Brandon
Brandon MB

• Major urban centres in Manitoba
  – Winnipeg pop 500,000
  – Brandon pop 46,000
  – Thompson pop 10,000

• Everitt & Ramsey 2002 writing about reviving inner city Brandon
Some media

- Leaving Brandon
Brandon MB

- A small, regional prairie city
- 46,000 pop with a 180,000 pop shopping area
- Built on agricultural servicing, rail facilities, food processing
- Economic growth has slowed
  - Farming declining in employment, east-west rail traffic in decline
  - City is distant from metropolitan heartlands at the core of the New Economy
Suburban Brandon

- Post 1960 growth moves to the suburbs
- Shift of middle-class residential to suburbs
- Development of suburban mall
- Hotels with indoor pools
  - Great way to allow rural folks to have winter getaways
Figure 1
Improvement districts in Brandon
Inner Brandon

- Decline of traditional urban core of Rosser Ward
  - Still has 5500 people and 500 (mostly local) businesses
  - Some gentrifiers
  - Significant poverty, with a strong Aboriginal dimension
The Gallery

• Bulldoze 2 city blocks to build the Gallery, 1980.
• Inward-facing retail bubble with no street presence
  – Vacuumed the remaining businesses off the downtown streets
• Fails to halt inner city decline
• In economic trouble by the 1990s
Figure 2
Entrance to the Town Centre in downtown Brandon. Clock is original from Reesor's store, 1882. Also an example of BIA improvements.
Figure 3
View of Town Centre from East End. The remains of the Eaton's signage is hidden under street light and among trees.
Gallery/Town Centre

• Closure of Eaton’s 1999, occupancy crashes to 50%
• Mall changes hands 4 times, renamed and reflagged as Town Centre, renovated
• Becomes a medical-based service mall, with library and art gallery
• Regional Health Authority becomes a key tenant
  – Close to its inner city clients
Other Initiatives

• Business Improvement Association
  – Promotes $3m makeover of downtown streetscape
  – Promotes parades, festivals

• Brandon MHAC
  – Promotes heritage conservation

• Riverbank Inc
  – Promotes potential of nearby natural heritage

• Neighbourhood Renewal Corp
  – Promoting family settlement/housing in inner city
  – May lead to ‘dehousing’ of welfare-dependent folk
Brandon MB

- Suburbs gain a Canada Games sports complex
- Most of the city’s big cultural events and festivals happen at a suburban arena near the Shopper’s Mall
  - The Keystone Centre