 Design & Heritage**

Physical form and how structures relate to one another is important. It is significant to achieve cohesion and flow so that buildings and public spaces are compatible with one another. Heritage buildings and streetscapes speak to the character of the area. Retaining the historical urban fabric and allowing complimentary design plans helps to ensure interconnectedness in the core. Public open spaces and public art work are also considerations in revitalizing downtown

Hamilton. Public open spaces include parks, open space, and Civic Square. Emphasis is placed on safety, accessibility, enjoyment, and usability.

While the DSP recognizes that downtown cores used to be the economic hubs of a city, the plan also acknowledges that this function has long changed. The main goal for the downtown is to be a governmental, institutional, and cultural centre. An emphasis on residential land use on the downtown periphery, along with diversified housing ensures a mixed use area where people can live, work, and play. Mixed housing within the downtown includes: low, medium, and high density residential areas.

#### **4.9 Interview Findings**

The table below represents key themes for downtown revitalization in Hamilton and interview respondents' professional opinions on key revitalization efforts. The qualifications of each interview respondent are outlined. While all interviewees are considered experts on downtown renewal in Hamilton, it is evident by their qualifications that each has a different professional background and area of focus with reference to revitalization in the Hamilton core. This variation allows for a well-rounded approach on the topic. The interview data provided by respondents mirrors the information obtained through archival research. Key interview responses extracted from each interview are captured in the interview findings and summarized in Table 2.



Table 3: Interview Findings

		Interview Respondent					
		Interviewee One	Interviewee Two	Interviewee Three	Interviewee Four	Interviewee Five	Interviewee Six
Key Themes	Credential	Hamilton historian, engaged citizen, author, Member of the Hamilton Historical Board & Hamilton Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee	Previous mayor, ward councillor, Hamiltonian, Board Member of the International Making Cities Liveable Conference	Municipal planner, specializes in: urban renewal, downtown planning, community planning, urban design	Municipal planner, specializes in: urban renewal, economic development, community initiatives	Municipal employee, specializes in: urban renewal, downtown renewal, economic development, business development	Municipal employee, specializes in: architecture, downtown renewal, conservation, tourism & culture
	North End	Intended goal was good, outcome questionable; traded one type of slum for another, little regard for area residents, overall unsuccessful	Area needed revitalization, tear down and rebuild approach was unsuccessful, essential DNA of the core was tampered with	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Civic Square	Raze and rebuild approach destroyed the urban fabric, loss of history & heritage, loss of character and architecture, no transparency on City's behalf, little regard for local citizens, methodology was not local; imposed by municipal government & development industry, unsuccessful plan	Destruction of heritage & character, moving everything indoors was a mistake, took 'eyes off the street,' superblock is not preferable, should reopen road system, created more private versus public space, common type of planning across many American cities at the time, developers did what was popular, worked initially	Created too much private space, benefits did not outweigh costs, loss of character & historical buildings, poorly designed second storey, real and perceived safety risks on second floor, Jackson Square did work for downtown core when it was new and exciting, rents were too high to make it feasible for tenants to stay	Creating a 'superblock' was a mistake, razing the entire area destroyed the urban fabric, no regard for citizen input, shopping mall downtown was to compete with suburban shopping malls, in the long run it did not work out well, cannot compete with suburban parking lots	Not just our city made this 'superblock' error, popular yet unsuccessful in the long term, need to re-establish a street network, downtown has a different dynamic – we need to recognize this, too much private space, note that some good things came of this project – art gallery, hotel, convention centre	Destroyed important heritage & culture, destroyed the grid system, very little public consultation, Jackson Square when new did well enough, however over time became unsuccessful, we did gain some useful buildings within the Civic Square project, however Jackson Square could have been planned much better

7 <sup>th</sup>	Interview Respondent					
	Interviewee One	Interviewee Two	Interviewee Three	Interviewee Four	Interviewee Five	Interviewee Six
York Street	Loss of character & architecture; negative impact on pedestrians & local residents, poor planning & execution on the City's part; very few photos exist of York Street before its revitalization, just a distant memory to most which is unfortunate	Loss of history & charm, too much demolition, designed for cars not people, popular approach at the time, some buildings did need to be demolished as they were unsalvageable, however we did lose some of Hamilton's oldest buildings	Teardown approach has never had good long-term effects for the city, put through council too quickly, no local input, loss of character, negative impact on local residents, lost sense of place, like a highway in the city centre	Not well planned, did not leave enough property along York Blvd. to make worthwhile private development, very ambitious plan, too many urban design requirements on remaining properties, very little can be done with remaining parcels of land	Created a fast-paced roadway that is not pedestrian friendly, negative impact on local residents, poorly designed, added roadway depth but took way from remaining properties, little can be done with such small parcels of land	Demolished and rebuilt to add a mini super highway, does not attract or retain people in the core because traffic moves too quickly, poor planning and execution, loss of historic buildings, not a worthwhile end result
NIP/RRAP	N/A	A lot of good work in the city, moved neighbourhoods in the right direction, great community interaction	We still refer back to this idea, although it fell by the wayside, City currently has neighbourhood associations with the same goals in mind – to improve the neighbourhood	Great community planning, we are seeing more of it now	This approach worked better than a lot of the more grand schemes, good concept but lost momentum in the 1970s, planning from the ground up, great idea	Brought about neighbourhood change, community-based whereby citizens had input, it had some success
Gore Park	Plan was initiated to receive grant money, no transparency in municipal planning, put through too fast by council, poorly designed, poorly executed, 1980s renewal was a disaster, it has since come a long way	An unfortunate plan for the community to withstand, many mistakes made, just not a well thought out plan, trees did need to come out due to disease, bringing back the fountain was pivotal	It became a big mess, it was put through council too quickly, responsibility for the plan changed hands several times, very costly mistakes, citizens were unhappy with the end result	It did not work and they had to tear it down halfway through & restart, no citizen input, unorganized, community consultation would have been useful, it was a costly disservice to the community	A lot of time and money were spent on this plan, it did not translate into success, poorly planned and poorly executed, an important area of the downtown & it was not handled appropriately	Planners & engineers of the time did not recognize what an important public space this was, poorly planned & executed, built an amphitheatre & concession stand and then tore it out, the City now has a better plan in place for the park

Th	Interview Respondent					
	Interviewee One	Interviewee Two	Interviewee Three	Interviewee Four	Interviewee Five	Interviewee Six
Private Development	Overall positive impact on the downtown, condominiums have brought great success, well planned buildings, many involve adaptive reuse, attractive frontages	Positive development due to policies that were put in place, loans to private sector business, lowering commercial taxes, well managed renewal effort, good for the economy, condominium development has been successful and continues to be	Positive role in renewal, important aspect of renewal, successful examples of this type of development include the CIBC Towers, Stelco Tower, & Pigott building condominiums	Necessary aspect of downtown renewal, need private interests & private development, a balance of public, private, and public-private partnerships is necessary for a healthy core, has helped attract people to the core	A lot of building stock from this era, important part of the business sector, the decline in manufacturing in the 1990s affected private development, but we have really recovered from this	Private development seemed to drop off in the 1990s when our economy took a downturn, otherwise we got some good buildings from this time frame & we actively continue to see private development as an important role in renewal
Brownfields	Excellent idea, could use more of it in the downtown, projects so far have been successful, great strategies and laws, would like to see more of this happening	Hamilton is one of the leaders in brownfields, appropriately so due to our industrial base & decline in manufacturing, positive impact on the city, slowly more is happening	Hamilton is at the forefront of brownfield redevelopment, would like to see more happening but it takes time, LIUNA Station is a great example of this	Extremely important tool, positive impact on the community, the balance between cost & return on investment is becoming more feasible	Was launched in the 1990s, excellent plan to aid in renewal, some financial aid available: ERASE program, tax increment financing (TIF), etc.	Has been more successful in other parts of the city, excellent initiative, LIUNA Station is an excellent example
Downtown Secondary Plan	Conceptually it is fine, it has a lot of potential, plans & goals must be acted upon consistently, the City is too reactive to deep pocketed investors	Good plan, a more relaxed approach to planning, no longer grand schemes, well thought out, it is working well so far	Excellent plan, takes into consideration all aspects of the downtown – pedestrians, transportation, culture, heritage etc.	Exactly what we need & want as a city, citizen input, incremental planning, public transportation is addressed in this plan, more focused on pedestrians rather than vehicles	It is all about incremental planning & rebalancing the core - downzoning aided with this, incentive program, excellent ideas, well thought out	It recognizes the importance of pedestrians & that streets are more than just cars – cyclists, pedestrians etc., its name “Putting the People First” is very fitting

The interview findings above summarize each interviewee's professional opinion on the eight plans that took place in downtown Hamilton during the time period under study. Plans that involved razing and rebuilding such as the North End, Civic Square, and the York Street projects were thought to be generally unsuccessful in revitalizing the core in the long term for similar reasons. Reasons noted by participants (as noted in Table 2) include: a loss of historic buildings, tampering with the urban fabric, a lack of citizen involvement, a negative impact on local residents, and a loss of character in the area. Another local plan that was considered to be unsuccessful at revitalizing the core area at the time was the Gore Park plan of the 1980s. The two biggest concerns with this plan were a lack of transparency by local government and that the plan was pushed through the planning and execution process too quickly. This resulted in costly errors and required additional resources.

The plans that interview participants deemed more successful were the incremental plans that generally took place after the 'raze and rebuild' phase of planning. These plans included the NIP/RRAPS, and more so, private development plans, brownfield planning, and the Downtown Secondary Plan: Putting the People First. Highlights of these plans include: citizen involvement, incremental planning, neighbourhood restoration, the preservation of historic buildings, and a balance between public and private interests often created through public-private partnerships.

Interview participants were asked to further discuss renewal in downtown Hamilton through a series of questions regarding renewal projects, their involvement in these plans, and the successes and failures of downtown renewal efforts. Interviewees discuss the main factors contributing to the success and failures of plans as well as the intended goals for downtown. This section further highlights the positive and negative aspects of the aforementioned eight plans.

#### **4.9.1 Participant Awareness of Renewal Plans**

In total, the number of plans that all interview respondents were aware of was six. There were a total of two different plans that two separate respondents were not aware of. These plans were the North End Project and the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (NIPS)/Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Programs (RRAPs). When asked if there were any other major renewal projects that participants were aware of were not mentioned in question one, the answer was no.

#### **4.9.2 Participant Contributions to Renewal Projects**

When asked if participants had in some way contributed to, or studied, any of the aforementioned urban renewal schemes or others pertaining to the revitalization of Hamilton's downtown core, all participants indicated that they had contributed to or studied the plans, in either a work-related manner or due to personal interest. The only renewal plans respondents had not reviewed or studied were the two plans mentioned earlier, that were unfamiliar to participants during two out of the interviews.

When asked to elaborate on the capacity of their involvement, all respondents stated that they had studied these plans for work or academic reasons and three of the six participants had contributed to these plans in the workplace from a planning perspective. Personal interest and work are reasons cited for familiarizing themselves with previous plans. Two of the three interviews resulted in respondents stating that they have lived through several of the plans as Hamiltonians.

Participants were also asked how Hamilton has evolved over the years. The dominant answer was that Hamilton is no longer looking to create a grand renewal scheme in order to remedy the downtown. As one participant (Interview Participant Five, 2014) states, "Hamilton is

no longer looking for silver bullet solutions, you know mega plans, we are talking about incremental change; building on what works and stopping doing what doesn't work." City representatives have learned from previous plans and see the value in preserving an area's heritage and architecture.

#### **4.9.3 Successful Initiatives in the Core**

Participants were asked if there have been urban renewal initiatives that have been successful in revitalizing the core area. These initiatives could include, but are not limited to those discussed in question one (See Appendix 1). The results are favourable; there have indeed been initiatives that have successfully aided in revitalizing the core. All respondents agree that the initiatives successful in helping to revitalize the core include Private Development, Brownfield Redevelopment, and the DSP. In terms of the NIPs/RRAPs, participants state that if these plans continued, they would have been more effective. The NIPs/RRAPs are reviewed as a great approach to community planning.

Overall, the later plans are considered to be more successful than the earlier redevelopment plans. When asked why, participants stated that demolishing entire tracts in favour of rebuilding has never been entirely successful and that incremental planning is the best approach. One participant (Interview Participant Six, 2014) states that, "We have learned that demolishing and rebuilding just doesn't work. What works is having public and private stakeholders work together and make small scale changes that, when looked at as a whole, makes a big change." Grand schemes are said to be ineffective and create a new set of problems.

When asked how these initiatives have contributed to a successful downtown core, respondents agreed that these plans brought about positive economic changes, attracted people into the downtown, and protected important architecture and heritage in the area. When asked to

identify the main positive contributing factors of these plans, again, the consensus was that these plans were small scale and encouraged incremental changes.

#### **4.9.4 Unsuccessful Initiatives in the Core**

Next, participants were asked if there were initiatives that were unsuccessful at revitalizing the core. All participants agreed that there were unsuccessful approaches. When asked to elaborate on which plans were unsuccessful at long term renewal and why, the earlier plans such as the North End Project, Civic Square, York Street, and Gore Park were identified. The main factor noted for the lack of plan success by respondents is the large scale of the plans, resulting in large scale demolition and rebuilding. All interview participants took issue with the ‘demolish and rebuild’ approach that was so popular when these plans took place. Other reasons listed for the lack of success with these plans include: the way in which the City executed the plans, a lack of public participation, a loss of heritage, a loss of architecture, destruction of the urban fabric, and that the plans were amended several times, allowing the projects to drift from their original goals and objectives.

In addressing whether these failed attempts simply failed to renew the core or if they were responsible for further deterioration of the core, the answers were unclear. While there were many negative effects as a result of these projects, participants were reluctant to discuss whether they caused the core to deteriorate further. It can be noted, however, that certain projects did destroy the urban fabric. In the case of Civic Square, the project blocked off streets, creating a superblock which directed pedestrian traffic off the streets and created an overabundance private space. Respondents agree that this early initiative was detrimental to the core. The project paid little attention to area residents and negatively affected the population due to displacement and relocation.

#### **4.9.5 Planning Proposals & Implementation**

In section two of the interview, respondents were asked to state their opinion on questions relating to planning proposals and the implementation process. Respondents were asked if they believed there was a gap between planning proposals and their implementation. All respondents answered yes to this question. Based on this response, respondents were asked if this gap should be bridged or whether the status quo should be maintained. Further, they were asked what challenges Hamilton faces during the implementation process. All respondents agreed that the gap should be narrowed, but will never be eliminated. Respondent answers varied, but they believe that the status quo will continue to be maintained for several reasons. These reasons are: that the City reacts to large investment proposals, the City does not stick to long term planning goals, and that there is too much of a time lag between the proposal and project implementation. The reactionary planning that the City exhibits is, in part, because the financial component is crucial, as one respondent (Interview Participant Four, 2014) points out that, “even the best planning document can fall apart when the funding dries up.” Also, a lag in time often increases the possibility of a gap occurring. This is inevitable with long term planning.

While the goals may stay the same, the proposals and how the plan is implemented may change. This challenge cannot be helped because plans need to have some flexibility. While the gap can never be bridged, one respondent (Interview Participant Six, 2014) states that, “A lot of the time the City is reactionary in its planning and even zoning is still not up to date for a lot of the lower city, it is for the downtown, but not for the neighbourhoods around the downtown. So I would say we fall a bit short in resources to be implementing the plans fully which poses a problem for narrowing the gap.” It is evident that some progress can be made in this area.



#### **4.9.6 Future Revitalization**

Interview participants were also asked what they would like to see in terms of revitalization in downtown Hamilton. Five of the six participants agreed that eliminating Jackson Square completely and putting through roads back in, as well as turning the store fronts facing outward again rather than inward would be beneficial to the core. More general answers that all respondents agreed upon were, having more people downtown, having a mix of people, mixed land-use, housing intensification, and more jobs downtown. One respondent believes that post-secondary education should play a key role as it did in many American cities. This respondent (Interview Participant Three, 2014) states that, “Having McMaster build the medical centre is a start, however, something more in terms of a satellite campus would help increase intensification.” Most answers were non-specific in nature and the general consensus was that having an overall intensification of jobs, housing, and people in the core would help revitalize downtown Hamilton.

#### **4.9.7 Elements of a Successful Core & Hamilton’s Goals**

Next, participants were asked, what elements, if any, does a successful core area in a mid-size city have that Hamilton is lacking? The results from all three interviews suggest that there are no elements that Hamilton is lacking in order to have a successful downtown core. This suggests that Hamilton should work with the existing downtown framework rather than try to change the downtown in its entirety. Participants were also asked what the current intended goals for revitalizing downtown Hamilton are and if these goals have changed over time. Respondent answers were not specific, but all mentioned, continuing the work of revitalization, new projects, the fixing up old of messes, restoring heritage properties, and attempting to intensify land use and the number of people and jobs in the core. All participants agreed that the

goals for downtown have definitely changed. The goal is now no longer to tear down and rebuild, but to keep the existing buildings and renew or adapt them to suit the city's current needs, thereby maintaining architecture and heritage.

## **5.0 ANALYSIS**

This chapter analyzes the findings obtained from literature including municipal scrapbooks as well as government and consulting company documents. It also interprets key informant interviews. The principal goal is to answer what key factors have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area in a mid-size city using Hamilton, Ontario as a case study. It addresses the major renewal schemes that were applied to downtown Hamilton. In addition to answering this main research question, the examination analyzes the discussion pertaining to the following sub-questions of the study:

- 1) What is the history of the downtown planning process in Hamilton?
- 2) What trends in urban renewal have taken place in downtown Hamilton?
- 3) For the urban renewal attempts that have failed, why have they been so unsuccessful?
- 4) Has there been a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and their implementation? If so, can this gap be bridged or should the status quo be maintained?

The first two sub-questions will focus more so on archival data while the last two sub-questions will primarily be analyzed through key informant interviews.

### **5.1 Downtown Renewal Plans**

Strategies starting from the mid-1950s have largely failed to return activity and importance to Hamilton's downtown core. Perhaps we need to acknowledge that the core cannot be what it once was, but that it is still an important part of the city in a different way. While it may no longer be the economic hub of the city or the centralized location for housing and transportation; it has a historical importance which is exemplified in its architecture and remains an important location for culture and government. Urban renewal programs and schemes intended to change the image of downtown Hamilton have largely failed leaving behind vacant

buildings and social issues that continue to persist. Several projects were implemented without the addition of policies to ensure regulation for the entire core area. There was no single framework for downtown revitalization. Compared to other Canadian cities Hamilton has seen more tearing down rather than building up (The Hamilton Spectator, June 14, 1962).

Newspaper articles in municipal scrapbooks speak to the fact that slum clearance does not work. It can destroy often socially stable neighbourhoods (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 21, 1986). This project is in line with Carmon's first generation of urban renewal policies, *The Bulldozer Phase*. Razing entire areas to rebuild typically required a timeline of 20-40 years. This put a heavy burden on the area socially, while renewal took place. The project also suffered financially as return on investment only occurs when the project is completed and successful. While the project did bring about some positive changes such as the recreation centre which was well used by residents and better living quarters, it destroyed the urban fabric and social cohesion in the area which is in line with Carmon's (1999) information on slum clearance. Tearing down old housing stock displaces residents, destroys closely-knit communities, and has no regard for social ties (Carmon, 1999). Many families of the North End project were displaced from the area and did not have a positive relocation experience. North End residents wanted to protect and preserve the sense of place that they had built as a community. Relocation housing was scattered throughout the city and was often more expensive than their North End residences creating financial stress, and putting greater distances between loved ones (The Globe and Mail, Apr. 4, 1974; Henry & Pineo, 1973). In the future, a review of possible relocation housing should be completed in order to ensure that enough comparable housing accommodations are available. Moving elderly people should be avoided as they are at an increased risk of psychosomatic and physical concerns during and after relocation (Henry & Pineo, 1973). Relocation costs should

also be considered as this is a stressful situation for most families that are being uprooted due to lack of financial resources.

It is evident that transparency and communication between the City and residents as well as developers must be improved for future projects. Overall, this type of renewal should be avoided. Rehabilitating a neighbourhood or parts of a neighbourhood is more favourable as there is less impact on residents in terms of finances, social cohesion, sense of place, and overall stress. During this project, several residents were relocated and their homes demolished for a road that was never built. This was both costly and unnecessary. It is important to ensure that project plans are carefully thought out and that funding is in place to complete all parts of a project. There are, however, always unforeseen project costs and cutbacks. Lastly, public participation is imperative so that those that continue to live in the area have a voice in the matter (Interview Participant One, 2014).

Until the early 1960s, Canadian cities could rely on the federal and provincial government to aid in funding urban renewal projects as long as housing was involved (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 2, 1964). Senior levels of government recognized and responded to residential blight up until this time and were not, however, concerned with commercial or industrial blight. When it became evident that large scale clearance projects were unsuccessful, senior levels of government no longer wanted to support this type of unsuccessful development and cut funding. Cities all over North America abandoned this type of planning.

Civic Square, before its revitalization was said to have too many land uses, poor aesthetics, overcrowded housing, and a lack of green space (Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1967). What was not understood at the time is that a combination of complementary land uses is often useful in creating a core area that is vibrant and where there are 'eyes on the street.' Through the

demolition of buildings and roads, a superblock was built to compete with suburban shopping malls. The Civic Square project also falls under Carmon's (1999) *Era of the Revitalization of Downtown Areas*. This project carried a heavy economic burden and required demolishing and rebuilding several blocks of land. It focused on a business-like approach whereby economic development was the focus through public-private partnerships. Cities using this approach often built shopping malls, convention centres, and hotels. The goal was to attract local businesses, customers, and tourists (Carmon, 1999). This type of planning is also what Filion *et al.* (2004) call *Head on Competition with the Suburbs*. The theory is grounded in the idea that demolishing and rebuilding to provide a downtown shopping mall would allow downtowns to successfully compete with the suburbs. The expanded Jackson Square complex was supposed to offer year round appeal and coupled with the arts facilities, convention centre, and hotel was to appeal to both Hamiltonians and tourists (The Hamilton Spectator, Sept. 21, 1984). Unfortunately this plan did not translate into permanent success.

The attempt to replicate conditions found in suburban shopping malls resulted in safety concerns and ended in poor retail performance just as Filion *et al.* (2004) discuss happened in cities throughout North America. Jackson Square was unable to retain tenants or draw customers in the long term (Interview Participant Two, 2014). Poor performance and a sterile environment are just some of the impacts of *Head on Competition with the Suburbs*. The downtown shopping mall was a costly failure (Filion & Hammond, 2008). The superblock did not relate to the community around it, nor did it cater to the needs of downtown residents. As with most efforts that fall under the *Era of the Revitalization of Downtown Areas*, it failed to help local residents and to provide long-term neighbourhood improvement. Jackson Square indoor shopping mall took pedestrian traffic off the streets. Further, it was difficult to compete with suburban

shopping malls which offered ample free parking (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 4, 1988; Jan. 6, 1994). The Civic Square project also changed the urban fabric of downtown, creating a superblock void of mixed use pedestrian space (The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 29, 1994; Interview Participant Four, 2014; Interview Participant Five, 2014). This explains the lack of pedestrian presence around the superblock. Public gathering spaces became non-existent as the project turned much of the public space into private space. Dr. John Weaver, (The Hamilton Spectator, Aug, 27, 1983) a professor at McMaster University, stated that he would have liked to have seen the retention of more of the original façades of the older buildings thereby maintaining more of the 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Ultimately, the economic downturn and deterioration of the pedestrian focused environment left the downtown in a state of decline. While Jackson Square was said to be a successful project on the basis that it was completed, it did not become a successful shopping mall in the long term and to this day struggles to attract customers.

The goal of the York Street project was to address the aesthetic appeal of the downtown core and to improve the living and working conditions of the area. The plan aimed to widen York Street, create high rise apartment towers, public and private housing, a shopping mall, as well as other institutional buildings (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a; Jones & Assoc. Ltd., 1966; The Hamilton Spectator, May 30, 1966). This project also falls in line with Carmon's *Era of the Revitalization of Downtown Areas* phase. The City stated that the area had too many land uses, a lack of green space, and poor aesthetics. The City believed demolishing and rebuilding would renew the core. Sub-standard housing was also addressed. While Civic Square was designed to give the city a cultural and commercial focus, York Street was to meet the local needs of the community (Hamilton Urban Renewal Committee, 1968a). It instead

destroyed social ties and again displaced residents (Interview Participant Five, 2014). Overall, it did not meet the needs of the local community.

This renewal project removed blighted and certain non-residential use buildings and replaced it with off street parking and new housing. Creating an excess of parking lots has been detrimental to the downtown core. Parking lots impede a scenic and lively pedestrian experience. While the idea behind additional parking lots was to compete with the free parking offered in suburban areas, a surplus of self-pay parking is not comparable. This type of practise is what Filion *et al.* (2004), discuss in their theory of *Head on Competition with the Suburbs*. The dynamics of a suburban shopping area and downtown core are, in fact, too different to implement the same plan for both. This is largely why such renewal efforts failed. This type of planning increased vacancy rates and created a surplus of empty parking lots. When parking is at a premium it is more expensive. Parking in Hamilton is less expensive and readily available compared to cities such as Toronto. It is evident that a lack of parking was not an issue. Hamilton had several parking options and too much emphasis was placed on accommodating vehicular traffic. Valuable spaces were and still are being used as car parks and there is no incentive to build.

In the case of York Street, public participation took place by means of educating and informing the public about what was to take place. It did not, however, allow for public input or feedback. This is similar to the North End project, where residents were informed of renewal plans for the area. This is not considered true public participation whereby residents are actively able to participate in the planning process.

Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (NIPs) and Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Programs (RRAPs) are excellent examples of small scale projects that had the ability to make



large impact. Carmon (1999) explains this type of planning as the second generation of urban renewal policies in North America. This phase took place from the 1970s onward and was called the *Era of Neighbourhood Rehabilitation*. It was a broad approach to social problems in which public opinions were favourable. The goal was to improve the housing stock and increase neighbourhood status. Canada's NIPs focused on renovating existing housing stock and creating better neighbourhoods (Carmon, 1999).

During the 1970s, neighbourhoods in Hamilton were brought into the planning process with the hopes of improving low cost housing (The Hamilton Spectator, Oct. 23, 1971; Feb. 5, 1972). These plans were to provide open and park space, better building conditions, and assistance in a lack of parking and land use conflicts (The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 5, 1972). The public's opinion was taken into consideration to ensure support for a more successful plan.

Throughout the decades, mixed land use has been seen as a problem to be rectified through renewal schemes. This was not the case for these improvement plans and programs. The concern with these plans and programs are that they were never carried out to their full potential. They seem to have fallen by the wayside and an analysis of their impact on the neighbourhoods was never carried out. This is in line with Carmon's (1999) analysis which notes that the plans never continued. This may be due to the fact that changes were incremental and therefore not as obvious as with other types of planning (Carmon, 1999).

The primary examples of these plans are the Corktown-Stinson and Gibson neighbourhoods, which are just outside of the downtown area. If these programs had expanded into the core it could have been quite advantageous for renewal. Hamilton has since implemented similar NIPs with success (Interview Participant Two, 2014). Having residents involved at the local level instills a sense of place and pride in the community. This is important

for all neighbourhoods in a City, not just in the downtown. These programs help strengthen communities and encourage public participation.

Gore Park aimed to create a vibrant and safe downtown area with an emphasis on pedestrian needs. While this project had good intentions, it switched hands several times and the finished development was far from the original plan, therefore, the intended goals were not met (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 31, 1983; Jan. 11, 1984; Oct. 3, 1986; Houghton, 1990; Interview Participant One, 2014; Interview Participant Two, 2014; Interview Participant Four, 2014). The shift from focusing on accommodating the automobile to focusing on pedestrians marks an important change. Filion *et al.* (2004) discuss this in the *Accentuation of a Distinct Core Identity* phase of downtown revitalization. This phase realizes previous failed revitalization attempts and instead, changes the focus on enhancing the core area. This shift focuses on pedestrian movement and the uniqueness of the core area (Filion *et al.*, 2004). The project was an effort to put pedestrians first, but large sums of money were wasted on building, tearing down, and rebuilding (The Hamilton Spectator, Dec. 31, 1983; Jan. 11, 1984; Oct. 3, 1986). The plan was poorly designed and executed because it was pushed through council quickly as redevelopment plans were trying to be expedited (Interview Participant Two, 2014). This resulted in poor judgement and errors during the planning and implementation phases. Public participation was not incorporated in this project because it was pushed through so quickly. Important decisions were made without proper consultation with those who would be utilizing the space. Overall, due to a lack of transparency the project did not live up to its potential.

Private development has brought about signs of vitality in the core, although, the future of some vacant old buildings remains unknown. This includes private development and redevelopment in the form of office towers and housing such as the two office towers built in the

1980s, one of which replaced the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and buildings such as the Piggott and Sun Life buildings which now provide housing (The Hamilton Spectator, July 21, 1984). There is great hope that the momentum generated by private investment and development in the core will ignite continued interest in the downtown. This type of planning is in line with Carmon's third generation of urban renewal policies, the *Era of the Revitalization of Downtown Areas*. This business-like approach has made landmarks such as the Piggott and Sun Life buildings into successful and functional spaces. They have brought about a great deal of change to the downtown through their redevelopment. Housing and employment opportunities help bring people into the core and allow for 'eyes on the street.' Pedestrians are an important element of a lively and interesting street life. This increases the perceived and real sense of safety as more people are present and involved in day to day street life. From the 1980s onward there have been many private development projects in downtown Hamilton (Interview Participant Four, 2014). This allows downtown Hamilton to attract and retain workers and residents which aids in downtown Hamilton's economic development. This phase of redevelopment focuses on the opportunity to create economic benefits and add to the local economic base.

Brownfield development, while a slow process, has been a positive venture in Hamilton. LIUNA Station is an excellent example of how Hamilton can keep its existing history and architecture while bringing life back to a building and its surrounding area. There are not many of examples of brownfield development in the core, but as is evident with LIUNA Station, when done correctly, it can be a very rewarding venture. It is evident that brownfield redevelopment is a worthy endeavour and that the City has continued to support it by encouraging projects such as the redevelopment of the Lister Block which now houses Hamilton's tourism office. The focus

is on the uniqueness of core area buildings rather than competition with the suburbs. The focus is on the distinct character and heritage of downtown buildings and appreciating what they have to offer as well as maintaining a more compact urban environment. Filion *et al.* (2004) would refer to this as the *Accentuation of a Distinct Core Identity*. The Lister Block has retained its historical façade and is a more recent example of brownfield redevelopment.

The Downtown Secondary Plan (DSP): Putting the People First is a long term planning document that seeks to renew the core through incremental changes and looks at all aspects of downtown land use planning, continuing the trend towards the *Accentuation of a Distinct Core Identity*. Its goal is to guide the planning process for downtown. The plan takes into consideration all aspects of the downtown including heritage planning, transportation planning, and land use planning. It seeks to streamline the application process for downtown projects. This means focusing on the core's unique identity, a compact urban environment, and the predominance of pedestrian movement. The plan also includes public participation. These are all important aspects that have not been looked at as a whole in previous renewal schemes. It is evident in reviewing past renewal efforts that this type of planning is the direction that the City should move toward due to the failure of large scale demolish and rebuild projects.

It was not until the DSP in the 1990s, that complimentary mixed land uses were considered to contribute to a more vibrant and improved core area. This is when true public participation began and the public's views and suggestions were taken into consideration and where feasible, put into action. Interview participants agreed that going back to mixed-use pedestrian friendly planning with a focus on culture, heritage, and design is the right choice for downtown Hamilton.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This research seeks to understand what factors have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown core, using Hamilton, Ontario as a case study. The recommendations discussed in this study, cannot be applied to other cities without considering several other factors. This section identifies general recommendations for the City of Hamilton based on the findings of this research.

While it is evident through key stakeholder interviews that there is indeed a gap between planning proposals and their implementation there is room for this gap to be narrowed. The conclusion that this gap cannot be bridged is clear, however, working towards narrowing this gap is important. Interviews with participants suggest that the City is too reactive in its planning. If the City became more proactive there would be less room for a larger gap to occur in the process. This is because the goals and objectives for the downtown and for projects would remain in place regardless of what proposal came before the City. It would not be compromised due to reactionary planning. This is where the City can make the most change, as it is inevitable for there to be a time lag between long-term planning proposals and their implementation.

Also, even with the most careful planning, concerns with funding can occur. While it is important to secure funding, concerns with project revisions due to funding changes is inevitable. The best approach is to try and ensure funding is secured for the entire project, but to begin with key areas of the project incrementally, attempting to complete one task or idea at a time. This will help ensure that one aspect of a long-term project is completed before another part begins. Small-scale, incremental initiatives are less drastic than large-scale demolish and rebuild schemes, but succeed at increasing downtown confidence and a sense of community through small gradual accomplishments. Such initiatives must be part of a larger vision and include

public-private partnerships for the downtown. Planners are pivotal to the facilitation of these partnerships as advisors throughout the planning, implementation, and monitoring process. They are instrumental in helping municipalities leverage their resources, acting as facilitators between a diversity of stakeholders and offering guidance and experienced support throughout the process. This encourages an integrative dynamic between the City, the community, and various stakeholders.

It is also important that public participation continue in the downtown planning process. It is evident that residents feel more pride in their community and establish a sense of place when they are involved in the process in a meaningful way. This includes charrettes, public meetings, and public advisory groups. The type of proposals that have been successful and that were expressed in key stakeholder interviews that should continue include: public-private partnerships, private development, and brownfield redevelopment whereby public participation is instrumental. Lastly, going back to a grid-like formation and putting through roads back through what is now the Jackson Square superblock should be considered. In literature and stakeholder interviews, it is evident that an interesting and lively streetscape where pedestrians and accessibility come first is important. This opens up the space and allows for more street level activity. It would also increase accessibility and bring back more public space to the area. Turning the stores outward would provide a more walkable streetscape as well.

Many mistakes were made early on in revitalizing Hamilton's core. This is because Hamilton was often one of the first cities in Canada to try a new renewal approach. Hamilton was an iconic example of renewal. This is due, in part, because of the ample amount of federal funding that the City received for projects at the time. As failed planning schemes demonstrate,

it is most favourable to be cautious of innovative measures and rather, to draw upon successful plans carried out in similar cities.

### **5.3 Future Research**

Conducting a similar research study using case studies from other mid-size cities would contribute to the expanding body of literature involving downtown revitalization and mid-size cities. A similar study in another mid-size city would be beneficial in determining if comparable outcomes exist. While it is anticipated that the history and trends would be similar, it is possible that differences would be present. Completing a comparison study may further highlight potential differences. In comparing two mid-size North American cities greater focus can be put on the political factors that often influence planning proposals and the implementation process. Another important factor to consider would be concerns regarding these projects and the possible gap between the planning proposal and implementation process. How each city deals with this gap may be different. Exploring how this gap can be bridged or if the status quo should be maintained may shed more light on improving future planning practices.

### **5.4 Concluding Remarks**

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the character of downtown Hamilton was significantly influenced by a series of plans and proposals aimed at renewal. The trend over time from the 1950s to the 1980s was to demolish entire tracts of land and rebuild. This was in line with the trend that swept across North American cities. This type of planning did not revitalize downtown cores. In order to compete with suburban shopping malls, building downtown shopping malls was also a trend in North America at the time. This too, failed to help revitalize the core in the long term. Political forces were a motivating factor at the time of these demolish and rebuild schemes. The political environment largely supported Hamilton's municipal

government receiving federal funding from the liberal government. Also, improvement plans in the downtown core, and Hamilton's downtown shopping mall in particular, were affected by the economic downturn that Hamilton was faced with in the early 1980s and 1990s. Hamilton had built its economy on manufacturing, and this sector has seen significant decline. These factors play a role in the planning that took place and influenced the outcomes of these plans. Over time, it was realized that demolishing and rebuilding, competing with the suburbs, and accommodating the automobile over pedestrians was not successful in revitalizing the core area. When the City began to move toward public-private investment opportunities we begin to see a small shift in the core. The City cannot revitalize the core successfully on its own. The shift toward private development, brownfield development, and creating a framework for future plans and renewal efforts through the Downtown Secondary Plan (DSP) have begun to shift the downtown into an area that shows promise and growth. This shift is in line with preserving the natural environment by protecting greenspace and allowing for sustainable growth downtown through an increase in density.

The reasons previous project efforts have failed are due, in part, to a heavy reliance on government funding, the magnitude of projects (large scale), the lack of public participation, and the absence of a solid framework backing the planning process. Allowing residents to be an active part of the planning process ensures that they are also partly accountable for outcomes in their city. Currently the City has shifted its focus to creating a vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly environment with an emphasis on ensuring that there is a mix of people in the core in terms of, housing, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. Socio-economic changes within the city focus more on multiculturalism and continuing to develop a sense of community. As Hamilton shifts from a manufacturing based economy to a more service based economy, it



continues to embrace multiculturalism in order to attract knowledge based workers. Also, with economic turbulence comes a shift in the layers of government. This can cause debt levels to increase as well as problems such as fiscal restraint. Within the City of Hamilton an increased commitment to fiscal responsibility and community participation in matters such as housing are more recent reactions to this trend. Table 4 outlines three key external factors of the planning process and the trends that have taken place within these factors. Further, it discusses both past efforts and current outcomes as they pertain to core area renewal.

Table 4: Outcomes of Contextual Planning Issues

Factor	Trend	Past Efforts	Current Outcomes
Economy	Cyclical changes, globalized economy	Reliance on industry, begin to see the steady decline in manufacturing	Focus on service sector, economic instability due to globalization, long range planning, review of trends
Demography	Immigration	Little focus on immigration as a key factor in renewal schemes	Attempt to actively attract and retain new immigrants, essential for core area density, focus on culture & lifestyle
Policy	Downgrading of responsibilities	Much public funding for renewal efforts	Neoliberal approach, financial restrictions

(Rubino, 2016)

The realization that one initiative will not work solely to revitalize the core area is evident. The review of initiatives incorporated by other mid-size cities to improve their core area is worth exploring. Creating a sense of place in the core, and preserving architecture and history

are important to core area renewal. While the role of downtown has changed over time, downtown is still important and integral to the overall quality of life in the city.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 Interview Questions**

#### **The Revitalization of Downtown Hamilton**

Section 1 includes questions asking for participants' professional opinion regarding the success/failure of downtown urban renewal projects; and

Section 2 includes questions asking for participants' professional opinion regarding planning proposals and their implementation.

#### **Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

##### **Section One:**

**Please answer the following questions by indicating yes or no**

- 1) From 1950 to present day, which urban renewal projects for Hamilton's downtown core are you aware of:
  - a) North End Urban Renewal Project (Y/N)
  - b) Civic Square Urban Renewal Project (Y/N)
  - c) York Street Urban Renewal Project (Y/N)
  - d) Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP) & Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) (Y/N)
  - e) Gore Park Urban Renewal Project (Y/N)
  - f) Private Development Plans(Y/N)
  - g) Brownfield Developments (Y/N)
  - h) Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan: Putting the People First (Y/N)
- 2a) Are all of the major urban renewal schemes for renewal in downtown Hamilton that you are aware of from 1950 to present day listed in question 1?

***If yes, go to question 3. If no go to question 2b.***

- 2b) Which urban renewal projects would you add to the list?

2c) When did these projects take place?

3a) Have you in some way contributed to, or studied, any of the aforementioned urban renewal schemes or others pertaining to revitalizing Hamilton's downtown core?

***If yes, go to question to 3b, if no go to question 4***

3b) Which downtown renewal efforts you have been involved with or studied?

3c) In what capacity were you involved?

3d) In your opinion, how has downtown Hamilton evolved over the years?

4a) Have there been initiatives within urban renewal that have been successful in revitalizing the core area? These initiatives can include, but are not limited to those discussed in question 1.

***If yes, continue to question 4b. If no, continue to question 5***

4b) How did these initiatives contribute to a more successful downtown core?

4c) What were the main factors contributing to the success of these plans?

5a) Have there been initiatives within urban renewal that have been unsuccessful in revitalizing the core area? These initiatives can include, but are not limited to those discussed in question 1.

***If yes, continue to question 5b, if no, continue to question 6***

5b) How did these initiatives fail to renew the downtown core?

5c) What were the main factors contributing to the failure of these plans?

5d) Did these failed attempts maintain the area as it was or cause further deterioration of the core area?

6a) What are the current intended goals for revitalizing the downtown core?

6b) Have these goals changed over time?



## **Section 2**

1a) Has there been a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and their implementation?

*If yes, continue to question 1b. If no, continue to question 2*

1b) Can this gap be bridged or should the status quo be maintained?

1c) What challenges during the implementation phase does Hamilton still face in attempting to revitalize its core area?

2) What would you like to see in terms of revitalization in downtown Hamilton?

3) How would you define a successful downtown core?

4) What elements, if any, does a successful core area in a mid-sized city have that Hamilton is lacking?

## **Appendix 2 Information Letter and Consent Form**

### **INFORMATION LETTER**

Date

Dear [Insert Name]

You are invited to consider participating in a research study regarding downtown revitalization in Hamilton, Ontario. As a Master's candidate in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Pierre Filion. More information regarding the project and your possible involvement is discussed below.

#### **Study Overview**

This research focuses on the belief that downtowns are important unique areas. Downtown centres offer a diversity of activities which differentiates the core from all other parts of the city. Traditionally, core areas act as the centre for commerce, transportation, entertainment, and retail. Decline has brought about many urban renewal and revitalization projects throughout the decades, some of which temporarily aided in the renewal of downtown, but for the most part, have largely failed to revitalize the urban core.

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of factors that have historically prevented the successful revitalization of a downtown area within a mid-size city using Hamilton, Ontario as a case study. This study seeks to understand the history and trends of revitalization in downtown Hamilton from the 1950s onward. While these answers can be found within planning documents and municipal scrapbooks two questions remain:

- 1) For the urban renewal attempts that have failed, why have they been so unsuccessful?
- 2) Has there been a gap between urban renewal planning proposals and their implementation? If so, can gap be bridged or should the status quo be maintained?

As an urban professional involved in or someone who has taken great interest in the urban renewal process for Hamilton's downtown core, you play an important role in answering these questions. Your input would provide key information for this study.

#### **Participation**

Your participation would involve an audio recorded semi-structured interview at a time and location to be set up at your convenience. The interview will be approximately 15 to 30 minutes in length. The interview includes questions about urban renewal projects as well as questions regarding the proposal and implementation of these projects. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences by letting me know you wish to do so. Please be assured that your name will not appear in any thesis or publication resulting from this study. All of the information you provide will be kept in a secure location and after one year the data will be confidentially destroyed or deleted. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

I will contact you within a week to further discuss the project. If you agree to participate, I will contact you to arrange an in-person interview.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision to participate is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please feel free to contact Maureen Nummelin, PhD, Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email at [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information about participating, please contact me by e-mail at [atrubino@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:atrubino@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my thesis advisor Dr. Pierre Filion by telephone at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 33963 or by e-mail at [pfilion@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pfilion@uwaterloo.ca)

Sincerely,

Toni Rubino  
Master's Candidate  
School of Planning  
University of Waterloo

## CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Toni Rubino under the supervision of Dr. Pierre Filion of the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in the study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Studies at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca)

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES  NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES  NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES  NO

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_