

▼ From A9

Creating climate part of mayor's job

ferent than the others because it is, again, a mixed approach. In particular, when he speaks of the downtown, he refers to the area as a "work-in-progress." While he supported the plan to revitalize Third Avenue, which merchants rejected, Mr. Bassermann says the growth in the downtown is "incremental" but impressive. He points to the Brick, the courthouse, the new Native Friendship Centre, new restaurants and the Westel Centre as key indicators of a renaissance. "We have to raise the level of consciousness of what's happening in the downtown."

One of the key developments, he suggests, is the stepping forward of groups to take ownership of some of the problems in the city's core. "We can talk about a new spirit in Prince George, a new spirit in the downtown. We can talk about groups that are prepared now to solve some of the problems. The Gospel Mission is an example of that, it has met with some resistance but it has also met with considerable support."

Another step in recrafting the downtown's image is

cleaning up George Street between Second and Fifth Avenues, which for many people is the sole image they have of the downtown. "I've offered a number of solutions to the downtown and I've suggested a number of tools to make it happen. And one of those tools is the tool of dispersal."

"If we have all the services that are needed by a certain element - what we would characterize as the negative element - in the downtown in a relatively confined area that's where they're going to be."

"If we move the facilities, but still allow the people access, when I go downtown with my grandson it's not as intimidating or threatening."

A pet peeve of Mr. Bassermann's is the Liquor Store on Fourth Avenue, something he says needs to be moved away from the core of the city - possibly to the Parkwood site.

As to development in other parts of the city, Mr. Bassermann says growth needs to be encouraged and planned. The Parkwood location is one that he, as mayor, would like to see revitalized. "I haven't boldly come out and said it's

the only way, but it will contribute to the downtown and to the Gateway."

In terms of attracting business, Mr. Bassermann says the city can do four main things:

- proper land use planning
- have all the needed infrastructure
- be responsive and welcoming to business
- create the right climate.

"Investors will see Prince George as a solid place to be," says Mr. Bassermann.

One of the toughest challenges facing the city is the cutting of funds from the province. Mr. Bassermann expects Prince George to take a \$750,000 hit. "It's really significant and we will have to look at diverting existing resources, the role of (staff) attrition and other forms of revenue generation."

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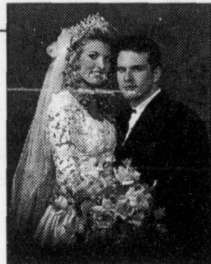
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