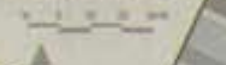


SITE PLAN 1:500 @ STREET LEVEL

- >1 LIGHT FOREST
- >2 RIVER BOTTOM FOREST
- >3 GLASS SILO ENTRY
- >4 SKYLINE
- >5 TURBINE FIELD
- >6 CROSS WALK
- >7 SCULPTURE/STAKE



# Portage & Main meets the future

*Barricades banished in winning plan*

By Mary Agnes Welch

The winning entry envisions long tubes of light (as seen above) that run from street level down into the underground concourse level, as well as large glass silos with spiral staircases (below) that would act as bright entrances to the tunnels and Winnipeg Square.

PORTAGE and Main will become an urban forest of light, trees and wind turbines — minus the concrete barriers — if the winning design for Winnipeg's famous hub gets built.

Local architects Corbett Cibinel, working with a Toronto landscape design firm, placed first in an international design competition meant to help turn downtown's busiest intersection into a pedestrian mecca.

The simple design is far from the flashy, Times Square-like transformations some have proposed, but the competition's judges said Corbett Cibinel's idea was both "poetic" and "doable."

The winning scheme relies on two key additions

## Inside

- **HIRST:** Just pull them down! **A16**
- **Trees, Star Wars** inspire **B6**
- **A look at the runners-up** **B7**

to the intersection: Tree clusters at each corner and along new medians, and long tubes of light that run from street level down into the underground concourse level. As well, large glass silos with spiral staircases would act as bright entrances to the tunnels and Winnipeg Square on three of the intersection's four corners.

Wind turbines lining the medians would power all the lights. And the waist-high concrete barriers erected in the mid-'70s to funnel foot traffic into Winnipeg Square and underground corridors would be removed.

Mayor Glen Murray said he is committed to remodelling the intersection, assuming a deal can be reached with the corner's five landowners to share the cost.

"We are going to do this," he said. "We can't do this alone. We don't have the money, but we do have some partnering opportunities."

But Murray's plea for money may be a tough sell.

*Continued*  
Please see **INTERSECTION A4**



## Intersection

Continued from page A1

MTS was the only one of the five major landowners to return repeated phone calls yesterday.

A spokesperson for MTS said the company is committed to being part of the process but won't promise to chip in money until a final plan is produced.

It's also not clear if Corbett Cibinel's design, which the jury said did a good job of linking the street level to the underground concourse, will mollify Oxford Properties, which owns and manages Winnipeg Square and the ScotiaBank building.

Frank Sherlock of Oxford Properties has said he opposes removing the barriers, but he did not return repeated phone calls yesterday.

Under Corbett Cibinel's plan, the barriers would be replaced by pedestrian crosswalks connecting each of the four corners. The crosswalks would be set back from the intersection a little for safety. A median would slice down each road, giving slow walkers a safe place to stop if the light changes.

The median would take up a lane of traffic on most parts of the intersection.

Doug Corbett said the changes may slow traffic by 10 or 15 minutes, but the payoff will be a much more vibrant intersection, with thriving shops and cafes above and below ground.

Kenn Rosin, the city's transportation manager, also said the changes would delay traffic but it's too early to tell how much. New crosswalks between the TD Centre and the Richardson Building and between the TD Centre and the ScotiaBank building would be the most problematic, he added. Since 2,300 buses motor through the intersection every day, the effects on bus schedules would also need to be considered.

**'This is a signature location for Winnipeg. We've got to figure this out'**

— David Witty, architecture dean of the U of M, praising the winning proposal

But Corbett Cibinel's proposal is likely not the final plan for the intersection. Landowners must still have their say, and elements of other proposals could be rolled into the final design.

Beginning today, the public can also see all 72 entries and choose their favourite for the Prix de Publique, which could also influence the final design.

Murray said the intersection could be remodelled in sections to test out certain elements before committing millions of dollars.

Asked if the process risks producing a hodgepodge design instead of a unified vision, Murray said he thinks the process will produce a better plan.

"We're involved in a facilitative way. We're not having a heavy-handed, top-down (approach), telling people that government knows best," he said.

Ideally, the work could be done before Winnipeg hosts the 2005 Juno Awards and a rock 'n' roll street party at Portage and Main, but a two-year time frame seems more likely, said Murray.

The competition gave architects an imaginary \$10-million budget, and Doug Corbett said his design could certainly be built for that.

The second-place award also went to a local firm, LM Architectural Group. Their plan envisions an intersection marked by a giant beacon tower, a plaza in front of the Richardson Building and a massive waterfall.

The five-person jury, made up of some of the continent's leading architects, chose the winning schemes blind, meaning they did not know which firm's proposal they were judging.

David Witty, the dean of the University of Manitoba's faculty of architecture, praised the winning proposal for creating an identity for the intersection and for building a vertical link between the street and underground levels.

Witty also said he is hopeful the city can earn the co-operation of the landowners to fund the make-over.

"This is a signature location for Winnipeg," he said. "We've got to figure this out."

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