

# Reviving London, ON: The Role of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market

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 the 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**

Societal changes have changed the function and presence of downtowns over the years and a variety of strategies have been implemented in an effort to revitalize downtown cores. One of the most recent strategies employed has been using urban catalysts, such as stadiums and markets, to stimulate downtown revitalization. The primary purpose of this strategy is to create catalysts for further development and investment. This study examines the role the John Labatt Centre (JLC, a recent arena) and Covent Garden Market (a farmers market with a large range of permanent food retailing facilities) play in revitalizing Downtown London, Ontario.

Within the last decade the City of London invested millions of dollars into rebuilding the Covent Garden Market and constructing the John Labatt Centre in the heart of London's downtown. The purpose of this research is to determine whether these venues act as catalysts for new development, and thus assess their spin-off effects.

Data was collected by reviewing planning legislation, administering a survey to local business owners and interviewing key stakeholders. Findings show that the impact of the JLC and Market is unevenly distributed. The results provide insight on differences based on business type, and geographical location.

Planning implications derived from the London, Ontario case study show that continued commitment from the public and politicians is the most important factor in downtown revitalization. Implementing urban catalysts helps to anchor downtown districts, by providing a destination. However, this strategy needs to be applied in conjunction with innovative ideas, such as a Main Street program and incentive programs (façade improvements, waiving development charges on residential buildings) that instill confidence in the private sector.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

For years, downtowns have been losing their prominence due to a number of changes in the urban form (Filion et al., 2004). Changes in the economy and retail sectors, and urban sprawl force downtowns to evolve in order to remain the focal point of the city/region (Filion & Gad, 2006). Specifically, cities characterized with dispersed urban form and populations between 100,000 – 500,000 have experienced difficulty maintaining their downtowns (Filion & Gad, 2006).

Numerous revitalization strategies have been implemented to tackle the decline of downtowns in mid-sized cities. Within the last decade, large-scale developments known as urban catalysts have been used to generate new growth in downtowns (Leinberger, 2005). Libraries, stadiums, markets, and convention centers have been built in downtowns, rather than in suburban locations, to bring more people to the core (Leinberger, 2005; Jagoda, 2007). Particularly popular have been entertainment centres (stadiums) built downtown to attract large crowds and create economic spin-offs (Baade and Dye, 1988, 1990; Chapin, 2004; Leinberger, 2005; Rosentraub et al., 1994).

The purpose of this research is to determine the role of implementing two urban catalysts intended to jointly revitalize Downtown London, Ontario. A case study approach is followed to study the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play in revitalizing London's core.

### **1.1 Research Background**

Literature on the functions of downtowns, decline and subsequent revitalization efforts, and downtown decline in mid-sized cities provides the framework for the research. These topics will be explored in greater detail to explain the research background.

### **1.1.1 Importance of Downtown**

The creation of downtowns began with ancient city development by the Greeks and Romans. Ancient Greeks had main streets that served as social gathering areas, and in Roman towns the intersection of the main streets served as the forum with shops, temples and public buildings (Hodge and Gordon, 2008). Such development recognized the importance of the downtown as a central area for interaction within a settlement. As the centre of the city, downtowns have traditionally been commerce, transportation, entertainment, and retail hubs (Filion & Gad, 2006). Additionally, functional downtowns offer a diverse range of activities within walking distance that appeal to a variety of people (Filion et al., 2004; Leinberger, 2005). These activities are unique to the core and are generally not available in suburban locations (Filion & Gad, 2006; Ley & Frost, 2006). Since the core is most accessible to the entire population, festivals, entertainment activities and niche retailing are typically located here.

Downtown can be an ideal location for commerce. Businesses benefit from the agglomeration of economies and face-to-face contact (Filion & Gad, 2006). Transportation networks converge at the core, and the downtown offers residents a variety of modes of transit (including walking, automobile, public transit). Seasons (2003) sums up the importance of downtowns by saying, “a healthy core can contribute to residents’ sense of belonging and pride in community ... [as well] healthy cores tend to create the critical mass of activity and investment necessary to attract more of the same” (p. 26).

### **1.1.2 Downtown Decline and Revitalization**

Downtowns across North America have been declining for many years under the pressure of a combination of related factors. Downtowns have been severely affected by the automobile, decentralization, suburban sprawl and changes in the retail sector (Filion et al., 2004; Filion & Gad, 2006; Leinberger, 2005; Robertson, 1995). As automobile use became general, public transit

ceased to play the primary transportation role. The automobile has made it easy for people to travel between locations, and clustering of services in a central location is no longer a necessity.

Furthermore, the automobile allows people to relocate from the core to the periphery. As people settled in suburban areas, retail, services, entertainment and select employment relocated as well, causing a precipitous decline of downtowns (Faulk, 2006).

In an attempt to counteract the decline, municipalities implemented revitalization strategies to accommodate the automobile and to compete with the suburbs. Surface parking lots increasingly took over downtown space. In some cities, two-way streets were converted into one-way streets while other streets were widened in an effort to make the downtown 'automobile friendly.' These early tactics failed to revitalize downtowns. Instead, they made the downtown less walkable as sidewalks decreased in size and cars became the dominant mode of transportation (Filion et al., 2004).

The downtown shopping mall represents another revitalization strategy used in an effort to help downtowns compete with the suburbs (Faulk, 2006; Filion and Hammond, 2008). Between the late 1950s and early 1980s, large retail centres were constructed in downtown locations to compete with suburban shopping centers. It was assumed "that by replicating conditions found in suburban shopping centers, downtown areas could compete successfully with suburbs" (Filion et al., 2004, p. 329). This strategy failed to generate sufficient economic activity and as a result tenants did not renew leases upon expiration (Filion and Hammond, 2008).

### **1.1.3 Downtown Decline in Mid-sized Cities**

Decline of downtowns in mid-sized cities is more prominent than in large metropolitan areas (Robertson, 1999). For the purposes of this thesis, mid-sized cities have a population between 100,000 and 500,000 (Filion et al., 2004). In the absence of high-quality and high-capacity transit services, these cities are automobile oriented and assume a relatively dispersed form. Downtowns in mid-sized cities are not graced with the same strengths as larger cities, such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, which do not possess large resident downtown populations, tourist attractions, and

extensive mass transit systems (Filion & Gad, 2006). Without the tourist draw and resident populations, cities of typical mid-sized cannot finance mass transit (Filion et al., 2004). In this context, it becomes difficult for such mid-sized city downtowns to compete with suburban locations.

## **1.2 Study Rationale**

Understanding urban catalysts and the role they play in the revitalization of downtowns is the primary reason for this study. The study rationale is stated below.

### **1.2.1 Understanding Urban Catalysts**

It is important to understand the relationship that exists between urban catalysts and downtown revitalization. One reason this understanding is so important is that urban catalysts are mostly publically funded projects. There needs to be confidence in the effectiveness of projects that spend millions of the taxpayers' dollars. Second, municipalities have been implementing a variety of types of urban catalysts as tools to revitalize downtowns in decline. Within the City of London, the Convention Centre, Central Library, Covent Garden Market, and John Labatt Centre have all been constructed as urban catalysts. It is important to understand which ones have the most impact for decision making purposes. Third, as more municipalities locate arenas in downtown, it is important to understand the rationale and effectiveness of this strategy. As well as it is important to assess the costs and benefits of using urban catalysts as tools for downtown revitalization. Within the decade, the cities of Guelph, Kingston, Oshawa, Sault St. Marie and Windsor have all constructed arenas to host their Ontario Hockey League team in downtown locations. This research contributes to the existing literature on urban catalysts as tools for downtown revitalization.

### **1.2.2 Rationale for the study**

Since the 1950s, the City of London has made downtown London a priority on the political agenda. To counteract the negative effect of extensive suburban development on downtown London, a lot of resources have been invested to draw people back to the core. Indeed, large

investments made in developments such as the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market appear to be turning around the downtown. The rationale for selecting London was primarily based on personal interest. I wanted to understand how the downtown has evolved and whether commitment by City Hall is turning downtown around. Specifically, my interest lies in the impact the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market have had in revitalizing the City.

Additionally, this research is significant because existing revitalization literature fails to address London, Ontario. London is understudied and much of the literature focuses on comparing cities or on cities deemed ‘successful.’ Although similarities can be made between London and the cities referenced in the literature, it makes sense to assess the effort the City of London has put forth to revitalize its downtown. This research will add to both the literature on London, Ontario and, ultimately, that of the role of urban catalysts. As well, the thesis will contribute to the literature on downtown revitalization in mid-sized cities.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Objectives**

The research is developed to answers three research questions:

- Did the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market act as catalysts for revitalization initiatives in downtown London?
- Are the spin-off developments sufficient to be considered tools for revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities?
- What are the positive outcomes of these large-scale developments and how far do these spin-off effects on development reach?

The specific objectives of this research are

1. To assess the role a stadium and market play as catalysts in revitalizing downtowns
2. To add to the literature available on revitalizing downtowns in mid-size cities, and London, Ontario in particular
3. To provide evidence on the use of stadiums and markets as catalysts for revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities within Ontario municipalities



## **1.4 Layout of Thesis**

There are seven chapters in this thesis. Chapter One introduces the topic, outlines the study rationale, and presents the research questions and objectives. Chapter Two reviews the literature on downtowns, as well as urban catalysts. An overview of the case study selected appears in Chapter Three. Chapter Four explains the study methods used. Chapter Five delivers the findings from the surveys and interviews, while Chapter Six analyzes the data collected. Recommendations for using stadiums and markets as tools for revitalization are given in Chapter Seven.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

Recently governments have been using catalytic projects to initiate new development and investment in downtowns. The purpose of this research is to determine the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play as urban catalysts in revitalizing downtown London. The literature review examines the importance of downtowns, the decline of downtowns and the evolution of revitalization efforts and projects over the years. This is followed by an examination of the importance of catalysts, and types of and roles of catalytic projects. Finally, the literature review will conclude by considering the economic dimension of downtown sport stadiums in Ontario.

### **2.1 Importance of Downtowns**

Downtowns provide a unique environment for specialty retail, entertainment, recreation and work (Melfi, 2008; Robertson, 1999). Downtowns can offer a range of activities, act as the heart of the city, and provide residents with a symbolic meaning (Filion and Gad, 2006; Ley and Frost, 2006). City centres play a significant role in the city's image and they can provide tourism opportunities ranging from festivals to concerts, which impact the social and economic environment of a city (Jones and Hernandez, 2006). For example, if a downtown is perceived as unsafe, people will not go to the core for social events or to spend money. Hosting events downtown attracts more people to the core, which encourages more investment (Baade and Dye, 1988; Belanger, 2005).

Additionally, downtowns act as the hub for commerce and transportation in a city. Businesses that congregate in the core benefit from locating near other firms and the face-to-face contacts this enables (Filion and Gad, 2006). As well, transportation networks come together downtown promoting a range of modes of transportation, including public transit, walking, cycling

and driving (Filion and Gad, 2006). The close proximity of various activities offers people a variety of modes of transportation.

## **2.2 Downtowns in Decline**

Downtowns across North America have been declining for many years. The decline of downtowns is more severe in small and mid-sized city urban areas, because these cities do not have the large concentration of people and employment that is found in larger metropolitan areas (Filion et al., 2004). Additionally, small and mid-sized cities lack mass public transportation systems, world-class tourist attractions, or recreational waterfronts that are found in large metropolitan regions (Robertson, 1999). Since World War II, decentralization shifted activities traditionally found downtown to the suburbs (Robertson, 1995). Meanwhile, the automobile promoted this process as retail, employment, and entertainment activities followed residents to the suburbs. With more development on the periphery, accommodating the automobile into the downtown made it less pedestrian friendly (Abbott, 1993). Sidewalks decreased in size, surface parking lots created “dead spaces,” and the distance between activities increased (Robertson, 1995). These changes make visiting downtowns less desirable. The decline of mid-sized city downtowns can be attributed to the changing retail sector, decentralization, transformations in transportation and suburban sprawl.

### **2.2.1 Changing Retail Sector**

Once the unchallenged primary retail district, downtowns have declined with the evolution of the retail system (Jones and Hernandez, 2006). The “intra-urban retail system” has experienced drastic changes over time that can be related to transformations in urban form and transportation (Jones and Hernandez, 2006). Pre-World War II, high-order goods were purchased downtown and public transit provided accessibility for all. Major changes in the retail system occurred when the automobile became the dominant form of transportation. The automobile encouraged suburbanization, and shopping centres proliferated in the 1950s and 1960s (Jones and Hernandez,

2006). “Activities found in traditional downtown have moved to the [suburban] mall” (Rybczynski, 1995, p.210). This further hindered the relative success of many downtowns in attracting people to the core in both the United States and Canada (Robertson, 1999).

The shopping centre was an enclosed structure that included a cluster of national chains (Melfi, 2008). In the 1970s, retail was used as a revitalization strategy in downtown cores, as the shopping centre assumed the role of catalyst intended to stimulate overall downtown redevelopment. Most downtown shopping centres were developed with department stores as anchors (Filion and Gad, 2006). Many malls partnered with T. Eaton Co. as the anchor, and had national chains occupying the stores (Filion and Hammond, 2006).

Many malls located in downtown cores failed as tools for revitalization (Bourne, 1989; Faulk, 2006). When tenant leases expired or were up for renewal, stores relocated to suburban shopping malls. As well, the early 1990s recession affected many of the stores occupying space in the downtown malls, causing them to close. Later, in 1997, Eaton’s filed for bankruptcy, causing these malls to lose their anchor department store (Filion and Hammond, 2006). Soon, mall operators sought to fill the vacancies with independent businesses. However, low pedestrian traffic affected the success of these businesses as well. A broader range of activities was sought to occupy these spaces, such as call centers, fitness centres, office space, and satellite university campuses (Filion and Hammond, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Decentralization**

The dispersal of people and employment from the core to the periphery further affected the state of downtowns in mid-sized cities. Decentralization “shifted downtown functions to the surrounding suburbs, particularly since World War II” (Robertson, 1995, p. 430). As people relocated to suburbia, so did offices, employment opportunities, entertainment activities and retail services (Bourne, 1989; Robertson, 1995). Decentralization severely affected downtowns, as they were no longer the primary destination for many of the key elements that embodied the meaning and importance of the traditional downtown.

### **2.2.3 Transformation in Transportation**

Downtowns once were the hub for public transit networks and promoted walkability. As the dominant form of transportation, public transit provided easy access to the core until the rise in automobile ownership and use from the 1950s onwards (Filion and Gad, 2006). Street networks were adapted to increase mobility of the automobile in downtown cores, making downtowns less pedestrian friendly. Roads were widened and two-way streets became one-way streets to ease the movement of traffic into downtowns (Filion et al., 2004). Increasing the width of streets reduced the size of sidewalks, making them narrower (Robertson, 1995). Along with adapting street networks to accommodate the automobile, there was the need for increased parking in the core. This parking need changed the urban form as parking lots dispersed throughout the core, causing breaks in the urban fabric (Filion and Gad, 2006). The increased automobile traffic made downtown dangerous for pedestrians, which in turn reduced the number of pedestrians on the street.

### **2.2.4 Suburban Sprawl**

Suburbanization has caused decline in many downtown areas, particularly those of small- and mid-sized cities which lack the abundance of activities present in large cities (Filion et al., 2004). The rise of automobile use allowed activities exclusive to the downtown region, such as department stores and entertainment (movie theatres), to follow residents to the city's periphery, thus contributing to suburban sprawl (Robertson, 1995). As people and services dispersed, downtowns were left with vacant storefronts and reduced pedestrian traffic (Filion and Gad, 2006). Such dispersion furthered the spiral of downtown decline as people had fewer reasons to visit downtowns (Filion and Gad, 2006; Robertson, 1995).

## **2.3 Downtown Revitalization**

To counteract downtown decline, governments across North America have attempted numerous strategies intended to boost investment in these areas. To return the focus to downtowns,

authors have analyzed downtown decline and revitalization efforts to determine the factors necessary for successful downtown revitalization.

The literature framework on downtown revitalization can be found in the works of Filion et al. (2004), Filion and Gad (2006), Faulk (2006), Leinberger (2005), and Robertson (1995). These works focus on revitalization strategies and defining elements that make for successful downtowns. Specific to mid-sized cities is the work of Filion et al. (2004) who “identify successful small-metro downtowns across the U.S. and Canada and explore reasons for their success” (p. 328). Filion and Gad (2006) discuss the evolution of downtowns in mid-sized cities, while Leinberger (2005) uses observations from U.S and European cities to identify twelve steps for downtown revitalization. Faulk (2006) furthers the notion of downtown revitalization in the American context by developing a model that explains “the organization of downtown interests, types of projects pursued, and evaluation of revitalization efforts” (p. 633). Robertson (1995) assesses redevelopment strategies and the subsequent effects in the United States. Themes of evolution, decline and evaluating revitalization strategies are common among the aforementioned works.

## **2.4 Progression of Revitalization Efforts**

Governments implemented revitalization strategies to return vibrancy to the downtown. This section explains the evolution of revitalization initiatives created to counteract decline. Throughout time, revitalization efforts have included urban renewal, downtown shopping malls, festival marketplaces and food retailing, promotion of downtowns through main street programs, and large-scale developments.

### **2.4.1 Urban Renewal**

Policymakers used urban renewal techniques in the late 1950s to rid the Central Business District of “eyesores” (Filion et al., 2004, p. 329). The purpose of this strategy was to demolish derelict buildings to make space for new construction and to repair the unpleasant image of the downtown. Often in the form of ‘slum clearance’ supported by the Federal government, new public

housing was constructed, which helped to fix the image of the downtown (Burayidi, 2001). The first project undertaken by the Canadian National Housing Act was that of Regent Park in Toronto (Ley and Frost, 2006). The urban renewal process displaced residents and demolished historic buildings. The Federal government ended urban renewal when it became clear that it often resulted in the concentration of poverty, criminal activity, design failures and a clustering of social issues (Bourne, 1989; Filion and Bunting, 2006).

#### **2.4.2 Downtown Shopping Malls**

Shopping malls were introduced to downtowns in the late 1970s in an effort to compete with suburban shopping centres (Filion and Hammond, 2009). The intention was to allow downtowns to remain the primary location for retailing. However, duplicating conditions similar to those found in suburban shopping centres provided only short-term success in a downtown context (Melfi, 2008). As tenants' leases came available for renewal, anchor department stores and businesses moved to suburban locations (Filion and Hammond, 2006). The suburban shopping malls benefited from the proximity of patrons, while downtown centres suffered from parking costs and high levels of vacancy. Many of these locations are now considered 'greyfields' located on prime land. In some cities, empty malls have been converted into office buildings and mixed-use developments.

#### **2.4.3 Festival Marketplaces and Food Retailing**

A festival marketplace tends to offer a variety of owner-operated shops, and emphasizes food, as one way to offer people a unique experience (Robertson, 1995). The development of the festival marketplace recognizes the importance of entertainment and food retailing (Bender, 2003). These marketplaces emphasize experience and social atmosphere. Highlighting the importance of food, entertainment and architecture, the festival marketplace became a popular revitalization strategy in the United States in the 1970s (Roberston, 1995).

Since the 1970s, there has been a resurgence of festival marketplaces as people seek a new social climate. These markets play a key role acting as both social and economic institutions within a community (Hinrichs and Lyson, 2008). Interaction between buyers and sellers adds value to the experience. The effect of farmers' markets are similar to those of festival marketplaces.

In addition to festival markets, food retailing is important for the success of a mid-sized city downtown. Unique dining experiences offer residents a change from the everyday suburban chain restaurant. These restaurants are supported by office workers during the day and cater to residents and tourists during the evening. Milder (1997) says restaurants play an important role in creating a niche market "... that should not be underestimated" (p. 29). In fact, the restaurant niche is often associated with "entertainment" niches, which combine two important revitalization strategies – food and entertainment (Milder, 1997). For example, people might go out for dinner before or after going to a play, concert or sporting event. Milder (1997) goes on to say that "people have demonstrated a willingness to travel considerable distances to go to a particular restaurant" (p.29).

#### **2.4.4 Main Street Program**

The Main Street Approach was founded in the United States in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Approach began as a short-term (3 year) pilot project with the aim to "help save many threatened older commercial buildings located in small Midwestern downtowns" (Robertson, 2004, p. 57). In each city, a third-party manager was hired to run the program. The project, deemed a success, led to the development of the National Main Street Center (NMSC) in 1980. Thirty cities located in six states participated in a second pilot project. The Approach had expanded to include state programs. Throughout the 1980s the project continued to grow to include cities with various populations. In 2004, the Program existed in 43 states, and evolved to include some of the largest cities in the United States such as Baltimore, Boston, and San Diego (Robertson, 2004).



Grounded in a four-principle approach, the Main Street Program was founded upon organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring (Robertson, 2004). Robertson (2004) explains specifically what each approach refers to, as seen below:

- “Organization: fundraising; committee structure; membership recruitment; and consensus building and cooperation amongst the many businesses, individuals, institutions, and government offices with a stake in downtown;
- Design: enhancement of downtown's physical assets and visual qualities (i.e., buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, waterfronts);
- Promotion: marketing the downtown to the public, working to enhance its image, and hosting events and activities to bring people downtown;
- Economic Restructuring: strengthening and diversifying the downtown's economic base” (p. 57).

Whether American cities use this strategy as a member of the National Main Street Centre (NMSC), or use individual elements, the Main Street Approach is “the most recognized method for revitalizing downtown districts in the United States” (Robertson, 2004, p.70). Furthermore, “the Main Street Approach is arguably the most widely used and heralded method of downtown revitalization –especially for smaller cities” (Robertson, 2004, p.56). Deemed as popular and effective, the Main Street Approach encourages collaboration between stakeholders and public-private partnerships, while highlighting the importance of shared interest associated with downtown revitalization and development (Robertson, 2004).

In Canada, the Ontario Main Street Approach was developed by the Heritage Canada Foundation. First initiated in 1981, as a pilot project in Perth, Ontario, the Approach worked to improve “downtowns’ attractiveness, quality of life, commercial viability, and sense of identity” (Heritage Canada Foundation, 2009, p. 4). Following the same 4-Point Approach as the American program, Ontario’s Main Street program helped over 70 communities throughout its duration. Working with the community the Main Street Approach received hundreds of endorsements and helped to revitalize downtowns through new employment, investments and buildings renovations (Heritage Canada Foundation, 2009). In the first ten years, the Approach assisted to generate \$90 million of investment in the participating communities as well as 700 major building renovations

(Heritage Canada Foundation, 2009). Focusing on “business development strategies that strengthen local economies through investment, business retention and attraction,” the Main Street Ontario program was deemed successful for creating the necessary framework for building partnerships and downtown revitalization (Ontario Heritage Connection, 2009, 1).

However, the literature available on the Main Street Program is limited. The National Main Street Centre (NMSC) publishes reports about implementing the four-point approach, as well as books containing profiles of cities that have successfully used this strategy. Additionally, the existing literature provides descriptive accounts of the program in specific American cities. As a relatively new approach to Canada, first implemented in London, Ontario, it is important to understand how this program contributes to downtown revitalization.

#### **2.4.5 Large-scale developments**

Large-scale developments, such as convention centres, libraries and stadiums have been implemented since the 1970s as a means to ‘anchor’ downtown districts. The concept of an ‘anchor’ entails that a large-scale development provides people with a destination to visit, similar to that of department stores in a shopping mall. Various types of large-scale developments have been created to draw more people downtown (Filion et al., 2004). In North America, since the 1990s the majority of arenas, stadiums and performing arts centres have been constructed in downtown locations (Leinberger, 2005). Such projects are typically developed through private-public partnerships to encourage continued growth by the private sector.

These projects have two primary goals. First, the purpose of these developments is to be catalysts for new growth (Bender, 2003; Bohannon, 2004). It is assumed that public spending will help to stimulate private investment and new development, which will improve the image of the derelict area (Robertson, 1995). Second, these developments can ‘anchor’ a sector creating entertainment districts with complementary businesses forming in close proximity to benefit from economic spin-offs (Leinberger, 2005). Such spin-off benefits include increased economic activity generated by linking the facility with restaurants, bars and close-by hotels (Robertson, 1995).

Implemented as a catalyst, the development becomes an anchor once complementary developments form around the venue. While the catalyst works to attract new development, the anchor acts to attract people to the area.

## **2.5 Urban Catalysts and Revitalization**

A lack of investment contributed to the decline of downtowns. This decline, in turn, has spurred the implementation of new revitalization tactics for transforming vacant urban centres into vibrant ones (GE Capital Real Estate, 2007). Use of an urban catalyst is a key revitalization tactic. By definition, a catalyst is a substance that initiates or accelerates a reaction. In planning, the term catalyst can be used to describe a project intended to stimulate growth and development in declining downtowns (Bohannon, 2004). Specifically, “urban catalysts are new redevelopment strategies comprised of a series of projects that drive and guide urban development” (Bohannon, 2004, ii). Jacobs (1961) used the notion of “the catalytic process that occurs when primary uses—land uses that produce significant human and economic activity such as major employment and residential buildings—stimulate a demand for secondary uses” (p. 306). Examples of urban catalysts include sports venues, museums, markets, art galleries and aquariums.

“Many cities have been able to resurrect their urban cores by leveraging specific downtown attractions” (GE Capital Real Estate, 2007, 18). Using entertainment facilities as a catalyst for new development has proved that it could work in revitalizing downtowns (Bender, 2003; Bohannon, 2004). Catalysts are important as a revitalization initiative because they have the potential to reshape a downtown by encouraging private sector development (Bohannon, 2004).

Attention is being granted to this revitalization strategy by governments and authors alike; thus, there is a need to explore the effectiveness of catalytic projects as tools for revitalization. This section evaluates the role of different types of urban catalysts in revitalization and concludes with an exploration of the benefits of stadiums.

### **2.5.1 The Role of Urban Catalysts**

Urban catalysts are used to redevelop run-down, vacant areas in the urban core. These catalysts can be linked with other types of redevelopment tools such as infill and adaptive reuse. For example, the Ontario venue that hosts the Guelph Storm hockey team was an adaptive reuse project that converted an old Eaton's department store into an arena (Jagoda, 2007). Urban catalysts take advantage of existing infrastructure such as roads, parking lots and municipal services (Grodach, 2008; Nelson, 2001; Rosentraub, 1999; Vogrin, 2003).

These revitalization developments bring new life and investment to an area by anchoring the district similar to how department stores anchor shopping centres (Nelson, 2001). For one, arenas, such as Guelph's, have created a new form of synergy for revitalizing downtown sectors through tourism and entertainment (Belanger, 2000). This venue creates niche districts for retail and entertainment, which capture spillover spending and economic investment (Grodach, 2008; Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2004). For instance, in Memphis, locating a new ballpark downtown attracted people who had not been downtown in years back to the core (Vogrin, 2003). Such increased pedestrian traffic improves the likelihood of social interaction and investment (Grodach, 2008; Project for Public Spaces, 2009). Moreover, urban catalysts tend to improve the aesthetics and image of an area, as older buildings in the nearby vicinity of catalysts are refurbished and restored. This effect is cyclical and governments often offer incentives to improve the appearance of run-down buildings (Belanger, 2000).

### **2.6 Types of Catalytic Projects**

Catalytic projects tend to be grand in scale and require a significant amount of investment (Bender, 2003; Bohannon, 2004). These projects can be funded publicly or through public-private partnerships (Filion et al., 2004). Governments have used entertainment attractions, such as sports stadiums, convention centres, museums, and markets as catalytic projects in an effort to revitalize downtowns (Bohannon, 2004). This section provides an overview of the aforementioned catalytic projects.

### **2.6.1 Sport Stadiums**

Gaining popularity as tools for community development in North America, sport stadiums and arenas are some of the most common forms of catalytic projects (Bohannon, 2004; Jagoda, 2007). Sports venues have a major economic impact on a community as, in addition to sports, these facilities offer entertainment activities (such as concerts) that attract people from the region (Jagoda, 2007). Out-of-town visitors will generate export gains for the city in terms of investment by linking the outing with another form of entertainment such as a dinner (Nelson, 2001).

Sport stadiums have the ability to lure suburbanites back to the downtown and provide the city with both tangible and intangible benefits (Goodwin, 2001). Tangible benefits include economic gains, while, intangible benefits such as civic pride and identity are more difficult to assess (Goodwin, 2001). Mid-sized cities in Ontario are recognizing these benefits and are relocating stadiums that house Ontario Hockey League teams from the peripheries to downtown cores (Jagoda, 2007). The hope is that entertainment spending associated with stadiums will create ancillary development (Rosentraub, 1999).

### **2.6.2 Convention Centres**

Convention centres are an example of large redevelopment projects implemented post-1970s. These projects are created with the intent of stimulating investment in the core by producing spillover benefits (Melfi, 2008). These spillover benefits occur because the global market for conventions and exhibitions is growing, thereby producing multiplier effects (Committee for Auckland, 2005). Delegates invest in the economy while attending an event at a convention centre, which can stimulate the city's economy and create job opportunities. Convention centres boost tourism, promote a city's profile and play a critical role in both the short- and long-term success of a city's economy (Ottawa Convention Centre Corporation, 2009).

### **2.6.3 Museums**

Museums have been developed as grand, iconic centres that are intended to enhance the cultural and social environment of cities (Grodach, 2008). These cultural institutions attract

tourists, and often enjoy urban design and architectural significance (Grodach, 2008; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2000). Museums in large American and Canadian cities are grand compared to similar establishments in small- and medium-size cities. In any case, “many cities have encouraged and funded such initiatives, perceiving mainstream cultural institutions to be an ideal means of attracting visitors to new redevelopment projects and functioning as catalysts for economic development while enhancing the city image” (Grodach, 2008, p. 196). The impact of museums spreads to surrounding areas, often creating complementary developments (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2000).

Contrary to sport stadiums, museums are informal destinations. This means people engage in self-guided learning and museums are a passive entertainment. Thus, greater attention needs to be paid to the physical environment and exhibits. The San Jose Museum of Art provides an example of how cultural institutions can reverse downtown decline by “providing the necessary catalyst to revive the downtown economy by forming a distinctive urban experience that would attract visitors from suburban enclaves” (Grodach, 2008, p. 204).

#### **2.6.4 Farmers Markets**

Farmers’ markets can be catalysts that form districts for food retailing (Project for Public Spaces, 2009). Project for Public Spaces (2009) recognizes “the catalytic role that markets can play in community development” (1). Markets support local economies, promote community life, and bring a range of people together (Project for Public Spaces, 2009). Communities benefit from markets that have the ability to act as an anchor and help to renew downtowns. Project for Public Spaces (2009) argues that markets have the ability to “encourage spin-off development, enhance real estate value and tax base and keep dollars in the neighborhood” (3). Additionally, markets shape growth in surrounding areas, creating an active public space and promoting healthy living (Project for Public Spaces, 2009).

Markets need to be studied as a catalyst for revitalizing downtowns, because markets are related to food retailing which is an important component of downtown revitalization. As well,

Bohannon (2004) states that, “the catalyst must not be a stand-alone element, but rather an element within a framework that guides future development” (p. 2). This is precisely the foundation upon which the Covent Garden Market was built. By looking at the interrelated components of two urban catalysts implemented in London, Ontario, this study explores opportunities to attain a revitalization of a downtown.

## **2.7 Benefits of Sport Stadiums**

Scholars continue to study the benefits of sport stadiums on local economies. In addition to investigating the economic impact, authors research the intangible effects stadiums have on downtown regions and cities. This section provides an overview of the literature available on the economics and intangible benefits of stadiums, before exploring Ontario’s use of arenas for downtown revitalization.

### **2.7.1 The Economics of stadiums**

Many North American cities have used sports and entertainment centres as a revitalization strategy. Economists have studied the economic impact a new stadium project can have on downtowns and cities. Facilities offer economic growth as people invest in surrounding downtown businesses (Swindell and Rosentraub, 1998). When stadiums are located downtown there are more opportunities available for investment because of the close proximity of a variety of activities (Nelson, 2001). This increased investment spurs construction of new developments such as restaurants, bars, and commercial strips. These new businesses, in turn, benefit from patrons linking an outing with another form of entertainment, such as dinner, drinks or shopping (Nelson, 2001). The success of these sports stadiums lies in their potential to become “destination attractions that ... act as catalysts for downtown revitalization” (Braun, 1999, p.144).

A number of American authors argue that the economic benefits are overstated. Baade & Dye (1988), Baade & Dye (1990), Chapin (2004), Florida (2002), Nelson (2001), Rosentraub et al. (1994), Rosentraub (1999), and Siegfried & Zimbalist (2000) maintain that stadiums do not have a

significant economic impact on cities. Bachelor (1998) confirms this is because of “minimal impact on employment or economic growth” (p. 95). Jobs are poorly paid, seasonal, and do not provide substantial returns for a city (Baade and Dye, 1990; Rosentraub et al., 1994). Meanwhile, economic growth is limited to close-by areas, which can create an uneven distribution of spending downtown (Nelson, 2001; Rosentraub et al., 1994). Most spending occurs within close proximity to the stadium and as one moves further from the stadium, the spending is reduced.

U.S. attitudes toward spending taxpayer money on stadiums tend to be negative. Florida (2002) reiterates that stadiums do not generate economic wealth and spending on these facilities could reduce local incomes. He insists further that the goal of these stadiums to generate positive economic returns is too extravagant. Instead, if the money were spent elsewhere, such as on university research, a city might be able to attract more of the “creative class.” Similarly, Rosentraub (1999) says that potential spending in restaurants and hotels is too small to impact the local economy; such spending only reflects of shifts in local expenditure rather than the arrival of new money to the area; therefore, there is no negative difference. For example, instead of shopping, a person will spend money on dinner before or after an event at a stadium (Rosentraub, 1999). Baade and Dye (1988) reiterate this point by explaining that the “economic development rationale is weak on the premise that spending on stadium events is not new spending for the area” (p. 274). Instead, it is a reallocation of spending. However, the redistribution of spending is not entirely negative, as it does not result in a net loss for the city (Bachelor, 1998; Goodwin, 2001).

Baltimore’s Camden Yards ballpark provides evidence for the critics who say that sport facilities cannot always be considered ‘successful’ catalysts (Chapin, 2004). While the sports stadium brought modest development to an area desperately seeking investment, it did not initiate a “dramatic transformation” on the edge of the downtown as predicted. The area, yet to become a tourist attraction, continues to be disconnected from the surrounding districts (Chapin, 2004).

Despite the counter claims of the critics, this strategy has been implemented in a variety of American cities, and politicians are raving about the economic impact. In Memphis (Tennessee),



Jeff Sanford states “that as a direct result of the decision to locate the ballpark in the heart of downtown, we got an additional \$75 to \$100 million worth of development” (Vorgrin, 2003, 16). In Denver (Colorado), it is estimated that within the first 3 years after the Coors Field (Ballpark) was constructed in the Lower Downtown District, the private sector invested \$200 million in the surrounding area (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2004). Additionally, after the ballpark opened, real estate prices increased in the Lower Downtown District (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2004).

These American case studies indicate that the economic findings are limited. However, in exceptional cases findings prove that stadiums do help to revitalize downtowns. Public investment in stadiums helps encourage private sector investment because stadiums have the ability to impact land values, attract new development, and bring more people downtown – all of which are important components of downtown revitalization.

### **2.7.2 Intangible Benefits of Sports Stadiums**

The economic impacts are less profound than intangible benefits (such as civic pride and image); however, intangible benefits can be used to justify stadium construction. Intangible benefits can help to revitalize downtowns by increasing the perception of safety and, ultimately, the number of people visiting the core (Swindell and Rosentraub, 1998). Sport stadiums can help the image of a city by reshaping perceptions of downtowns. This can rebrand a city (Goodwin, 2001). Since downtowns are directly tied to a city’s image, sports stadiums can play an important role in altering negative perceptions of an area by acting as a ‘visible symbol’ of revitalization (Goodwin, 2001).

The problem with intangible benefits is that they are difficult to quantify and measure (Goodwin, 2001). It is challenging to assess civic pride, as there is no monetary value that can be applied to these benefits (Rosentraub, 1999). Rather, intangibles are related to the greater sense of ownership and placemaking. Goodwin (2001), Rosentraub (1999), and Swindell and Rosentraub

(1998) support building a sports stadium for the intangible benefits associated with the development.

## 2.8 Downtown Arenas in Ontario

The Ontario Hockey League (OHL) is the major tenant of many arenas located in mid-sized cities throughout Ontario. When arenas were originally built to house OHL teams, there was no strategy to use these venues for urban revitalization purposes. The cities of Kingston and Windsor constructed arenas in the inner city, whereas Ottawa and Toronto selected suburban locations (Jagoda, 2007). Jagoda (2007) developed Table 1 to present the location and facility status of arenas that host OHL franchises.

Table 1: Locations of Ontario Hockey League Teams

| City             | Facility Location         | Facility Status | Year of Facility Opened |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Barrie           | Suburban                  | New             | 1995                    |
| Belleville       | Beyond City Core          | Refurbished     | 1990s                   |
| Brampton         | Suburban/Highway Corridor | New             | 1997                    |
| Guelph           | Downtown Core             | New             | 1999                    |
| Kingston         | Inner city                | Dated           | 1950s                   |
| Kitchener        | Beyond City Core          | Refurbished     | 1990s                   |
| London           | Downtown Core             | New             | 2002                    |
| Mississauga      | Suburban/Highway Corridor | New             | 1997                    |
| Oshawa           | Downtown Core             | New             | 2006                    |
| Ottawa           | Suburban                  | Dated           | 1960s                   |
| Owen Sound       | Beyond City Core          | Dated           | 1960s                   |
| Peterborough     | Suburban                  | New             | 1998                    |
| Sault Ste. Marie | Beyond City Core          | New             | 2006                    |
| Toronto          | Suburban                  | Dated           | 1950s                   |
| Windsor          | Downtown Core             | Dated           | 1950s                   |

Source: Jagoda. (2007).

The aging of facilities has prompted the proposal or building of a number of new arenas. Recently, the trend has been for arenas to be constructed in downtown locations. Arenas in the

cities of Guelph, Kingston, Oshawa, and London are built downtown in an effort to create an anchor (Jagoda, 2007). Reliance on downtown arenas is a recent revitalization strategy, as illustrated by the proposed downtown location for new facilities in Niagara Falls, North Bay, St. Catherines and Windsor (Jagoda, 2007).

This chapter provides insight for understanding the existing literature on downtowns as well as the role urban catalysts play in downtown revitalization. This information offers the background knowledge necessary to investigate the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play in revitalizing downtown London. Chapter three provides an overview of London, Ontario.

## CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY PROFILE

This chapter introduces the case study selected and provides an overview of London, Ontario. A brief review of London's history, demographics, economy, arts, entertainment and culture is provided followed by an in depth overview of the downtown. Discussion addresses the downtown boundaries, history of downtown planning, and documents released by the City, including the Official Plan and studies about revitalization strategies. Information is supplemented by personal observations where applicable.

### 3.1 Introduction

Situated in South-western Ontario, London is located along the Quebec-City – Windsor Corridor which provides a highway network that connects major centers in Ontario to Detroit. The City of London is bordered by Middlesex County to the north, east and west, while Elgin County bounds the City to the south. Additionally, the Thames River and the forks where the river converges provide a natural landmark identifying London. Figure 1 shows the location of London in Ontario.

Figure 1: Map of London, Ontario



Source: BEC Canada. (2008).

Covering approximately 420 km<sup>2</sup>, the City's population in 2006 was 352,395 (City of London, 2008). As a mid-sized city, London boasts a strong economy as the Canadian headquarters for 3M Canada, EllisDon, Labatt, and Diamond Aircraft are located here (City of London, 2008). As well, the City offers diverse cultural activities. During the summer months, London hosts a variety of festivals including Rib-Fest, the London Fringe Theatre Festival, Rock the Park, Western Fair, and Sunfest, which is the second biggest world music festival after Caribana in Toronto (Sunfest, 2009). It is home to world-renowned research; penicillin was discovered in London. Today, innovative research continues to define the City's character and drive the economy (City of London, 2009). "London's Research Row [seen in Figure 2] is a new concept used to describe a geographical band that is home to a large number of London's research-based institutions. The Row employs nearly 2,000 researchers and conducts over \$330 million in research annually" (University of Western Ontario, 2009, 1).

Figure 2: London's Research Row



Source: University of Western Ontario. (2010).

### **3.2 London, Ontario**

The reasons for selecting London as a case study are outlined in the methodology. In addition to selecting London to explore the role of the JLC and Market in revitalizing the downtown core, the case study was also chosen for personal interest. Born and raised in London I have witnessed first-hand the ongoing challenges to create a thriving downtown. I have seen how urban sprawl and suburban shopping malls have reshaped the City and the subsequent effects on the downtown. As well, I have observed the turnover of restaurants in the core, and how the exterior of buildings in the east end are getting ‘face lifts.’

#### **3.2.1 History of London**

London has a rich history, which “begins in 1793, when Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe selected the Forks of the Thames as his choice for the future site for the capital of the province” (City of London, 2009a, 1). The courthouse was the first building located in London at the Fork of the Thames, and current heritage buildings, including Eldon House, were erected shortly thereafter. In 1840, the first council was elected when London was officially incorporated (City of London, 2009a). Municipal services were established, manufacturing industries began to appear, and the Covent Garden Market was built in 1845 (City of London, 2009a). In 1844 and 1845, a fire destroyed the City. However, the City rebounded by immediately rebuilding. In particular, the rebuilding of St. Paul’s Cathedral was symbolic and restored hope to residents (City of London, 2009a).

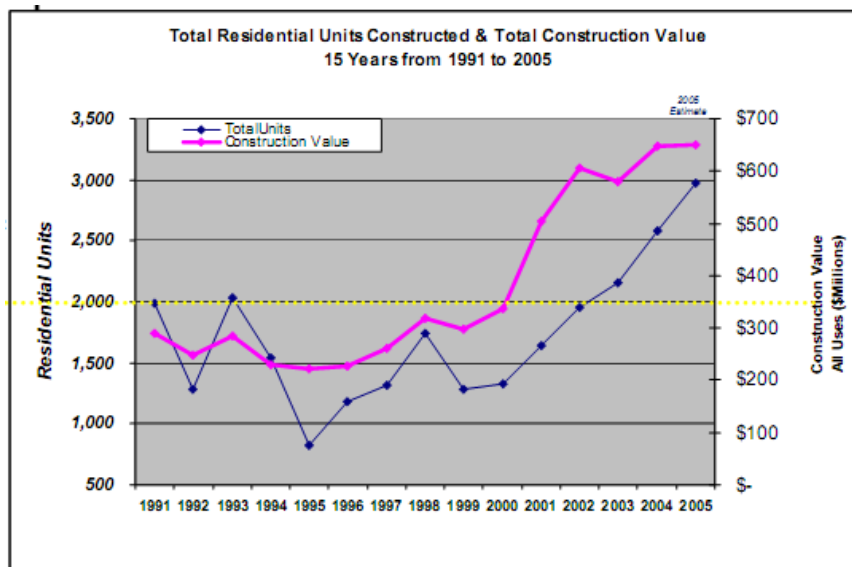
Transportation networks developed as the Canadian National Railway (formerly the Great Western Railway) was built through the City. The Railway eased the transport of goods and people. As well, the Railway affirmed London’s importance in a greater transportation network connecting large metropolitan areas in Ontario to the United States. London was awarded the title of a city in 1855 (City of London, 2009a).

Unfortunately, the 1857 depression severely affected the City in terms of development. Prosperity decreased and economic activity came to a halt. Construction resumed and some of

London’s landmark institutions were built. For example, London Life Insurance Company was founded in 1874. In 1888, St. Joseph’s Hospital opened. The University of Western Ontario opened in 1878, and Huron College was built in 1986. Steady growth continued during the interwar period of 1918 and 1939 when the Dominion Public Building, Bell Telephone Building and London Life Insurance Office were constructed (City of London, 2009a).

Post World War II, the urban form changed and city size grew. Responding to rapid growth, the Ontario Municipal Board ruled in favour of the annexation of local municipalities to the City of London in 1960. The annexation was effective in 1961 and the communities of Masonville and Byron became a part of the City, adding 60,000 people (City of London, 2009a). By 1976, London’s population had grown to close to a quarter of a million people, and by 1989, its population was 350,000. Meanwhile, suburban growth continued on the periphery. Figure 3 shows the total number of residential units constructed in the City from 1991 until 2005, as well as the total construction value.

Figure 3: Total Residential Units between 1991 and 2005

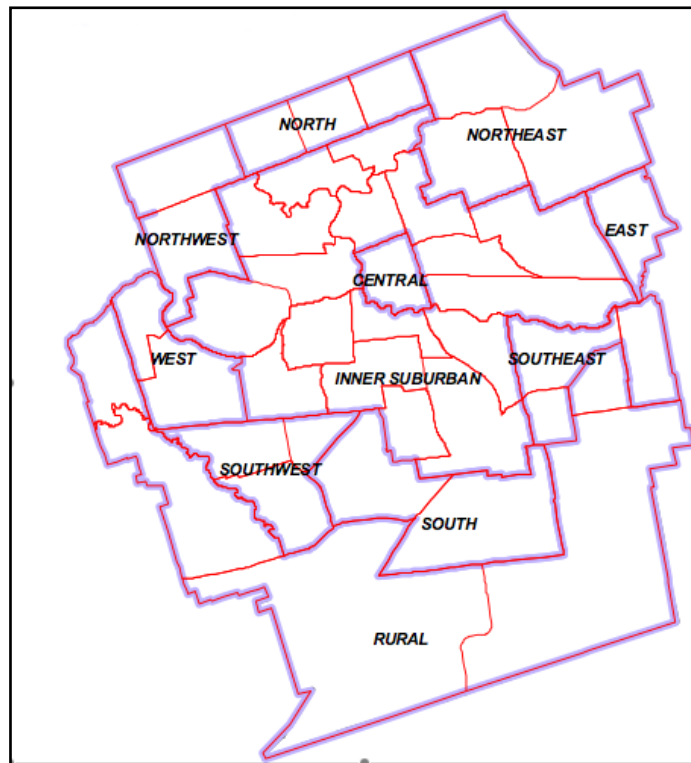


Source: City of London. (2010).

In 1993, another annexation occurred, when the Town of Westminster located to south joined the City proper (City of London, 2009a). Primarily rural, agricultural land this annexation doubled the size of London and added many residents.

The City was quickly expanding. New residents coming to London located in suburban communities. Use of the automobile continued to encourage growth at the edge of the City, as low-density housing was dominating the landscape. All of this peripheral growth was affecting the downtown core. Older downtown buildings were demolished and replaced with modern developments. The “McClary factory was demolished for Wellington Square; the Hotel London was replaced by the City Centre; the Covent Garden Market was enclosed by the Market Garden Parking Building; and a new Court House was finally constructed on a demolished two block site” (City of London, 2010, 10). People were locating in suburban neighbourhoods, making downtown primarily a 9-5 environment. Figure 4 depicts the districts present in the City today.

Figure 4: Districts in London



Source: City of London. (2005).



### 3.2.2 Demographics

In 2006, London's city proper had a population of slightly more than 352,000 (City of London, 2008a). The population of London has been steadily increasing for many years and increased by 4.7% from 2001 to 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2009). London enjoys a concentration of young people attributed to the presence of the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College; however, the older population (those aged 75 and up) increased by 17 percent from 2001 to 2006 (City of London, 2008a). In 2006, the median age was 38.2 (Statistics Canada, 2009). Table 2 shows population and dwelling counts from the 2006 Census for London.

Table 2: Population and Dwelling Counts for London

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Population in 2006                            | 352,395 |
| Population in 2001                            | 336,539 |
| 2001 to 2006 population change (%)            | 4.7     |
| Total private dwellings                       | 157,436 |
| Private dwellings occupied by usual residents | 145,526 |
| Land area (square km)                         | 420.57  |

Source: Statistics Canada. (2009). *2006 community profiles*. Retrieved December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3539036&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=london&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custo m=>

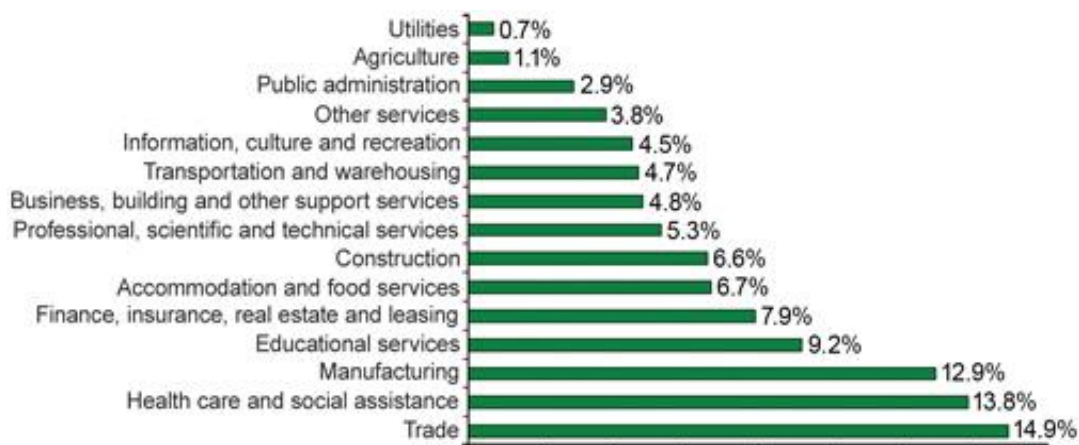
The population of London residents is also increasing in diversity. The total population of visible minorities increased from 11,000 to 47,955, making up 14 percent of London's population (City of London, 2008a). Arab/West Asian, Latin American, Black, Chinese and South Asian are the top five groups of visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2009), while the largest ethnic origins in the City are English, Canadian, Scottish, Irish and German (City of London, 2008a).

### 3.2.3 Economy

London has a strong economy that thrives because of the diversity of its industries. London's economy can be best described as "... a diverse business community with a well balanced economy that embraces strengths in health care, government, education, manufacturing,

IT and business services” (London Economic Development Corporation, 2007, 2). In 2006 the top industries in London were manufacturing, health care and social assistance, retail trade, education services, as well as accommodation and food services (City of London, 2008b). Figure 5 shows employment in London in 2008 categorized by industry. Additionally the head offices for “3M, McCormick, Kellogg’s, Trojan Technologies, TSC Stores, and Starlim North America” are located here (London Economic Development Corporation, 2007, 1).

Figure 5: Breakdown of Employment in 2008



Source: London Economic Development Corporation. (2008). Industry Sectors. Retrieved on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from <http://www.londonedc.com/industrysectors/>

The University of Western Ontario (U.W.O.) and its affiliate colleges of Huron, King’s, Brescia, as well as Fanshawe College help to drive the economy by supporting innovative research at places such as the Robarts Research Institute. Additionally, the post-secondary institutions support a high-level of learning by offering highly accredited professional schools, such as the Robert Ivey School of Business. U.W.O. and London’s Colleges attract students to the City, and add over \$1 billion dollars to the City’s economy annually (London Economic Development Corporation, 2009, p.5).

### **3.2.4 Arts, culture and entertainment**

Downtown acts as a cultural hub for the City of London and South-western Ontario as home to the arts, festivals, entertainment and sporting events. In the summer months, downtown is filled with people attending festivals located in Victoria or Harris Park, or the Covent Garden Market square. During the winter months the London Knights draw crowds of 9,000 people downtown twice a week to cheer on the local Ontario Hockey League team (MacDonald interview, 2010). When the Knights are not in town, the John Labatt Centre hosts a plethora of events including musicians, Cirque du Soleil productions, musicals, kid-productions, as well as national figure skating and curling championships (John Labatt Centre, 2010).

The Grand Theatre, Covent Garden Market, Museum London and Orchestra London are four landmarks in downtown London. The Grand Theatre opened in 1901, while the Covent Garden Market has been servicing Londoners since 1946. Museum London opened in 1940 and Orchestra London in 1957 (Orchestra London, 2010). These landmarks are cultural institutions that are embedded in the history of London and continue to offer residents unique social and cultural experiences. More recently, in 2002 the Central Library opened at its new downtown location on Dundas Street (City of London, 2009b). Downtown is the primary destination for Londoners who take part in the arts and cultural and entertainment events; indeed, the City has located these major public institutions in the core in order to bring people downtown year-round.

## **3.3 Downtown London**

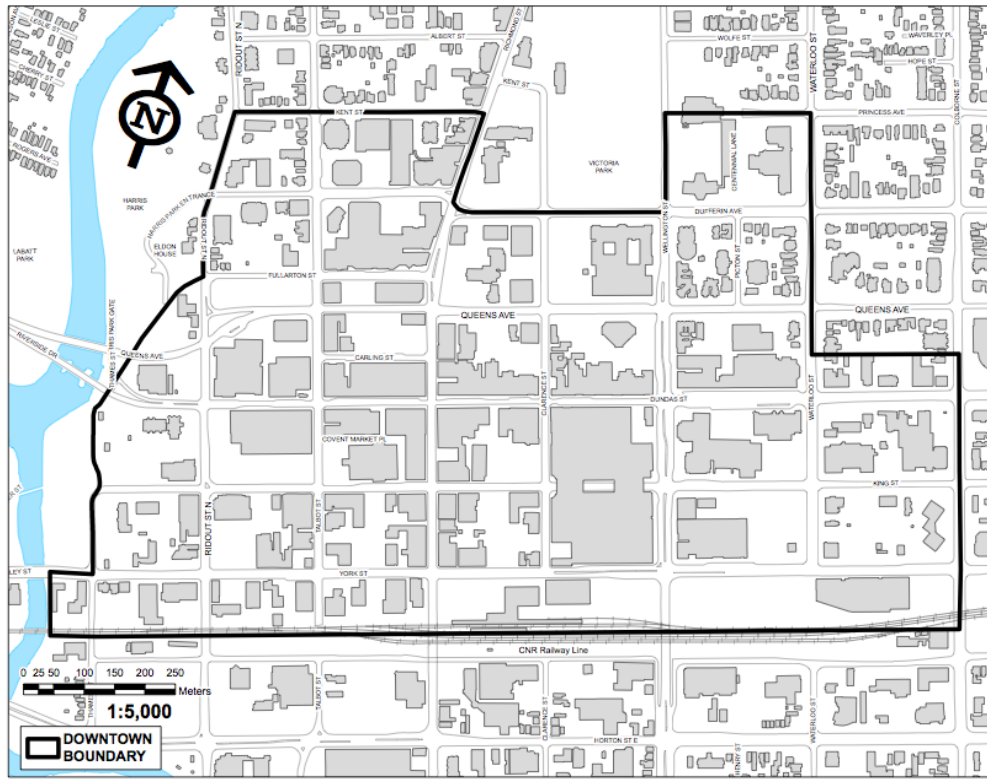
This section introduces downtown London. It provides information about the downtown boundaries and the history of planning in downtown London.

### **3.3.1 Downtown Boundaries**

The Thames River to the west and the Canadian National Railway to the south along Bathurst Street bind downtown London. Kent and Princess Street define the northern border, while

Waterloo and Colborne Street are the most easterly points of the downtown. A map of the downtown area as defined by the City of London's Official Plan can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Map of the Downtown Boundaries



Source: City of London. (2009c). Draft Background Study – November 2009. Retrieved on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 from [http://www.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Planning/downtown\\_town\\_plan\\_backgroundstudy.htm](http://www.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Planning/downtown_town_plan_backgroundstudy.htm)

### 3.3.2 History of Planning in Downtown London

Attention has been given to planning in downtown London since zoning bylaws were passed in the 1920s. In 1958 the first urban renewal study sparked on-going interest in the downtown area (City of London, 2009d). Prepared under the federal urban renewal program, this study looked at ways to solve challenges associated with the automobile. Traffic, parking and reducing conflict between automobiles and people were all challenges this plan sought to solve (City of London, 2009d). The area Queens, Talbot, King, and the Thames River as well as the land bordered by King, Clarence, York and Richmond were the primary areas for urban renewal within the downtown boundaries. Buildings were demolished, and a new Federal Government building,

court house, and the Bell Canada building were built on the block surrounded by Queens, Talbot, Dundas and Ridout (City of London, 2009d).

In 1971, the Official Plan contained policies formulated specifically for the downtown area. The policies encouraged a broad range of uses to locate at the densest part of the City. However, these policies held little clout as there were no mechanisms in place to implement them (City of London, 2009d). Rather the policies acted as guidelines, using suggestive language such as “encourage” (City of London, 2009d). Over the years, the policies were adapted and the current Official Plan polices came into effect in 1991. Chapter 2 of the Official Plan contains the following goals and strategies for downtown London (Table 3).

Table 3: Downtown Official Plan Policies

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 2.12.2.<br>Downtown<br>Goal       | <i>It is a goal of this Plan to promote Downtown revitalization, and to strengthen the role of the Downtown as the historic, cultural, institutional and economic heart of the City and region.</i>   |
| 2.12.3.<br>Downtown<br>Strategies | <p><i>Council will consider the following strategies in the pursuit of the Downtown Revitalization Goal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i) promote the location of entertainment and cultural facilities within the Downtown area;</i></li> <li><i>ii) promote residential development within the Downtown;</i></li> <li><i>iii) improve the accessibility of the Downtown by all modes of transportation;</i></li> <li><i>iv) provide incentives for the retention and improvement of heritage structures, streetscapes and open spaces;</i></li> <li><i>v) promote a high standard of design for Downtown development and public spaces that is conducive to a safe and attractive pedestrian environment; and,</i></li> <li><i>vi) involve landowner, business operator, resident and service provider interests in the process of preparing plans, policies and programs for Downtown revitalization.</i></li> </ul> |

Source: City of London. (1989).

Various studies and plans were completed over the years to generate assessments of the downtown (Table 4). The documents contained a “series of recommendations, a number of which have been implemented” (City of London, 2009d, 15).

Table 4: History of Downtown Planning

| <b>Year</b>    | <b>Planning Initiative</b>   |
|----------------|--|
| 1958           | -Urban Renewal Study approved by Council   |
| 1966           | -Urban Renewal Study – Phase 1 recommended by Council  |
| 1971           | -Official Plan policies approved which included specific policies for downtown for the first time  |
| 1980           | -City of London Commercial Policy Review   |
| 1982 – 1985    | -Central Business District Plan in progress  |
| 1991           | -Current Official Plan policies come into effect; includes “Downtown Area” land use designation and policies<br>- City of London Downtown Design Study and Downtown London Urban Design Guidelines are adopted by Council  |
| 1994           | Report on “Strategies for Revitalizing London’s Downtown” is complete from which a number of initiatives are implemented in 1995 - 1996  |
| 1995           | -Downtown Community Improvement Plan is approved<br>-Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Program starts<br>-Façade Improvement Loan Program (first introduced in 1986) is improved<br>-Upgrade to Building Code Renovation Loan Program started<br>-Waiver of Development Charges and parking requires for Downtown residential development starts |
| 1998           | Downtown Millennium Plan completed   |
| 1998 to date   | -Major municipal investments in the Covent Garden Market, John Labatt Centre, - Central Library, Forks of the Thames, Victoria Park and various road, sewer and street lighting projects   |
| 1999           | -Start-up of Main Street Program   |
| 2005/2006      | -Research project and reports on Downtown buildings and heritage resources<br>-Comprehensive set of new Downtown revitalization incentives focusing on “feet on the street” uses along Dundas Street   |
| February 2008  | -A Blueprint for Action – Report of the Downtown Task Force completed by Mainstreet and LDBA   |
| September 2008 | -Downtown Master Plan Process starts   |

Source: City of London. (2009d).

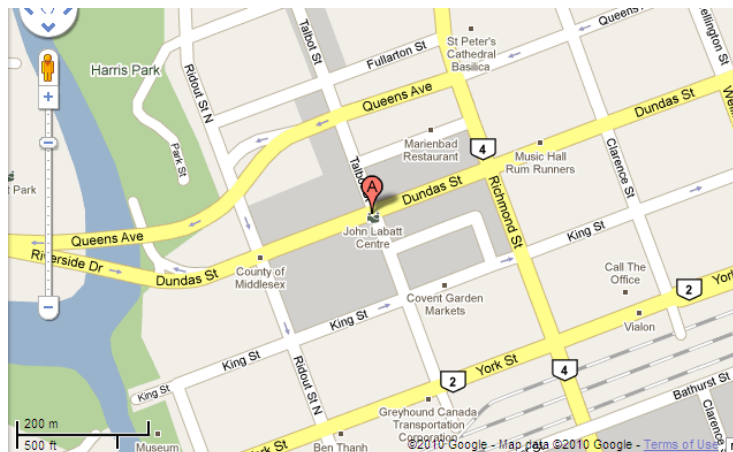
Over the years, City Council has been working to revitalize downtown London. Large investments were made in the Galleria Mall, Covent Garden Market and John Labatt Centre. In 1989, Campeau Corporation opened the Galleria Shopping Mall in the heart of the downtown at the intersection of Wellington and King. The two-storey mall occupies nearly one million square feet and was once home to two department stores that acted as anchors. However, upon the bankruptcy of Eaton’s and tenants relocating to suburban shopping malls, the Galleria quickly began to suffer from high vacancy rates and decreased consumer activity.

The next big construction project in the downtown was the rebuilding of the Covent Garden Market. A long-standing tradition in London, the original Market was built in 1846 (Usher interview, 2010). The ‘outdoor’ market expanded to include a yellow-brick building in 1853

(Covent Garden Market, 2009). Poor building conditions forced construction of a new building with a parking structure in 1957 (Covent Garden Market, 2009). Plans for a modern building had been underway since 1989, and on October 21, 1999, the new \$14 million dollar Market opened for business (Covent Garden Market, 2009). This Market reduced the number of parking spaces available but retained its traditional features including an outdoor market, and architecture similar to the previous market building's. As well, the new Market contains a replica of the infamous mechanical horse that occupies kids as their parents shop.

The John Labatt Centre is a relatively new development in downtown London. The decision was made to relocate the Ontario Hockey League team from its home arena (the Ice House) in the City's south end to the corner of Dundas and Talbot Street, on the parcel formerly known as the Talbot Block (Figure 7). The Talbot Block was once the home of the Talbot Inn, a 19<sup>th</sup> century building located on the site for 125 years. Following its demolition by the City in 2001, the area was reduced to vacant lots. Construction of the facility began in 2001 and the new arena opened in 2002. The John Labatt Centre seats 9,000 people for hockey games and hosts approximately 150 sporting and non-sporting events a year (John Labatt Centre, 2010). Acting as both a venue for entertainment and sports, the facility was created under the assumption that it "will be one of the catalysts in the redevelopment of London's downtown" (John Labatt Centre, 2010, 1).

Figure 7: Map showing the location of JLC



Source: Google Maps. (2010).

As downtown becomes the primary location for arenas, this study intends to investigate the role the John Labatt Centre plays in the revitalization of downtown London. It is paramount to understand the impact these facilities have on businesses, the downtown, and the city as a whole.

In addition to investing in large-scale capital projects, the City upgraded downtown infrastructure (roads and sewers), invested in metal trees as street art, and created successful programs such as offering incentives and developing Main Street London (City of London, 2009d).

The metal trees refer to an innovative idea the City had to install decorative trees in and around the downtown area. The first 30 were introduced in the summer of 2007. At an approximate cost of \$6,000 a tree, this initiative received mixed reviews from Londoners (Haggarty, 2008). Known as the Forest City, many people were upset that real (live) trees were not planted. Despite the controversy, the London Downtown Business Association (LDBA) continues to invest in the project and hopes that one day there will be 80 metal trees downtown (Haggarty, 2008). Nonetheless, even if people do not appreciate the artwork, it is getting people talking about the downtown, which was intended. Figure 8 provides a view of some of the metal trees.

Figure 8: Metal Trees



Source: Bratt. (2010).



Main Street London is a not-for-profit organization that follows the principles of the American Main Street program. Main Street is a unique program (the only one of its kind in Canada) rising from the Millennium Plan. Adopted in 1999, Main Street London's aim is to recruit "new business, office and residential projects which ultimately serve to revitalize the downtown core" (London Downtown Ltd., 2007, 1). The manager of Main Street London, Janette MacDonald, says they consider themselves the "gatekeeper for the City's incentive and investment programs" (interview, 2010). Additionally, the organization has evolved into the first point of contact for someone looking to purchase a building, open a business, or relocate residentially. The program works to revitalize downtown London by "sponsoring and encouraging façade improvements, recruit[ing] new quality retail and business tenants, promoting safety and cleanliness, facilitating retail peer support, promoting downtown events and festivals, and fostering residential development" (London Downtown Ltd., 2007, 4).

Since its inception, the organization has provided in excess of \$500,000 dollars in façade grants (MacDonald interview, 2010). Moreover, MacDonald says the organization has played a key role in downtown revitalization through 'immeasurable' indicators. For example, the amount of promotion, assistance and networking that Main Street London has provided businesses within the community are 'immeasurable' indicators.

### **3.4 Document Review**

Since the 1958 urban renewal report, numerous documents attest to London's on-going efforts to revitalize its downtown. Specifically, the following documents are reviewed: Central London (Ont.) Urban Renewal Scheme (1967), Downtown Concept (1984), Mayor's Task Force on Downtown Revitalization (1993), Planning Entertainment Uses for Downtown Revitalization in the City of London (1996), Downtown Millennium Plan (1998), State of the Downtown Report (2009), Draft Downtown Master Plan Background Study (2009) and the City of London Official Plan (1989).

### **3.4.1 Central London (Ont.) Urban Renewal Scheme**

The study seeks to provide a background about the economic aspect of urban renewal. The report assesses the “amount of economic activity and floor space which will be required in the CBD to meet the demand up to 1981” (City of London, 1967, p.1). Primarily, the floor space of retail establishments was studied because of its role within the Central Business District. The report provides an overview of London’s economy, the Central Business District and employment in the City. The analysis uses origin-destination tables to show how sales are distributed within the City. Thirty-nine percent of all sales in London and twenty-two percent within the region were than accounted for in the Central Business District (City of London, 1967). It was predicted that in 1981 the Central Business District would continue to be a primary location for retail sales; however, the total sales in the Central Business District would decline, because of suburbanization. The report concluded by assessing municipal finance. An overview of debt charges, tax base, tax levy, municipal expenditures, and capital budget were provided to explain the fiscal framework the City is working within.

### **3.4.2 Downtown Concept (1984)**

Released in 1984, the Downtown Concept was prepared to discuss the than prevailing conditions of the downtown and to identify trends for future development (City of London, 1984). The report defined the roles of the downtown as: “an economic centre for the city and the South-western Ontario region, hub for offices, and a social activity centre” (City of London, 1984, i).

The goals and objectives in the Official Plan stated were:

- i) “To develop a Central Business District (downtown) appropriate in size and intensity, as the dominant, multi-functional centre, providing the widest range of retail office, recreational, cultural, residential and institutional facilities, serving the City and surrounding region.” (i)
- ii) “To provide a Central Business District (downtown) which will facilitate and attract social activity both day and night and which has an attractive visual quality and sense of identity.” (i)

The report recommended the integration of different land uses and divided the downtown into nine areas. The nine areas were: the Cultural District, Queens Avenue Office Corridor, Dundas Street Retail area, King Street Office-Retail area, York Street Transportation Corridor, Mid-town Office Apartment Area, Hotel-Office Area, Dundas Street Office-Apartment Corridor and the Service Commercial Corridor.

The Cultural District was defined by “several important artistic cultural and historical facilities located in the downtown area, especially related to the Forks of the Thames Park” (City of London, 1984, p. 7). The approach of the City to this district was that it should “investigate in a planning and design context, the possibility of creating a vibrant cultural district that would create some synergy between various facilities and users” (City of London, 1984, p. 7). Within the Cultural District, “a major cultural or recreational use, or other focal point which would attract large numbers of people, could be located on the west side of Ridout Street near Dundas Street” (City of London, 1984, p. 58). Specifically, a facility such as an ice rink was suggested.

The report defined downtown retail as an important contributor to the economy. With one third of all retail space location downtown, this sector provided “\$1 billion annually” (City of London, 1984, p. 20). It was encouraged to retain existing retail, while expanding the sector. Incentives could be used to encourage additional retail development, especially on ground floors.

### **3.4.3 Mayor’s Task Force on Downtown Revitalization (1993)**

Completed in March 1993, the report compiled information from the public about the downtown. Residents contributed their opinions through either public meetings or surveys. Information was gathered about the importance of London’s downtown and reasons for visiting the core. As well, data was collected on the ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ associated with the downtown. Seven issues including parking, policing, marketing/beautification, commercial/development, economic development, arts/culture and youth initiatives were the prime concerns about the downtown. As well, the report provided recommendations for each of the issues.

#### **3.4.4 Planning Entertainment Uses for Downtown Revitalization in the City of London (1996)**

The report was written to propose changes to the entertainment policies in the City's Official Plan. "The intent [of the report] is to establish the downtown as an entertainment destination place in the city by encouraging the grouping of entertainment uses in the core" (City of London, 1996, p.1). Policies were developed to create an entertainment district that would help to encourage revitalization in the core. Such policies included directing entertainment uses away from suburban locations in order to create a critical mass of entertainment uses in the core (City of London, 1996). Specifically, theatres, cinemas and places of entertainment would no longer be permitted in community shopping areas, without an Official Plan Amendment. The following modification was proposed to the definition of places of entertainment; "... a building, or part thereof, used for the general purpose of providing entertainment and includes cinemas, theatres, art galleries, commercial recreation establishments, auditoriums, and all other places of amusement, but excludes amusement game establishments" (City of London, 1996, p.11).

City of London staff recognized the important role of entertainment uses for the core and this was present within the recommended policies. By concentrating entertainment uses in the core, people would have a reason to go downtown. To fulfill the downtown vision, City staff concluded that,

Entertainment could be one of the last remaining land uses that can be capitalized upon to encourage this for Downtown London ... Entertainment uses can act as a strong activity generators – particularly during off-peak hours and this activity can be a first step in marking the Downtown a safer place to work, shop and play and a better environment in which to live. (1996, p. 11 -12)

#### **3.4.5 Downtown Millennium Plan (1998)**

The Downtown Millennium Plan was created to ask what the next step would be for downtown London (Barrett interview, 2010). The plan reassessed programs and provided feedback to tailor the programs for targeted uses. The key objectives of the plan were:

1. Managing
2. Lead by example
3. Incentives for private investors

The Plan “recommended the following initiatives; new downtown street lighting, Forks of the Thames project, building code/fire code loans, façade improvement loans, free Saturday parking and the initiation of a Main Street program” (City of London, 2009d, p.5).

#### **3.4.6 State of the Downtown Report (2009)**

The State of the Downtown Report was created to provide Council with an update on the condition of downtown London. The report grew out of an evolution of programs to revitalize the downtown, in particular to assess the return on investment for capital projects (Barrett interview, 2010). A list of indicators was developed to assess the state of the downtown. The indicators included current value assessment, street level vacancy, building permit values, residential growth and demographics, financial incentives, office vacancy rates, and new businesses (Barrett interview, 2010).

The most recent report released in 2009 shows prosperity in London’s core. The report states that within the last decade, since London City Council adopted the Millennium Plan “more than 1,000 building permits worth \$320 million have been issued for downtown London” (City of London, 2009e, i). The City led by example by investing approximately \$100 million in capital projects, such as the Covent Garden Market and John Labatt Centre. This instilled confidence in the private sector, who subsequently invested \$50 million in building upgrades since 2001 (City of London, 2009, i). Additionally, “since 2001 private builders have invested \$150 million in new residential construction. Causing the number of Londoners living downtown to jump from 2,510 in 1996 to 3,430 in 2006, a 37 per cent increase” (City of London, 2009e, p.15).

Street level vacancy rates have slightly decreased since 2006 and the total current value assessment in downtown London has increased twenty-two percent (City of London, 2009e). The statistics in the report depict a prosperous downtown, which is perhaps approaching the proverbial turning point.

### **3.4.7 Draft Downtown Master Plan Background Study**

The City of London is working towards creating a Downtown Master Plan. This plan developed out of need. The Downtown Master Plan will consolidate previous downtown documents while addressing recent issues of “revitalization incentives, design, and heritage issues” (City of London, 2010, 1).

The background study highlights previous downtown successes and argues for a new plan. “A component of the Background Study process will be to identify a long term vision for Downtown” (City of London, 2010, 3). Other topics discussed in the background study include building conditions, property values, office land uses, residential land uses, entertainment land uses, major public facility, retail land use, open space, parking lots, roads, pedestrian environment, infrastructure, economic study, heritage and urban design (City of London, 2010). By consolidating work from previous plans, responses from resident surveys (where applicable) and public participation sessions, the background report provides a basis for developing the Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan is expected to be complete in April 2010, followed by a final public meeting held in June 2010.

### **3.4.8 City of London Official Plan**

Chapter four of the Official Plan deals with Downtown and Commercial Land Use Designations. The revised Downtown Official Plan Policies contained in Official Plan Amendment 438 were adopted by Council in 2008. According to the Official Plan, “the downtown is the primary multi-functional activity centre serving the City of London and the surrounding area, comprising much of Southwestern Ontario” (City of London, 2008d, p.1). The boundaries of the downtown are defined as:

- a) “Natural and constructed features which define the Downtown;
- b) The existing land use pattern

- c) The inclusion of the type and intensity of existing land uses which are permitted and desirable in the Downtown
- d) Pedestrian movement
- e) The necessity of providing an adequate supply of land to accommodate, with a reasonable amount of choice, the types of development intended for the Downtown; and,
- f) The potential benefits to the function and appearance of the Downtown that the redevelopment of a particular area may have” (2008, p. 2).

The Official Plan explains the necessary criteria to expand the downtown boundaries, and discusses the downtown shopping area, major facilities, permitted uses, scale of development, parking, the downtown Plan and monitoring.

This chapter highlights the different visions for downtown London over the years. The plans move from broad approaches to more focused visions. The plans emphasize the importance of entertainment a tool for downtown revitalization. In addition to entertainment, the role of food is another important instrument for downtown revitalization that is highlighted in the literature review. It is the combination of entertainment and food that define downtown revitalization in London, Ontario. The John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market complement each other and work together to combine two central revitalization strategies. The research includes a survey of downtown business owners. The survey is created to test the effectiveness of these downtown revitalization strategies in London, Ontario.

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Methodological Approach**

The research approach used for this study is qualitative. A qualitative approach is selected because it best suits the research questions and study objectives. Qualitative research is defined by Creswell (2003) as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). As an interpretive, exploratory approach, qualitative research allows for more flexibility than quantitative methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

In order to examine the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play in revitalizing downtown London, a qualitative approach is suited to review the existing literature and planning documents, and to analyze the interview and survey data. Quantitative data released by the City of London provides factual information to supplement perspectives about the state of the downtown. This study primarily uses a qualitative approach to collect and interpret data; however, quantitative data is used to obtain information on vacancy rates, public and private investment, as well as the number of building permits processed.

#### **4.1.1 Triangulation**

A mixture of methods is used to obtain data on revitalizing downtown London. This is referred to as triangulation. Hoggart et al. (2002) say, “Triangulation involves employing complementary methods or data sources to circumvent the potential inadequacies of single data sources” (p. 312). In particular, methodological triangulation can be used to collect different types of information (qualitative and quantitative) (Creswell, 2003). The data can overlap, be complimentary or contrary, which provides a broader understanding of the research at hand (Creswell, 2003). Triangulation will be used in this study, as data is obtained from reviewing documents, surveys and interviews.



## **4.2 Research Framework**

The research will be framed around case study research. Creswell (2003) and Stake (1995) explain case studies as

... a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (p. 13).

London was selected as the case study to be explored in terms of downtown revitalization. The reason for this case study selection is discussed below.

### **4.2.1 Case Study Selection**

The case study selected is downtown London, Ontario. Specifically, the interaction of two publicly funded urban catalysts, the John Labatt Centre (JLC) and Covent Garden Market are studied to determine the role they play in renewing the downtown. London provides an ideal case study because of the ongoing challenges associated with the downtown and subsequent efforts the City has made to revitalize the area.

Strategies to combat downtown decline have been on the city's political agenda since the 1950s. A significant amount of public money has been invested into the core over the years, through urban renewal schemes and the construction of the public library, convention centre, John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. Within the last decade, the City developed the downtown Millennium Plan, created the organization MainStreet London, and presently the City is working on a Downtown Master Plan.

## **4.3 Research Methods**

A variety of research methods are used in this study, including a review of existing literature, review of planning reports released by the City of London, administering a survey, and four interviews. This section explains the approach taken for each research method employed.

#### **4.3.1 Review of Literature**

By reviewing the literature, the researcher obtained the background knowledge necessary to complete this study on downtown revitalization. Literature reviewed fell into the following categories: downtown revitalization, mid-size cities, urban catalysts and the role of stadiums in revitalizing cities. In addition to reviewing scholarly articles, creditable websites and newspaper articles are reviewed (e.g. the London Free Press). The newspaper articles provide the context for what has been happening over the years in the study area, while the journal articles provide the broader body of knowledge on topics of downtown decline and revitalization, and urban catalysts.

#### **4.3.2 City of London Planning Reports**

Planning reports prepared by the City of London were reviewed. Document analysis “enables the researcher to obtain language and words” used by the City, and it provides an overview of the history of downtown planning (Creswell, 2003, p. 180). A brief summary of each document reviewed is found in chapter three. The documents outline the policies on downtown London and provide the contextual framework for planning in the City, which is then related to the survey and interview data.

#### **4.3.3 Surveying Downtown Businesses**

Following the document analysis, the survey will provide additional data. Creswell (2003) states that survey research “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 234). The primary methods of administering a survey are either face-to-face, self-administered or by telephone (Creswell, 2003). The two methods used within this study to obtain survey data were face-to-face and self-administered. The advantages of face-to-face surveys are increased response rate, and the possibility of providing clarification if sought by the participant.

A disadvantage of self-administered surveys is the possibility of biases introduced by the respondents’ interpretation of the questions. To reduce such problems, the questions were

straightforward. As well, a pre-test was performed with ten businesses to ensure validity of the survey instrument.

Surveys were given out to business owners located in London's downtown. Downtown business owners were selected to obtain their perspective on the role of the JLC and Market on their business and on the revitalization of downtown London. The survey focused on the impact of the JLC and Market on businesses, why the businesses picked their present location, changes witnessed downtown and what initiatives work and do not work in downtown London.

#### **4.3.4 Key Informant Interviews**

Interviews asking open-ended questions were the final method used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews as explained by Bryman and Teevan (2005) ask questions that "are frequently somewhat more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a structured interview schedule" (p. 71). Interviews are useful because the researcher can gain "rich, detailed answers" (Bryman and Teevan, 2005, p.183). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the community to verify findings from the document analysis and to provide greater insight into some of the responses from the survey instrument. The open-ended questions asked in the interviews allowed for the clarification of the process of revitalization in London. An advantage of interviewing stakeholders in London was that the researcher was in control of the conversation, while participants provided historical information (Creswell, 2003). A disadvantage of using this technique is that the presence of the researcher could create bias in the response as respondents might be affected by social desirability (Creswell, 2003).

#### **4.4 Data Collection**

The data collection process for the surveys completed by downtown business owners, and stakeholder interviews is explained below.

#### **4.4.1 Surveying Downtown Businesses**

The Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo granted ethics clearance to the surveys for business owners in October 2009. An information package including an information letter, consent form and the survey was distributed to business owners during the months of January and February 2010. The self-administered survey was selected over a mailed survey to reduce non-response rate. The survey contains both open and closed ended questions to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. In total the survey is comprised of 18 questions. The survey is designed to allow business owners to reflect on the impact of the JLC and Market on their business and the revitalization of downtown London. Please refer to Appendix A-1 to see the survey administered to business owners in downtown London.

Contact was made with businesses by entering the establishment and explaining who I am, and the reason for my visit. If the business owner agreed to participate he/she would be asked to complete the survey face-to-face at the present time. If the current time was inconvenient the information package containing the survey was left for the business owner to complete later. I would return to pick-up the survey at the agreed upon time selected during my initial visit. In some cases a week was not feasible for the business owner to complete the survey, so I would provide an additional week. Reasons presented for not being able to meet the agreed upon deadline included: 'being busy,' 'misplacing the survey,' 'no time,' 'business owner away/unavailable 'or 'forgetting about the survey.' Within a month of completing the survey business owners were sent a thank-you letter and brief summary.

Initially ten businesses were surveyed. These ten businesses provided a pre-test of the survey instrument to ensure validity. The pre-test was completed with businesses located on the outer edge of the downtown. Businesses located on the outer edge were served first because if there were any discrepancies the survey instrument could be adapted before surveying businesses in close proximity to the JLC and Market. The data collected from the pre-test was deemed usable as business owners provided consistent answers. Seventy-five businesses were then surveyed to obtain

a sample size of 46 businesses. The following sampling technique was used. Originally, one in every four businesses was sampled. This was to ensure random selection and reduce potential researcher bias. However, the technique needed to be slightly adapted as within the study area there are a variety of services including: accountants, lawyers, marketing and communications, and real estate offices for which the survey was not relevant. It was expected that the impact of the JLC and the Market would be the greatest on hospitality businesses. Therefore, businesses specializing in hospitality including: restaurants, retail, bars, places of entertainment were sought as primary candidates. The presence of hospitality establishments lead to the stratification of the sample. Therefore, when a service business was the fourth store, I would make note and continue to survey hospitality businesses in the area.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, surveys were coded upon collection. Surveys were assigned a number in the order the surveys were returned. This number was then combined with the distance in meters (as answered in question 18 of the survey) the business is located from the JLC and Market. An example of a code used for a business located less than twenty-five meters from the JLC and Market is 25m-returned# (e.g. >25m-2). The purpose of coding a business based on geographic location was to help determine a relationship between the impact and the distance from the JLC and Market.

#### **4.4.2 Key Informant Interviews**

The interviews were conducted in January and February 2010. The interviews took place in the workplace of the individual being interviewed. Candidates for the interviews were selected based on their employment titles and expertise on downtown revitalization. During the initial interview, the interviewee suggested other candidates who would be beneficial for this study. After following up with the suggestions, an individual from each of the following organizations was interviewed: City of London Planning Department, MainStreet London, the Covent Garden Market as well as a long-standing business owner. Table 5 shows the candidates interviewed. The questions asked in the semi-structured interview can be found in Appendix A-2. The findings from

the interviews will be used to supplement information obtained from the surveys. As well, the information provides the researcher with a better understanding of revitalization in London, Ontario.

Table 5: Interview participants

| Name              | Job Title                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Janette MacDonald | Manager of Mainstreet London          |
| Bob Usher         | Manager of the Covent Garden Market   |
| Greg Barrett      | Manager III, Land Use Planning Policy |
| Fred Kingsmill    | Owner of Kingsmill department store   |

#### **4.5 Ethics Approval**

The study received clearance from the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009. A modification was granted on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010. All participants were provided with an information package that contained an information letter and consent form. Please refer to the appendix to view a copy of the information letter and consent form (A-3).

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the downtown business owner surveys. The results are introduced starting with part D, which contains general information about the businesses. Following this, the results are presented question by question beginning with part A. Attention is given throughout to differences based on business type and distance from the JLC and Market. The information gathered from the four stakeholder interviews is summarized following the survey information.

### 5.1 Survey Results

Seventy-five businesses located in downtown London were approached to participate in this study. Forty-six businesses (or 61%) completed the survey, while twenty-nine businesses (or 39%) declined to participate. The type of businesses surveyed can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Type of participating businesses surveyed

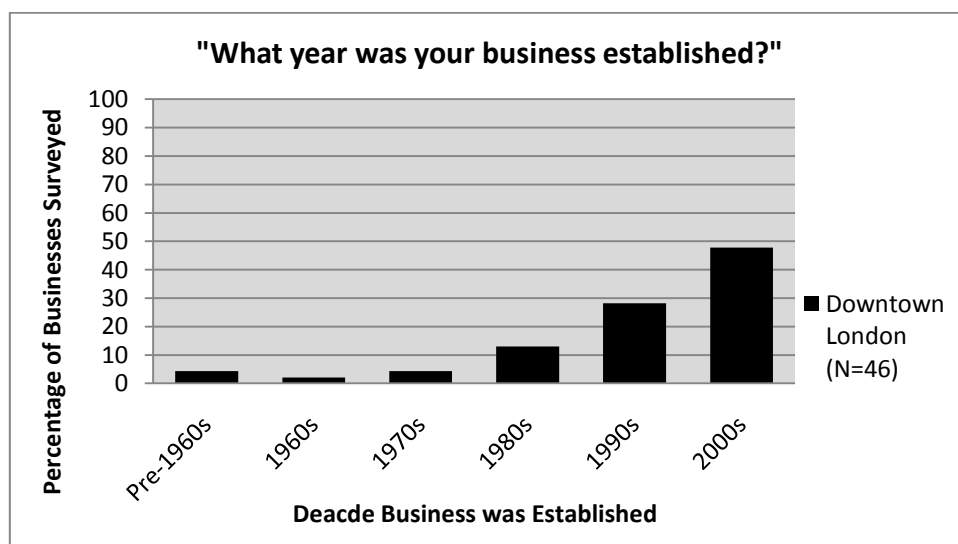
| Types of Businesses Surveyed                 |           |
|--|-----------|
| Clothing Retail                              | 10        |
| Coffee shop                                  | 1         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment            | 6         |
| Florist                                      | 1         |
| Hair salon/spa                               | 4         |
| Hotel  | 1         |
| Pawnbroker                                   | 2         |
| Restaurant                                   | 13        |
| Specialty Retail (Books, kitchen goods, etc) | 8         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>46</b> |

“Restaurants” comprise 28.2% of the sample population surveyed, followed by “clothing retail” at 21.7%. “Specialty retail businesses” concentrating on used books, comics, kitchen goods, home décor, furniture, jewelry (2) and a specialty department store account for 17.4%. “Drinking and dining establishments” comprise of 13.0% of the sample and include bars, supper clubs, and locations that offer clients a location for both drinking and eating.

### 5.1.1 Year business was established

Downtown businesses are asked the year when their business was established. The results displayed by decade can be seen in Figure 9. The majority of businesses surveyed (47.8%) are relatively young, as they were established within the last ten years. This can be a reflection of the competitiveness of businesses and the high rate of turn-over associated with stores and restaurants in general (MacDonald interview, 2010). Of the businesses surveyed, 28.2% were established in the 1990s, followed by 13.0% in the 1980s. Few businesses surveyed existed prior to the 1980s, showing the longevity of select businesses and high rate of turnover for other businesses.

Figure 9: Age of Businesses Surveyed in Downtown London



All businesses surveyed before 1980 are retail establishments (2 clothing, and 2 specialties) except for one spa/salon and one restaurant. In the 1980s, three specialty shops opened downtown along with a pawnbroker and a restaurant. In the 1990s, three clothing retailers opened along with



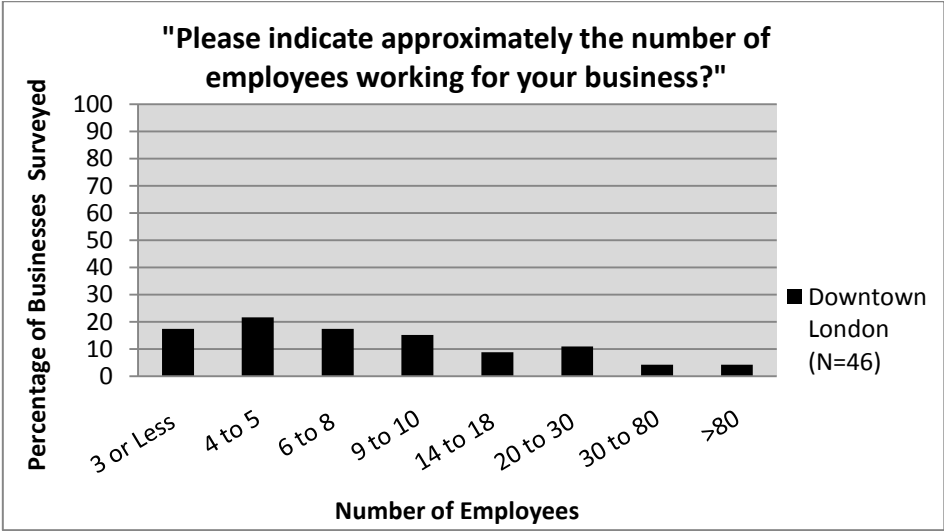
three specialty retailers, four restaurants, one pawnbroker, one hair salon and one drinking and dining establishment. Since 2000, a plethora of restaurants have opened (nine), along with four drinking and dining establishments, two specialty retail shops, one coffee shop, one florist, a hotel, and a hair salon.

When analyzing businesses based on their distance from the JLC and Market, there is no discernable pattern. Within 25 meters of the JLC and Market, a hotel, clothing retail shop and specialty retailers were surveyed. Within 25 – 50 meters, a specialty retailer, restaurants and a clothing retailer responded to the survey. As one moves further from the JLC and Market, there is a greater variety in the types of businesses surveyed.

**5.1.2 Size of Business**

Businesses are asked to state the approximate number of employees working for their establishment. Figure 10 shows the results to this question.

Figure 10: Size of Businesses Surveyed



The majority of downtown businesses surveyed (56.5%) can be defined as “small businesses” or “owner-operated,” having fewer than eight employees. Slightly more than twenty percent of businesses (21.7%) have between 4 and 5 employees, while the replies for “3 or less” and “6-8” employees each comprise 17.4%. A good portion of businesses sampled can be considered medium

size (having between 10 and 30 employees), while there were few large businesses surveyed with more than 30 employees (8.6%) located in downtown London. Typically downtowns offer niche retailing experiences, so it was not unexpected to find a large number of “small businesses” as opposed to national chain stores in downtown London.

### **5.1.3 Hours of Operation**

Business owners were asked to indicate their hours of operation both during the week and on weekends. The purpose of this question is to gain information about whether businesses are open during events held at the JLC and Market. During the week the majority of businesses are open from either “9 a.m. to 5 p.m.” (N=10) or “10 a.m. to 6 p.m.” (N =13). Eleven businesses surveyed open at 11 a.m. and four open at 11:30 a.m. Only one business surveyed opens at 4 p.m. in preparation for dinner service, while five businesses open at 5 p.m. and two bars surveyed open at 8 p.m.

On weekends, busy hours are sporadic. Twenty- nine businesses (or 60.0%) are closed on Sundays. Saturday hours vary depending business type. Restaurants open at 10 or 11 a.m. or 5 p.m., while bars and night clubs open at 8 p.m. The hours for clothing and specialty retail stores and hair salons remain relatively consistent with their weekday hours. Four businesses are open from “9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,” eight businesses from “9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,” and seven businesses from “10 a.m. to 4 p.m.”

### **5.1.4 Busiest Time of Day**

Downtown businesses are asked in question 17 A) “what time of the day is busiest for your establishment?” Some businesses cited multiple responses, as they might be equally busy for multiple hours of the day. Therefore, the number of responses exceeds the total number of businesses surveyed (N=72). Figure 11 illustrates the busiest time of day for businesses during the week and on weekends.

Figure 11: Busiest time for businesses

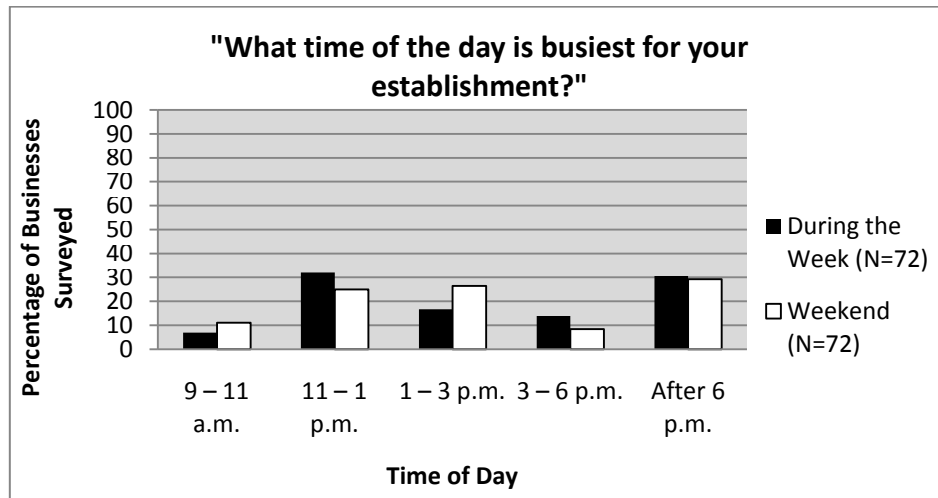


Figure 11 shows that the majority of businesses are busy during the lunch hour (11 – 1 p.m.) or after 6 p.m. During the week 32.0% of businesses are busiest from “11 – 1 p.m.,” while 30.6% of businesses are busiest “after 6 p.m.” On weekends the busiest times are slightly altered: 29.6% report “after 6 p.m.” busiest, followed 26.4% at “1-3 p.m.,” and 25.0% from “11 – 1 p.m.” This pattern was predicted because restaurants, drinking and dining establishments, and retail (clothing and specialty) will receive the most service from the downtown working population during these times.

Table 7 provides a breakdown by business type of the busiest time of day during the week, while Table 8 shows the same characterization but for the weekend.

Table 7: Busiest time of day during the week

| Type of Business Surveyed         | Busiest time of day during the week |             |            |            |              | TOTAL     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
|                                   | 9 – 11 a.m.                         | 11 – 1 p.m. | 1 – 3 p.m. | 3 – 6 p.m. | After 6 p.m. |           |
| Clothing Retail                   | 2                                   | 5           | 2          | 1          | 2            | 12        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -                                   | 1           | -          | -          | -            | 1         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | -                                   | 3           | -          | 3          | 5            | 11        |
| Florist                           | -                                   | -           | 1          | 1          | -            | 2         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | -                                   | 1           | 2          | -          | 1            | 4         |
| Hotel                             | -                                   | 1           | -          | -          | -            | 1         |
| Pawnbroker                        | -                                   | 2           | 1          | -          | -            | 3         |
| Restaurant                        | 2                                   | 4           | 3          | 2          | 9            | 20        |
| Specialty Retail                  | -                                   | 9           | 3          | -          | 6            | 18        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>4</b>                            | <b>26</b>   | <b>12</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>23</b>    | <b>72</b> |

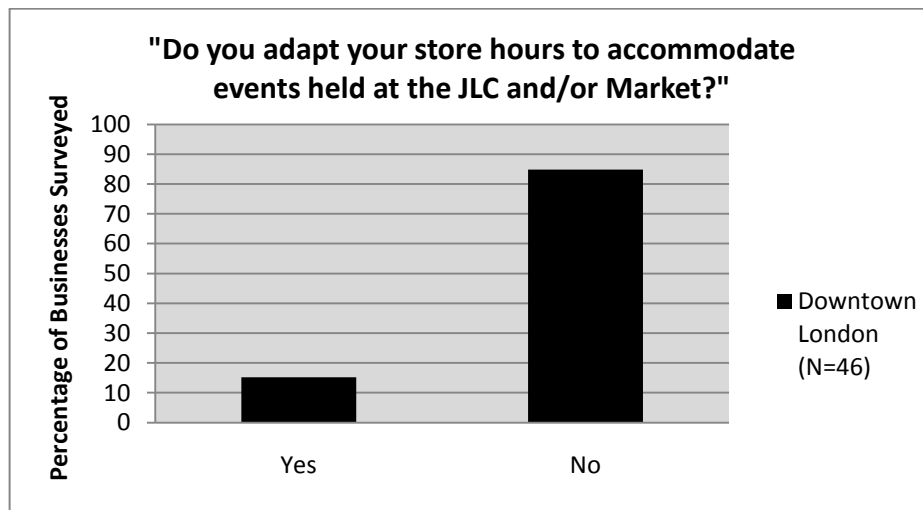
Table 8: Busiest time of day on a weekend

| Type of Business Surveyed         | Busiest time of day on a weekend |             |            |            |              | TOTAL     |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
|                                   | 9 – 11 a.m.                      | 11 – 1 p.m. | 1 – 3 p.m. | 3 – 6 p.m. | After 6 p.m. |           |
| Clothing Retail                   | 2                                | 3           | 2          | 1          | 4            | 12        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -                                | 1           | -          | -          | -            | 1         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 1                                | 1           | 2          | 2          | 5            | 11        |
| Florist                           | -                                | -           | 1          | 1          | -            | 2         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | -                                | 1           | 2          | -          | 1            | 4         |
| Hotel                             | -                                | -           | 1          | -          | -            | 1         |
| Pawnbroker                        | 1                                | 2           | -          | -          | -            | 3         |
| Restaurant                        | 2                                | 5           | 3          | 2          | 8            | 20        |
| Specialty Retail                  | -                                | 4           | 5          | 3          | 6            | 18        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>6</b>                         | <b>17</b>   | <b>16</b>  | <b>9</b>   | <b>24</b>    | <b>72</b> |

### 5.1.5 Adapting Store Hours

Downtown businesses are asked whether they adapt their store hours to accommodate events held at the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market (Figure 12). Thirty-nine businesses (or 84.8%) say they do not adapt their hours, while seven businesses (or 15.2%) do change their hours in an effort to accommodate patrons visiting the JLC and/or Market.

Figure 12: Percentage of businesses that adapt their store hours



This finding was unpredicted, as it was hypothesized that with the JLC attracting 9,000 people downtown for a hockey game or concert, many businesses would remain open to try to take advantage of this crowd. However, as MacDonald (interview, 2010) says, “hospitality businesses

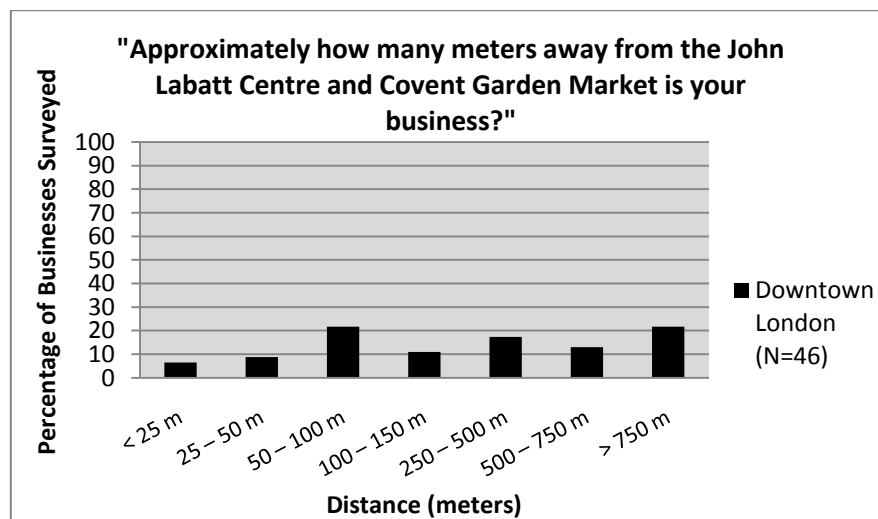
primarily benefit because people do not go shopping before or after an event.” Likewise, upon further investigation via personal observations, patrons visiting the JLC on weekdays leave immediately after the event.

Of the seven businesses that do adapt their store hours to accommodate events held at the JLC and Market, four are restaurants, two are drinking and dining establishments, and one is a specialty retail store. As previously stated the majority of businesses do not change their store hours. Of those that do change their hours, four are located within 50 to 100 meters of the JLC and Market, two between 100 – 150 meters, and the remaining 500 – 750 meters away.

### 5.1.6 Distance from JLC and Market

Question 18 on the survey distributed to downtown business owners asks approximately how far the business is located from the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market in meters. Figure 13 shows the approximate location in relation to the JLC and Market.

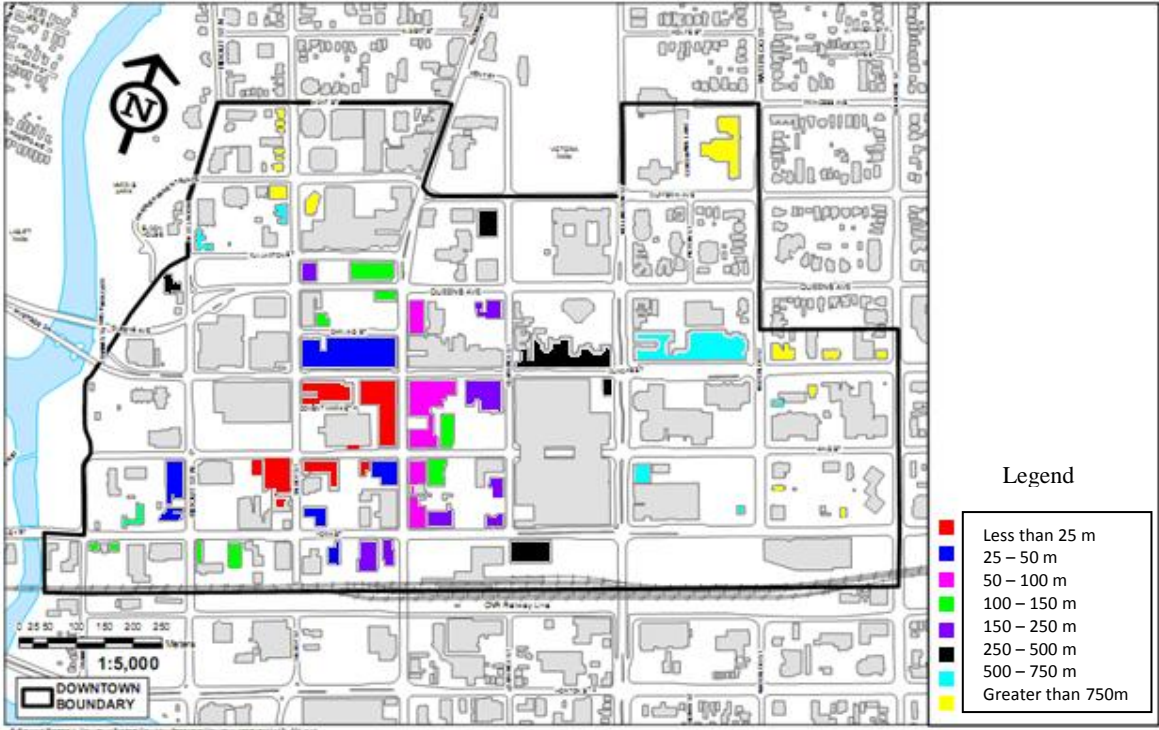
Figure 13: Distance from the JLC and Market



The most common distances are “50 – 100 meters” and “greater than 750 meters,” each representing 21.7% of the businesses surveyed. Slightly less than twenty percent of businesses (17.4%) are “250 – 500 meters” from the JLC and Market, followed by 13.0% being “500 – 750 meters” away. Approximately 10.9% are within “100 – 150 meters,” 8.8% are “25 – 50 meters”

away, while 6.5% of businesses are within “25 meters.” Figure 14 illustrates the approximate distances on a map of downtown London.

Figure 14: Plotting Distances



**5.2 Impact**

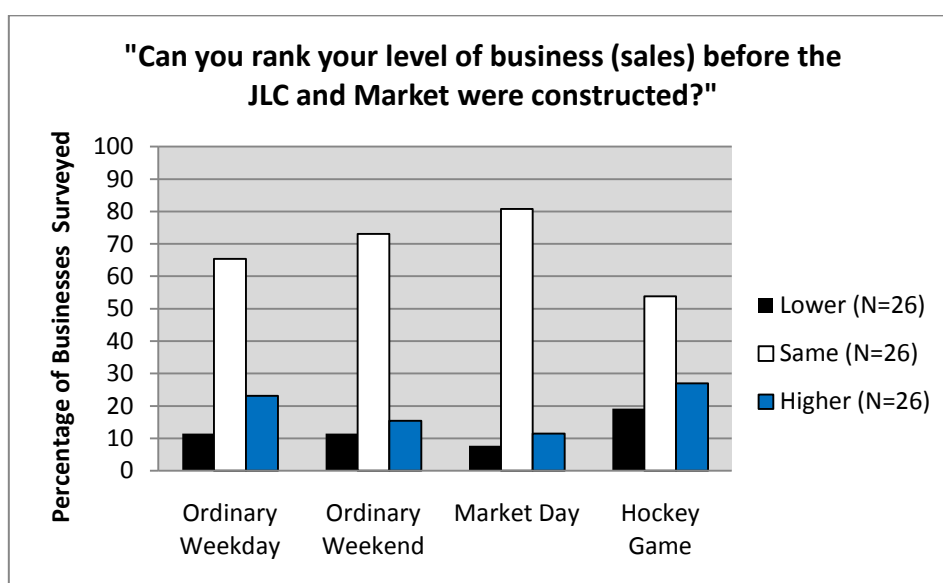
Part A of the survey instrument distributed to downtown businesses asks questions about the impact of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. This following section presents the business owner perceptions of the impact these venues have on their businesses.

**5.2.1 Level of business**

Businesses established prior to 2002 (N=26) were asked to rank their level of business (sales) before the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market were constructed. Figure 15 shows the results. The level of sales for the majority of businesses surveyed remains the “same” regardless of the day of the week or events hosted at either the JLC or Market. Interestingly enough, 27.0% of businesses said they experienced “higher” sales on the night of a hockey game

before the JLC was constructed, when games were hosted at the Ice House located in the south end of London. This finding is surprising, as one would expect sales to be lower. Sales on an ‘ordinary weekday’ were “higher” before the JLC and Market were built for 23.1% of businesses, which could be related to less competition between businesses. With fewer businesses and higher vacancy rates, it is possible that spending is now being distributed among many businesses as compared to before, when fewer businesses existed.

Figure 15: Level of business prior to JLC and Market



It was assumed that business would be significantly “lower,” however, the “same” received an overwhelming response on all occasions. This finding suggests that the economic benefits may have been overstated as compared to reality. The increased spending is limited to restaurants, and too small to affect the entire downtown economy (Rosentraub, 1999).

It is important to assess how the JLC and Market affect each type of business surveyed. Therefore, the tables below provide a breakdown of the responses by business type. The numbers indicate the number of businesses that provided that response.

Table 9: Sales on a weekday by business type

| Type of Business Surveyed         | Rank Level of Sales on an Ordinary Weekday |           |          |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|----------|
|                                   | Lower                                      | Same      | Higher   |
| Clothing Retail                   | -  | 5         | 1        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -  | -         | 1        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 1  | 1         | -        |
| Florist                           | -  | -         | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | -  | 2         | -        |
| Hotel                             | -  | -         | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | -  | -         | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 2  | 3         | 1        |
| Specialty Retail                  | -  | 6         | 2        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>17</b> | <b>6</b> |

On an ordinary weekday, six businesses said they had “higher” sales before the JLC and Market were constructed, while the majority said sales were “[about the] same.” No evident pattern exists based on business types corresponding to level of sales on an ordinary weekday.

Table 10: Sales on a weekend by business type

| Type of Business Surveyed         | Rank Level of Sales on an Ordinary Weekend |           |          |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|----------|
|                                   | Lower                                      | Same      | Higher   |
| Clothing Retail                   | -  | 5         | 1        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -  | 1         | -        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 1  | 1         | -        |
| Florist                           | -  | -         | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1  | 1         | -        |
| Hotel                             | -  | -         | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | -  | -         | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 1  | 5         | -        |
| Specialty Retail                  | -  | 6         | 2        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>19</b> | <b>4</b> |

On an ordinary weekend and on a Market day, no particular business type is affected more than another by sales.



Table 11: Sales on a market day by business type

| Type of Business Surveyed         | Rank Level of Sales on a Market Day |           |          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
|                                   | Lower                               | Same      | Higher   |
| Clothing Retail                   | -                                   | 5         | 1        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -                                   | 1         | -        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 1                                   | 1         | -        |
| Florist                           | -                                   | -         | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | -                                   | 2         | -        |
| Hotel                             | -                                   | -         | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | -                                   | -         | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 1                                   | 5         | -        |
| Specialty Retail                  | -                                   | 7         | 1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>2</b>                            | <b>21</b> | <b>3</b> |

Surprisingly, four restaurants said they experienced “higher” sales on the night of a hockey game before the JLC and Market were built: an unexpected result. One would have assumed sales to be higher today as a direct result of the presence of the JLC; however, as mentioned, this increased competition may have undermined the assumption

Table 12: Sales on the night of a hockey game by business type

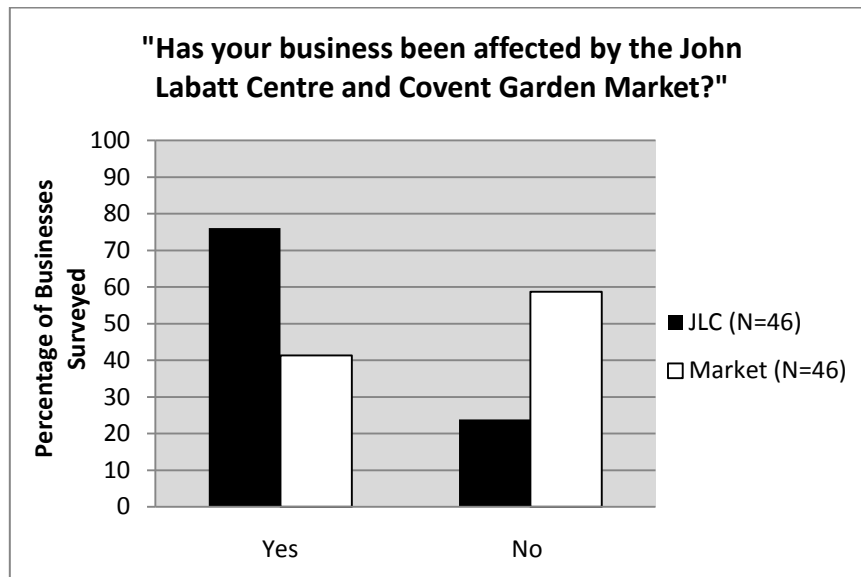
| Type of Business Surveyed         | Rank Level of Sales on the night of a Hockey Game |           |          |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|----------|
|                                   | Lower   | Same      | Higher   |
| Clothing Retail                   | -   | 5         | 1        |
| Coffee Shop                       | 1   | -         | -        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | -   | 1         | 1        |
| Florist                           | -   | -         | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1   | 1         | -        |
| Hotel                             | -   | -         | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | -   | -         | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 1   | 1         | 4        |
| Specialty Retail                  | 1   | 7         | -        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>4</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>7</b> |

### 5.2.2 Businesses Affected by JLC and Market

Downtown businesses are asked whether their business has been affected by the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. More than seventy percent (76.1%) of businesses

surveyed are affected by the JLC, whereas 23.9% are not. To the contrary, the majority of businesses (58.7%) say they are not affected by the Market, and 41.3% are (See Figure 16).

Figure 16: Effect of JLC and Market



To assess the effect the JLC and Market have on specific businesses, the following tables provide a breakdown of the responses by business type and by distance. Table 13 shows that the majority of restaurants (N=10) are affected by the JLC. Surprisingly, only three drinking and dining establishments are affected, while the remaining three are not affected. Six clothing retail stores and four specialty retail are affected as well.

Table 13: Affected by JLC presented by business type

| Type of Businesses Surveyed       | “Has your business been affected by the JLC?” |           |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|
|                                   | Yes   | No        |
| Clothing Retail                   | 6   | 4         |
| Coffee Shop                       | 1   | -         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 3   | 3         |
| Florist                           | 1   | -         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1   | 3         |
| Hotel                             | -   | 1         |
| Pawnbroker                        | 1   | 1         |
| Restaurant                        | 10  | 3         |
| Specialty Retail                  | 4   | 4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>27</b>                                     | <b>19</b> |

When assessing the impact by distance from the JLC and Market, the findings show that distance has an effect (see Table 14). Eight businesses located within 50 m are affected by the JLC, and the number of businesses affected decreases as one moves further from the venues. The pattern reverses for businesses that replied “No” they are not affected by the JLC, as the majority of responses came from businesses located further than 250 m away.

Table 14: Affected by JLC presented by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “Has your business been affected by the JLC?” |           |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|
|                              | Yes   | No        |
| < 25 m                       | 2   | 1         |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 6   | 2         |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 4   | 1         |
| 100 – 150 m                  | 1   | 2         |
| 150 – 250 m                  | 2   | -         |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 5   | 3         |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 4   | 4         |
| >750 m                       | 3   | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>27</b>                                     | <b>19</b> |

The majority of businesses surveyed say they are not affected by the Covent Garden Market. Table 15 shows the breakdown by business type. Of the businesses whose response was “yes,” four are clothing retail, three are specialty retail, with one each of florist, hair salon/spa, pawnbroker and a restaurant. All the drinking and dining establishments (N=6) said they are not affected by the Market, while twelve restaurants cited that the Market does not affect their business.

Table 15: Affected by Market presented by business type

| Type of Businesses Surveyed       | “Has your business been affected by the Market?” |           |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|
|                                   | Yes  | No        |
| Clothing Retail                   | 4  | 6         |
| Coffee Shop                       | -  | 1         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | -  | 6         |
| Florist                           | 1  | -         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1  | 3         |
| Hotel                             | -  | 1         |
| Pawnbroker                        | 1  | 1         |
| Restaurant                        | 1  | 12        |
| Specialty Retail                  | 3  | 5         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>11</b>  | <b>35</b> |

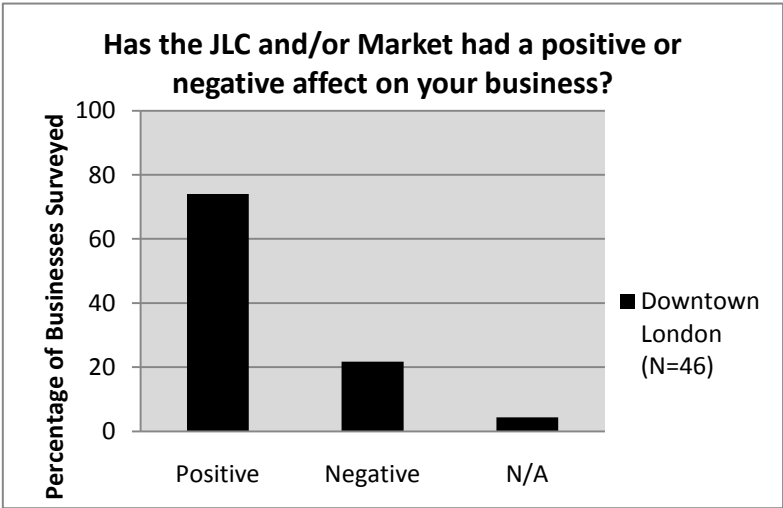
When assessing spatial sensitivity for the impact of the Market, the results do not show a discernable pattern. Of the eleven businesses affected by the Market, four are located 25 – 50 meters, one is located 50 – 100 meters, and three are located 250 – 500 meters away. The majority of respondents are not affected by the Market, and location does not appear to have an impact.

Table 16: Affected by Market presented by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “Has your business been affected by the Market?” |           |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|
|                              | Yes  | No        |
| < 25 m                       | -  | 3         |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 4  | 4         |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 1  | 9         |
| 100 – 150 m                  | -  | 3         |
| 150 – 250 m                  | -  | 2         |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 3  | 7         |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 1  | 3         |
| >750 m                       | 2  | 4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>11</b>  | <b>35</b> |

Continuing to investigate the effects in more detail, businesses were asked to explain their initial ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. This open-ended question provides participants with flexibility in their response, and the researcher coded responses accordingly. Of the responses listed, the majority (74%) felt the venues to be positive (Figure 17). Meanwhile 21.7% of businesses cited these venues have a negative impact on their business.

Figure 17: Positive or Negative Affect



Some of the specific responses from the business owners about the effects of the JLC and/or Market are seen below:

*“More people living downtown – will have positive effects on downtown businesses”*  
(>750m-#7)

*“Both the JLC and Market are attractions that bring people to the area, and with people comes increased business”*  
(500-750m-#44)

*“Events negatively affect our business, because it takes away metered parking from our customers”*  
(25 – 50m-#22)

### 5.2.3 Type of Impact

Question 3 of the survey instrument asks business owners “what type of an impact has the JLC and/or Market had on your business?” This open-ended question allows participants to write about the impact each of these venues has on their business. First the answers were categorized into positive, negative or no impact, and then the answers were coded to highlight common themes.

Table 17 shows the type of impact the JLC and Market have on surveyed businesses.

Table 17: Type of impact on businesses

|              | JLC       | Market    |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Positive     | 27        | 16        |
| Negative     | 7         | 3         |
| No impact    | 12        | 27        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>46</b> |

Table 18 provides a breakdown by business type of the impact the JLC has on one’s business. The majority of restaurants (N=10) say the JLC has had a positive impact on their business. Similarly, four drinking and dining establishments report a positive impact. Other businesses that cite the JLC as having a positive impact include clothing retail (N=5), a coffee shop, two hair salons/spas, a hotel, a pawnbroker and three specialty retail stores.

Table 18: Impact of the JLC by business type

| Type of Businesses Surveyed       | “What type of an impact has the JLC had on your business?” |          |           |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------|-----------|
|                                   | Positive   | Negative | No Impact |
| Clothing Retail                   | 5  | 1        | 4         |
| Coffee Shop                       | 1  | -        | -         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 4  | -        | 2         |
| Florist                           | -  | -        | 1         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 2  | 1        | 1         |
| Hotel                             | 1  | -        | -         |
| Pawnbroker                        | -  | 1        | 1         |
| Restaurant                        | 10   | 1        | 1         |
| Specialty Retail                  | 3  | 3        | 2         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>27</b>  | <b>7</b> | <b>12</b> |

Meanwhile, Table 19 shows the impact of the JLC by distance from the venues. Businesses located greater than 750 meters from the JLC, cite “no impact,” whereas businesses within close proximity (<25 meters) provide mixed reviews. This finding can be associated with the lack of parking available, while other businesses see the positives associated with increased visibility and pedestrian traffic. The majority of businesses located within 50 – 100 meters say the JLC has a positive impact on them.

Table 19: Impact of the JLC by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “What type of an impact has the JLC had on your business?” |          |           |
|------------------------------|--|----------|-----------|
|                              | Positive   | Negative | No Impact |
| < 25 m                       | 3  | 3        | 1         |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 1  | -        | -         |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 7  | 3        | -         |
| 100 – 150 m                  | 2  | -        | 1         |
| 150 – 250 m                  | 1  | -        | 1         |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 7  | -        | 1         |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 4  | 1        | 1         |
| >750 m                       | 2  | -        | 7         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>27</b>  | <b>7</b> | <b>12</b> |

On the other hand, the majority of businesses cite that the Covent Garden Market had no impact on their business. Three clothing retail stores, two drinking and dining establishments, a hair salon/spa, a hotel, five restaurants and four specialty retailers respond that the Market has a positive

impact, while only three businesses, those being a pawnbroker and two restaurants, say the Market has a negative effect on them.

Table 20: Impact of the Market by business type

| Type of Businesses Surveyed       | “What type of an impact has the Market had on your business?” |          |           |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------|-----------|
|                                   | Positive  | Negative | No Impact |
| Clothing Retail                   | 3   | -        | 7         |
| Coffee Shop                       | -   | -        | 1         |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 2   | -        | 4         |
| Florist                           | -   | -        | 1         |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1   | -        | 3         |
| Hotel                             | 1   | -        | -         |
| Pawnbroker                        | -   | 1        | 1         |
| Restaurant                        | 5   | 2        | 6         |
| Specialty Retail                  | 4   | -        | 4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>16</b>   | <b>3</b> | <b>27</b> |

Once more the impact of the Market is space sensitive, similar to that of the JLC. Twelve businesses within 150 meters say the impact is positive, and as one moves further from the Market, nineteen businesses outside the 250 meter range cite “no impact.”

Table 21: Impact of the Market by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “What type of an impact has the Market had on your business?” |          |           |
|------------------------------|---|----------|-----------|
|                              | Positive  | Negative | No Impact |
| < 25 m                       | 3   | -        | 2         |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 1   | 1        | -         |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 7   | -        | 3         |
| 100 – 150 m                  | 1   | 1        | 2         |
| 150 – 250 m                  | 1   | -        | 1         |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 1   | 1        | 6         |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 2   | -        | 3         |
| >750 m                       | -   | -        | 10        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>16</b>   | <b>3</b> | <b>27</b> |

To continue this analysis, responses are categorized. The categorized responses can be seen in Table 22 which shows the positive impacts, while Table 23 displays the negative impacts.

Table 22: Positive Impacts of the JLC and Market

| <b>Positive Impacts of JLC and Market on Businesses Surveyed</b> |                           |                             |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | <b>John Labatt Centre</b> | <b>Covent Garden Market</b> |
| <b>Draws people downtown</b>                                     | <b>10</b>                 | <b>9</b>                    |
| <b>Increased pedestrian traffic</b>                              | <b>3</b>                  | <b>3</b>                    |
| <b>Increased exposure/visibility</b>                             | <b>4</b>                  | <b>---</b>                  |
| <b>Increased business</b>  | <b>10</b>                 | <b>---</b>                  |
| <b>Obtains produce from market</b>                               | <b>---</b>                | <b>4</b>                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>27</b>                 | <b>16</b>                   |

Both the JLC and Market bring a significant number of people downtown, which has positive impacts on businesses. “Draws people downtown” is the most commonly cited response about the positive impact of the John Labatt Centre (N=10) and Covent Garden Market (N=9). “Increased business,” “increased exposure/visibility” and “increased pedestrian traffic” are other positive impacts of the JLC and Market. As more people come to the area, there is the potential for window browsing which can lead to new customers.

Table 23: Negative Impacts of the JLC and Market

| <b>Negative Impacts of JLC and Market on Businesses Surveyed</b> |                           |                             |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | <b>John Labatt Centre</b> | <b>Covent Garden Market</b> |
| <b>Limited parking</b>   | <b>7</b>                  | <b>---</b>                  |
| <b>Competition for business with restaurants</b>                 | <b>---</b>                | <b>3</b>                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>7</b>                  | <b>3</b>                    |

“Limited parking” is the main negative issue for seven businesses, while three businesses say the Covent Garden Market “increases competition among business.” Parking is and has always been an issue for downtown businesses. Especially since suburban shopping malls offer an abundance of free parking, people feel the same should be offered in downtown locations. People like to have parking available at a low cost, and when on-street parking is occupied by people visiting the JLC it affects the willingness of customers to shop at downtown stores.

#### **5.2.4 Greater Impact on the business**

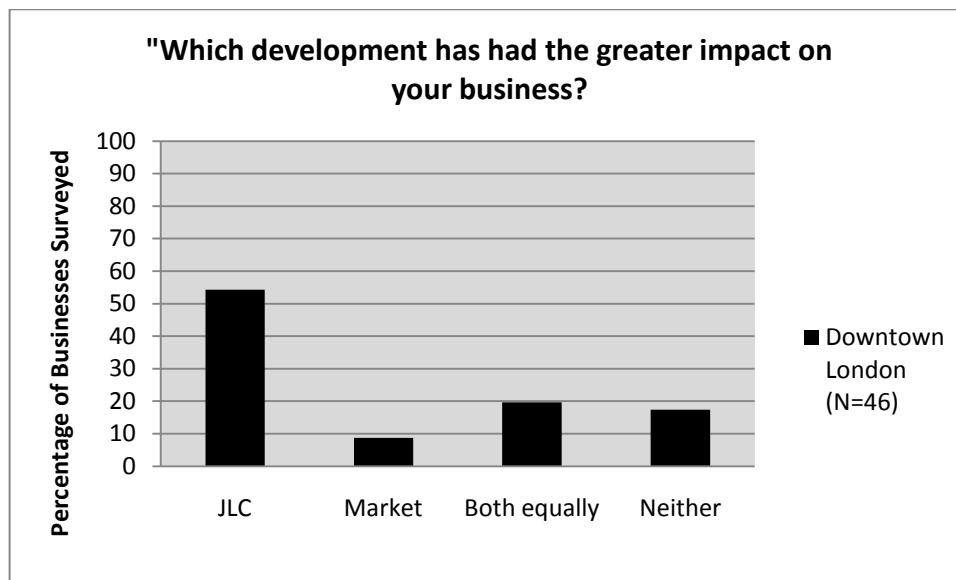
Businesses surveyed are asked in question 4 to select which development had a greater impact on their business (part A) and revitalizing downtown London (part B). There are three



choices for the respondent to select: 'JLC,' 'Market,' or 'both equally.' Some business owners stated 'neither' development has had a greater impact; therefore this became another possible answer. Respondents were asked to explain the reason for their answer, and these responses were coded into similar categories. The categories then formed themes that were linked to the literature.

The John Labatt Centre (JLC) had the greater impact on 54.3% of businesses surveyed, while 19.6% of businesses say both developments equally impacted their business (Figure 18). Slightly less than twenty percent (17.4%) say "neither" development has had a greater impact on their business, while only 8.7% said the Market.

Figure 18: Greater Impact on your business



When analyzed by business type, the majority of restaurants (N=12) and drinking and dining establishments (N=4) say the JLC has the greater impact on their business. This finding was predicted, as patrons might link an outing at the JLC with dinner or drinks at a nearby restaurant or bar. Table 24 shows the breakdown by business type of which development has had a greater impact on their business.

Table 24: Greater impact on your business presented by business type

| Type of Business Surveyed         | “Which development has had a greater impact on your business?” |          |              |          |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------|--------------|----------|
|                                   | JLC  | Market   | Both Equally | Neither  |
| Clothing Retail                   | 3  | -        | 3            | 2        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -  | -        | 1            | -        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 4  | -        | 2            | -        |
| Florist                           | -  | -        | 1            | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | 1  | -        | 2            | 1        |
| Hotel                             | 1  | -        | -            | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | 1  | -        | -            | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 12   | 1        | -            | 1        |
| Specialty Retail                  | 3  | 3        | -            | 3        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>25</b>  | <b>4</b> | <b>9</b>     | <b>8</b> |

The John Labatt Centre is the most common response for businesses located within 100 meters. Three businesses within 100 meters of the venues say the Market, and three more responded “both equally.” Interestingly enough, no businesses within 100 meters responded with neither. Table 25 shows the remaining results broken down by distance.

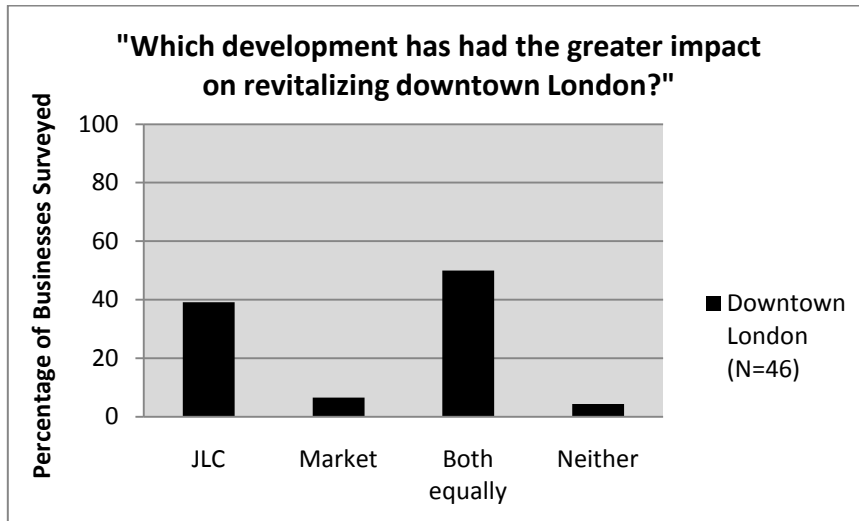
Table 25: Greater impact on your business assessed by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “Which development has had a greater impact on your business?” |          |              |          |
|------------------------------|--|----------|--------------|----------|
|                              | JLC  | Market   | Both Equally | Neither  |
| < 25 m                       | 2  | 1        | -            | -        |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 2  | 1        | 1            | -        |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 7  | 1        | 2            | -        |
| 100 – 150 m                  | 1  | -        | 1            | 1        |
| 150 – 250 m                  | 1  | 1        | -            | -        |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 5  | -        | 2            | 1        |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 2  | -        | 2            | 2        |
| >750 m                       | 5  | -        | 1            | 4        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>25</b>  | <b>4</b> | <b>9</b>     | <b>8</b> |

Part B of question 4 asks business owners “which development (JLC or Market) has had the greater impact on revitalizing downtown London?” Surprisingly, 50.0% of businesses surveyed say “both [developments] equally” impacted revitalization in downtown London (Figure 19). This response could be influenced by social desirability. This concept refers to the expectation that both venues provide significant and meaningful contributions to downtown London. The JLC is the

second most common response with 39.1%. A small percentage of businesses (6.5%) mention the Market, while 4.4% say “neither” development has helped to revitalize downtown London.

Figure 19: Greater impact on revitalizing downtown London



There is no discernable pattern present when the responses are displayed by business type (Table 26). The majority of restaurants say the “JLC” has had a greater impact on downtown London, however the majority of businesses say ‘both [the JLC and Market] equally’ have impacted downtown London. Again, this response could be influenced by social desirability.

Table 26: Greater impact on downtown London presented by business type

| Type of Business Surveyed         | “Which development has had a greater impact on downtown London?” |          |              |          |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------|--------------|----------|
|                                   | JLC  | Market   | Both Equally | Neither  |
| Clothing Retail                   | 5  | -        | 4            | -        |
| Coffee Shop                       | -  | -        | 1            | -        |
| Drinking and Dining Establishment | 2  | -        | 5            | -        |
| Florist                           | 1  | -        | -            | -        |
| Hair salon/spa                    | -  | -        | 4            | -        |
| Hotel                             | -  | -        | 1            | -        |
| Pawnbroker                        | 1  | -        | -            | 1        |
| Restaurant                        | 7  | 2        | 3            | 1        |
| Specialty Retail                  | 2  | 1        | 5            | -        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>18</b>  | <b>3</b> | <b>23</b>    | <b>2</b> |

When the findings are presented by distance from the JLC and Market, no pattern emerges. Table 27 provides a breakdown by distance from the venues.

Table 27: Greater impact on downtown London presented by distance

| Distance from JLC and Market | “Which development has had a greater impact on revitalizing downtown London?” |          |              |          |
|------------------------------|---|----------|--------------|----------|
|                              | JLC   | Market   | Both Equally | Neither  |
| < 25 m                       | -   | -        | 3            | -        |
| 25 – 50 m                    | 2   | -        | 1            | 1        |
| 50 – 100 m                   | 2   | 1        | 7            | -        |
| 100 – 150 m                  | 1   | -        | 2            | -        |
| 150 – 250 m                  | -   | 1        | 1            | -        |
| 250 – 500 m                  | 4   | 1        | 3            | -        |
| 500 – 750 m                  | 2   | -        | 4            | -        |
| >750 m                       | 7   | -        | 2            | 1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>18</b>   | <b>3</b> | <b>23</b>    | <b>2</b> |

Some of the specific responses from the business owners are seen below:

*“The JLC brings a far more diverse consumer to the downtown. The concert goer is as important as the hockey fan.”*  
(250-500m- #15)

*“The John Labatt Centre is bringing suburbanites to the core to eat and socialize.”*  
(50-100m- #20)

*“People like to eat out before or after an event at the JLC, which increases business on certain nights. Also, the JLC brings more traffic downtown and everyone benefits from increased traffic.”*  
(>750m- #8)

*“Both equally, because people are coming downtown again, whether it is to the Market or JLC. One venue does not offer people a greater incentive than the other, they cater to different things.”*  
(50-100m- #36)

### 5.3 Location Questions

Part B of the survey instrument distributed to business owners asks questions about their location - more specifically, reasons for selecting their location, opportunities and challenges faced in this location and what are some of the changes observed in the last 10 years. The majority of the questions in this section are open-ended to allow business owners to speak their mind. The rationale for having business owners formulate their own responses rather than select from a list built on personal observations and the literature was to allow for a variety of responses from those individuals most familiar with the area. The responses were then coded into appropriate categories to form themes. This following section presents the findings for the ‘location specific questions.’

### 5.3.1 Reasons for selecting their location

Question 5 asks business owners “why did you choose to operate in this location?” The question allows respondents to provide more than one reason, thus N=62. The most common theme is “wanted to be downtown” (N=13). The sheer number of business owners who want to be located downtown shows that people care and are passionate about making the downtown prosperous. Answers within the “ready-made building/building available” (N=13) category consist of “had kitchen,” “appropriate size,” “had vault necessary for business,” and “space was available.” Nine businesses said “proximity to entertainment venues” while eight businesses noted that “exposure/visibility” was a factor for selecting their current location. “Other” responses given included “offices nearby; less crime; potential of King Street (2); parking available (2); long-time family business and unique store front.” More themes can be seen in Table 28.

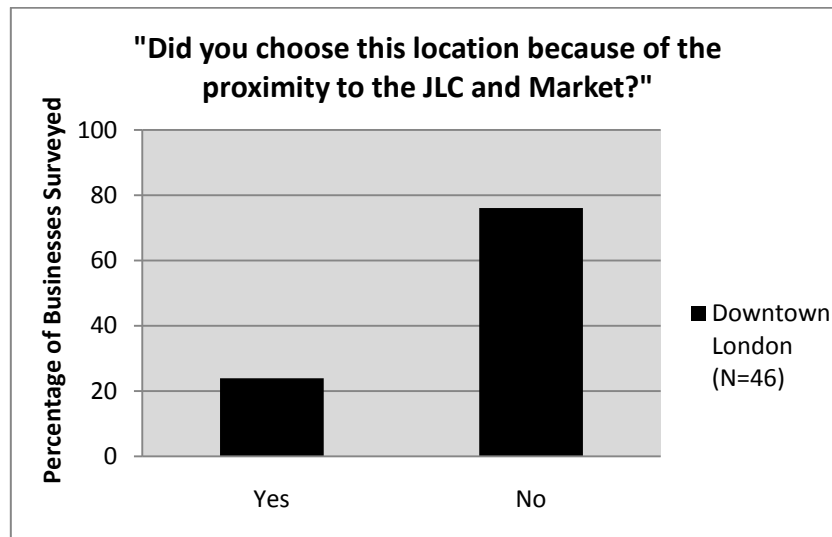
Table 28: “Why did you choose to operate in this location?”

| <b>Why did you choose to operate in this location?</b>      |           |
|---|-----------|
| Wanted to be downtown<br>(includes good location)           | 13        |
| Ready-made building/building available                      | 13        |
| Proximity to entertainment venues<br>(JLC, Market, Theatre) | 9         |
| Exposure/visibility   | 8         |
| Proximity to hotels and residential population              | 4         |
| On transportation route (bus)                               | 3         |
| Affordable rent   | 2         |
| Near competition  | 2         |
| Other   | 8         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>62</b> |

### 5.3.2 Proximity to JLC and Market

Downtown businesses were then asked if they selected their location because of close proximity to the John Labatt Centre and Market. Of all businesses surveyed, 76.1%, said no, while only 23.9% said they selected this location because of the proximity to these venues (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Proximity to the JLC and Market



Businesses located within 150 meters of the JLC and Market said they choose location based on these venues, whereas proximity was not a factor for businesses outside of this radius. When the replies were analyzed by business type, the findings did not provide any additional information about their reasons for selecting their location.

### 5.3.3 Opportunities existing in the current location

Surveyed businesses were asked “what opportunities do you see as a business operator in this location?” The open-ended question produced a variety of responses that were then coded into themes. There were 55 answers, as the questions received multiple responses from some participants. Table 29 shows the themes derived from the responses.

Table 29: “What opportunities do you see in this location?”

| <b>What are the opportunities in this location?</b> |           |
|---|-----------|
| Increased residential development                   | 10        |
| Walk by traffic                                     | 10        |
| Opportunities to expand                             | 8         |
| Niche Market  | 6         |
| Benefits from JLC/Market                            | 5         |
| Tourists  | 3         |
| Visibility  | 3         |
| Other   | 4         |
| None  | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>55</b> |

The most commonly cited theme is that “increased residential development” (N=10) is changing the downtown from a 9-5 area to a place where people are present at all times of the day, thus increasing “walk by traffic” (N=10). “Opportunities to expand” (N=8), capturing a “niche market” (N=6) and “benefits from the JLC/Market” (N=5) are other frequently cited responses. The ‘other’ category includes the following responses: ‘parking nearby, on bus route, new restaurants opening and the variety of businesses and services in the neighbourhood.’

#### **5.3.4 Location challenges faced**

After listing the opportunities associated with their location, business owners were then asked “what challenges do you face as a business operator in this location?” The most common challenge for business owners is “parking” (N=23). “Social issues,” including the presence of drugs, crime, and vandalism is the second most common response cited by sixteen businesses. The existence of the “homeless” population (N=7) and “perception of safety” (N=6) are other challenges business owners face in downtown London. “Other” challenges include basement location (2), centralization of buses, lack of city support, noise bylaws, too many bars (2), and lack

of visibility. As seen in Table 30 further challenges include location of the social services office, competition with other businesses, and taxes.

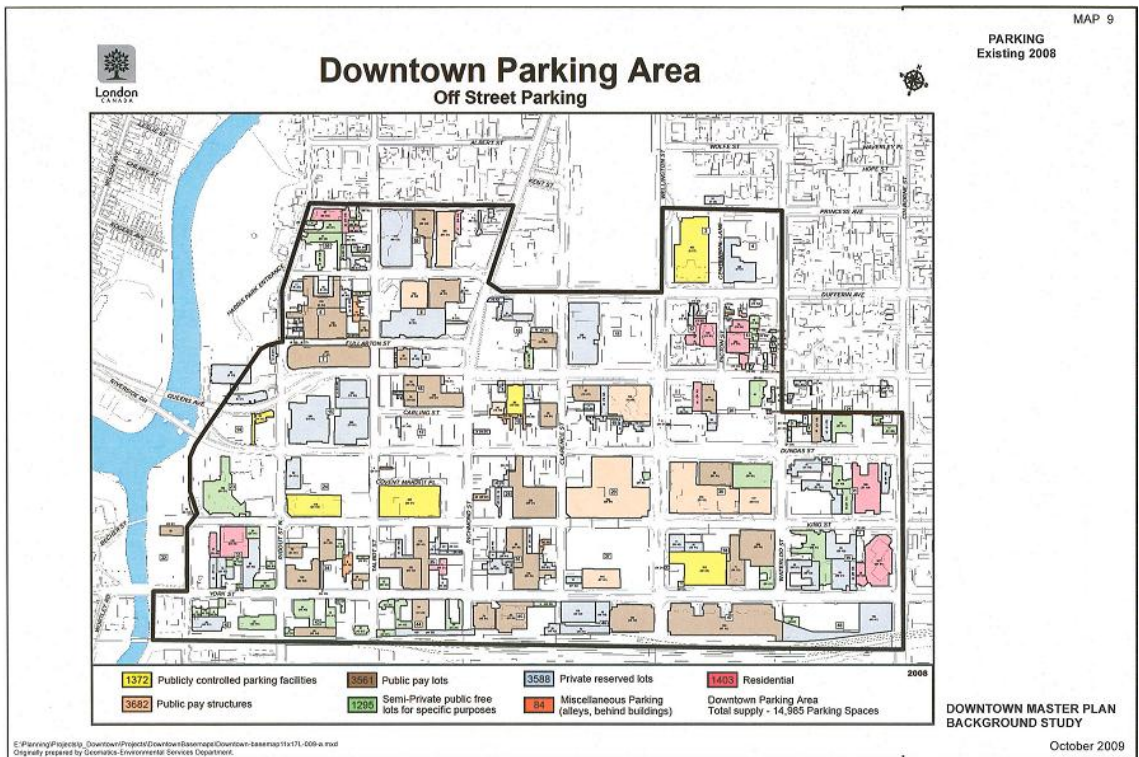
Table 30: “What challenges do you face in this location?”

| <b>What are the challenges in this location?</b> |           |
|--|-----------|
| Parking  | 23        |
| Social issues                                    | 16        |
| Homeless   | 7         |
| Perception of Safety (police patrol, lighting)   | 6         |
| Location of social services                      | 4         |
| Competition with other businesses                | 3         |
| Taxes  | 2         |
| None   | 3         |
| Other  | 8         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>72</b> |

Parking has always been a point of contention in London, and in revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities. However, contrary to popular belief, downtown London has a substantial amount of parking available. Rather “the parking shortage issue is more of one perception than reality for short-term parking” (City of London, 2009f, p. 6). In fact, parking lots cover approximately 30-40% of downtown London’s land area, as seen in Figure 21.



Figure 21: Downtown Parking Areas



Source: City of London. (2009).

In 2008, there were a total of 14,268 spaces available in the downtown, 10% owned by the City (City of London, 2009f). Table 31 shows the parking supply available in downtown London over the years.

Table 31: Downtown Parking Supply

| Type of Parking                                     | 1994          | 1999          | 2005          | 2008          |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Public Pay Structure controlled by City             | 1390          | 5259          | 1390          | 1417          |
| Other Public Pay Structure                          | 4540          | -             | 3760          | 3682          |
| Public Pay Lots                                     | 3260          | 3605          | 3552          | 3448          |
| Semi-Private Public Free Lots for Specific Purposes | 1510          | 1423          | 1153          | 1327          |
| Private Reserved Lots/Structures                    | 3110          | 2872          | 3675          | 3611          |
| Residential   | 1070          | 1098          | -             | -             |
| Private Miscellaneous                               | -             | 69            | 84            | 84            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>14,880</b> | <b>14,326</b> | <b>13,525</b> | <b>13,569</b> |
| On-street Parking                                   | 490           | 643           | 699           | 699           |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>15,370</b> | <b>14,969</b> | <b>14,313</b> | <b>14,268</b> |

Source: City of London. (2009f).

In fact, the downtown London Parking Study released in 1995 revealed that “parking utilization of the over 4,000 existing parking spaces ranged from 44-73% during the work day and 30% in the evening” (City of London, 2009f, p.5). While, “there were high utilization rates of 85%

on some parking lots none approached 100%” (City of London, 2009f, p. 5). Furthermore, the location of parking lots is scattered throughout the downtown, with the exceptions of Richmond and Dundas Streets.

### 5.3.5 Changes in the downtown area

The survey sought to ask businesses to explain the changes witnessed in this commercial area in the last ten years (roughly since the opening of the JLC and the Market). As some businesses are less than ten years old, the question was worded in a more open fashion: “what changes have you noticed in this commercial area since you have opened?” Businesses were able to provide multiple responses, thus N=77. Table 32 shows the responses.

Table 32: Witnessed changes in the last ten years

| <b>Changes in the Last 10 Years</b>        |           |
|--|-----------|
| Lifestyle type businesses                  | 13        |
| Anchors                                    | 10        |
| Upgrading buildings                        | 9         |
| More residential                           | 8         |
| Cleaner streets                            | 7         |
| Turnover in businesses                     | 7         |
| More pedestrian traffic                    | 5         |
| New retail stores                          | 4         |
| Social issues (drugs, homeless, vandalism) | 4         |
| Other                                      | 10        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               | <b>77</b> |

The most frequently noted change is the increase in ‘lifestyle type businesses’ which includes restaurants, hair salons, and spas. The presence of ‘anchors’ such as the JLC, Market, Central Library was another noticeable change. Upgrading the building stock (N=9) and the increased residential development (N=8) has been noticed by business owners as well. Responses that make-up the ‘other’ category include less vacancy (3), Mainstreet London, less retail, private parking lots (e.g. Impark), Galleria mall, competition (2), and new customers.

## 5.4 Revitalizing Downtown London

The survey instrument asked business owners general questions about revitalization in downtown London in part C. There are three questions in the section asking what initiatives have and have not worked in London. The final question asks business owners what they would still like to see in terms of revitalization.

### 5.4.1 Initiatives that work

When asked which initiatives work in downtown London, free parking (N=16) is at the top of the list. The JLC and Market as anchors (N=13) along with the implementation of MainStreet London (N=11) are common responses. Encouraging people to live downtown, and residential development (N=10), along with the incentive programs (N=8) are vital to business owners. Some “other” responses include the following: unique small businesses, more retail (2), more restaurants, museum, continued support from City, and appealing to ethnic groups. Table 33 shows the other themes.

Table 33: In your opinion, what initiatives work in downtown London?

| <b>Initiatives that work in downtown London</b> |           |
|---|-----------|
| Free parking initiatives                        | 16        |
| MainStreet London                               | 11        |
| JLC and Market as anchors                       | 13        |
| Encourage residents/residential development     | 10        |
| Incentive program                               | 8         |
| Festivals                                       | 5         |
| Revitalization of Galleria                      | 2         |
| Foot patrol                                     | 2         |
| Other   | 7         |
| N/A   | 9         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>83</b> |

#### 5.4.2 Initiatives that do not work

Question 11 asked business owners “in your opinion, what initiatives do not work in downtown London?” The most frequent response is “parking” (N=16), followed by the “social problems” (N=8) that persist. These social problems include drugs, homelessness, methadone clinic, drunks, vandalism and crime. The centralization of the “social services office” (Ontario Works) is another concern of business owners that relates to the perception of safety. “Lack of the continuity” by the City has impacted the creditability of initiatives such as road closures, incentive programs, and the “MainStreet program.” Responses that did not fit into a theme were classified as “other,” which includes metal trees (2), bus route (2), Victoria Park, and the promotion of Richmond Row, a competing sector abutting the downtown.

Table 34: “What initiatives do not work in downtown London?”

| <b>What initiatives do not work in downtown London?</b> |           |
|---|-----------|
| Parking   | 16        |
| Social problems need to be addressed                    | 8         |
| Location of social services                             | 8         |
| City’s lack of continuity                               | 5         |
| Road closures for festivals                             | 5         |
| Incentive program                                       | 4         |
| Mainstreet  | 3         |
| London is a 9 -5 , need to keep people downtown         | 3         |
| Other   | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>58</b> |

### 5.4.3 Suggestions for revitalizing downtown London

Business owners provide plenty of insight into what they would like to see in terms of revitalization in downtown London. Many business owners offered multiple suggestions (N=91) that seem realistic enough. Table 35 highlights the themes developed from the survey responses.

Table 35: “What would you like to see in terms of downtown revitalization in London?”

| What would you like to see for revitalizing downtown London? |           |
|--|-----------|
| Free parking   | 15        |
| Continued development  | 13        |
| Grocery store  | 11        |
| Relocate social service                                      | 10        |
| Clean up streets/store fronts                                | 9         |
| Pedestrian friendly areas                                    | 7         |
| More incentive programs                                      | 6         |
| More residential development                                 | 4         |
| More security  | 2         |
| Public Transit   | 4         |
| Private transit  | 4         |
| Public relations   | 3         |
| Aesthetics   | 3         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>91</b> |

“Free parking” is the most common suggestion provided by business owners followed by the “continuation of development.” Types of development include the construction of office buildings, more owner-operated businesses (2), retail (8), and a creative arts centre (2). Business owners recognize the absence of a grocery store and say that this is required as more people are living downtown. Additionally, “relocating the social services office” is another suggestion for improving downtown as it will help to increase the perception of safety by reducing the presence of people who access these services. Seven respondents say streets such as Dundas or Talbot should be closed to automobiles to become a walking path, or a pedestrian only street. The presence of “residential development” is mentioned and four business owners would like to see more

residential development in downtown London. This increased population living downtown will help change the downtown from a 9-5 environment to a place where ‘people, live, work and play.’ Other suggestions include more security/police patrol downtown; public and private transit initiatives (such as a bike share program, decentralizing the London Transit Commission (2) to reroute the buses so there is less congestion at the intersection of Richmond and Dundas, less parking (2), and building a parking structure); public relations for advertising; and aesthetic recommendations, for example, artistic initiatives, removing the metal trees and replacing them with real trees, and removing an unsightly patio.

This chapter presented the findings from the survey instrument administered to downtown business owners. The following chapter analyzes the data and provides answers to the research questions.

## CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the findings in relation to the information obtained from the literature review. Discussion answers the three primary research questions and addresses the advantages of this revitalization strategy. Additionally, this chapter interprets the findings from the surveys distributed to local business owners and the stakeholder interviews.

The principal goal of this study is to explore the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play in revitalizing downtown London. Specifically, the research was created to answer the following three questions:

- Did the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market act as catalysts for revitalization initiatives in downtown London?
- Are the spin-off developments sufficient to be considered tools for revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities?
- What are the positive outcomes of these large-scale developments and how far do these spin-off effects on development reach?

The findings show that the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market are catalysts for revitalization initiatives in downtown London. However, the economic impact is limited to restaurants and drinking and drinking establishments (such as bars, pubs, and night clubs within 100 meters of these venues. While venues definitely have positive outcomes, the effects are spatially sensitive. The answers to these questions will now be explored more thoroughly.

### **6.1 Did the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market act as catalysts for revitalization initiatives in downtown London?**

This section answers the aforementioned question by explaining the roles of the JLC and Market within the broader context of downtown planning in the City. A brief review of investment, new commercial and residential growth, and vacancy rates is provided and this information is supplemented with data from the surveys and interviews.

### **6.1.1 Are these venues catalysts?**

Despite attempts to revive downtown London via the 1960s and 1970s urban renewal schemes, and the construction of a downtown shopping centre and convention centre, the City's core was in a state of "perpetual decline" (Cobban, 2003, p. 234). Indeed, by 1993, London's core decline had identified as a consequence of suburban sprawl (Cobban, 2003). Property values in the City's downtown were decreasing and construction had significantly declined. To counteract the decline, London invested in capital projects (including the JLC and Market) with the intent to encourage further development.

To reiterate, by definition an urban catalyst is a project intended to stimulate growth and development in a declining downtown (Bohannon, 2004). In fact, the JLC and Market achieved their goal of acting as catalysts by "jump-start[ing] development" (Rosentraub, 1997). In particular, the survey data shows that slightly more than twenty percent (23.1%) of the businesses surveyed selected their location because of proximity to the JLC and Market. Locations were selected to capture the tangible or intangible benefits. Indeed, some neighbouring businesses (specifically restaurants and drinking and dining establishments) benefit financially from increased economic activity when events are held at the John Labatt Centre.

Since the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market opened their doors in 1999 and 2002, development in downtown London has increased. As well, vacancy rates are decreasing as new stores open. Since the JLC's and Market's openings, four other businesses opened between 1999 and 2002, with an additional nineteen businesses opening following the JLC's construction in 2002. Of these businesses, nine are restaurants and four are drinking and dining establishments. Therefore, the number of businesses opening is increasing the competitiveness in the market, which forces business owners to be accountable and innovative (MacDonald interview, 2010). Many business owners, aware of these changes in the surrounding area, cite an increase in lifestyle-type businesses, the presence of anchors, and the upgrading of building stock. Some business owners



responded with specific developments, such as the Tricar Group's Renaissance residential building, Hotel Metro, or the new rock-and-roll themed bar, Nite Owl.

The new developments are complementary to the JLC and Market, which are creating a niche district for both entertainment and food retailing. The restaurants offer unique dining experiences, thereby creating a restaurant niche; meanwhile, the JLC and Market are two of the primary destinations for entertainment. By linking entertainment and food, the City's implementation of these venues has created a recipe for successful downtown revitalization in London.

### **6.1.2 Foundation for JLC and Market's success**

The John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play a pivotal role in resurrecting downtown London, however not in an isolated context. Previous revitalization strategies, beginning in the late 1950s, have failed to return prominence to London's core. Urban renewal programs intended to fix downtown's image have failed leaving behind social issues that continue to persist today. However, it was assumed that urban renewal would fix downtowns' problems and was implemented as a stand-alone strategy without additional policies to help create a framework for downtown revitalization. Likewise, following this renewal strategy, the costly Galleria constructed to compete with suburban shopping centres, was soon unable to retain tenants or draw consumers.

In 1995, the City began the Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Program, Façade Improvement Loan Program, and the Upgrade to Building Code Renovation Loan Program. Additionally, the City waived development charges on new downtown residential development (City of London, 2009d). Efforts to revive its downtown continued. As in 1998, the City began making major investments in various capital projects including the JLC, Covent Garden Market, Central Library, and Fork of the Thames – all of which are located downtown.

The innovative idea to create Main Street London, a not-for-profit organization that follows the criteria of the American Main Street Program has truly helped to shape downtown London today. The organization acts as the gatekeeper for the incentive and investment programs, thus far

providing in excess of \$500,000 (MacDonald interview, 2010). As well, the organization has strong relationships with local business owners, works to recruit new businesses, and promotes downtown events and festivals (MacDonald interview, 2010).

Within this broader picture, the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play an important, yet small, role in revitalizing downtown London. Without the grant and incentive programs, many businesses would be unable to locate in the core, or established businesses would not be able to improve their signage and give their buildings ‘face lifts.’ It is a combination of the aforementioned factors which helped to launch downtown London’s on-going revival.

The JLC and Market have acted as catalysts for further development and investment. In addition to acting as catalysts, investment in these venues has increased confidence in the private sector (MacDonald interview, 2010). All in all, the success of the JLC and Market is contingent upon the solid framework the City of London has established.

### **6.1.3 Investment in downtown London**

The proactive approach to revive its downtown taken by the City of London has increased both public and private sector investment. In the 2009 *State of the Downtown Report* it is apparent that “Council led by example investing approximately \$100 million in major capital projects including the John Labatt Centre and the new Covent Garden Market” (City of London, 2009e, i). Large-scale investments made by the City prove its dedication to improving its downtown. Through continued public and political support, confidence has been instilled in the private sector. This increased confidence is encouraging private sector investment to improve buildings and build new commercial and residential developments. Specifically, since the City invested approximately \$100 million, the private sector has invested \$132 million. Of this figure, \$50 million was spent to upgrade the current building stock (City of London, 2009e). The sheer amount of investment from the private sector attests to the roles the JLC and Market play as catalysts within the City of London’s plan to revitalize its downtown.

#### **6.1.4 New commercial and residential growth**

Downtown London has seen an increase in new commercial growth located in the area surrounding the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. Stores, restaurants, drinking and dining establishments, and a new hotel have recently opened. Specifically, the City of London's *State of the Downtown Report*, which reports the number of new street front businesses that open every year, confirms that new growth has occurred in recent years. This 2009 report says that "since 2006 ... an average of 11 new businesses [open] each year" (p.31). In particular, eleven new businesses opened in 2007, ten in 2008, and twelve in 2009 (City of London, 2009e). As well, since 1998, the number of building permits processed has exceeded 1,000 (City of London, 2009e).

In addition to new commercial development, there has also been an increase in residential construction. The private sector has invested \$150 million in new downtown residential buildings (City of London, 2009e). The City took a practical approach by waiving development charges on residential construction in downtown London to encourage investment, and 1,781 new residential units have been constructed since 1998 (City of London, 2009e). Furthermore, Census data shows that the population living downtown has increased by 23% between 2001 and 2006 (City of London, 2009e). This new development can be related to the presence of the JLC and Market, and the City's on-going efforts to stimulate growth in its downtown.

#### **6.1.5 Vacancy rates**

Since the construction of the JLC and Market, vacancy rates along some streets in London's downtown have been decreasing as new stores are filling the voids in the urban fabric. Street level vacancy on King Street (which is directly adjacent to the JLC and Market) dramatically decreased from 11.5% in 2006 to 5.2% in 2009 (City of London, 2009e). Ground floor vacancy on Richmond and Dundas Streets has also decreased since 2006, however, Dundas Street has the highest ground floor vacancy rate of 17.4% (City of London, 2009e). This is another indicator showing that the JLC and Market are acting as catalysts for new development.

## **6.2 Are the spin-off developments sufficient to be considered tools for revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities?**

Locating arenas that house Ontario Hockey League teams and markets downtown creates spin-off developments. Discussion of these spin-off developments addresses the scope, impact, advantages, and achievements of this strategy, followed by comparing the use of arenas and markets to previous revitalization efforts.

### **6.2.1 Scope of the spin-off developments**

The spin-off developments created as a result of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market are limited in scope. In particular, these developments are subject to space sensitivity. Downtown businesses were affected by space sensitivity, which is used to describe the effect of distance on spatial interactions. In particular, the JLC and Market had the greatest impact on businesses located within 25 meters. As one moves further away, the impact decreases. For example, when asked if their business was affected by the JLC, thirteen of the twenty-seven businesses that said ‘yes’ were within 150 meters. The trend continues for questions about the Covent Garden Market, as five of the eleven businesses that said ‘yes’ were within 100 meters. In the same way, twelve of the twenty-five businesses that responded that the JLC had a greater impact on their business were located within 100 meters of the arena. The spatial impact begins to decrease once one exceeds approximately 100 – 150 meters. The response of one business owner, located slightly outside of this radius, confirms the effect of distance on the impact. He said that “their business caters to the residential population by acting as a local pub, because they receive virtually no impact from the JLC and Market” (250 – 500m-#44). This finding confirms the work of Nelson (2001) and Rosentraub et al. (1994), who say the economic growth is limited to nearby areas and businesses, therefore creating an uneven distribution of spending downtown.

Additionally, the impact of the JLC and Market is not uniform for all types of businesses surveyed. There is an uneven distribution of ‘spill-over’ spending that is directed to restaurants,

drinking and dining establishments (bars, pubs and night clubs) and hotels (Nelson, 2001). The majority of restaurants (ten) and drinking and dining establishments (three) business owners report being positively affected by the JLC, citing increased business. When business owners were asked about the effect of the Market, the type of businesses influenced is different. In this case, clothing and specialty retail stores said they are the most affected, while only one restaurant is affected.

Between the spatial sensitivity and disproportional impact these venues have on businesses it is important to assess the advantages of using this strategy. The advantages will be discussed for London, Ontario specifically and then generalized for mid-sized cities.

### **6.2.2 Advantages of this strategy in London**

The advantages of implementing this revitalization strategy in London, Ontario can be seen in the increased private sector investment, current assessment value, and pedestrian traffic. The City of London provides statistical evidence of the benefits of this strategy in its *2009 State of the Downtown Report*. “Since 2001, the private sector has invested \$132 million” (City of London, 2009e, 5). This spending is an indication that the private sector is feeling confident in the City’s efforts to revitalize its downtown. In 2010, a new boutique hotel and fine dining restaurant opened steps away from the JLC and Market. The owner of the new boutique hotel, Velji, says his hotel “builds on the momentum of the John Labatt Centre (JLC) ... and developers such as Shmuel Farhi, Tricar and Sifton, who have invested in the downtown core” (Daniszweski, 2010, 10). As well, the increase of current value assessment of downtown buildings is another advantage of this strategy. Since the 1990s, the current value assessment of downtown buildings has risen by 22% (City of London, 2009e). This increase reflects upon the successfulness of the grant and loan program, as landlords and business owners alike have improved the quality of their buildings.

The business owners reaffirm some of the aforementioned advantages by discussing the impact the JLC and Market have had on their businesses. An advantage cited by ten businesses was that these venues draw people downtown. In some cases, people who have not been downtown in

years are returning to the core to attend functions held at the JLC and/or Market. These venues are attracting a more diverse consumer, and everyone benefits from the increased pedestrian traffic. Specifically, some businesses (mainly restaurants and drinking and dining establishments) benefit from increased business and as one restaurant business owner explains, “receiving increased business is great, but these venues have done a lot for downtown London by initiating private sector development and forcing businesses to improve to remain competitive in today’s market” (250-500m-#31).

Lastly, another advantage of using hockey arenas and markets as tools for revitalization is the synergy associated with these venues. The increased civic pride and identity among residents and tourists alike has enhanced sense of community, ownership, and public engagement, which underscore the success of this revitalization strategy. The perception of safety in downtown London is changing – for the better - as more people visit the area. Meanwhile, the JLC and Market act as ‘visible symbols’ that are helping to reshape the City’s image. Business owners are truly passionate about downtown London and what it has to offer. Their willingness to provide feedback and critically assess the JLC, Market, and downtown revitalization speaks wonders of how the business community has been united. Additionally, Londoners are taking pride in their downtown through a greater sense of placemaking that is apparent from the number of people attending public meetings about the Downtown Master Plan (Barrett interview, 2010). As increasing numbers of people continue to care about the wellbeing of the downtown, the true worth of London’s revitalization initiatives is shown (Barrett interview, 2010).

### **6.2.3 Advantages of this strategy for mid-sized cities**

Hockey arenas and markets should be considered as revitalization strategies by other mid-sized cities in Ontario. The advantages in London, Ontario show the economic impact these venues have on the surrounding downtown businesses and within the downtown. Specifically, when these catalysts are implemented within a broader vision, such as incentive programs and waiving development charges, it helps to instill confidence in the private sector. This is because the private

sector is convinced that the City is committed to fixing the downtown. When a City, such as London, invests \$100 million in capital projects, it is financially devoted to the cause. This mass public spending combined with the on-going policy helps to encourage the much sought after private sector investment.

Other mid-sized cities can expect increased pedestrian traffic, which helps to change the reputation of a downtown (Goodwin, 2001). When a downtown lacks pedestrian traffic it is often a reflection of the lack of stores or destinations. In turn, this lack of pedestrian presence can make a downtown feel unsafe (Abbott, 1993). By implementing an arena and market, the flow of people downtown is continuous. For example, in London, the Market provides traffic during the day, while the JLC attracts people downtown at night. It is the complementariness that makes this strategy effective. When the City of Kitchener built a Market downtown, traffic was restricted to two days a week and primarily during the day. By adding an entertainment venue that attracts a night audience, such as an arena, the downtown is transformed from being strictly a 9-5 environment.

Lastly, this strategy helps to restore downtown to one of its original functions – the primary location for entertainment. Traditional downtowns were known for entertainment, retailing, employment and as transportation hubs (Filion and Gad, 2006). Even though the function of downtowns has evolved over the years, many cores in mid-sized cities have continued to provide entertainment. Museums, convention centres, markets and more recently arenas are being located in downtown locations. These venues draw people to the area and help to reestablish downtown as the primary location for entertainment.

#### **6.2.4 What can this strategy achieve?**

By implementing this revitalization strategy the City of London was able show its commitment to revitalizing its downtown which, in turn, instilled confidence in the private sector. As well, the City has attracted more people to the area, adding to the social atmosphere typically found in downtowns.

The case of locating the JLC and Market in downtown London provides similar results to the construction of ballparks in the cores of Memphis, Tennessee and Denver, Colorado which encouraged millions of dollars of private sector investment. Spending millions of dollars on capital projects including the JLC and Market paid off for the City of London by encouraging private sector investment. Leading by example and reaffirming its commitment to revitalize downtown London, the City has received considerable support from private investors. Such investors include the Tricar Group and Shmuel Farhi, owner of Farhi Holdings Corporation. In 2009, the Tricar Group, a property development and management company, opened the Renaissance, a luxury residential building across the street from the John Labatt Centre. Meanwhile, Farhi Holdings continues to add to its long list of acquisitions in downtown London by purchasing the Bell Canada Building and Market Tower. Owning and managing more than 1 million square feet in over 80 sites in downtown London, Mr. Farhi says he is committed to downtown revitalization and continues to have great confidence in the future of London (Farhi Holdings Corporation, 2007).

Likewise, both business owners and the stakeholder interviews reveal that one of the functions of the JLC and Market is to draw more people downtown. The JLC and Market act as destinations that attract suburbanites and tourists to the core. This helps to increase the visibility of businesses located in close proximity to the venues. By improving exposure it is possible that people attending events at the JLC or festivals held at the Market might invest in one of the nearby businesses. Similarly, by hosting a variety of events ranging from concerts to hockey games, the JLC helps to promote London as a tourist destination. People travel to London to be entertained and this strategy fosters tourism in the City.

These venues add to the unique social atmosphere found in downtowns by acting as gathering places (Robertson, 1999). Both venues promote socialization and help to alter the negative stigma associated with downtown London. Swindell and Rosentraub (1998) say that as more people visit downtown cores, the perceptions of blight and safety will change for the better.



As more people venture downtown London to the JLC and Market, the ‘true’ perception of safety is realized.

### **6.2.5 Comparison to downtown shopping malls**

The use of hockey arenas and markets as tools for revitalization should be compared to previous strategies to revive downtowns in mid-sized cities. Given that all efforts supported the same goal – to revitalize the core - why have some initiatives been more successful than others? This section will discuss why urban catalysts, specifically arenas and markets are a more successful revitalization strategy than downtown shopping malls.

A costly initiative that failed was downtown shopping malls. This strategy was unsuccessful because malls were unable to retain tenants (Filion and Hammond, 2008). Unfortunately, malls were destinations for shoppers and people did not go to the surrounding areas. Needs were met at the mall, and there was no reason to invest in surrounding stores, which affected the longevity of businesses in the downtown core. Unlike malls, arenas and markets are integrated into the existing urban fabric. Specifically, in London, they were built among commercial strips forming complementary relationships with nearby businesses. This dynamic presents the opportunity for economic growth as people invest in surrounding stores (Swindell and Rosentraub, 1998). The responses from business owners show that the economic impact is unevenly distributed, however, unlike with malls, people will walk past storefronts as they visit these venues, therein creating the potential for investment.

Therefore, the relative success of implementing arenas and markets together as a tool for revitalization surpasses the success of downtown shopping malls because of the multiple functions associated with them. They work well together and form strong relationships with complementary businesses, whereas shopping centres were created to be enclosed, stand-alone entities.

### **6.3 What are the positive outcomes of these large-scale developments and what is the geographical reach of these spin-off effects on development?**

The large-scale developments constructed in London, Ontario were intended to spur development by acting as catalysts. While the results show they did achieve this goal it is important to assess the positive outcomes associated with these developments in London and to generalize the outcomes to be applicable for other mid-sized cities considering using this revitalization strategy.

#### **6.3.1 Positive outcomes of these developments**

The John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market have had positive impacts on downtown London. Specifically, the venues have worked to draw more people downtown, thereby increasing pedestrian traffic and boosting exposure for businesses. Both venues bring a significant number of people downtown who were not visiting the area prior to 1999. In addition, for select industry types (restaurants and drinking and dining establishments) business has been slightly enhanced. Overall, the positive outcomes of these developments can be seen in the changes business owners have witnessed in the last ten years. Thirteen businesses responded that there has been an increase in the number of lifestyle-type businesses downtown. These businesses such as restaurants, hair salons and spas tend to attract middle-to-high income people. As well, the construction of ‘anchors’ has been another positive outcome. Such venues provide people with a destination to visit, whether it is seeing an art exhibit or buying produce from the Market.

Business owners stated that upgrading the building stock has been noticeable. Improving the interior, exterior and signage of buildings helps to enhance the image of downtown London. Certainly, more London business owners and landlords are taking pride in their buildings and establishments. In a competitive market, a tidy appearance is necessary. Moreover, with the improved appearance of London’s buildings, its streets appear to be cleaner as well.

Other mid-sized cities would probably experience comparable changes if they implemented a similar revitalization strategy. The incentive and grant programs have made it possible for

business owners and landlords to improve the building stock. This, in turn, is helping to drive the economy and alter the perception of downtown London. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who go downtown since the JLC and Market have been constructed. Suburbanites and tourists attend events at these venues, and more people downtown leads to increased visibility and more economic activity.

### **6.3.2 Geographical reach of the spin-off developments**

As mentioned, the geographical reach of the spin-off developments is affected by spatial sensitivity. This finding was predicted, as the literary works of Nelson (2001) and Rosentraub et al. (1994) explain that the impact is greatest for businesses located close-by. For this study, the impacts are greatest for businesses located within 100 meters of the venues. Business owners located in excess of 150 meters do not feel the same economic impact, while businesses located further than 750 meters are “too far away” to reap any benefit. One business owner located further than 750 meters from the JLC and Market says, “I do not receive business from the JLC and Market; instead, I need to be innovative to attract my own clientele, since I do not have the luxury of receiving additional business because of walk-by traffic or proximity” (>750m-#36). Therefore, the geographical reach of these spin-off developments appears to be limited.

### **6.4 Limitations of the Study**

There are four limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the study. The first limitation is that the study is based on one constituency. The study focuses on the perceptions of business owners of stores and hospitality establishments and does not provide information on a full range of businesses. Additionally, the study does not consider the viewpoints of shoppers or residents.

The second limitation relates to the inability to use direct quotes from two stakeholder interviews. The use of direct quotes was not possible as the audio recording device failed, leaving the researcher with only notes taken throughout the interviews. Fortunately, the notes were sufficiently detailed to account for the content of the two interviews.

Another limitation relates to the impossibility of obtaining crime statistics from the London Police Department. After being connected with the Freedom of Information officer, it was clear that the police do not release statistics for specific areas. Without this data, it is difficult to assess whether the local business owners perception that downtown London is less safe than other areas of the city.

The fourth limitation has to do with the case study method. As a descriptive method, case studies allow the researcher to explore the process of revitalization in downtown London. Since the process involves interrelated factors, direct conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market cannot be drawn. These venues act as small forces within a larger planning framework. This study focuses on only one revitalization strategy, while the City of London is applying numerous on-going strategies to revive its downtown. Secondly, the study is limited by the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the cases study. This is because the case study is too limited and specific for broad generalizations. Planning recommendations can be made, but the success of implementing these venues in another city cannot be predicted.

## **CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The final chapter uses the findings from London's case study in conjunction with information presented in the literature to provide recommendations for the City of London, as well as other mid-sized municipalities, considering locating an arena and/or a market downtown as a revitalization strategy. Lastly, recommendations for planners and education programs will be presented. The chapter concludes with a summary of the thesis.

### **7.1 Recommendations for the City of London, Ontario**

In London, Ontario the revitalization strategy to rebuild the Covent Garden Market and construct the John Labatt Centre in the downtown core has been successful. These establishments bring more people downtown and offer a place to be entertained. As anticipated, London's JLC and Market have worked as catalysts for new downtown development and investment. Specifically, a large number of new businesses open every year in downtown London, with an average of eleven opening annually since 2006 (City of London, 2009e).

Although more people are venturing downtown for events or festivals held at the JLC and to visit the Market, the economic impact is of limited significance because the benefits are restricted to restaurants and drinking and dining establishments within 100 meters. A greater share of the economic impact, however, can be seen in investments by the private sector. For example, "after two-and-a-half years of work and more than \$4 million in renovations," London's new downtown hotel opened in 2009 across the street from the JLC and Market (Daniszewski, 2009, 1). It is investments like this one that show the added value of these venues.

#### **7.1.1 Continue to prioritize downtown**

A key recommendation for the City of London is to continue to maintain its priority focus on downtown revitalization and keep the projects associated with reviving its core at the forefront of its political agenda. The current successes can be attributed to the strong political will and ongoing commitment of City Council through incentives, public investments and innovative ideas

(Barrett interview, 2010). The incentive programs have stimulated building owners to upgrade the appearance of their structures. Additionally, the large amount of money spent on public projects has assured the private sector that downtown investments are worthwhile. Also, innovative ideas, such as the metal trees and the Mainstreet London organization have encouraged people to talk about the downtown. The preparation of the Downtown Master Plan shows the City's current commitment to revitalization of the downtown. The Master Plan process has incorporated opinions and ideas of the public which strengthens the creditability of the document. The public participation process asked residents what they thought of downtown London and what their visions are for the downtown.

#### **7.1.2 Change the perception of insufficient parking**

Another recommendation for the City would be to work on changing the perception that there is insufficient parking. In downtown London, there are over sixty-two parking lots that supply over 10,000 spaces (City of London, 2009f). The biggest problem downtown is that the majority of parking lots are operated by IM Park, a private enterprise. The monopolization of lots by IM Park makes them costly, but observations show that initiatives such as free two-hour parking during December for holiday shopping help to attract more shoppers downtown.

#### **7.1.3 Consider relocating the social services office**

An additional recommendation for the City, stemming from citations from many business owners, is to consider relocating the social services office. By moving the Ontario Works office, downtown business owners feel that the number of social issues would dissipate. The central location currently leaves people lingering downtown waiting for public transit, creating a perception that the downtown is unsafe. Personal observations show that people cross the road to avoid walking past busy bus stops located on Dundas Street.

#### **7.1.4 Create a walkable environment**

A final recommendation for London is to work towards creating a walkable, unique environment for pedestrians. Given that the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market are increasing the amount of people visiting downtown London it is important to have a continuous streetscape. Since, many people drive to events at these venues, it is important for the City to making walking a pleasurable activity, rather than a chore. Having buildings with unique architecture, or design details will attract pedestrian's attention making the experience of visiting downtown more enjoyable. The City of London should create a set of design guidelines for the downtown area to work towards creating an environment that makes walking downtown an interesting, and fun experience.

### **7.2 Recommendations for other mid-sized cities**

This section provides recommendations for other mid-sized cities in Ontario working towards revitalizing their downtown. The recommendations were developed from the lessons learned from investigating revitalization in London, Ontario and comparing this knowledge to the literature. This section presents advice for downtown revitalization and information specific to implementing stadiums and/or markets as revitalization strategies.

#### **7.2.1 Would I recommend using arenas and markets as tools for revitalization for other mid-sized cities?**

The present study shows that arenas and markets work well as tools for revitalization. Specifically, arenas and markets function as catalysts for new development. Through public-private partnerships arenas and markets can contribute to downtown revitalization by encouraging investment, instilling confidence in the private sector, and acting as an anchor (Leinberger, 2005). These venues can begin to reshape an area and create districts for entertainment as businesses develop hoping to capture a portion of the market share through ‘spin-off’ benefits (Bender, 2003; Robertson, 1995). However, the scope of the catalytic role is limited without the use of other

revitalization strategies (Barrett interview, 2010; MacDonald interview, 2010). Using arenas and markets as tools within a downtown revitalization strategy has proven to be successful in London, and this strategy could be copied by other municipalities.

### **7.2.2 What are the implications of implementing urban catalysts, such as stadiums and markets downtown in mid-sized cities?**

By implementing urban catalysts, such as stadiums and markets in downtown areas, mid-sized cities need to be prepared for increased pedestrian traffic. More people travel downtown to these venues for social activity. Both stadiums and markets offer people a gathering place and location to be entertained (Bender, 2003). These venues offer residents a unique experience and ‘draw’ people travelling from areas outside of the city proper. It is essential to locate these venues appropriately to encourage tourism and create maximum exposure for the city and businesses (Chapin, 2004; Goodwin, 2001). Cities have the opportunity to ‘showcase’ their tourism offerings, and locating venues of these sizes downtown provides a high level of visibility for stores and the downtown. By locating a stadium or market in a suburban location, tourists and residents are exposed only to this area of the city, whereas by placing these venues downtown, people travel throughout the city to the core, which tends to be a reflection of the city’s character (Faulk, 2006; Fillion et al., 2004).

Besides promoting socialization, these venues contribute to the social atmosphere of a city by increasing intangible benefits such as civic pride and community spirit (Rosentraub, 1999; Swindell and Rosentraub, 1998). Increasing the ‘intangibles’ can affect the perception of the area, changing the image of a downtown area from derelict to prosperous. These changes are the first steps to creating a character in a city’s downtown and restoring faith in the area.

It is assumed that the presence of more people downtown generates more economic activity. Millions in taxpayer dollars are invested in an effort to encourage further development, which helps to reshape a downtown. New businesses develop around these venues in an effort to



‘capture a portion of the market share,’ which in turn reduces street level vacancy. Nonetheless, economic activity generated as a direct result of these venues is limited to specific types of businesses, such as restaurants and eating and dining establishments (MacDonald interview, 2010). Indeed, the venues themselves create new employment opportunities; however, the number of jobs created is limited (Baade and Dye, 1988). Chapin (2004) refers to the economic activity generated as being the redistribution of wealth from other areas within the city, which is true. Money spent dining downtown represents the redistribution of wealth that could have been spent at a restaurant located in a suburban location, for example.

Accordingly, if municipalities are investing in stadiums and markets with the expectation that economic activity will significantly increase – it will not happen. Municipalities need to use urban catalysts in conjunction with other revitalization strategies to create the desired result. That is, investment or new growth will not necessarily follow the placement of a stadium and/or market without the accompanying appropriate policies. For instance, the incentive program in London is one policy which has aided new development in the area, proximate to the arena and market. For arenas and markets to be successful in other mid-sized cities, ideas need to be innovative and the City needs to be patient as the “results do not occur overnight” (Barrett interview, 2010).

### **7.3 Recommendations for planning practitioners**

This section provides recommendations for practicing planners. These recommendations were developed from discussions with a planner working for the City of London and the literature.

#### **7.3.1 Collaborate with the economic development department**

Another recommendation for planning practitioners is to collaborate with the economic development department. By working together, planners and the economic development department can brainstorm ideas for downtown revitalization. Planners can contribute their knowledge of city planning, while the economic developers can provide information about the economy and how to generate growth (Barrett interview, 2010). Economic developers could create

reports to assess the effectiveness of planning strategies within the current economic, political and social framework of a city. It is suggested that planning and economic development departments work in partnership towards downtown revitalization by sharing resources and increasing communication. This collaboration will provide benefits for both parties as well as the city as a whole.

### **7.3.2 Act as a facilitator**

It is recommended that planning practitioners act as facilitators for downtown and its revitalization efforts. By coordinating downtown planning and efforts to help revive the core, planners will work towards creating a synergy. This synergy can work towards promoting downtown planning initiatives as a shared interest and responsibility. With this, planners will have greater success in enabling stakeholders and the public to search for the appropriate solutions and next steps for the downtown area. In turn, this will improve the decision making process ensuring that high-quality decisions are made.

## **7.4 Recommendations for academic institutions**

A recommendation for academic institutions with a planning program is presented in this section. Discussion focuses on the degree to which academic programs should include courses on downtown revitalization.

### **7.4.1 Downtown revitalization and formal education**

Universities with planning programs offer a wide variety of courses allowing students to learn about diverse topics that encompass urban and regional planning. Transportation, environmental, heritage, waste management and urban design are all subcomponents of the planning program that allow students to specialize their interests (Hodge and Gordon, 2008). Downtown revitalization is an issue that relates to land use, economics and city form that can be studied in small-to-large cities (Filion et al., 2004). Since, downtowns are an integral part of cities, it is important to understand how they have evolved over the years (Faulk, 2006). In formal

education programs, a course that focuses on downtowns, decline and the subsequent revitalization efforts would be useful for understanding how cities have evolved over the years. The course could offer insight into ‘successful’ downtowns, and compare these to downtowns that remain in decline. It is recommended that students have the option to further their knowledge on downtowns in the academic setting. Thus, a course on downtowns should be developed and offered to students as an elective.

### **7.5 Future Research**

Suggestions for expanding the current study and continuing to contribute to the literature available on downtown revitalization appear below. The first recommendation is to develop the current research into a longitudinal study. A longitudinal study would provide valuable insight into how the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market are impacting businesses 10 years from the present. Such a follow-up study would be particularly useful since many of the businesses surveyed are relatively new and, thus, have not felt much impact from the JLC and Market as of yet. Has the impact of the JLC and Market changed or remained the same?

Another avenue to explore would be to conduct a comparative study. A comparative study would provide interesting insight about the role stadiums and markets play in revitalizing downtowns in mid-sized cities. By comparing two mid-sized cities, greater insight into the political factors shaping revitalization processes could be explored. However, finding a city with a similar context to London could be challenging. Nevertheless, a comparative study could determine whether the results are consistent and what specific factors (such as policies, demographics, economy, etc.) influence the results.

This research comprises a case study of London, Ontario; a case study of another mid-sized city in North America could investigate the impact of stadiums and markets in a different municipality. If London is considered a ‘benchmark’ case, it would be useful to examine how successful downtown stadiums are in other cities that host an Ontario Hockey League team.

A final recommendation is to focus on other types of urban catalysts such as museums, art galleries, and libraries to supplement the findings of this study which focus on ‘entertainment’ venues. Perhaps ‘cultural institutions’ play a different role in downtown revitalization? Do cultural institutions contribute to downtown revitalization? If yes, how? What role do these establishments play in a mid-sized city?

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

The research highlights the importance of downtown revitalization in mid-sized cities. As the ‘heart of the city’ it is important that downtowns remain vibrant, lively areas of the city that attract residents and tourists seeking unique experiences (Faulk, 2006; Filion et al., 2004; Robertson, 1995). As the traditional function of downtowns has changed over the years, municipalities are working to implement innovative revitalization strategies to continue to bring people and investment downtown. Urban catalysts, such as stadiums and markets, are one means of achieving this goal. Specifically, because the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market do act as catalysts for new development and Councils efforts have increased confidence in the private sector.

In addition to the slight economic activity generated by these two venues, the John Labatt Centre and Market are encouraging more people to venture downtown for unique experiences. Hospitality services benefit from the presence of the JLC and Market (MacDonald interview, 2010). Meanwhile increased pedestrian traffic has improved visibility for other businesses, and helped to alleviate the perception that downtown London is unsafe (Usher interview, 2010). Although the economic activity is not overwhelming, these venues contribute intangible benefits to London such as increased civic pride (MacDonald interview, 2010). Beyond acting as catalysts for new development, the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market act as ‘anchors’ in Downtown London’s south end.

The ongoing efforts to revive downtown London began in the 1960s and will continue as the City evolves. Continual support from City Council has helped to encourage private sector investment in Downtown London. The combined efforts of the public, Council, and private sector can be credited with helping to revitalize London's core (Barrett interview, 2010). The study shows revitalization strategies are interrelated and that although the JLC and Market have done a lot for the City, they are not the only reasons for the changes seen in London's downtown. An innovative idea such as the Main Street program along with investing millions of dollars has helped to bring prosperity and life back to downtown London.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Downtown Business Owners Survey

#### REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN LONDON, ON

#### Master’s Thesis Survey

#### **PART A: IMPACT OF THE JOHN LABATT CENTRE AND COVENT GARDEN MARKET**

*If your business was established before the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market were built please answer question 1.*

*If your business was established after these developments, please move on to question 2.*

1. Can you rank your level of business (sales) before the JLC and Market were constructed?

A) On an ordinary weekday

Lower                  Same                  Higher

B) On an ordinary day of the weekend

Lower                  Same                  Higher

C) On a Market day

Lower                  Same                  Higher

D) The day of a hockey game/event at the JLC

Lower                  Same                  Higher

2. Has your business been affected by ...

|                      | Yes | No | Please explain your response |
|----------------------|-----|----|------------------------------|
| John Labatt Centre   |     |    |                              |
| Covent Garden Market |     |    |                              |

3. What type of an impact has JLC and/or Market had on your business?

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| John Labatt Centre |  |
|--------------------|--|

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      |  |
| Covent Garden Market |  |

*Continued on next page*

4. Which development (JLC or Market) has had the greater impact on ...

|                                    | JLC | Market | Both<br>equally | Please explain your response |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Your<br>business                   |     |        |                 |                              |
| Revitalizing<br>Downtown<br>London |     |        |                 |                              |

**PART B: LOCATION SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

5. Why did you choose to operate in this location?

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6. Did you choose this location because of the proximity of the JLC and Market?

Yes

No

7. What opportunities do you see as a business operator in this location?

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8. What challenges do you face as a business operator in this location?

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9. What changes have you noticed in this commercial area in the last 10 years?

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**PART C: REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN LONDON**

10. In your opinion, what works in Downtown London and why?

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11. In your opinion, what does not work in Downtown London and why?

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12. What would you like to see in terms of downtown revitalization in London?

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*Continued on next page*

**PART D: GENERAL INFORMATION**

13. Please indicate your business type. \_\_\_\_\_

14. What year was your business established? (Please circle one)

|      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 |
| 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
| 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please indicate approximately the number full and part time employees working for your business.

| Full Time | Part Time |
|-----------|-----------|
|           |           |

16. Please indicate your hours of operation during the week and on weekends.

| During the week | Weekends |
|-----------------|----------|
|                 |          |

17.a) What time of day is busiest for your establishment?

DURING WEEK

WEEK-END

9 – 11 a.m.

9 – 11 a.m.

11 – 1 p.m.

11 – 1 p.m.

1 – 3 p.m.

1 – 3 p.m.

3 – 6 p.m.

3 – 6 p.m.

After 6 p.m.

After 6 p.m.

b) Do you adapt your store hours to accommodate events held at the JLC and/or Market?

Yes

No

18. Approximately how many meters away from the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market is your business?

|                |             |             |                    |             |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Less than 25 m | 25 – 50 m   | 50 – 100 m  | 100 – 150 m        | 150 – 250 m |
|                | 250 – 500 m | 500 – 750 m | Greater than 750 m |             |

***Thank you for your time and participation!***

## Appendix 2 – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

### Interview Questions

#### PART A: Revitalizing London Questions

1. I have noticed growth in Downtown London particularly surrounding the JLC and Market, is growth occurring in selective areas or on particular streets of the Downtown, or the Downtown as a whole?
2. What opportunities do business owners face by locating their business in Downtown London?
  - How about if they locate in close proximity to the JLC and Market, does that provide further opportunities?
3. What challenges do businesses face by operating Downtown?
4. In your opinion, how has downtown London evolved over the years?
5. What are the changes you have noticed in London's downtown in the last 10 years?
6. In your opinion, what initiatives work in downtown London and why?
7. In your opinion, what initiatives do not work in downtown London and why?
8. What would you like to see in terms of downtown revitalization in London?

#### PART B: John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market Questions

9. What type of an impact has the John Labatt Centre and Market had on downtown London?
  - Would you agree that the JLC and Market acted as catalysts for new developments? Please explain.
10. What has rebuilding the Covent Garden Market done in terms of revitalizing London's downtown?
11. In your opinion, has the John Labatt Centre or the Market had a greater impact on revitalizing downtown London?
12. Do all types of business (service, entertainment, dining, and retail) benefit equally from increased pedestrians brought downtown as a result of the JLC or Market?
13. I have witnessed the turn-over that occurs with businesses located Downtown in the past, how do you think that two large anchors, such as the JLC and Market will affect this trend?



## Appendix 3 – Information Letter and Consent Form for surveys



School of Planning

University of Waterloo  
200 University Avenue West  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada  
N2L 3G1

██████████  
mbratt@uwaterloo.ca

January 8, 2010

Dear Business Owner:

I am a second year Master's candidate in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo conducting research under the supervision of Professor Pierre Filion on revitalizing downtown London, the role of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market. Urban catalysts are one of the fastest growing type of downtown revitalization. London, around the JLC and Market, has become a prime area for development. As a business owner of one such business located in close proximity to the JLC and Market, your opinions may be important to this study. I would like to invite you to participate by completing a face-to-face survey.

Your involvement in this survey is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. Completion of the survey is expected to take 15 minutes and the survey is to be completed face-to-face and the researcher takes notes on the business owner's responses. The questions focus on the impact of the JLC and Market on your business. If the present time is not convenient, I can return at a time that better suits your schedule.

All information you provide will be considered confidential and will be grouped with responses from other participants. Further, you will not be identified by name in any thesis, report or publication resulting from this study. The data collected will be kept for a period of 2 years in my supervisor's office at the University of Waterloo and then confidentially destroyed.

### Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information about participation, please contact Meghan Bratt by email [mbratt@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbratt@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor Professor Filion by telephone at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 33963 or by email at [pfilion@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pfilion@uwaterloo.ca).

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 about participation is yours. Should you have comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes in the Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Meghan Bratt  
University of Waterloo  
School of Planning  
██████████  
[brattm@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:brattm@uwaterloo.ca)



School of Planning

University of Waterloo  
200 University Avenue West  
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N2L 3G1

  
mbratt@uwaterloo.ca

**CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Meghan Bratt under the supervision of Professor 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 also aware that excerpts from the survey 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 this study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ssykes@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 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4 – Information Letter and Consent Form for interviews



School of Planning

University of Waterloo  
200 University Avenue West  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada  
N2L 3G1

██████████  
mbratt@uwaterloo.ca

Dear Stakeholder:

This letter is an invitation to participate in a research study. As a full-time Master's student in the Department of Planning at the University of Waterloo, I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Professor Filion on Revitalizing Downtown London: The role of John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market as catalysts for new development.

### Study Overview

Downtowns act as the centre for commerce, entertainment and provide a sense of community. Finding ways for downtowns to remain the focal point of cities has been a priority for many mid-sized cities in Ontario, including London. The purpose of this study is to examine the role the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market play as catalysts for new development in London, Ontario.

The research will be carried out by conducting interviews with key people in the City of London, including planners and other agencies (Mainstreet London) involved in downtown revitalization to explore in more detail, what influence the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market have on revitalizing the core.

As a City of London planner or employee of Mainstreet London, you play an important role in revitalizing Downtown London, and your input would provide key information and opinions to this study. I would like to invite you to participate in an in-person interview.

### Your Involvement

The interview includes questions about the role of the John Labatt Centre and Covent Garden Market in downtown London, the vision for the downtown and planning process, You may wish to consult other staff in your organization regarding any factual questions, but I would ask that any opinions expressed be your own.

I will contact you in a couple of days to further discuss the project. If you agree to participate, I will contact you to arrange an in-person interview. I will be scheduling in-person interviews commencing December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The interview would last about one hour and would be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. To ensure the accuracy of your input, I would ask your permission to audio record the interview.

Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. You may decline to answer any of the questions you do not wish to answer. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time, without any negative consequences, simply by letting me know your decision. All information you provide will be considered confidential unless otherwise agreed to, and the data collected will be kept in a secure location and confidentially disposed of in two years time.

Your name and the name of your organization will not appear in any thesis or publication resulting from this study unless you provide express consent to be identified and have reviewed the thesis text and approved the use of the quote. After the data have been analyzed, you will receive a copy of the executive summary. If you would be interested in greater detail, an electronic copy (e.g., PDF) of the entire thesis can be made available to you.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information about participation, please contact me at (519) 777 – 8377 or by email [mbratt@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbratt@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor Professor Filion by telephone at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 33963 or by email at [pfilion@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pfilion@uwaterloo.ca).

I 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 contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with this research.

Yours very truly,

Meghan Bratt  
Master's Candidate



School of Planning

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200 University Avenue  
West  
Waterloo, Ontario,  
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N2L 3G1

██████████  
mbratt@uwaterloo.ca

**CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Meghan Bratt under the supervision of Professor 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 audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also 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 this study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ssykes@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: \_\_\_\_\_