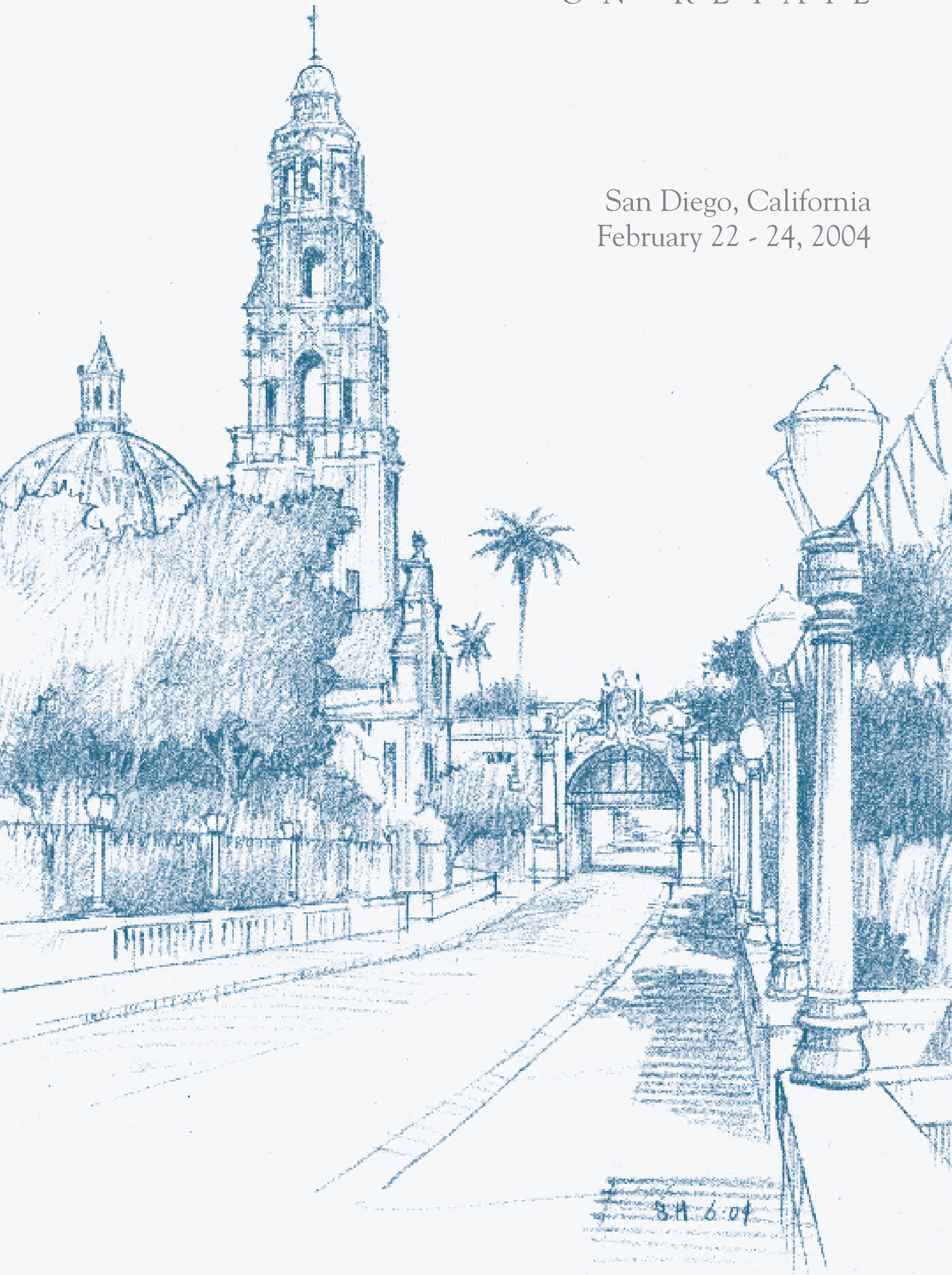


# COUNCIL REPORT VI

ON RETAIL

San Diego, California  
February 22 - 24, 2004



# COUNCIL REPORT VI

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# I N S I D E

NU Council VI On Retail.....	3
From Urban Dream to Urban Reality .....	3
A Glass Half Full or Half Empty.....	4
Centers: The Missing Element .....	6
Plugging Retail into TND .....	8
On Blocks & Boxes.....	9
The SmartCode and Retail Typology .....	11
Making Special [Downtown] Places .....	12
Transforming Retail .....	14
The Art of Creating a Neighborhood Center .....	16
From Malls to Main Streets .....	18
Parking Solutions for Urban Centers and Cores .....	20
The Retail Transect in a Regional Context .....	22
Place-Based Retail Strategy .....	23
Transforming Shopping Centers to Town Centers .....	24
15 Years Later, Kentlands Continues to Evolve.....	26
Retail Development Starts With a Good Marketing Plan .....	28
The Emergence of Post-Suburban Villages.....	30
New Approaches for Retail in Suburban Settings .....	32
Transit As Retail: Selling the Product...	34
One Way Couplets and Town Centers...	35
To Improve Retail, Urban Structuring and Movement Networks .....	36
Can Wal-Mart Become A Good Neighbor?.....	39

## COUNCIL REPORT VI

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# NU Council VI On Retail

San Diego, California  
February 22-24, 2004



DRAWING BY BRUCE RAY DAMMANN

By Howard Blackson

As a member of the new urbanism's Next Generation, I quickly took advantage of the opportunity to host the sixth NU Design Council without much hesitation or forethought, unfortunately. The Design Councils are focused endeavors worthy of their organizational headaches due to their unique critical nature. The Councils' scrutiny creates a higher expectation and design quality of our built places. Although I had never attended a Council, previous Council Reports proved to be valuable resources in my research of examples to give me a better understanding of the places I was designing.

Upon discussion with Bill Dennis and Stefanos Polyzoides, the past two fall West Coast Council organizers, we decided to structure the event around the topic of retail. I believe having this event in San Diego was a unique opportunity to review a few of our better known smart growth town center projects and to give East Coast new urbanists an opportunity to go outside and walk around during the middle of a long winter. Though San Diego's famous rainy season conspired against us, the rain didn't deter from the purpose of the Council, and it became a tremendously satisfying event.

The Retail Council was held in downtown's Gaslamp Quarter, an internationally successful regeneration project begun in the late 1970s to create a district that

ultimately fanned a renewed civic interest in urbanism and reintroduced shopping, entertainment, hotels, restaurants and most recently a new baseball park to San Diego's core. Fortunately, 2002 Knight Fellow Joyce Crosthwaite, local American Institute of Architects chapter Executive Director Libby O'Malley, urbanist Michael Stepner and transit guru William Lieberman all agreed to assist me in the organization of the Council. Lieberman was the chief land planner for the building of our regional trolley system, and Stepner oversaw the development of the Gaslamp Quarter as City Architect. Stepner had a profound influence on new urbanism when he developed our city's transit-oriented development guidelines with Peter Calthorpe in the late 1980s.

While organizing the Council, an interesting aspect I discovered about New Urbanist retail projects was the overall lack of large-scale projects to be critiqued in the standard Council format, projects presented by their designers to be deconstructed by a panel of peers and then discussed by the floor in an open forum. The topic enticed 80 invited new urbanist designers, economists, researchers and developers from around the globe to participate. Intriguing debate and consensus, as documented in this report, occurred between these participants on retail in terms of its big box, town center, greenfield and infill context.

An interesting phenomenon occurred during the

Council. A lexicon or taxonomy of retail definitions, provoked initially by Peter Calthorpe and further refined by Chuck Bohl and Seth Harry, started to arise from the various presentations. This attempt to achieve consensus for a common language led to an understanding of how we define retail in its urban context. Fortunately, during the final day's crescendo, this common language led to the promise of sharing our "building better retail" definitions at the upcoming Congress and beyond. A follow-up proposal from this Council that sparked great interest was the possibility of setting up a new urbanism retail "booth" at the next International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) convention in Las Vegas to "plug our retail forms into the existing power grid."

The Councils define an intense necessary process that serves to discipline the transformation of our urban environment. To borrow from Stefanos, "We hope to exit Council meetings with greater clarity of ideas, resolve in overcoming obstacles, and optimism in knowing where we have succeeded and where we have not, and faith that after a lifetime's work we can ultimately prevail in changing the American landscape." I could not image a group of "Everyday Urbanists," our uniquely southern California urban theory that celebrates the messy mundane of today's urban life, sitting in a room critiquing their latest Jack in the Box prototype. This critical function of the Council has resonated as the one of the most satisfying benefits of my association with the new urbanism.

## From Urban Dream to Urban Reality

*A Historical View of San Diego's Gaslight District*

By Michael Stepner

From its humble beginnings as a developer's dream, called "Horton's Addition," San Diego became the region's center for trade, commerce and government in the second half of the 19th century. When people spoke of San Diego, they meant the burgeoning new town growing north from the wharf on Fifth Street.

By the late 1860s, San Diego was poised to be the principal city on the West Coast of the United States. Its great natural harbor promised trade with the Far East and the Pacific Coast of South America. More important, it was to be the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad. The city's leaders began to act on the expectation, and great structures began rising along Fifth Street, much grander than expected from a town the size of San Diego.

In anticipation of the coming railroad, San Diego's population also swelled. Adding to the excitement, gold was discovered in nearby Julian. But then misfortune paid a call. The gold cache expired quickly.

Railroad owners decided Los Angeles would be the railroad terminus. San Diego's population dropped dramatically in response.

Then a flurry of activity had a major impact on the Gaslamp Quarter. The Panama Canal was set to open in 1914, and San Diego, as the first U.S. city on the west side of the canal, scheduled a grand fair glorified as the Panama California Exposition. The entire city would be refurbished to impress its guests. A new railroad station – the current Santa Fe Depot – was built. Those arriving by boat would disembark at the Fifth Street wharf, which motivated city fathers to clean up the portion of downtown south of H Street (Market) and north of K Street between First and Sixth Streets, given a distinctive name – "The Stingaree."

The Stingaree was a "Restricted District" – home to adult entertainment, such as houses of prostitution, opium dens and gambling parlors. An infamous raid was launched in 1912 and 136 women boarded a train to Los Angeles. All but two bought round-trip tickets, many returning in time to help some of the visitors "enjoy" the Exposition. San Diego's Chinatown, adjacent to the Stingaree, was part of clean-up efforts as well, as poor conditions were improved through the work of city offices such as the health department.

After World War II, San Diego experienced the flight of people and businesses to the suburbs, like most American cities. This exodus left what is now called the Gaslamp Quarter as home to tattoo parlors, seedy

bars and saloons, pawn shops, card rooms and locker clubs, where sailors would store their military uniforms and spend the night if they could not make their curfew. For the next 20-30 years, more adult businesses flooded the area – massage parlors, X-rated bookstores, and peep shows. Gaslamp became a favorite for movie companies looking for an unsavory location.

In the 1960s, a confluence of events orchestrated a change in the character of downtown's historic district once again. This time for the better. The historic preservation movement was taking hold throughout the country. In San Diego, city fathers were preparing to commemorate the city's bicentennial when, once again, a milestone drove the city into action. *San Diego Magazine* commissioned artist and design Robert Hostick to suggest how we might celebrate this anniversary. Hostick suggested the city restore and revitalize Old Town and the Gaslamp Quarter.

The city chose to focus its bicentennial resources on Old Town, but a determined group of property owners and preservationists banded together under the leadership of former city councilmember Tom Hom to revitalize the Gaslamp Quarter. They had visited similar historic districts in other cities and knew that the Gaslamp Quarter could be pivotal in the redevelopment of downtown San Diego.

In early 1974, the group petitioned the San Diego

**SAN DIEGO'S GASLIGHT DISTRICT**  
*continues on page 39*

## New Urban Retail:

# A Glass Half Full Or Half Empty?

By Charles C. Bohl

After a very slow start in the 1980s and early 1990s, the new urbanism began to have a significant impact on retail development in the mid-1990s far beyond the number of actual new urbanist town centers and main streets built. Surveying the progress made in getting developers, retailers, banks and communities to break out of the sprawl formats that have dominated commercial real estate for more than five decades, new urbanists should take some solace in the accomplishments made in the two decades since Seaside broke ground. Here at the beginning of its third decade, the new urbanism movement is witnessing an explosion of NU-influenced projects that would have been unimaginable just a decade ago when the number of new urban commercial projects could be counted on one hand.

The glass, however, is only half full or half empty depending on one's perspective. While the number of mall openings dropped to a 40-year low of three in 2003 and the number of new town centers has rapidly multiplied, many new urbanist retail projects have been harshly critiqued within CNU circles as hybrids, lifestyle centers, more benign sprawl, and pale shadows of the "real urbanism" of historic towns and cities like Charleston, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Manhattan. Hard-won battles to get grocery stores to locate within TNDs, big box retailers and national credit tenants to consider locating on main streets, and retail developers to reconfigure their standard formats to include a fabric of urban streets and blocks are celebrated as victories by some, yet criticized as capitulations by others.

The new urbanist oath will always be to "first do no harm," and to work towards the revaluing, rebuilding and revitalization of existing towns and cities. In this great effort we can work together with those that preceded us in the National Main Street Program, the preservation movement, and the wide assortment of pro-urban actors in towns and cities throughout the United States. But in confronting what Chip Kaufman called "the ebola virus of commercial sprawl" in the United States, we need to stay relevant and engaged in our "Suburban Nation" and the communities where more than 50 percent of Americans now live and where as much as 90 percent of new growth continues to occur.

Seth Harry warns of the danger that NU could become co-opted by developers as a marketing ploy to promote conventional retail projects and turn "town centers" into yet another passing retail fad. This is a valid fear, and one that has been discussed for some time over concerns that "neotraditional," "TND" and "new urbanist" labels were being used to market to hybrid subdivisions that satisfy few if any of the Charter principles. But unlike the strictly retail fads that came and went in real estate, such as festival marketplaces and urban entertainment centers, the influence of NU can now be seen in a wide variety of walkable, mixed-use development that cut across conventional product lines of subdivisions, apartment complexes, office parks and the automobile-dependent variants of shopping centers.

It is no accident that early NU town center projects



### Place-Making, Transect-Based and Place-Based Retail

The very successful series of annual place-making conferences organized by the ULI have had a major impact on the development industry and led to my contract with ULI to author a book of the same title. More than simply a catchy title, "place making" conveys the extraordinary sea change that is drawing as many as 1,000 ULI members annually to come and learn about the making of places rather than the "blow and go" project mentality that was such a memorable part of the conversation at the joint ULI-CNU panel discussion at CNU VI in Denver. "It's a place, not a project" has been a mantra repeated at the place-making conferences that resonates with core NU values.

The small group of CNU members at last year's conference in Reston Town Center were astonished at the high level of discourse on urbanism in the panel sessions, and the presentations by developers that would have been right at home in a Congress.

Thus it was very disappointing to hear one of the San Diego presenters using the term "place-making" in a pejorative sense. Place-making was used to refer solely to a small, but prominent group of large town center projects like City Place and Southlake Town Square that were profiled in the "Place Making" book along with very different types of projects such as Haile Village Center and Orenco Station Town Center. It reminded me of the way in which critics have attempted to corrupt the term new urbanism to refer solely to high profile greenfield projects like Kentlands and Celebration and to obscure the actual diversity of projects being designed and built.

In writing the "Place Making" book for ULI, I was acutely aware of the potential for it to be viewed as another "handbook," that covers yet another category of stand alone, formulaic projects. To avert this I included chapters on the historical evolution of town centers, another on "timeless design principles" drawing on historical precedent, and a third that surveys the full gamut of retail types and configurations including corner stores, neighborhood centers, village centers, town centers and shopping districts. This chapter discusses perhaps as many as 100 extremely diverse projects with the express purposes of 1) showing the tremendous variety of walkable, urban mixed-use projects being built in cities and suburbs and 2) introducing the ULI audience to the rural-urban transect as a framework for understanding and conceptualizing retail formats. The additional chapters doubled the proposed size of the book, but it also placed the case studies presented in the second half within this much larger historical and urbanistic context.

As it turns out, the advancement of terminology and organizing frameworks for "context-based retail" and "place-based retail" (which is perhaps the best nomenclature) are completely consistent with the transect-based retail that was laid out in Chapter 4 of the "Place Making" book. I also brought up an earlier framework, devised by Thomas Comitta and published in the Lexi-

like Mashpee Commons and Mizner Park have now outlived the conventional shopping centers they replaced. While the names on the stores will come and go, the stronger community-orientation, incorporation of civic uses, and establishment of a high quality public realm in NU town centers set them apart from retail development fads that lacked these qualities and relied too heavily on their retail components for their survival.

On the other side of the aisle, while ICSC and ULI members are increasingly embracing street-oriented retail, more genuine forms of public space, and mixed uses. My own critique of lifestyle centers was challenged after attending the ICSC conference in Miami Beach earlier this year, where panelists agreed that the future of lifestyle centers would increasingly involve mixed-use development, and that this was not only inevitable but desirable. While the financial success of many TNDs and urban infill projects has caught the attention of the development world, new urbanists continue to be viewed in ULI and ICSC circles as novices when it comes to retail development. The gulf between knowing what is correct urbanistically and being able to execute this so that both the urbanism and the financial performance of the effort are successful remains wide, and this is true across the entire spectrum of urban and new urban development.

"Retail," as Seth Harry says, "is easy," and by the end of 2004 we will have close to 6 billion square feet of it. Building financially successful, walkable, mixed-use town centers, main streets and urban neighborhood centers, however, is considered the most difficult type of real estate development. Developers who have done it successfully say these are the projects that have given them the most "brain damage" of their careers and, unfortunately, most say they would probably not do it again. The glimmer of hope in their stories is that these projects are also the ones they are most proud of. This is not because urbanism itself is inherently difficult, but because nearly all of the public infrastructure investments, planning regulations, building codes, and financing practices continue to favor and provide de facto incentives to produce sprawl. The challenge for new urbanists is to continue to push on all of these fronts to level the playing field for both urban reinvestment and new urban communities with town centers and main streets in place of conventional suburban development.

HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY  
continues on next page

con of the New Urbanism, that draws parallels between the scale, tenant mix, and trade areas of conventional retail development and traditional neighborhood development alternatives. The Council was a first step to reconcile these and other frameworks, including another one that was quickly outlined by Peter Calthorpe and Chip Kaufman during the Council itself, and provided a starting point for more work that will be needed to refine a working typology of urban retail places.

### The Store, the Region and the Highway

Beyond the mishmash of terminology, there were some wide-ranging discussions and debates on how to and whether or not to accommodate big box retail and chain stores in traditional neighborhood development, the relationship between regional land use and transportation planning and retail development. During the debate it became apparent that some felt anything built in suburban areas, any new development that was accessed by an arterial, or that incorporated big box retail, or chain stores, or horizontal (rather than vertical) mixed uses was problematic for new urbanism. Others argued that this represented the front line in the battle against sprawl and that new urbanists have been the only ones working to reconfigure suburban retail formats into more urban retail places that can be woven into surrounding neighborhoods. Rather than viewing these as opposing positions, we should view them through the prism of the Charter as highlighting the work to be done at the level of the region as well as the neighborhood, district and corridor, and the block, street and building. New urbanism has distinguished itself as the movement that refused to concede 90 percent of new development to sprawl.

Seth Harry's presentation reinforced the fundamental impact that transportation infrastructure and land use decisions have on the scale and location of retail development. If new urbanists hope to bring about a long-term change in retail development patterns, we will need to continue to work hard with smart growth and transit organizations and on the political landscape to influence these macro-regional-level policy decisions. This represents a truly long-term strategy, however, as there are already 46,726 miles of interstate highways and a glut of land zoned for commercial uses along this system, which threads through every metropolitan region in the nation. As John Anderson commented, new urbanists believe in regional planning and redirecting investment back into existing towns and cities, "but we don't own the region."

The antipathy of many new urbanists towards big box retail and all manner of chain stores was highlighted in the opening Council session by Bob Gibbs as a potentially dangerous disconnect between the personal preferences of CNU members and the store choices of mainstream Americans. A scathing review of the Retail Council written by an ICSC member confirmed fears that new urbanists may be positioning themselves so far outside the contemporary retail development world that we risk significantly diminishing our role in what is actually getting built on a daily basis. In Gibbs' view, the most damaging capitulation for new urbanism would be to disengage from the battle to reshape conventional sprawl retail formats and to convince national chains to locate in urban and new urban settings.

As I have traveled the country over the past few years and presented the wide range of new urban retail projects being built, there is always a discussion of both big box retail and national chains. Sometimes communities are in sync with the CNU mainstream and want to build or rebuild main streets and town centers without national chains and big box retail. More often, however, communities are just crying out for less corrosive forms of retail development and would be ecstatic if they could simply get a grocery store to place its parking in back and create an urban storefront with entrances on both sides. New urbanism should not decide whether or not chains and big box retail are right or wrong for a particular community, but should work with the community to achieve the very best urbanism regardless of the names on the stores or the size of the boxes. We can highlight the trade-offs involved in pursuing these different paths and can present the very best examples of enduring market places that are defined, in large part, by the eclectic mix of local shops, restaurants, cafes and services found there, but we should never presume to choose for them.

The strength of new urbanism, and the reason the movement remains vital long after others had faded, has always been the willingness of CNU members to get

their hands dirty and operate in the rough-and-tumble world of developers, planners, elected officials, and other brokers of the development process while at the same time identifying higher principles and standards to aim for. New urbanism stepped into the vacuum created when the community-building professions decided that either sprawl was inevitable or that it was unworthy of their professional attention.

Despite the massive growth in the United States population and the development of millions of homes and multi-family residences, billions of square feet of retail and office space, and tens of thousands of churches, libraries, town halls, libraries and other civic buildings, there were no traditional walkable, mixed-use, civic-oriented town centers planned or built in the nation for five decades beginning in the 1940s. Between 1970 and 2000 alone the United States population grew by over 76 million people and more than 4 billion square feet of new retail space was constructed. This quantity of growth could have supported the creation of hundreds of new villages, towns and cities throughout the United States, but instead it was the engine of sprawl. It's not enough to proclaim that the urbanism of cities that are hundreds of years old is superior to the urbanism of a five-year-old new urban town center. We must continue to work to decriminalize urbanism and make it possible to, once again, build a wide variety of urban places where retail will contribute one part of what makes a well-rounded neighborhood and community.

### Evolution & Adaptation: Toward an Incremental Approach to Town Centers

If urban history can teach us anything, it is that town centers are made, not born. The Athenian agora was little more than a patch of dirt located between the acropolis and residential neighborhoods of Athens. Over many decades it evolved as a meeting place, first with tables set up by book sellers and fish merchants – which later evolved into open air loggia – and then a series of progressively more impressive permanent structures. The same progression can be witnessed in the evolution of London's Covent Garden Market, Boston's Quincy Market, and countless market towns and crossroad villages whose modest beginnings and urban evolution are part of urban history.

Cities, towns and suburbs that have been built or rebuilt during the automobile age have faced more and different challenges, and a faster pace of change. But those retail settings that incorporated a basic urban fabric from the start and whose designers and developers planned ahead for a greater intensity of development in the future have provided good examples for today's new urbanists to consider.

Shopping villages built in the early automobile era of the teens and '20s of the 20th century, like Market Square, Highland Park, and Country Club Plaza, took many years to fully develop and they continued to evolve as the decades went by and retail fashions and development formats changed. While sprawl formats came and went, the urban design of the shopping villages has helped them survive for more than eight decades, allowing them to adapt to the changing demands of retail, dining, office and entertainment establishments and to accommodate growing numbers of automobiles. In Country Club Plaza, this evolution has included the transition from parking lots to structured parking as density and land values increased.

Today similar transformations are taking place in new urbanist projects like Mashpee Commons, Mizner Park, Kentlands and Seaside, which have seen steady improvements including the addition of residential and civic uses, public spaces, performing arts and cultural buildings, and liner buildings to conceal parking lots and extend pedestrian retail frontages. Mashpee Commons will soon grow from a mostly commercial town center into multiple traditional neighborhoods all interconnected with the core. A regional transit plan includes a rail line that will link the Kentlands and Lakelands town center to Washington, D.C. Mizner Park has seen the addition of the Boca Raton Museum of Art and a

permanent outdoor amphitheater and has triggered a wave of downtown urban redevelopment in the downtown.

Although too often dismissed as a "resort town," Seaside, in fact, provides a great example of how to grow a town center over time, with limited resources, a guiding vision, and committed town founders willing to experiment with what works from a place-making perspective rather than a conventional retailing perspective. The ombudsman approach of Robert and Daryl Davis also provides valuable lessons for both urban and new urban settings on the incubation and long-term nurturing of an eclectic mix of small-scale, independently run shops.

Seaside has gradually packed more diversity of retail places into a small fraction of its 80-acres than communities 10 times its size, and it has done so by tapping into the same tourism market that others used to create the islands of high-rise condos and strips of T-shirt shops, gas station/food-marts, and drive-by dining that typifies the Florida panhandle. In place of these, Seaside conjured up: Modica Market, the prototypical TND corner store; kiosks colonizing the over-sized village green; the art spaces, shops and cafes consistent with the more residential character of Ruskin Place; temporary buildings that could frame the green and act as place holders until the market supported their replacement with larger, more permanent structures; and the upended

*"Hard-won battles to get grocery stores to locate within TNDs, big box retailers and national credit tenants to consider locating on main streets, and retail developers to reconfigure their standard formats to include a fabric of urban streets and blocks are celebrated as victories by some, yet criticized as capitulations by others."*

shipping containers rearranged like chess pieces to shape and reshape the open-air beachfront market.

What Seaside, Mashpee Commons, the shopping villages and other projects illustrate is the importance of strategizing and planning for the long-term war while remaining relevant and engaged in the short-term, day-to-day battles. Great places often have their beginnings in the most modest of circumstances, and take time to grow, adapt and evolve. Initiating a town center does not require \$500 million dollars and a portfolio of national credit tenants, it requires an approach to retail place-making that brings people, food, goods and activities together in an attractive public space with a built-in potential to evolve and become more urban over time.

New urbanists will almost never be able to deliver the complete package of urbanism on day one, but neither did the founders of Rome, Paris, London or Washington, D.C. We will also not transform sprawl overnight, but we can work to continue to plant the seeds of urbanism, create attachable urban fragments, and plan ahead for future infill development, densification, the extension of transit systems, and the tide of automobile dependency to subside. If we can put conditions in place that will help urbanism be restored in our cities and unfold over time in our suburban nation, then we will have earned our bread.



The redevelopment of 75 acres of the Bay Meadows race track is located within walking distance of a Caltrain station. The town center combines a major employer, mixed-use retail and commercial space, and over 750 units of housing.

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# CENTERS: The Missing Element of New Urbanism

By Peter Calthorpe



THE TOWN PAPER

*“... retail is often seen as an appendage to a neighborhood rather than the core. ...”*

I believe that the CNU has effectively communicated and helped implement on a broad scale the neighborhood scale agenda of the Charter. Developers, planners and the home-buying public have embraced the fundamental proposition we all helped to formulate and advance. This is quite an accomplishment and perhaps enough for 10 years. It is clearly an area we have achieved considerable consensus about and plays to our core membership of designers. But the Charter articulated two other elements (districts and corridors) that we have not been so successful with, and one it failed to identify (centers). Herein lays the challenge we face moving forward.

Because of this, our vision and message regarding the form and policies of regionalism have been confused and conflicted. The Charter is vague and, to put it mildly, there is little consensus on the taxonomy of regional design, much less the policies that would advance and implement a new urbanist vision of regionalism. In fact, CNU has projected an image of internal conflict over the fundamentals of regionalism – questions of the appropriate location and structure of metropolitan growth.

Rather than a healthy debate, I believe this conflict has been seen by potential allies as a reason to look elsewhere for coalition builders. Hence the ascendancy of various smart growth organizations. Many come to the Congress and leave with the sense that we do not have a consensus on some fundamental issues (such as where and when greenfield development is appropriate or how to correct subregional jobs/housing imbalances) and therefore are unlikely to be effective leaders.

Part of our problem has been that new urbanism has focused on the residential neighborhood. Although we nod to elements we call districts and corridors, little work or clarity has surfaced around them. In addition, areas dominated by commercial development are rarely studied. We have contributed little to the design questions of how to integrate office campuses, major employment areas, or regional retail centers. Nor have we, until recently, begun to articulate a regional circulation strategy for roads and transit. And yet these elements are central to the emerging regional form. Indeed, retail is often seen as an appendage to a neighborhood rather than the core of what I would classify as a range of centers.

Beyond neighborhoods, a design theory of districts, corridors and centers (their hierarchy, placement and internal structure) has failed to emerge. The Transect lays out broad guidelines for the urban design of each but not their relationships, hierarchy, appropriate placement, and integration with the larger regional form. We desperately need such a theory if we are to contribute to the larger debates on regional growth. In addition to the need for consensus on when various regional policies (such as school vouchers, inclusionary and fair share housing, UGBs, greenlines, and transit investments) are appropriate, is this pressing need for a sophisticated design approach to the non-neighborhood building blocks of the region.

## THE MISSING PLACE TYPE

The taxonomy of new urbanism has been missing a preeminent element – centers. Job centers, major retail, and subregional cultural facilities cluster in centers that can be mixed-use and walkable but are rarely “neighborhood” in character, mix or scale. They are not “districts” if that category is to include the region’s neces-

sary single-use areas, nor are they corridors in form or function. The hierarchy of centers, from urban through town and village, provide the primary structure of a metropolis and the focal points of its circulation system. In fact, the interdependent nature of centers and the regional transportation network must define a new urbanist design structure for both the metropolitan and subregional scale.

Centers are regional and sub-regional focal points of services, jobs, housing and retail that are located within and adjacent to walkable neighborhoods. Centers are needed at a variety of scales, from the downtowns of the region to small centers that provide services to neighborhoods or rural areas. Smaller centers can place lifecycle housing choices within easy walking distance of services and create a “park once and walk” environment. Larger centers can create synergies among civic, employment, retail and residential uses, making places that are active throughout the day and evening and creating a market for high quality transit service.

Walkable centers must be designed as the local designations of new development, providing the necessary jobs/housing balance not attained in each neighborhood. They can also be created within existing developed areas by incrementally adding the “missing pieces” – be they housing, jobs, services or street connections. With the following recommended standards for different types of mixed-use centers, we aim to help communities coordinate the locations of private development and public facilities into Centers that are accessible by car, transit and bicycle and are easy to walk around in once there.

## CENTER PLACE TYPES

### Metropolitan Centers

Downtowns are the highest-order centers in the region. They have the region’s most intense concentrations of jobs and some of its highest concentrations of housing, as well as important civic uses that serve the entire region. The highway and transit systems make them the region’s most accessible places. As a region grows, it is critical to balance employment growth with housing in and around the metropolitan centers so that they are active places outside of business hours and can support high levels of services in the evenings and on weekends. Since downtowns are too often surrounded by freeways and cut off from surrounding neighborhoods, it will also be critical to continue to enhance their connections.

### Subregional Centers

Subregional centers are destinations for tens of thousands of people. After the metropolitan centers, they are the region’s largest and most concentrated walkable districts of employment, housing and retail. Well served by highways and transit, subregional centers attract people from all parts of the region, especially those within 10 to 15 miles. Because of their large size, subregional centers are likely to grow up around an existing employment or retail destination through intensification and the addition of complementary uses. Potential locations for subregional centers include areas near high-rise suburban office districts or regional retail centers. These uses are typically found in locations that are highly visible from the region’s highway system.

THE MISSING ELEMENT  
continues on next page

trip. They should include a grocery store and ancillary shops as well as local serving businesses.

**Rural Centers**

Rural centers are remote small towns with the potential to grow. While they are similar to town or village centers, due to their rural location rural centers may not be viable locations for large-scale employment or frequent transit. They offer housing opportunities with a small-town or rural atmosphere and provide services to a larger rural area or township. The amount of retail present may vary but ideally should include a grocery store and other retail offering goods and services that meet daily needs. Housing in rural centers should emphasize lifecycle housing opportunities and maximize connections to existing retail and employment uses. Some rural centers may be served by express bus or “park and pool” lots.

**Neighborhoods**

Neighborhoods are the most basic elements of communities of any scale – they are the fundamental building blocks of the villages, towns and cities that constitute the region. Each type of center has a family of neighborhoods directly associated with it, even if the center’s market area is much larger than those neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the structure of the infill areas of a regional plan and the tissue of the new growth areas. They provide for a mix of housing opportunities, an interconnected local street network, and a limited range of civic and commercial destinations. They can take on very urban, dense forms close to the Metro center. In suburban areas they provide a range of densities or at the region’s edge they may be more rural in character and density.

**MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS FOR PLACE TYPES**

The key characteristics of the various types can be measured in terms of overall acreage, jobs per acre, housing units per acre, street intersections per 100 acres, and the square footage of retail that is incorporated into mixed-use centers. Table X-1 shows a recommended range of values for these characteristics for each type. Each benchmark is discussed below.

**Size**

Centers need to be considered as districts rather than individual projects. The size of the center varies according to the type. A successful center will likely consist of many projects over many years in a single area, balancing existing uses and services with complementary new uses and increasing connections among them.

Centers must be large enough to contain significant concentrations of destinations yet small enough to be traversed on foot. A five-minute walk (1/4-mile radius from a center) yields a possible area of up to 120 acres, while a 10-minute walking radius gives a maximum area of 500 acres. The actual area reachable along streets will be smaller, but more connected street patterns will maximize the area that is accessible to the center. Centers will likely contain natural resource areas, wetlands and small bodies of water but should be uninterrupted by major barriers to pedestrian movement such as freeways or large lakes.

**Retail Square Footage**

In developing areas, retail centers are among the most frequent local destinations. By capturing retail uses in walkable mixed-use centers rather than single-use retail areas, communities can take advantage of the economic activity generated by large retail anchors to activate smaller “Main Street” type shops, while making it convenient for nearby residents to walk, bike or make shorter auto trips to reach shopping destinations. The recommended amounts of retail in Table X-1 will help ensure that centers achieve their full potential as destinations.

Different types of retail centers are appropriate in different types of mixed-use centers. Grocery-anchored neighborhood shopping centers are particularly appropriate for village and town centers. Larger “community” shopping centers, with anchors such as discount and department stores, can be especially well integrated into town centers. Large regional malls and power centers can be integrated into subregional centers. Entertainment- and lifestyle-oriented retail centers, featuring



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The San Elijo village center combines 335 units of housing with a grocery-anchored retail area of approximately 130,000 square feet. In addition, there are mixed-use buildings surrounding the village green and an elementary school at the corner that shares its library with the community.

Often the addition of structured parking for existing uses can free up additional land for new development.

**Town Centers**

Town centers are destinations for many thousands of people. A town center offers significant concentrations of jobs, retail, housing and services in a walkable area that is served by, and visible from, one or more principal arterials roadways and major transit routes. Town centers may be the traditional downtowns of established communities, new centers in growing communities, or urban neighborhood centers in the region’s core cities. A town center should incorporate around 100,000 to 350,000 square feet of retail use, which may mean a community shopping center anchored by a supermarket, discount department store or large specialty/discount apparel store. Town centers should have transit service throughout the day and evening, seven days a week.

Town centers in outlying areas will be good candidates for additional transit service in the future. Perhaps most importantly they must become primary job clusters, replacing now segregated office parks.

**Village Centers**

Village centers provide basic services to several surrounding neighborhoods and offer a range of lifecycle housing choices concentrated around an existing or potential transit stop. They may be planned as part of new development or created through strategic investments in existing urban neighborhood centers. To support viable retail services, they typically require easy access and visibility from A-minor arterial roadways. Village centers can provide focal points within a larger supporting area of predominantly single-family residential development, maximizing the opportunity for local destinations to be reachable by bicycle or by a short auto

Type	Size (acres)	Retail in Center	Primary Trade Area*	Min. Jobs Per Acre (entire area)**	Min. HH Per Acre (entire area)**	Location/Circulation Context	Street Intersections per 100 Acres
Metropolitan Center	200+	1M+ Multiple Anchors	N/A	100	15	Multiple Freeway, Major Transit	30 to 50
Sub regional Center	60-200+	400k - 1M+ Multiple Anchors	5-15 miles	20	8	Freeway to Avenue, Dedicated ROW Transit	15 to 30
Town Center	40-120	150-400k 2-3 Anchors	3-6 miles	10	6	Boulevard to Avenue, Dedicated ROW Transit	20 to 30
Rural Center	Varies	40-150k 1 Anchor	3-6 miles	5	4	Avenue to Avenue, On street Transit	20 to 30
Village Center	20-60	40-150k 1 Anchor (Grocery)	1.5-3 miles	5	4	Avenue to Avenue, On street Transit	20 to 30
Neighborhood	60-120	0-20k 0 Anchor	.25 miles	0	4	Connector to Connector, On Street Transit	25 to 30

\* Area from which 60-80% of retail sales originate  
\*\* Developed acres include streets and all residential, commercial, civic and other urban uses, but exclude natural resource areas, parks and open space.

# Plugging Retail into TND

## FROM THE LEXICON OF THE NEW URBANISM

ANDRES DUANY

### DEFINITION

• **Shopping Center:** a generic term for a group of shops that has a standard and precise definition, as formulated by the former Community Builders Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) in the 1950s and reaffirmed over time. A shopping center is a group of commercial establishments planned, developed, owned, and managed as a unit and related in location, size, and type of shops, to the trade area. It provides on-site parking in definite relationship to the types and sizes of stores. As the shopping center evolved, certain basic types emerged, each distinctive in function as determined by its major tenant or tenants.

Shops work best in certain mutually supportive combinations. The grouping is associated with a specific service area within the region. Conventional suburban versions of these combinations have been rationalized by the ULI. These standard retail groupings are now recognized by developers, merchants, and lending institutions to the exclusion of all other patterns. This authority, in addition to a record of genuine success, forces the retail component of Traditional Neighborhood Development to be conceived as translations of these ULI classifications. Fortunately, certain of these classifications are functionally equivalent to those required for TNDs.

### TRANSLATION

The translation of CSD to TND retail classifications involves maintaining the ULI guidelines of size, mix, management, and location while modifying certain other aspects including:

- The provision of offices or dwellings on the upper floors.
- The provision of seamless pedestrian and spatial connections to adjacent residential areas.
- The spatial definition of the parking areas as plazas, or their location behind the building frontages.

These translations have important social consequences:

- The neighborhood remains inhabited at all hours of day and night, increasing safety through continuous informal supervision. See: **CPTED crime prevention through environmental design**
- Apartments above commercial premises provide affordable housing for service workers who are likely to be employed nearby. For such people, automobile ownership becomes less necessary.
- A mixed use neighborhood enables the elderly to walk to acquire their daily needs, allowing them to continue living independently, without resorting to a specialized retirement community. See: **NORC naturally occurring retirement community**
- Parking areas may perform double duty, serving commercial and residential users at different times. Therefore, a smaller parking area is necessary. See: **Shared Parking Standards**
- Fewer automobile trips are generated because the neighborhood residents may walk to obtain many of their daily needs. See: **Traffic Capture**

### CORRELATION

The following definitions are taken from the *Shopping Center Development Handbook* published by the Urban Land Institute (ULI), and from the *National Association of Convenience Store (NACS)*.

ULI	TND
<b>Convenience Store</b>	<b>Neighborhood Store</b>
A convenience store is a retail business that provides a convenient location for quick purchases from a wide array of products (predominantly food). Convenience stores are typically less than 5,000 sq ft with convenient pedestrian access and parking, and extended hours of operation.	
<b>Convenience Center</b>	<b>Main Street Shops</b>
A convenience center, similar to a convenience store, provides for the sale of personal services (dry cleaning, barber shop, shoe repair) and convenience goods (food, drugs, and sundries). The convenience center is anchored by some type of personal/convenience retail such as a minimarket. It has a typical gross leasable area of about 20,000 sq ft.	
<b>Neighborhood Center</b>	<b>Town Center Shops</b>
A neighborhood center provides for the sale of convenience goods and personal services for the day-to-day needs of the immediate neighborhood. The supermarket is the principal tenant. In theory, the neighborhood center has a typical gross leasable area of 50,000 sq ft. In practice, it may range in size from 30,000 to 100,000 sq ft.	
<b>Regional Center</b>	<b>Shopping District</b>
A regional center provides for the sale of general merchandise (apparel, furniture, and home furnishings) in depth and variety, as well as a range of services and recreational facilities. It is anchored by one or two full-line department stores of generally not less than 75,000 sq ft. In theory, its typical size is 450,000 sq ft of gross leasable area; in practice, it may range from 300,000 to 850,000 sq ft. The regional center is the second largest type of shopping center, providing services typical of a business district yet not as extensive as those of the super regional mall.	

### SIZE & SERVICE AREA Source: Thomas Comitta

ULI	TND	Size (sq ft)		Service Area (radius)	
		Min	Max	Min	Max
Convenience Store	Neighborhood Store	800	5,000	1/4 mile	1 mile
Convenience Center	Main Street Shops	15,000	25,000	1 mile	2 miles
Neighborhood Center	Town Center Shops	30,000	100,000	2 miles	5 miles
Regional Center	Shopping District	300,000	850,000	5 miles	15 miles

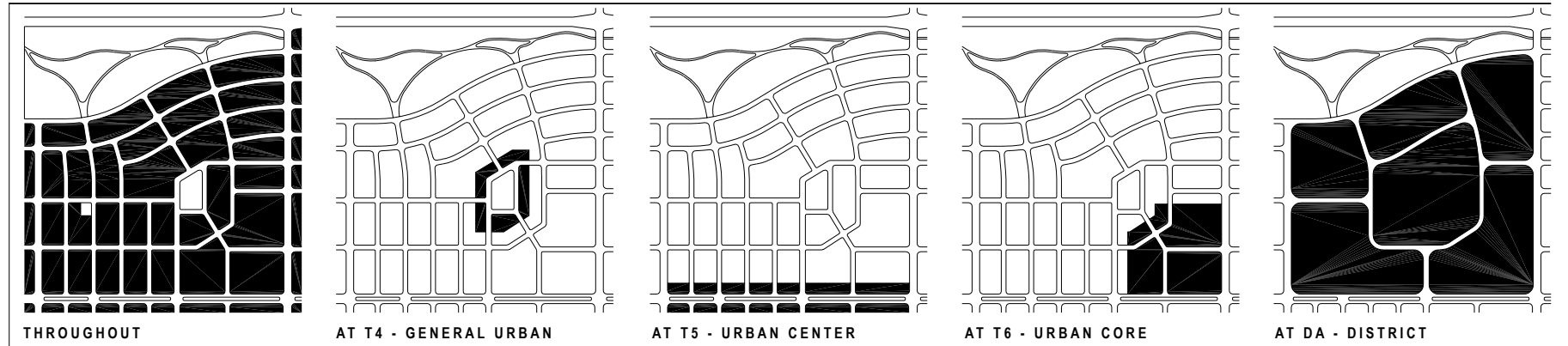
### LOCATION

ULI	TND	BY TRANSPORTATION						
Conventional	Traditional	Local & Local	Local & Collector	Collector & Collector	Collector & Arterial	Arterial & Arterial	Arterial & Expressway	Expressway & Expressway
Convenience Store	Neighborhood Store	•	•					
Convenience Center (Unanchored)	Main Street Shops			•	•			
Neighborhood Center	Town Center Shops				•	•	•	
Regional Center	Shopping District					•	•	•

ULI	TND	BY TRANSECT						
Conventional	Traditional	T1 - Natural	T2 - Rural	T3 - Sub-Urban	T4 - General Urban	T5 - Urban Center	T6 - Urban Core	DA - District
Convenience Store	Neighborhood Store		•	•	•	•		
Convenience Center (Unanchored)	Main Street Shops				•	•		
Neighborhood Center	Town Center Shops				•	•	•	
Regional Center	Shopping District						•	•

### CORRELATION OF RETAIL AND WORKPLACE PROGRAMS



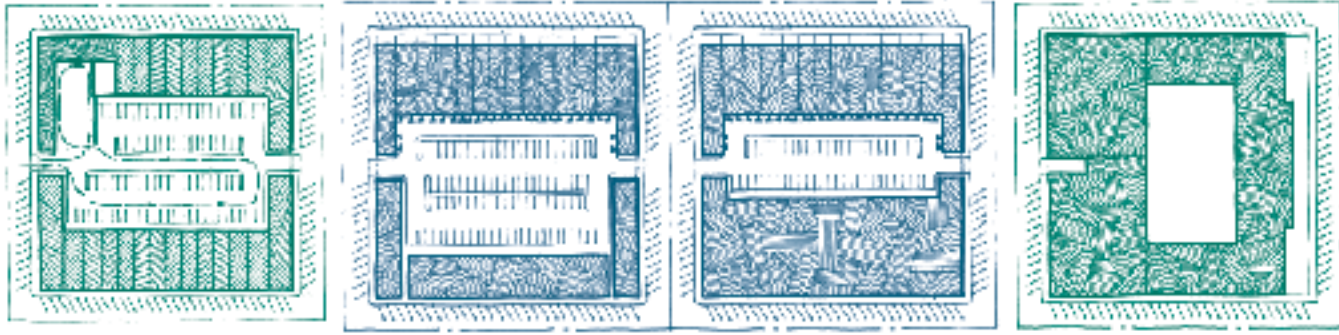
### RETAIL

• <b>None</b>	• <b>Neighborhood Store:</b> the smallest of the retail establishments, permitted at Center Zones. It is the equivalent of the ULI Convenience Store. The neighborhood store occupies a frontage at the ground story, with residential use recommended above. Parking is to the rear of the buildings. These establishments have a limited number of employees, where customers may arrive walking and bicycling. An anchor tenant of 2,500 sq ft can be supported by a trade area of tk dwellings. It may be reinforced by including a cafe, a contract post office, an automatic bank teller, and a newsstand. See: <b>Post Office Syn.: Home Office, Corner Store, Home Occupation</b>	• <b>Main Street Shops:</b> retail enterprise permitted within Center and Core Zones, usually shared by two or more neighborhoods. Main street shops are the equivalent of the ULI Convenience Center. These are businesses having any number of employees, customers, clients or patients. The retail quarters occupy the ground story with residential or commercial uses recommended above. Main streets supply ordinary goods supported by a trade area of tk dwellings. The anchor tenant is a convenience market of 15,000 to 60,000 sq ft, with the following stores ideally appended: a branch bank, a bookstore with coffee bar, a video rental, a cleaner and laundry, a home (hardware) store, a barber shop and hairdresser, a pharmacy, and two or three restaurants.	• <b>Town Center Shops:</b> retail enterprises permitted within Core Zones, located at a regional intersection and shared by several neighborhoods. A downtown is the equivalent of the ULI Neighborhood Center. These are businesses having any number of employees, customers, clients, or patients. The retail quarters occupy the ground story with residential or commercial uses recommended above or interspersed. Downtowns are similar but larger than main streets, serving to supply ordinary goods supported by a trade area of tk dwellings. The anchor tenant is a supermarket of 60,000 sq ft or larger, with the following stores ideally appended: banks, a bookstore, a coffee bar, a liquor store, a video rental, a cleaner and laundry, a hardware store, a barber shop and hairdresser, a pharmacy, and restaurants.	• <b>Shopping Districts:</b> specialized retail sectors located at an intersection of regional significance as it must draw from a trade area of tk dwellings. Shopping districts are similar to the ULI Regional Center. The anchors may be two or more department stores or a multiplex cinema, supported by in-line specialty stores (principally apparel) and restaurants. Although the size of this type precludes its incorporation within a neighborhood proper (hence the District designation), it should be integrated with office buildings, hotels, and apartments to approach a balanced use.
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### WORKPLACES

• <b>Home Occupations:</b> commercial enterprises permitted everywhere, including Suburban and General Zones. The work quarters should be invisible from the frontage, usually located within a backbuilding or an outbuilding. Home occupations are small and quiet non retail businesses, seldom visited by clients, requiring little parking, no signage, and having only one or two employees. The most likely businesses are professional and artisanal, location-neutral, or Internet-based. The permitted activities are defined by the Restricted Use category. Syn.: <b>Home-Based Business</b>	• <b>Live Work Units:</b> small commercial enterprises permitted at Center Zones, with ground floor occupied by commercial and a residential unit above. Commercial space may be home-based business or leased independently.	• <b>Main Street Offices:</b> small commercial enterprises permitted at Neighborhood Center Zones, the offices usually occupy the frontage at the ground story, with residential use above. Parking is to the rear of the buildings. Businesses may include retail sales, with a limited number of employees and where customers or clients may visit. The permitted uses are defined by the limited use category.	• <b>Downtown Offices:</b> sizable commercial enterprises permitted within Town Center Zones, the equivalent of the suburban office park except that parking must be to the rear or side of the frontage. Businesses may have any number of employees, customers, clients, or patients. Business quarters may occupy all stories. The permitted uses are defined by the open use category.	• <b>Business Districts:</b> commercial enterprises which must be isolated in order to mitigate some intrinsic aspect which is destructive to the urban fabric. This may involve excessive building size or a parking requirement at the frontage; the generation of noise, smell, or vibration; large trucking needs or a hermetic building frontage. The permitted uses are defined by the specialized use category, which excludes housing and assumes the absence of a neighborhood structure. As a component of Traditional Neighborhood Development, the business district is not vested and must undergo a process of justification. See: <b>Prohibited Use, Big Box Retail</b>
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# On Blocks & Boxes

By Stephen A. Mouzon



**HERE ARE A NUMBER OF APPROACHES TO SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF CONVENTIONAL POSTWAR RETAIL.** The transportation network was discussed extensively at the Council, and the network clearly needs attention and effort. But it took a half-century of intense effort and countless billions of dollars to create the network problems we now have, and it is likely to take many years to correct the problems that exist. New urbanism cannot wait that long to begin getting things right. We need a toolbox full of tools that range from the scale of the region to the scale of the block. This article focuses on some of the block-scaled tools.

One of the obstacles new urbanists face is the accusation that, “You’re really good at creating cute little boutique places with ice cream parlors and coffee shops, but you can’t build buildings for real American uses like Wal-Mart, Home Depot, car dealers and drive-through restaurants and banks.” It is true that some new urbanists are violently opposed to these uses, it is also true that nearly every new urbanist is against pervasive implementation of these uses in their current forms because the current forms are only useful in auto-dominated districts, not in pedestrian-oriented places. So the accusation has a ring of truth. Unfortunately, it is a particularly vicious ring. Projects to replace or supplement conventional municipal zoning with new urbanist codes that get tarred with this charge are at high risk of going down in flames. It is therefore imperative that this argument be confronted directly.

The ideas included herein illustrate how it is possible to do exactly what the sprawl-promoting nay-sayers say cannot be done: fit those common uses into a traditional block structure in appropriate Transect zones. It is fair to ask: “But aren’t you just decorating the big box?” and “How is that any better than the lifestyle center?”

The answer to the first question is to make the distinction between decorating the big box and civilizing the big box. We’ve all seen decorated big boxes that attempt to paint their concrete block walls with the trappings of everything from colonial America to whatever the local style is. Most look pretty pathetic. That isn’t what this is about at all: The first tasks shouldn’t focus on decorating the box, but rather civilizing the box. Civilizing the box consists of the following things in this order:

**A. How do you park it with nothing more than diagonal parking on the street that is visible from the street?** In other words, how do you eliminate the parking lot in front? Or on the side but still visible?

**B. How do you fit it into the normal block structure of the place it is being built?** Until the block structure is maintained rigorously correct, you’ve created nothing more than another suburban project, not a part of the fabric of the town

**C. After that, how do you get the massing and fenestration rhythms right?** This still has nothing to do with style. It should be obvious that a blank concrete box inserted into a town center is still destructive. Bays consistent with those of the town should be articulated, and appropriate shopfront glazing at the first level should be provided.

**D. Only after these things have been accomplished is it proper to even think about the style of the building.** And the style obviously should be something that communicates with and resonates with the average citizen of the place where it is built.

This article addresses the first two of these priorities. The second question: “How is that any better than a lifestyle center?” should have obvious and similar answers. Anyone who has offered more than a passing glance at lifestyle centers knows that while they may spend exhu-

ciating amounts of effort (and money) getting massing, fenestration and style right, they fail miserably with the first two priorities. Matter of fact, they ignore them entirely. Their block structure usually has nothing to do with (and no connection to) the block structure of the town, and they continue to have massive parking in front, just like suburban malls.

They may say “But wait, that’s really the back! The Main Street we’ve created is the front; the parking is in back.” That illusion may hold when you’re walking down the Main Street, but the truth of the matter is that the front of a place is what you see when you arrive, not what you see when you get into the innards of the project. So the parking lots are without question the front of the project.

So if decoration of the big box is not the answer and the lifestyle center is not the answer, then what is the answer? There are several, actually. The answers vary by Transect zone and by use. Please note that there are no superficial solutions here, like trying to come up with a model for a T2 big box. Simply put, there should be no big boxes in T2 (or T3, for that matter). Tools are only shown for the zones where they naturally should occur. All tools are based on appropriate mixed-use parking ratios and factors as enumerated in the SmartCode. The tools focus on the uses many New Urbanists don’t like, and that our adversaries say we are not capable of providing for. They are as follows:

## T6 Urban Core

T6 zones often extend several blocks in each direction. All illustrations given here therefore are based on a full block. The block size used is 400 feet from center of thoroughfare to center of thoroughfare, which is a very common size of block for city center areas in much of the eastern United States.

## T6 Big Box

This type does not need an illustration because it is so familiar. This is the urban center department store that has been built for over a century in cities across America. Some urban centers don’t require much parking because of transit, but when one does, it is provided in structured parking in the basement. Floors are stacked up as high as necessary at roughly 90,000 square feet per floor (assuming the building occupies the entire block) to achieve the desired floor area. Other uses, including residential, typically occupy higher floors.

## T6 Automobile Dealership

Urban center real estate is often too expensive to occupy with a typical auto dealership that requires a sea of parking on-site. Nonetheless, dealerships may still occur there. At a minimum, the dealership occupies a first level showroom with all other functions handled off-site. Look carefully: Dealerships occupy small urban center showrooms such as this in the most urban places in the world.

Where real estate values (and construction costs) allow, car storage and service functions can be accommodated in the basement parking structure. In such cases, cars are usually brought up for a test drive by employees, although it is technically possible for the salesperson and the cus-

tommer to walk through the parking deck looking for a car. It is also possible to handle all other functions on-site if real estate values are low enough to allow on-site car storage. The physical form of the building in such cases may be virtually identical to that of the T6 big box: a large full-block building mass with showrooms on the street level, offices above, and parking garage in the basement. As before, other uses may occupy higher floors.



THE TOWN PAPER

*“The ideas included herein illustrate how it is possible to do exactly what the sprawl-promoting nay-sayers say cannot be done. ...”*

## T6 Building Supply Stores

T6 real estate is almost always too expensive to be occupied by a building supply store. The required lumberyards simply do not generate enough revenue to justify the expense of T6. Because the real estate prices require buildings to occupy the entire site except for very special functions, the garden center would have to be placed on the roof of the building, which is also not feasible. It is true that some hardware stores or other building supply specialties such as plumbing or lighting showrooms certainly do occupy street-level retail spaces in T6 mixed-use buildings, but the building supply superstores such as Home Depot simply cannot afford to exist here in their most common form.

## T6 Drive-Through Retail

T6 drive-through retail is a bit superficial, because if a person lives or works in the urban center, it is easier to simply walk to the restaurant, bank or wherever than to get their car out of the parking deck (which may be further than the restaurant) and drive there. And if they live outside the urban core, it makes no sense to drive downtown just to buy a Whopper or go to the ATM.

## T5 Urban Center

T5 zones sometimes extend several blocks in each direction, but they may also be one block wide and several blocks long along a main street. Two illustrations are given here where appropriate: one for the full block and the other for the half-block, with primarily residential uses occupying the other half. The block size used is 400 feet from center of thoroughfare to center of thoroughfare, which is a very common size of block for town center areas in much of the eastern United States.

# Blocks & Boxes

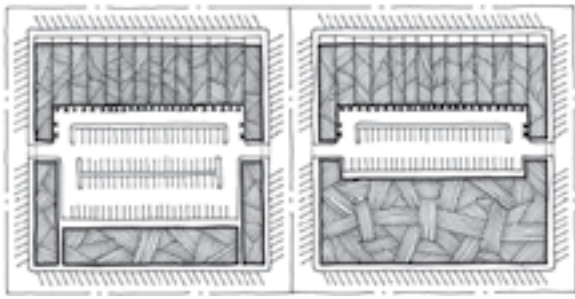
*continued from page 9*

## T5 Big Box

This type is one of the most important types to solve. There is obviously a range of box sizes to be solved, from the 40,000 square foot grocery store to the 180,000 square foot super center. Both extremes are illustrated, along with two intermediate conditions.

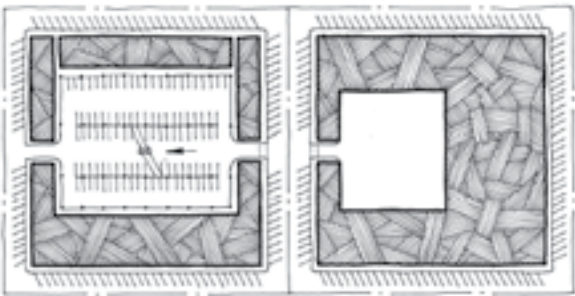
### 40,000-Square-Foot-Grocery

This box can be solved on a half-block with all surface parking, and therefore works along main streets that are one block deep from alley to alley with townhouses behind fronting the outer streets. Loft apartments are assumed above the grocery. This illustration includes 104 parking spaces on the street, 48 spaces on the alley and 28 garage spaces in the townhouses behind. In addition to the 40,000-square-foot-grocery store, 14 townhouse units are shown and 40 loft apartment units are located above the grocery.



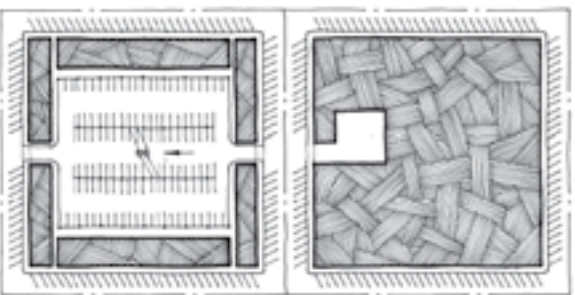
### 80,000 Square-Foot mini-anchor

This is approximately the largest box that can be solved on a half-block with all surface parking, although it does require pairing with another block of liner buildings and internal parking to do so. It therefore works along Main Streets that are one block deep from alley to alley with townhouses behind fronting the outer streets. The mini-anchor building is two floors tall, but the first level is double-height and is detailed on the exterior as two levels. There are two levels of loft apartments above the retail liners.



### 150,000-Square-Foot-Building-Supply

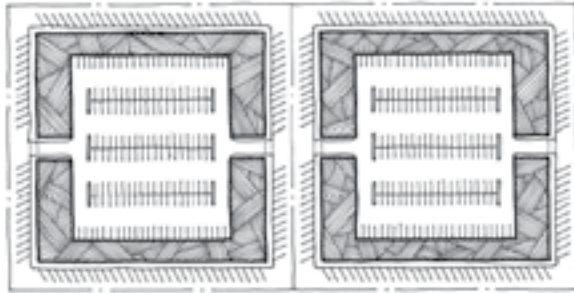
The building supply box requires two levels of an entire block and must be paired with another block of structured parking bounded by liner buildings. The big box is assumed to have high ceilings on at least the street level because of the clear span size, and is to be expressed as a three- or four-level building on the exterior as a result. Liner buildings are assumed to be oriented away from the main street, and are therefore offices on the first level and lofts on the second and third. Please note that some functions of the building supply that require cashiers at all times for security or other reasons (such as the garden center, which is shown here as an interior courtyard) could be expressed as separate storefronts on the exterior of the box. This and the 180,000-square-foot-super-center that follows are the only two types that require structured parking, which is a four-level deck in both cases. Clearly, decks cost more than surface parking if land cost is not considered. This is one of the few solutions presented that costs more than the conventional suburban model. Several solutions herein actually save large amounts of money.



### 180,000 Square-Foot Super Center

The super center box requires two levels of an entire

block and must be paired with another block of structured parking bounded by liner buildings. The big box is assumed to have high ceilings on at least the street level because of the clear span size. It is to be expressed as a three- or four-level building on the exterior as a result. Liner buildings are assumed to be oriented away from the main street and are therefore offices on the first level and lofts on the second and third. Please note that some functions of the super center that require cashiers at all times for security or other reasons (such as the pharmacy or the jewelry department) could be pulled out into the liner buildings if desired as separate shops.

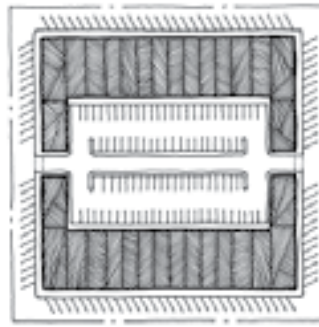


## T5 Automobile Dealership

The full-featured automobile dealership requires two blocks divided according to the natural divisions of the business. New car sales and general administration occupies one block, while used car sales and service occupy the other. Buildings are essentially all liner buildings, with lofts (or possibly offices) on the upper levels. All office and residential parking requirements are met through the use of on-street parking, reserving the 328 spaces within the two blocks for the dealership's stock of new and used cars. The auto dealership may also be done in a single block through the use of structured parking.

## T5 Main Street Block

This block is patterned closely after commercial buildings used on countless main streets across the United States. Diagonal parking rings the block, which is composed of buildings ranging between 20 feet and 30 feet in width. Building depths are typically 75 feet except at each end of the alley, where the end building extends back tight to the alley in order to screen the interior of the block. This liner building is assumed to be office occupancy since it is on the side street rather than the front street. This layout provides a total of 48,000 square feet of retail and 8,400 square feet of offices per block plus 28 loft apartments on the second level. Units may be sold as live/works, where the purchaser buys both the retail unit on the first level and the living unit on the second. Such arrangements allow very inexpensive incubation of a new business. The interior of the block is composed of a two-lane alley flanked by a bay of parking on each side. Enough width is available to insert parallel parking on the alley if desired.



## T5 Drive-Through Retail

Drive-through retail requires automobile stack space. This clearly is a problem if the stacking occurs on a main street. Stacking cannot occur between the fronts of buildings and the street without unacceptably serious damage to the integrity of the street. Stacking also is a nuisance if it occurs in an alley, blocking the alley from use by other businesses. A close visual connection between the business and the vehicular entry to the drive-through is very important. The shop fronts of the main street should not be punctured by a drive-through exit. Drive-through traffic should exit the site where it enters the site, rather than being routed to another side of the block, so customers are not disoriented. The drive-through scheme should work whether the block is a full block, as in the case of contiguous blocks of T5 in both directions, or whether the block is a half-block, as in the case of a single block of T5 along a Main Street. Given all of these limitations, is it possible to accommodate drive-throughs within T5?

The proposed system includes a central alley with a bay of parking to either side as described above. Drive-through establishments are allowed only on the corners

of the block in order to be visually tied to the alley entries that serve them. The drive-through is both entered and exited via the alley entrance adjacent to them. An end bay of roughly 50 feet of parking is reserved for the drive-through facility, which is one of three types:

## Semi-Detached Multi-Lane Drive-Through

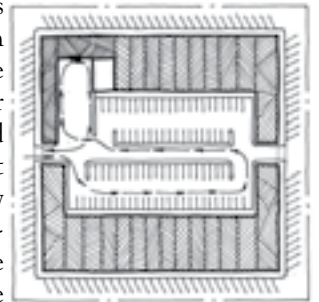
Gas stations are a bit of a hybrid between detached and attached drive-throughs. The product is piped to a remote location like a bank, but the point of delivery must have a closer connection to the cashier to avoid fuel thefts. Gas stations also try to make additional sales by bringing people into the convenience store where the cashier works. Gas stations require a somewhat larger end bay on the alley than the other two types. The European pull-by model is an option that allows the gas station to occur on the street. This model only works on side streets but should be considered as an option.

## Remote Multi-Lane Drive-Through

Remote drive-throughs may be used for uses such as banks or pharmacies, where objects may be placed in a capsule and shot out to the drive-through via a tube. New remote drive-through technology allows the drive-throughs to be located several hundred feet from the primary place of business. In this case, the drive-throughs are stacked diagonally beside the alley and exit back out onto the alley. Note that the remote drive-through must be placed on the right side as the customer is exiting the alley. If the bank or pharmacy is located on the left, this will preclude a restaurant occurring on the right because the drive-through for the bank or pharmacy occurs in the slot that would be needed for the restaurant drive-through. The scheme, then, will accommodate between two and four drive-through businesses per block, depending on type.

## Attached Single-Lane Drive-Through

Attached drive-throughs are required for items such as food that cannot be turned upside down or dramatically accelerated during transit. These must be attached to the primary place of business at a location appropriate for the interior function of the business. Both right-hand and left-hand options are shown, since the building layout changes significantly depending on which orientation is used.

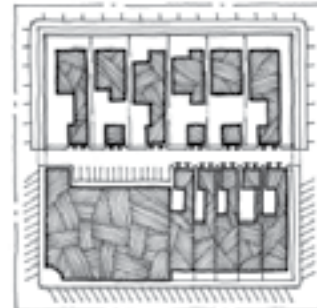


## T4 General Urban

T4 zones are easier to deal with in two primary respects: First, the biggest boxes simply are not allowed there. The SmartCode limits retail to one corner building per block, and the parking requirements are higher. Second, because the buildings may be detached, it is possible to bring a driveway out to the front street.

## T4 Neighborhood Grocery

This 20,000 square foot neighborhood grocery store is the most typical general neighborhood retail use. Because only one such retail building is allowed per block and it must be located on a corner, this illustration shows it at the largest possible size, which is a quarter block. Big box retail significantly larger than this simply is not appropriate for T4.



## T4 Drive-Through Retail

Semi-Detached Multi-Lane Drive-Through  
Gas stations also occur at corners in t4. James Wassell did a particularly good model for this idea recently. He calls it the Inverted Gas Station. Others call it Gas Backwards, although I'm not sure whom to credit for this name. This particular option, by aligning the pumps from front to back, allows a total of 10 pumps within a surprisingly conservative area.

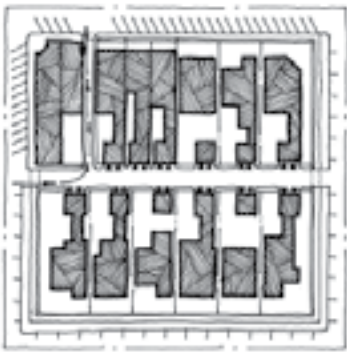
## Attached Multi-Lane Drive-Through

Banks and pharmacies typically change to attached drive-throughs in T4 because there is no imperative for

# Blocks & Boxes

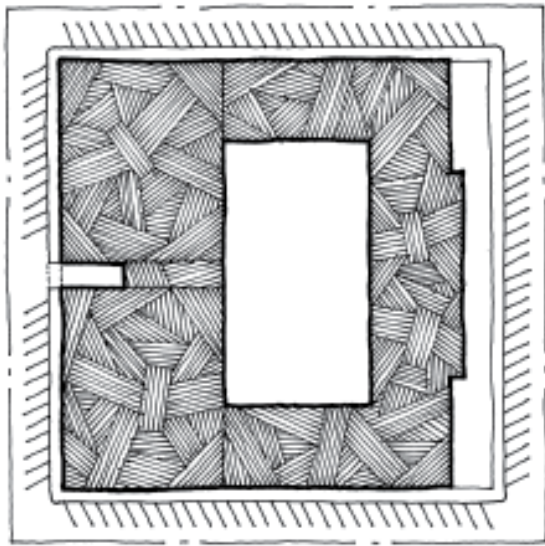
*continued from page 10*

detaching the drive-through function like there is in T5. If detailed properly, a four-lane drive-through can look like a large but believable porte cochere by running one lane between the porte cochere and the building, two lanes through the porte cochere, and the last lane (which serves the ATM) to the outside.



## Attached Single-Lane Drive-Through

Restaurants remain attached like they are in T5. Because retail is required to occur only on corners in T4, drive-throughs either enter on the front street and exit through the alley or vice versa. By running the stacking lane the depth of the lot (including parking in front) eight or more cars may be stacked without blocking traffic.



## T4 School Building

T4 should be the most common zone for schools. This illustration shows the largest two-story high school that can easily be put on a single block. A high school is illustrated because it is the worst-case scenario on two counts: some of its students drive, and high school athletic field requirements are larger than those of middle schools or elementary schools. The school is assumed to be slid to one edge of the neighborhood. Playing fields occur within adjacent parklands. Two huge auto-related problems of schools are parking spaces and stack space for parents picking up and dropping off their children. When schools are embedded in neighborhoods, students within the pedestrian shed can walk. This illustration assumes an average density of 5 units per acre in the surrounding neighborhood, and assumes that 8 percent of those households have children of high school age. Of those, half are assumed to be legal drivers. Given these assumptions, and the assumption that the pedestrian shed for children walking to school is the 10-minute walk, there are a total of 250 acres in the half-shed (the other half is park). If 2.9 percent of the population is high school students of driving age and there are 1.8 children per household that has children, then there could be between 100 and 120 driving-age high school students within the pedestrian shed of the school. If 80 percent of them walk (once they rediscover that walking to school is a tremendously social thing to do when it's possible) on any given day, then the student parking lot can be reduced by 80 to 100 spaces. The school parking requirement is therefore reduced to the teachers, staff and a few students.

Stack space for pick-up has an exceptionally simple solution for schools embedded into the fabric of the neighborhood: Cars are allowed to stack on neighborhood streets. Embedded schools actually need no drop-off lane at all in many cases where parents can drop off children on the school lawn and let them walk to the door. Because parents are sitting in the cars waiting to pick up children, anyone blocking a resident's driveway can easily move because they are already sitting behind the wheel. And because most high schools end at 3 P.M., most residents are still at work and should not need to use their driveways at this time of day.

# The Smart Code and Retail Typology

By Lee Sobel

The CNU Council on retail was held in San Diego just as the SmartCode Workshop was wrapping up. During the Workshop, I gave a presentation on the commercial component of the SmartCode. Afterwards, a couple of people asked if I could compress my presentation into a table or chart that shows where traditional retail types fit into a Transect-based code. During the Council, I began laying out this chart. Upon double-checking, I noticed that the chart also compliments retail illustrations found in the Lexicon of the New Urbanism (see V3.2, L1.1&2).

Although not expressly stated, it should be apparent that both the T-zones and the retail types rely on two important principles for their ordering; size and scale. In this regard, I would remind anyone discussing the commercial component in traditional development to include these two elements.

If you think that the chart is still open to refinement, please let me hear from you. One reviewer has already noted that sales from the Internet and mail order catalogues extend from T-6 down to T-2. While I agree with the observation in principle and practice,

I didn't include this retail type on the chart because it was based in the realm of the wired world rather than the built. Also missing is an important overlay regarding frequency of the types as the built environment becomes more urbanized. As you move up the T-zones, you would expect to see the smaller retail types repeat in number though not necessarily in size. In this regard, the smaller "wholes" help define the larger "wholes." Seth Harry presented a frequency chart at the Council, so maybe this work is complete. I'd like another chance to review his work.



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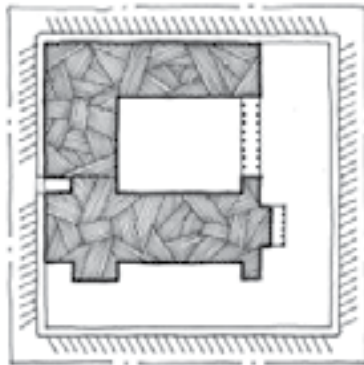
Locations based on principles of the Transect*						Corollary Retail Types		Locations		
Natural	Rural	Suburban	General Urban	Urban Center	Urban Core	Traditional	Conventional	Rural	Suburban	Urban
		X	X	X	X	General / Convenience Store	Out-parcel	X	X	
			X	X	X	Main Street Shops	Strip Center (Unanchored)	X	X	
			X	X	X	Main Street Shops / Town Center Shops	"Neighborhood" Grocery-Anchored Strip Center	X	X	
				X	X	Town Center	"Community" Strip Center	X	X	
				X	X**	Shopping Corridor	Lifestyle Center	X	X	X
				X			Power Center	X	X	
				X			Regional Mall	X	X	X
				X		Shopping District**	Super-Regional Mall	X	X	
				X		Department Store	Big-Box Store	X	X	

\* See SmartCode V5.1, 6.4.4 and 6.11.11.d.  
 \*\* May include Department Store(s)  
 Prepared by Lee S. Sobel, 2004

This building is two stories and surrounds a central courtyard with double-loaded classroom wings. A two-story gymnasium and a single-story lunchroom are located to the rear of the building, which also includes the loading dock. The library is located over a portion of the lunchroom. There are a total of 56 classrooms plus administrative offices.

## T4 Church Building

T4 should also be the most common zone for church buildings. Churches vary tremendously in schedules of services and other operational items, and also in the number of worshippers drawn from within walking distance, a church does not usually have the near-monopoly on residents that many public schools do; It is therefore not possible to make as many numerical assumptions as can be done with school buildings. It is clear, however, that church buildings embedded within a neighborhood fabric will draw some worshippers from walking distance. It is also clear that overflow parking can take place on surrounding streets as long as parking is allowed on the streets. Purely for the purpose of illustration, if most worship services occur with only 50 percent of the seats filled and if 20 percent of the worshippers walk to services, then the same number of dedicated



parking spaces will allow 2.5 times as many seats in the auditorium of church buildings embedded in a walkable neighborhood. This is an amazing number. How else, with less land area (because surrounding streets double as aisles for on-street parking), could any institution get over double the conventional capacity of their building?

## T4 Automobile Dealership

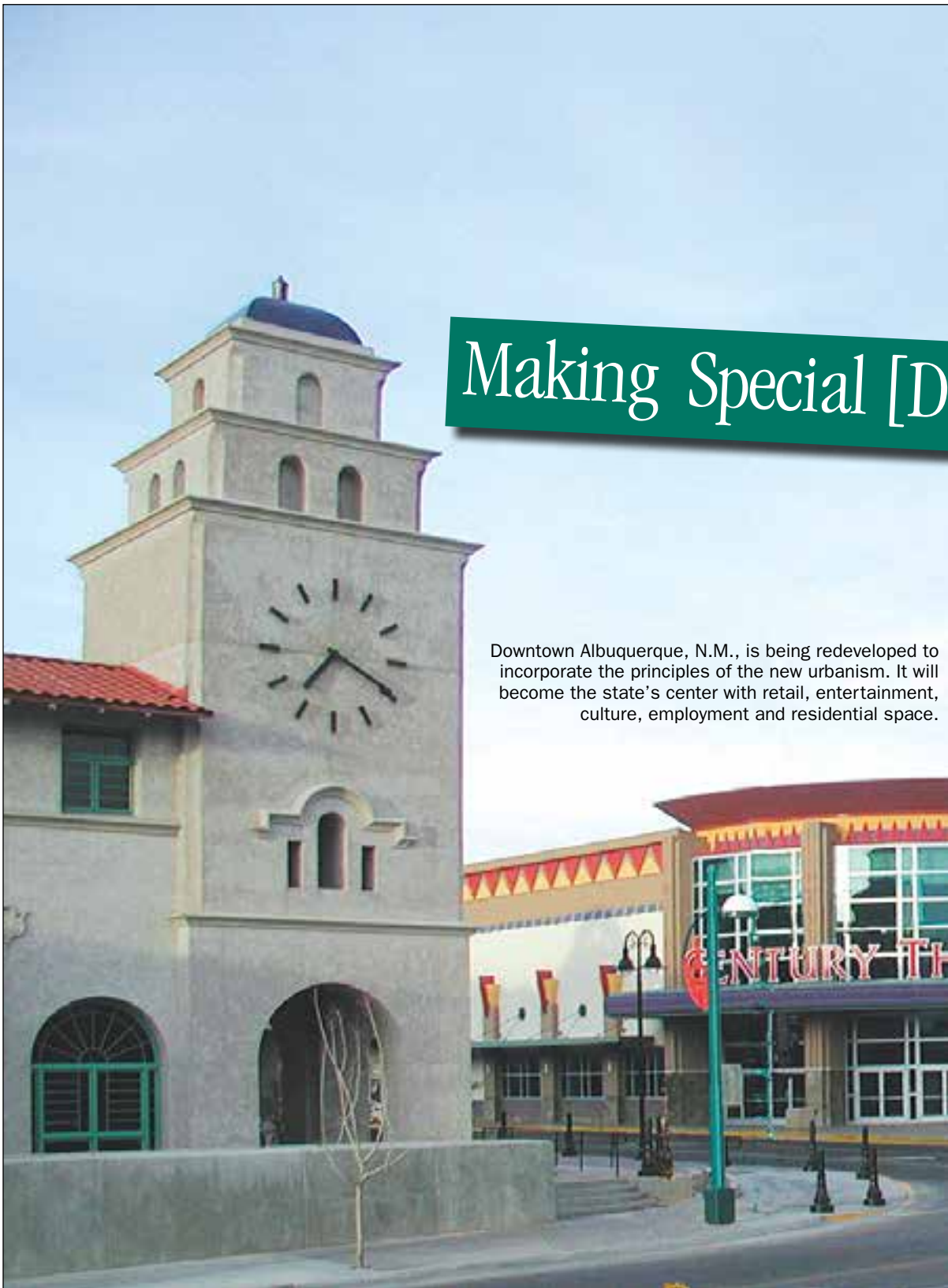
It is technically possible to have a small used automobile dealer as a corner retail business in T4, but this is highly unlikely due to the nature of T4. Automobile dealerships are best suited for higher Transect zones as discussed previously.

## T4 Building Supply

A full-scale building supply outlet cannot occur in T4 due to limitations previously discussed. A hardware store, plumbing supply store, lighting fixture store or other similar establishments could easily be a T4 corner store.

## T3 Suburban

T3 is limited in the SmartCode to essentially one corner store per neighborhood. One of the great errors of conventional postwar planning is the inclusion of pretty much every function within what should have been T3 Suburban areas. By making the suburban zone become everything, it became nothing. Because the Transect can be exceptionally fine-grained, it is certainly possible, and usually desirable, to have areas of T4 and T5 within close proximity to T3. But within T3, with the exception of the corner store, there should essentially be none of the typical suburban commercial uses; they should all occur in nearby T5 or T4. T2 and T1, of course, are even more restricted.



## Making Special [Downtown] Places

Downtown Albuquerque, N.M., is being redeveloped to incorporate the principles of the new urbanism. It will become the state's center with retail, entertainment, culture, employment and residential space.

are built downtown. These entertainment and retail uses tend to be regional-serving, as opposed to local-serving retail, which comes later in the process. These uses draw from the entire metropolitan area and generally provide the only walkable entertainment district in the region, providing the key competitive advantage to the downtown that the suburbs have a hard time matching, though the rise of "faux-urban" lifestyle retail like Reston Town Center outside Washington, D.C., and West Lake outside Dallas is an attempt to mimic real urbanity.

### Rental Housing

Once there is a "there-there," the desirability of the downtown for housing increases tremendously. Most consumer research shows there is significant pent-up demand for housing within walking distance of restaurants, entertainment and work, possibly as much as a third of the households in most metropolitan area want this kind of lifestyle, maybe higher. Even if only a sixth of the households have a desire for higher density housing within walking distance of the reviving downtown, this represents overwhelming demand for a product that is generally in very short supply, possibly representing less than 5 percent of the existing houses in the region. The initial housing will be rental since it appeals to a younger household, who tend to be more attracted to the initial revitalizing downtown than older households, and they are not required to commit their major household asset, the home that they own, to an unproven resale market.

By Chris Leinberger

Regardless of the location on which a new urbanist planner or developer is focused, what he or she is doing is making a special place. By a special place I mean a complex, integrated, walkable, mixed-use, environmentally sustainable, mixed-income community, that is unique to the location it finds itself. This is in contrast to the "could be anywhere" places conventional development tends to build, which are based upon simple formulas, segregated by use, car-dominated and appealing to a narrow band of incomes.

So how are special places created? And what is the role of retail, restaurants and entertainment in creating them? The answer to these questions is different whether the location is a greenfield location on the fringe of a metropolitan area, a second home community, a busy infill corridor or a revitalizing downtown. The first two examples require a housing-first strategy – getting rooftops in place with the retail following. The infill corridor requires a balanced housing and local-serving retail strategy at the same time. The revitalizing downtown demands a retail/entertainment-first strategy, followed by housing, local-serving retail and then office. This article, like the presentation to the Retail Council, focuses on downtown revitalization.

A retail, restaurants and entertainment approach has become the major way for people to informally engage one another and build community. As such, it is a key component of creating special places, such as revitalizing a downtown. Most of the downtowns in the United States have begun a revitalization process over the past 15 years. Through that experience, it is now known that there are five steps, which are progressively overlapping, to bring back a clinically dead downtown. Most pre-revitalized downtowns have a concentration of office

jobs, generally in finance, professional services, government and public utilities, which means the place only has activity from 9 to 5 during the workweek. The remaining 75 percent of the week, unrevitalized downtowns are generally given over to the homeless. Below are the five progressively overlapping steps to revitalizing a downtown with particular emphasis given to retail uses.

### Retail/Urban Entertainment

The initial step is to create a "there-there." The various options include restaurants (almost always a significant use), performing arts center, movie theater, arena, stadiums, festivals, nightclubs, etc., determined by market research so that the choices are market-driven. Note that all of these entertainment and retail uses are nighttime and weekend focused, filling in the times the downtown is generally pretty empty. Some of the keys to encouraging these kinds of uses are safety, cleanliness, promotion and parking. The safety, cleanliness and promotion are usually provided by a "business improvement district" (BID), paid for by a voluntary tax assessment on private property owners though administered by a nonprofit organization. The BID provides safety ambassadors, wired to the police and clean teams to augment the city efforts. It also works to change the perception of downtown through promotional campaigns. And since this is a car-addicted culture, parking drives development. Downtown parking needs are generally met through the double use of the office parking facilities, particularly the decked garages, since they are generally empty at night and on weekends. The availability of existing parking decks is one of the major reasons over 80 percent of all new arenas, performing arts centers and stadiums have been built downtown since 1990. The other reasons are that these facilities have higher attendance than those built in the suburbs, and there is more economic spin-off when these facilities



### For-Sale Housing

As there are more people on the streets, more households living downtown and the urban entertainment continues to grow, the older households, who tend to own, are attracted downtown. Especially in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, with examples in downtowns throughout the country of households experiencing significant housing price appreciation that were clinically dead only a few years ago, the appearance

**DOWNTOWN PLACES** *continues on next page*

of for-sale housing in revitalizing downtowns now happens earlier in the process.

### Local-Serving Retail

As more rooftops appear in the downtown, especially if there are viable neighborhoods surrounding downtown, there will be demand for local-serving retail, such as video/book stores, drug stores and, most importantly, grocery stores. These local-serving retailers will tend to be national chains. These chains have begun to experience financial success in downtowns throughout the country since urban grocery stores tend to have higher sales per square foot and higher margins. However, the biggest issue is figuring out how to park them. Grocery stores and their patrons are used to having free parking in front of their suburban stores. That is generally not available in a downtown location, and a majority of their patrons will still be arriving by car, especially in the first years of the development. Decked garages are expensive, especially if they are underground, and then the spaces have to be given away to the customers. The spaces can not be double used, say for office workers during the day, since there is demand by the grocery patrons all day and much of the night. Public subsidies are generally needed to pay for the initial local-serving retail parking needs. In addition, there is also the potential for high-end as well as funky retail in the downtown, much of which can be provided by local retailers. There are some national retailers who are attracted to a downtown location, such as appropriately named Urban Outfitters, but most national chains in this category tend to go to malls or faux urban locations in the suburbs.

### Office

The office market tends to be the last use to come back downtown. The reason office comes back is that the number one decision criteria for selecting an office location is proximity to where the boss lives. The folks living in the for-sale urban housing tend to be older and wealthier and, therefore, they tend to be the bosses. Once the bosses move downtown, it is likely they will move their office downtown to be within walking distance of home.

The experience of my company, Arcadia Land Company, in the revitalization of downtown Albuquerque validates the above process. The initial strategy, developed in 1998, outlined a complex implementation process, spearheaded by 17 different task forces. These task forces, lead by the private sector, have:

- established the BID (\$750,000 annual budget) for safety, cleanliness and promotion,
- put in place the Downtown 2010 Plan which follows a new urbanism code and allows for the issuance of a building permit within three weeks administratively,
- gotten new parking decks built by the city (\$25 million cost) to implement the “park-once” system,
- improved urbanity (converted one-way streets to two-way, way-finding system installed, re-establishing the grid where it had been modified, etc.)
- gotten a 10,000-seat arena downtown, though the chance of a baseball stadium downtown was lost,
- begun a process to reinvigorate the convention business,
- built of a multi-modal transportation center by the city, new courthouses for every level of government and new federal office buildings,
- created a “catalytic development” firm, the Historic District Improvement Company (Arcadia is the general partner), which has built a 14-screen movie theater, restaurants, retail and offices early in the revitalization process, taking above-market risk to demonstrate the viability of downtown development,
- HDIC and others, including new urbanist Rob Dickson, have built hundreds of rental housing units, which quickly leased at the highest rental rates in the region,
- HDIC and others, including Rob Dickson, have built hundreds of for-sale loft units, after the rental housing came on stream, which, as of this writing, are projected to sell for the highest price per square foot in the region,
- created a women’s-oriented retail district with 12 locally owned retailers to date within three blocks.



The Century Theaters block serves as the cornerstone of downtown Albuquerque’s revitalization effort.

Since 1998, there has been over \$400 million of new construction in a downtown that had not seen a private sector building permit since a federally subsidized project in the mid-1980s. There will shortly be an additional \$150 million under construction, 90 percent of which are privately funded projects. (See [www.nmdowntown.com](http://www.nmdowntown.com) for more information.)

Given the pent up demand for the development of special places, especially as shown in America’s revitalizing downtowns, there has been an explosion in downtown lease/rental rates and sale prices. Generally, revitalized downtowns have the highest prices and costs in their metropolitan area, what is known as gentrification,

*“Retail, restaurants and entertainment have become the major way for people to informally engage one another and build community. As such, it is a key component of creating special places, such as revitalizing a downtown.”*

something most people find very surprising after decades of decline in our downtowns. Most policy makers have failed to recognize this situation until it has happened and some then decry gentrification.

In fact, gentrification is a good thing. It brings new investment into the downtown, reverses decline, and does it using minimal public subsidies (as opposed to suburban sprawl, which has been publicly subsidized for decades). It also brings middle-and upper-middle class

households back downtown to shore up the tax base and allows for a mixed-income community. However, if programs are not put in place, the well-to-do households will completely price-out lower income households from staying or moving in. This is due to the large amount of pent up demand for special places in most metropolitan areas that will always outstrip the supply. The uniqueness of special places is due to the absolute limit to an area that is walkable, a radius of about 1,500 feet, which translates into about 120 acres, the size of a regional mall and its parking lot. Adam Smith’s law of supply and demand means that special places, such as a revitalized downtown or a second home development such as Seaside, will have very high prices. ... It is inevitable.

Rather than ban the building of special places, as some opponents of gentrification advocate, downtown Albuquerque has created a new nonprofit, the Albuquerque Civic Trust, to be a financial intermediary to finance affordable housing, keep artists living and working downtown, build parks and keep existing funky retail in place as rents go up. The Trust uses the funds generated by gentrification to pay for the financing of these affordable projects. In essence, the more gentrification, the more funds for affordable development. And the Trust has been set up early in the revitalization process so that it can control land and participate in projects before the gentrification process prices land higher in the future. (See [www.abqcivictrust.org](http://www.abqcivictrust.org) for more information.)

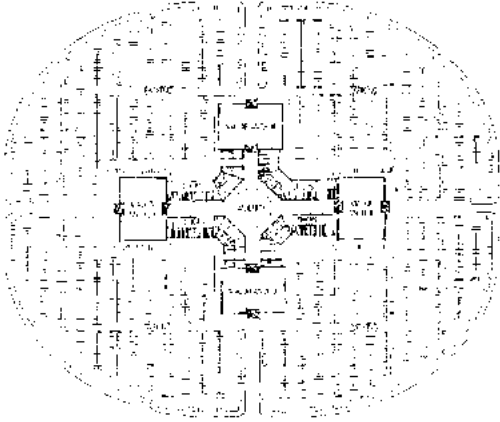
The beauty of developing a special place, regardless of whether it is a greenfield location, an in fill corridor or a revitalizing downtown, is that there is significant pent up demand for it today. However, the market will not believe that the special place will come “someday”; they want a critical mass in place before the bulk of them will come. Achieving that critical mass quickly is the biggest challenge to creating a special place, especially since it also needs to be “real,” “sincere” and rooted in its place to be truly successful. Then there is the need to plan early in the process for the unintended consequence of its success, i.e., achieving among the highest prices in the region so only the well-to-do can afford to live there, possibly by using gentrification to finance affordable housing.

Creating a special place is far more difficult than conventional development. Yet far richer returns can be achieved, socially, ethically, environmentally, as well as financially over time, which makes it well worth the effort.

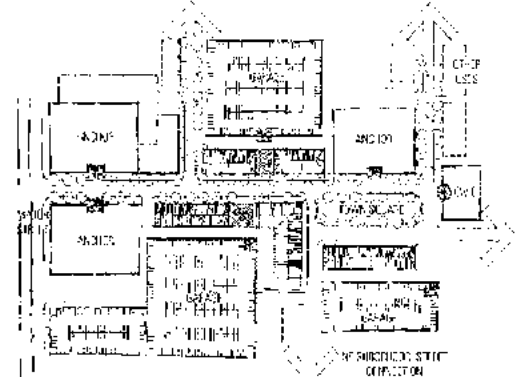
## TRANSFORMING

## Retail

*Conventional regional centers take on the form of a “dumbbell,” with anchor tenants at the end generating foot traffic for the smaller shops between (left). The same basic arrangement can be accomplished in a street-oriented format and can incorporate civic features and connections to the surrounding neighborhoods (right).*



Conventional Regional Retail



Modified for Main Street, Town Square and Neighborhood Connections

By Matt Taecker

**T**he challenge of transforming retail is as much an economic problem as one of design. If we want to create new urban retail that will gain broad acceptance and have economic success, then we need to understand the essential relationships between market considerations and form.

Whether one likes the aesthetic and social implications of conventional retail, or not, it is important to recognize its underlying logic. The form of conventional retail results from careful observation and analysis by an industry that includes: developers, financiers, property managers, transportation engineers, and both large and small retailers. Their “rules,” while not monolithic, are directed at a single purpose: to assure profit and minimize risk.

New urbanists would be wise, therefore, to set about finding “both-and” solutions that make great communities within sustainable regions, and anticipate the real risks and concerns that face the retail industry. But what are the principle economic concerns that dictate retail form? And what design techniques and strategies can we respond with?

### Retail is a Commodity

Most new retail results from a highly capitalized industry that dwarfs our idealized notions of retailer as small entrepreneur. This industry insists on predictable formats to minimize risk. While designers may relish complexity, investors seek the uniformity and assurance

that commodities represent.

ULI and ICSC have “commodified” retail centers into certain types, including “regional,” “community,” “neighborhood” and “lifestyle” centers. Because each type has standard characteristics, investors can better predict how a new project will perform. Standards help to attract safe money.

So far, new urban centers are so varied that they defy categorization, and therefore lack the predictable performance (and institutional vehicles) that publicly traded companies insists on. We would be wise to identify what new “products” we are delivering, in terms that investors will appreciate, and sufficiently standardized to be good predictors of future value.

This does not mean that we need to abandon our notions for integrating and enhancing communities, but rather that we need to do a better job explaining the various ways that value is added. We should better package claims that new urban centers will perform better because:

- housing and jobs yield a built-in patron base for retailers;
- diverse uses and products offer higher absorption and can better respond to changing economic conditions;
- trip internalization, transit use and shared parking demand less parking and make projects more cost effective; and
- urban amenities and vitality sells.

We must also continue to develop financial and institutional arrangements that bring long-term “value added” into present day “rate of return” calculations.

Positive synergies from mixed-use, urban environments increase over time, while most investors heavily discount the value of long-term profit. New urbanists should continue to reconcile this inherent tension by seeking investors and financial funds with long-term horizons, and should encourage direct municipal financing for parking garages and other upfront costs.

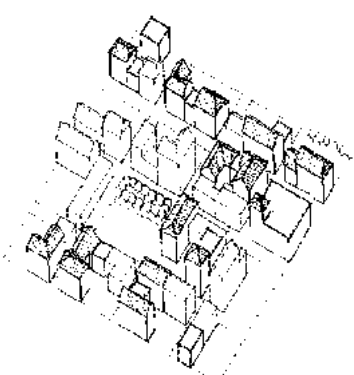
### Centers Must Compete for Market Share

Retail is Darwinian. Only the fit survive, and competitive advantages are always changing. To compete, a center needs to:

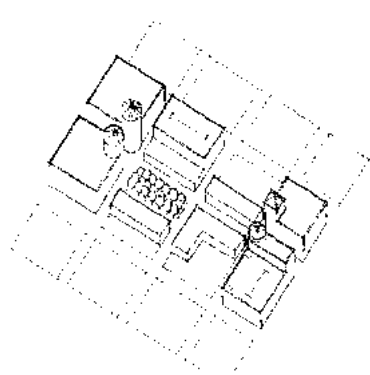
- save time (by offering superior selection and/or local convenience);
- offer exceptional enjoyment (by having an entertainment focus, urban amenity, or sense of community); or
- save money (by offering economies of scale and/or comparison shopping among multiple retailers).

As a whole, new urban retail focuses on convenience and enjoyment but remains ambivalent around patrons saving money. And even where we have focused, challenges remain. The convenience of a corner market is in no way assured for most projects. Without subsidy, it can be feasible with relatively few drive-by trips per day, but still at traffic levels that many residential developers want to turn their backs on. Where drive-by patronage can’t be accomplished, retail convenience can be delivered with a subsidy. A small portion of an

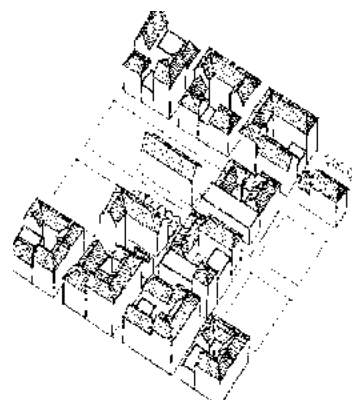
**TRANSFORMING RETAIL**  
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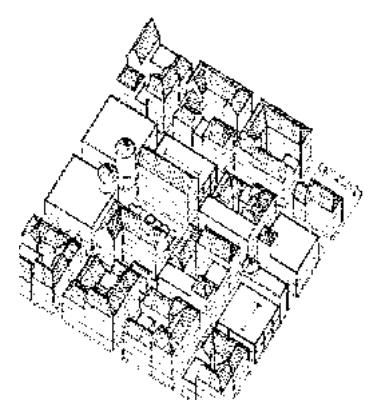
Stable-Undertilled and Vacant Land



Retail-Amenity and Parking



Housing and Employment



Diversity and Balance

Like the mall, downtown shops depend on anchor destinations to generate foot traffic. Shops are most viable between anchors. The establishment of anchor uses, and their relationship to smaller shops, should be considered when redeveloping vacant and underutilized parcels.

apartment building or community center can be set aside with relatively minor additional cost – or at no cost if used first as the project’s sales office. Without a competitive advantage, however, locations with subsidies also face an on going challenge of recruiting a small-time entrepreneur interested in setting up shop.

Where new urbanist retail has seen the greatest success is with projects that offer exceptional enjoyment as a competitive advantage. Beautiful streetscapes and plazas, human scale and activity, and civic focal points deliver a sense of community that is not seen in most suburbs. New urbanists are often called upon to exploit the market opportunity presented by pent-up demand for great places. People are willing to travel farther for the experience.

New urban retail has remained a niche market, however, partly because exceptional enjoyment cannot give a unique competitive advantage to more than a few larger projects within an area. New urbanists must overcome their ambivalence to retailers that save people money if we are seeking broad-based change. Like it or not, larger retailers offer better selection and prices. Fortunately, many larger stores are developing urban formats that have multiple levels, and bury parking and the box.

While some credit goes to designers who took on these retail “goliaths,” these innovations also respond to exceptional land costs and high-income demographics. But in suburban areas, the value of lands does not justify urban intensities, at least in the near term. Suburban communities can alter that proforma by publicly financing parking garages and aggressively negotiating parking standards. But these tactics are challenging, and big box retail with large areas of surface parking may be a reality that must be faced – and can be mitigated.

**Majors Lead, Small Guys Follow**

Because competition is fierce, the most critical tactic for the developers and managers of retail centers is securing (and keeping) major tenants. Anchor stores attract patrons from a larger trade area and share those patrons with adjacent shops. While a center’s total floor area might be equally divided between small shops and major anchors, the lion’s share of a center’s rent comes from the smaller shops.

Anchors are viewed as an essential device for attracting the smaller tenants and demanding higher rents. The smaller retailers will want to be between the anchors, so that they can enjoy visibility and foot traffic. A conventional “dumbbell” arrangement of anchor uses at the ends is clearly exhibited in neighborhood and regional centers. New urban projects can maintain this essential recipe for success, while also reorienting retail toward streets instead of parking lots (see diagrams). The dumbbell format is also relevant to the revitalization of existing downtowns and shopping streets. Small shops located beyond where foot traffic is concentrated get less business, which is good for supporting offbeat shops but not great for encouraging urban vitality.

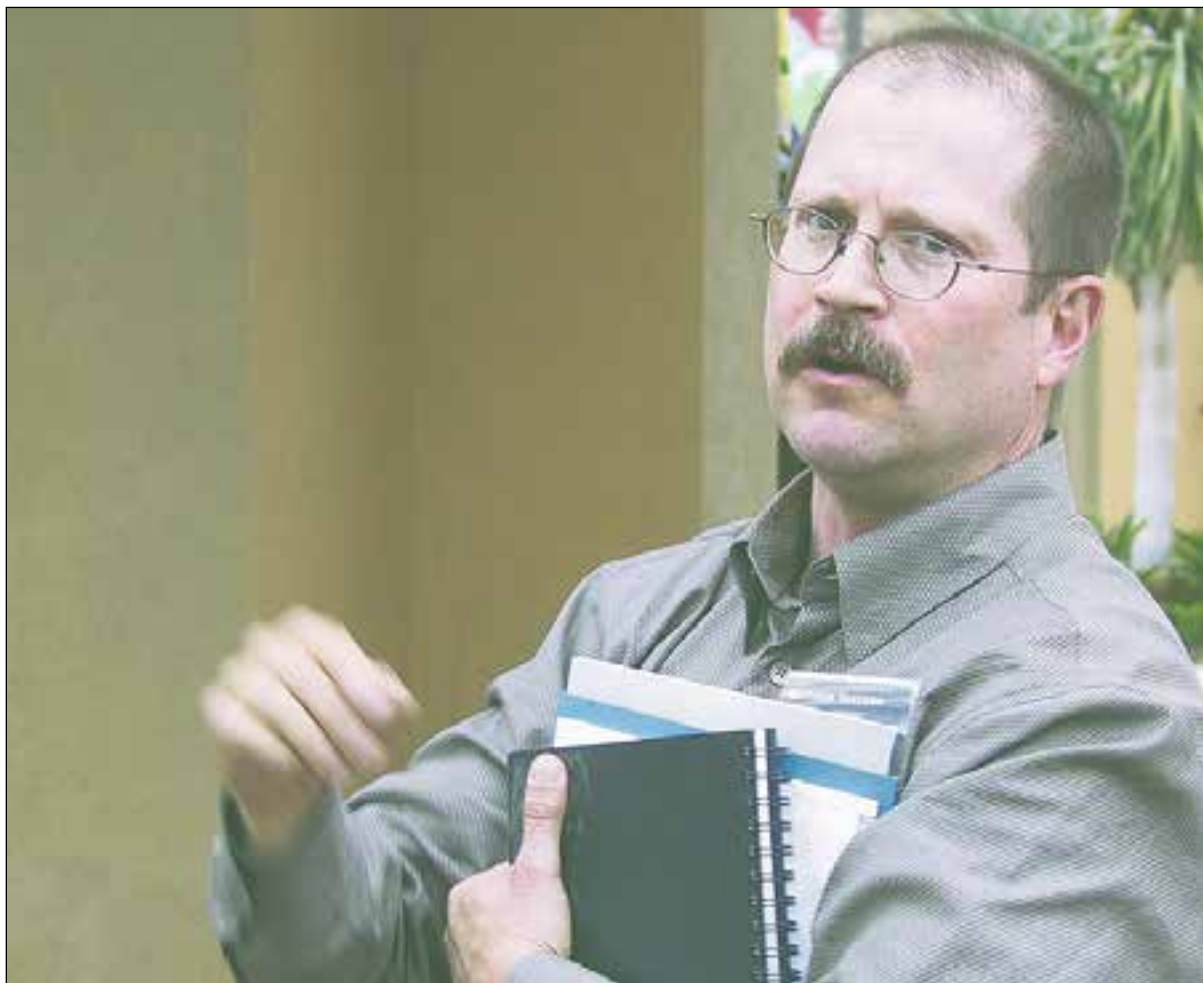
Not all anchor destinations need to be major retailers. Civic “anchors,” like libraries, recreation centers, concert halls and transit, can also draw patrons and generate foot traffic for smaller shops. “Market halls,” where synergies among vendors are carefully orchestrated, also attract. Exceptionally great civic places can be their own destinations. While designers recognize these features as ingredients for success, the value they add needs to be better quantified to gain the confidence of the typical investor.

**Access and Visibility**

The arrival experience must be carefully choreographed. The largest part of retail center design focuses on how to get the potential patron to the front door of the retail tenant. The corner store aside, centers that are known by and convenient to a larger pool of potential patrons perform better. Not surprisingly, retail developers want to locate their centers where the flow of human activity is most concentrated. Drive-by traffic is a prerequisite, therefore, for retail centers outside of the high-density of urban centers.

The mixed-use boulevard and couplet are among techniques that allow retailers to feed off traffic, while also creating urban environments. “Main street” environments can also run perpendicular to major streets, offering regional access on one end and neighborhood accessibility on the other.

Urban retail can perform even better if given opportunities for citywide or regional control. Economic



LAURENCE AURBACH

*“Design techniques that meet the concerns of the retail industry, and make great places, deserve clarification and consistent application. Institutional change must also be fostered.”*

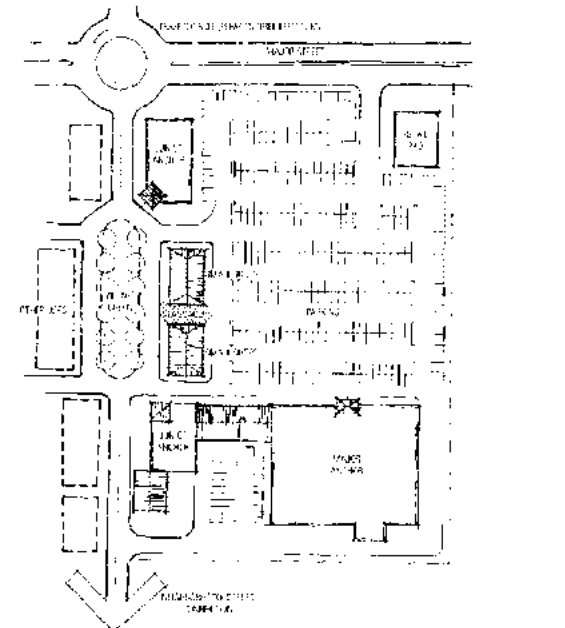
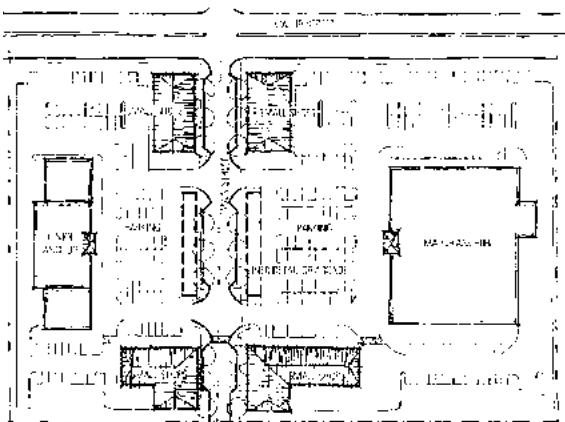
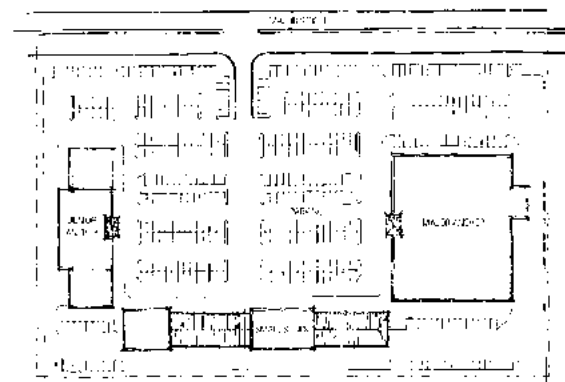
investment can be redirected by comprehensive plans that limit retail opportunities at locations only accessible by car. The type and scale of retail can also be influenced by the extent to which traffic is concentrated on arterial roads.

Concern with access also means that every step of arrival is carefully considered, as both a physical and mental progression. Potential patrons need to get to the front door easily. When commuting by car, a “free right” into a center is superior to waiting at an intersection to make a left turn. Parking needs to be reasonably easy to find, and the path from parking to storefront must be easy.

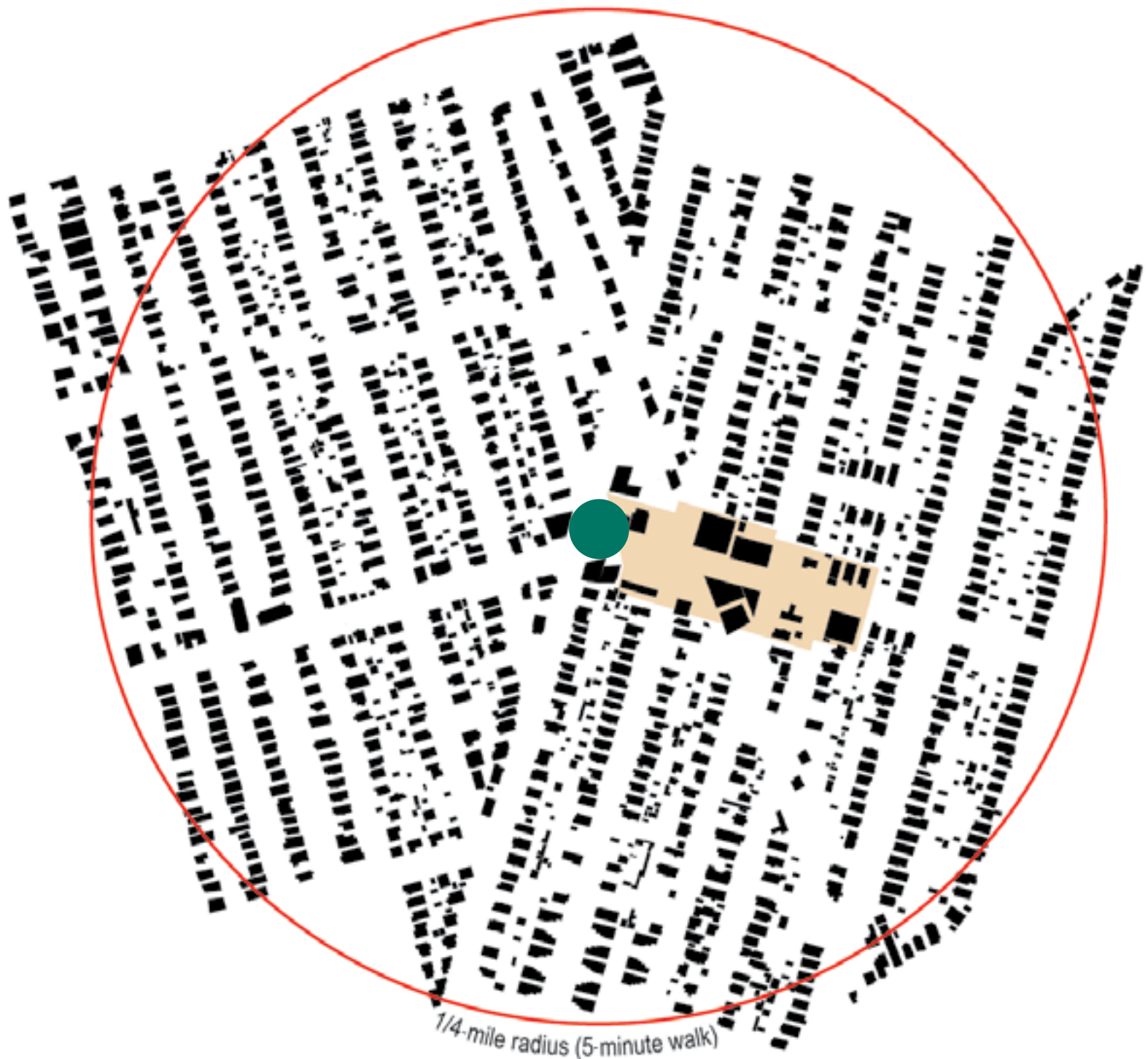
Retailers continue to be concerned about parking placed behind shops. Retail layouts should focus on ways to minimize and amenitize the path from car to store. The street itself has to be exceptionally inviting, as do the passages between parking and street. Parks can accompany streets to deliver sufficient amenity to make smaller tenants more comfortable.

**Next Steps**

Only through awareness of its economics underpinnings can retail be transformed. Design techniques that meet the concerns of the retail industry, and make great places, deserve clarification and consistent application. Institutional change must also be fostered. The performance of new urban centers needs to be better understood to give assurance to potential investors. And new financial and institutional mechanisms need to be developed that recognize the “value added” by new urban centers in the long term. No small feat, but then again, look how far we’ve traveled.



Conventional neighborhood retail centers are accessible primarily from a major street (top). The simplest modification provides a new street connection to the abutting neighborhood and lines this new “main street” to the extent possible (middle). The vitality offered by retail can be integrated more fully within a neighborhood by reorienting shops toward a village green (bottom).



COURTESY OPTICOS DESIGN

# The Art of Creating a Neighborhood Center

**N**ighborhoods are the building blocks of great communities and towns. The heart of these neighborhoods is the mixed-use neighborhood center that provides day-to-day amenities, places for community members to congregate and socialize, incubators for small businesses, and office spaces for small business owners within walking distance of their homes.

By Dan Parolek

Within this neighborhood framework, new urbanists have nearly perfected the ability to develop good housing types and site plans, but projects have continued to struggle to integrate vibrant neighborhood centers, which are the backbone of true walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. In addition, the discussion of mixed-use centers often neglects the small, convenience-related centers, which are important for the function of a neighborhood, and jumps directly to larger regionally-oriented town centers or lifestyle centers. This article summarizes a study that was conducted to explore the characteristics of neighborhood centers within Berkeley, Calif. The goal of the study was to document both the physical and statistical characteristics of existing centers in order to define what a neighborhood center is, to establish an understanding of what makes them function, and to take an initial step toward developing a best practices document for new neighborhood centers.

## Context and Setting

Berkeley, Calif. is known as the “City of Neighborhoods.” Most of the neighborhoods were built as street-car suburbs near the turn of the 20th Century, and many of them are oriented around a center that gives each area its own unique identity.



Westbrae Center in Berkeley, Calif.

Berkeley’s street pattern is an integrated network of streets that provides primary through streets at approximately 1-mile intervals along with secondary through streets at 1/2-mile intervals. A large majority of the

Neighborhood Centers occur at the intersections of these secondary streets. Within this study, two neighborhood centers within Berkeley were explored: 1. Westbrae Center at Gilman Street and Santa Fe Avenue; and 2. Northbrae Center at Hopkins and Monterey Streets. The Westbrae neighborhood center provides day-to-day amenities for residents of the community, as well as passers-by. Gilman Street is one of the primary connectors through Berkeley, with a freeway on-ramp within a mile of the Center. It includes a bagel store, bakery, deli, dentist’s office, laundromat and several restaurants, as well as a 7,500-square-foot natural grocer. The Northbrae neighborhood center provides residents and visitors with the ability to shop European style, passing from the butcher, fish market, and tea and cheese shop to the large natural produce market. This center has more of a city-wide draw than Westbrae. Both centers provide urban nodes integrated within the neighborhoods that transition very quickly to single-family homes.

## Defining the Parameters of a Neighborhood Center

Types and Sizes of Businesses: Food as an Anchor

The types, sizes and distribution of uses within the neighborhood centers play a critical role in the way they function within the neighborhood and provide amenities for the residents. Both centers have between 43,000 and 50,000 square feet of leasable space and up to 10,000 square feet more of outdoor sales, in both instances fairly large nurseries. The typical store size is approximately 1,300 square feet, about a 65-foot by 20-foot space, which is small by current standards. The larger

**NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**  
*continues on next page*

COURTESY OPTICOS DESIGN





Westbrae provides daily amenities for residents and passers by in its town center.



uses, a natural grocer and a fresh produce market within the two centers, are 7,200 and 8,000 square feet respectively and serve as one of the anchors for the other retail uses in the area. The opposite anchor ends in both instances are created by the aggregation of adjacent food-oriented businesses and landscape nurseries. At Westbrae, a deli, bagel shop, bakery and nursery provide this anchor, and at Northbrae, a butcher, fish market, bakery and large nursery serve the same purpose. In both instances, there are very few retail uses with the exception of the nurseries and flower shops.

**General Urban Design Characteristics**

The neighborhood context that provides well designed density and strong connectivity through an interconnected network of streets is critical to the function of the centers. The neighborhoods are composed primarily of single-family dwellings, with duplexes, small apartments, and in-law units integrated throughout. The average lot sizes are between 4,000 and 5,000 square feet, and many are as small as 35-feet by 100-feet. The Westbrae Center has 3,600 rooftops within 1/2 mile. The counts for Northbrae were not available, but due to the similarity in development patterns, this number would likely be similar. As mentioned above, the footprints of the neighborhood center buildings are quite small. This enables an easy transition to the residential buildings, which in many instances are immediately adjacent to commercial and retail uses, and easier accommodation of parking, critical for the overall character. The former characteristic is visible in the figure ground plans that illustrate a quick transition from the commercial uses to residential uses and through the different transect zones.

The street design in both instances accommodates fairly large volumes of traffic, but not at the expense of the pedestrian character of the streets. Buildings, in most instances, are built to the right-of-way, engaging the sidewalk and helping define the outdoor room. The

design of Gilman Street in Westbrae, which has an ADT of between 10,300 and 11,300 cars, is 36 curb to curb, accommodating one lane of traffic and one parking lane in each direction. The sidewalks range from 6- to 12-feet in depth. The design of Hopkins Street in Northbrae accommodates an ADT of 5,900 cars and is 40 feet curb-to-curb, also accommodating one lane of traffic and one parking lane in each direction. The sidewalk depth is 15 feet and in a few instances includes 2 feet of planting in front of the buildings. Parking in both centers is accommodated primarily with on-street parking in combination with a few small lots that accommodate from seven to 43 spaces. Within the Westbrae Center, nearly 380 on-street parking spaces were counted within 300 feet of the Gilman Street and Santa Fe Avenue intersection.

One of the most important urban design characteristics of these neighborhood centers is their location within the larger city context and circulation patterns. As mentioned above, the network of Berkeley Streets has secondary through streets at approximately 1/2-mile intervals, with the primary through streets occurring at 1-mile intervals. The pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers are not located along the primary thoroughfares such as University Avenue or San Pablo Avenue, but rather find themselves at the intersections of two of the secondary through streets. The critical factor here is that these secondary through streets provide connections not only into the adjacent neighborhoods, but also to other parts of the city. Therefore the volumes of traffic, which range from 6,000 ADT to 12,300 ADT, include traffic from outside the adjacent neighborhoods and allow the commercial uses to capture some of these people for their customer base.

**Statistical Characteristics**

Some important data was collected to help form a better understanding of the neighborhood centers and

surrounding neighborhoods that were studied. Car ownership was one of the statistics that was quite telling about the walkable nature of the neighborhoods. In both neighborhoods, 6 percent of the households own no cars, 39-45 percent are single-car households, 39-42 percent are two-car households, and less than 10-13 percent of households own more than two cars. The median household incomes were slightly higher than the rest of Alameda County, which has a median income of \$56,379, compared to \$61,500 for Westbrae and \$66,000 for Northbrae.

**Conclusion**

At the Retail Council in San Diego, much of the discussion centered on whether or not current circulation patterns and street designs are driving the proliferation of larger retail venues. Until there is a change in the current system, it will be hard to tell whether or not this is true. This study illustrates that neighborhood centers within established neighborhoods in Berkeley thrive at the intersections of much smaller and less traveled streets within the overall network, the one caveat being that these streets also provide citywide connections, not just internal local connections. This emphasizes the importance of an interconnected network of streets, not only locally but also throughout the region, in relation to integrating viable neighborhood centers into new neighborhoods. If circulation patterns and street standards are not changed, it is likely that these types of neighborhood centers will continue to not be a viable part of current development practice, and town centers and lifestyle centers will be the most likely alternative. With the belief that street standards will undergo significant changes in the near future, the long-term goal of this study is to begin a database that will assist in the creation of a best-practices document to help facilitate the design and implementation of neighborhood centers within new development.

**Westbrae Retail Analysis**

Use	Square Footage	Off-street Parking
Westbrae Deli	4000 sf	-
Westbrae Nursery & Garden Supply	7200 sf	2
New Leaf Gallery (Outdoor space - unconditioned)	3400 sf	-
Ana's Flowers & Gifts	1300 sf	
Westbrae Laundry	1300 sf	
New Medice: Tapes & Books	1300 sf	10 total - shared
Conference Recording Services	1300 sf	
Mama Lan's Vietnamese Restaurant	1300 sf	
Gilman Auto Repair (lot size)	3500 sf	5
Henry's Service & Auto Repair (lot size)	2100 sf	5
Lalime's Restaurant	1800 sf	-
Berkeley Natural Grocery	7200 sf	-
Heidee's Flowers	100 sf	-
Toot Sweets Bakery	1800 sf	5
Boogie Woogie Bagels	2900 sf	-
Design Firm (2nd Floor)	2900 sf	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,400 sf</b>	
Average	2,713 sf	
Largest	7,200 sf	
Smallest	100 sf	

**Neighborhood Centers**

	Westbrae	Northbrae
Typical Residential Lot Size	5000 sf	4000-5000 sf
Typical Retail Size		
Smallest	100 sf	600 sf
Largest	7200 sf (Natural Grocer)	7000 sf (Produce Market)
Typical Residential Block Size	200' x 1200'	300' x 600'
Ethnic Mix		
Caucasian	60%	83%
Asian	16%	11%
African American	9%	3%
Median Income	\$61,500	\$66,000
Average Age	41.1	39
Cars per Household		
None	6%	6%
One	45%	39%
Two	39%	42%
Three or more	10%	12.20%
Parking Spaces		
On-Street (within 300 feet)	372	91
Off-street	18	64
Percent (Housing) Rented	36%	25%
Dwelling Units Within 1/2 Mile	3,564	
Primary Street ADT	12,300 ADT	6,000
Secondary Street ADT	5,000 ADT	5,900

This research was completed within the College of Environmental Design at The University of California at Berkeley during the fall semester of 2003. Daniel Parolek was the instructor. Drawings and statistical data were compiled by the following students: Shay Boutillier, Kyla Burson, Jeff Carney, Christina Ferracane, Caitlin Pope-Daum, Rodrigo Orduna, Kristina Smith, Jantrua Ting, and Todd Vogel. Source: 2000 Census.



# From Malls to Main Streets

By William Anderson

**A**cross the country, owners of obsolete shopping mall owners are facing critical choices: whether to refurbish the mall, continue operating a declining asset, or consider a more dramatic change to retain the property's value.

Local communities in which these malls are located face a declining tax base and derelict properties. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) retained the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) to investigate how these mall sites, which CNU refers to as "Greyfields," can be converted into new, mixed-use town centers that employ new urbanism and smart growth principles. This investigation builds upon CNU's "greyfields to Goldfields," which estimates that there are hundreds of malls that face this dilemma and describes an attempt to convert malls into mixed-use developments by focusing on six in depth regarding the process of conversion.

## Site and Location Factors

Many sites were built in the 1950s-1970s on "greenfield" sites that were originally planned for suburban regional shopping centers. Consequently, they are not nestled within a traditional urban grid. Instead, they are surrounded by the street design of the era in which they were built – long, curvilinear and wide. The exceptions were the regional malls that preceded Paseo Colorado and CityPlace. These prior malls were redevelopment projects that closed original streets and assembled urban blocks to create superblock sites. These interruptions of the traditional grids to accommodate the "new" type of 1970s mall were meant to stimulate economic revitalization in their downtown locations. While these first-generation redevelopment efforts had initial success, they failed as catalysts for their surrounding districts, in part because their intentionally self-contained format was designed to capture and hold customers.

All of the sites, except for Belmar, are less than 50 acres, relatively small for modern regional shopping centers. The relatively small sites reflect the industry standard when they were built, or the land constraints of their urban locations. These site constraints limited the previous regional shopping centers' ability to expand and add anchors to compete with newer, larger, more modern regional shopping centers.

In suburban markets, small can mean failure if larger centers that offer consumers a greater critical mass of shopping options are present in the region, particularly in middle income markets which characterize most examples.

While the sites typically are small for a modern regional shopping center, they are relatively large for infill mixed-use development. The parcel sizes presented opportunities that were realized once it was determined that a conventional regional shopping center could no longer work.



*"As the opportunity emerges, the public, property owners and developers come together. The private sector sees an opportunity to create value for its holdings."*

Easy access to public transit is a common feature. The projects inherited public transit lines that served the original regional shopping centers, and, in some cases, enhanced them to serve the new mixed-use development.

The sites front or are near major arterials, a requirement for the original regional malls. This inherited infrastructure links a site to other commercial, employment and civic centers in the region. While inconsistent with plans to accommodate pedestrians, arterial streets can be assets by providing roadway capacity to introduce higher-density, mixed-use development without requiring significant and costly off-site traffic mitigation measures. Because of these arterials, few projects are fully inte-

grated into the surrounding urban fabric. Rather, most attempt to create a new urban identity within the site while addressing challenging edge conditions where they front arterial streets, with mixed success.

These conditions demonstrate that traditional mixed-use buildings nearby are not necessary preconditions for town center reuse projects.

## Civic and Cultural Activities Distinguish the Town Center Reuse Projects

Most examples leverage civic or cultural institutions to create a civic identity for the new town center. Integrating the developments with civic functions helps establish the development as an important public civic place, a true town center, distinct from simple mixed-use developments.

## Project Readiness

Some of the centers had to fail badly before the sites were resurrected as town centers. The asset value had to fall significantly to a point where the redevelopment option presented a better economic return than struggling with a dying shopping center.

City governments and their redevelopment agencies were all active partners. Municipal support is essential. It is important that both the public and private sides have knowledgeable point persons who have the trust of their respective decision-makers.

It is important to spend adequate resources on communicating about the project objectives to make sure the message is clear, so that public support is sustained. It is likely that members holding council seats will change during the course of concept development and entitlement processing. They look to their constituents for direction.

An extensive, structured public planning process is required that brings the development/design team, city and public together. The developer/owner cannot simply present a plan and expect acceptance.

Public opposition can doom a project. Local residents and businesses are often adverse to change and many hold out for the level of retailing and services provided by the old mall, even if the competitive market prohibits it. The general public does not easily accept the concept that higher density is beneficial and may not necessarily generate greater impacts, particularly traffic, because of the land use mix. Opposition to redevelopment powers is common.

Most of the projects achieved relatively quick approvals, particularly given their complexities and the significance of the changes proposed. However, this was only possible after communities undertook a careful community review and concept formation processes prior to officially entering into the formal entitlement approval stage. While the entitlement approval process

**MALLS TO MAIN STREETS**  
*continues on next page*

was usually short, the preparatory community planning and design work often took much longer.

The parcels that comprise a regional shopping center site typically include the anchor department stores, in-line retail, parking, and pad sites, with easement agreements, owned by multiple entities. The parcel configurations are not designed for town districts and streets, which complicates implementation considerably. Some parcels need to be consolidated to facilitate the planning and implementation.

Once the property is consolidated and planned, it needs to be re-subdivided into its various components to facilitate financing, phasing, accommodate infrastructure and streets, and to create the diversity that characterizes a town district. Here is where the real skill resides, on the parts of city government, developers and project designers.

Redevelopment's power of eminent domain and public financing, particularly tax increment financing, were crucial to implementing most new town centers. Even when eminent domain is not used, it is useful leverage during negotiations. It is best to form a new tax increment financing district after the older mall has declined or closed, so that the assessed valuation base is lower and the potential tax increment greater.

Public capital leverages private capital. Typically, the public capital was used for parking, amenities, some infrastructure and, occasionally, to write-down land costs or cover impact fees. It is needed because the redevelopment of an obsolete regional shopping center into a new mixed-use town district incurs extraordinary costs, such as condemnation, utility retrofitting, structured parking, transit facilities, and superior amenities and public places.

Property and sales tax increment, parking revenue special assessments, tax reserves, impact fees, and revenue from land sales and leases are among the sources used to support these public investments.

### Developer and Lender Capacity

Since the intent is to create value over time as development is phased in and the synergies between uses mature, some developers are private companies and partnerships that intend to hold on to their properties as they develop long-term value. However, some developers are publicly traded companies that tend to have shorter-term horizons and higher hurdle rates of return, and hope to sell the asset in the near-to mid-term.

All are experienced developers, usually with shopping center experience. Often the developers with shopping center experience will partner with developers having residential experience, especially if the two uses are in separate buildings in the new town district.

The sources of private financing for development and land acquisition are the same as for most large-scale developments – private investors, public investors, REITS, insurance and pension funds, and commercial banks. However, attracting private capital to fund mixed-use development is relatively difficult. Sometimes, buildings have to be subdivided into condominium space to divide the vertical uses by type, so each can be financed and sold separately. Conflicts may arise between the investors and lenders of each use regarding whose loan or investment is paid first from project cash flow or sale, in case of bankruptcy.

The mixture of uses helps stabilize long-term value by coordinating uses that are mutually supportive and providing multiple sources of revenue as an investment hedge to diversify risk. However, this benefit is realized over the long-term, sometimes too long for some types of investors. It helps to have lenders who are familiar with the local market and who understand the value of the developer's relationships with the community. The track record and reputation of the development team are important.

Amortizing costs over future phases must take into account each debt and equity investor's time horizon. This is very difficult due to their different tolerance for risk and cost of funds. Lenders want as much up-front project revenue as possible to pay off loans, while developers want to leverage loan dollars. Investor's equity funds are necessary to cover most predevelopment costs, which can be extraordinary.

### Positioning a Mixed-Use Town Center Project

The town center model that builds on new urbanism principles is a very different proposition than the regional mall. The town center has an outward orientation, with stores, housing and offices facing streets rather than just interior corridors. The parking field is vanquished, with structure parking providing for more intensive use of the site. Public open space comprises a much greater portion of the property.

As the opportunity emerges, the public, property owners and developers come together. The private sector sees an opportunity to create value for its holdings. The community sees an opportunity to create a worthy public place that is walkable and sustainable while removing blight. The city sees an opportunity to improve civic life while restoring some of the fiscal resources that were lost when the original shopping center declined. Cumulatively, the growth in these assets builds a place-making dividend that emerges over time. In the best situations, this dividend adds value to surrounding properties as they create beloved places.

## MALLS TO MAIN STREETS SUCCESS STORIES

### PASEO COLORADO, PASADENA, CALIF.

Paseo Colorado redeveloped a 1978 enclosed regional mall site, the 600,000-square-foot Pasadena Plaza, into a mixed-use district fronting Pasadena's Colorado Boulevard, the internationally renowned Rose Parade route. The development restores a historic civic axis, closed off when the enclosed mall was originally built. Opened in fall 2001, Paseo Colorado contains 560,000 square feet of commercial uses, 387 luxury apartments, and 10,000 square feet of flex-office space. The project has eight layers – two levels of subterranean parking, two levels of retail space, and four levels of housing.



### CITYPLACE, LONG BEACH, CALIF.

The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency and developers demolished Long Beach Plaza, an 870,000-square-foot enclosed mall on a 12-acre downtown super-block site, to create CityPlace, a mixed-use retail and housing district within a reintroduced street grid. CityPlace creates an urban mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented district with discount "box" retailers as the anchors (WalMart, Ross, Albertson's and Walgreens). Opened in fall 2002, CityPlace includes 478,000 square feet of retail space, 221 apartment units, and 120 for-sale condominiums.

### BELMAR, LAKEWOOD, COLO.

Belmar is the redevelopment of Villa Italia, a former 1.4 million-square-foot enclosed regional mall on a 106-acre suburban site. When completed, Belmar will include 960,000 square foot of retail space, 1,300 rental apartments, 200 for-sale housing units, and 760,000 square feet of office space. These uses will be organized within a new main street and grid system that uses small blocks to integrate the site with surrounding neighborhoods and to create a true urban town center where one did not exist before.



### PARK FOREST VILLAGE, ILL.

Park Forest Village is the one example where a public agency, the Village of Park Forest, is owner and master developer. The site is the location of a former 750,000-square-foot open-air regional mall located on 48 acres in the heart of Park Forest, a "garden city" planned community in the outer suburbs of Chicago. The Village obtained the property from the private owner for back taxes owed, and is in the process of redeveloping the site with 275,000 square feet of retail space, 335 rental apartments, 65 for-sale housing units, 155 senior housing units, 75,000 square feet of office space, a Village Hall, a community theater and museum, and a new main street to integrate the uses. Portions of the project are developed, while others are currently under construction or planned.

### MIZNER PARK, BOCA RATON, FLA.

Mizner Park was one of the first large-scale mall conversions in the country. Built in phases, Mizner Park was completed in 1998. The developers redeveloped a 28-acre enclosed Boca Raton Mall into a district with 236,000 square feet of retail space, 272 rental apartments, 260,000 square feet of office space, and cultural facilities, including the Museum of Cartoon Arts. A new linear street system and a grand parkway plaza terminate at the new 5,000-seat Count de Hoernle amphitheater next to the Boca Raton Art Museum.



### WINTER PARK VILLAGE, WINTER PARK, FLA.

Winter Park Village is the redevelopment of the 400,000-square-foot enclosed Winter Park Mall on 32 acres. When completed, the Village will contain 322,000 square feet of retail space, an 84,000-square-foot Regal Cinema, 58 loft residential units over retail space, and 120,000 square feet of office space, of which 80,000 square feet is over retail space. The developers reintroduced the grid system to integrate the site with existing neighborhoods and to provide civic space. The first phase has been completed and the long-term plan is approved.

### COMPETITION FORCES CHANGE

Insurmountable competition from newer centers with new retail formats creates Greyfields. Owners first react to this competition by trying to upgrade or reposition their center. Many eventually find that they are no longer competitive as regional shopping centers due to a combination of obsolete design, small size, significant regional competition and lack of freeway visibility. The regional competition eventually forces change.

### POPULATION GROWTH CREATES MARKETS

Most of the new town district sites are located in growing regions where development is sprawling. The new town districts provide a housing alternative to people who want to be in walkable communities, with easier commutes because they live closer to transit or where they work.

### COORDINATING MULTIPLE FINANCIAL INTERESTS

Disagreement among the original owners or between the developers, landowners, anchors and the city is common because of different interests, time horizons, tolerance for risk, and objectives. The original property owner often is not involved in the town center reuse project.



Three big box tenants occupy upper floors in the DC USA project in Columbia Heights in Washington, D.C., while Whole Foods and smaller tenants are located on the ground floor sidestreets.

COURTESY BRIAN O'LOONEY

# Parking Solutions for Urban Centers and Cores

By Brian O'Looney

New urbanists have successfully transformed the housing market in the United States. New, pedestrian-friendly, single-family home types are now being regularly built by large, national home building companies, not because jurisdictions are forcing them to, but because they are more efficient and profitable than former housing products. New typologies that were extremely rare before, such as the stacked maisonette (or the two over two) are now commonplace. In new residential neighborhoods, the demands of the automobile are regularly managed with design devices such as alleys and parallel parking.

The challenge facing new urbanists in commercial districts is much more daunting. Much of the economics of retail in the American economy is based upon the automobile. Land value is directly tied to the number of cars that pass a particular property's doorstep. Entrenched market forces still assign higher values to single-use suburban retail products than equal square footages in mixed-use buildings.

New urbanists are meeting the challenge. The same creativity is being exhibited in managing vehicles in urban centers as in residential neighborhoods. The willingness of new urbanists to share triumphs quickly turns yesterday's inventions into today's typologies. New urbanists point out the successes to clients, who then convince their lenders of their merits and get them built. Better solutions are becoming commonplace, and their typologies will become easily valued and understood, sight unseen, by market forces. A stock of new retail commodities has been created: live-work units, podium buildings and "donuts" that serve market needs and satisfy pedestrian-oriented goals. This article is about the achievements in commercial district parking and the unique commercial prototypes resulting from those parking solutions that further pedestrian-oriented goals.

## On Parking Demands and Strategies for Urban Centers and Urban Cores

The consequences of commercial parking demands are evident throughout the American landscape. Retailers often demand parking ratios of one space per 250 square feet. Many jurisdictions require that restaurants park at one space per 75 square feet. In an optimized surface parking lot, a single parking space requires around 300 square feet of land, including the portion of drive aisle necessary for access. To surface park any single-story of commercial space in suburban America, over half the available land area must be dedicated to a parking lot. For a two-story building, three-quarters of the land must be set aside for parking.

The ideal solution to create a wonderful pedestrian realm is to bury the parking. In established, urban environments where the land values are high, such as downtown Washington, D.C., this has been done for decades. (Washington actively discourages above-grade decked parking by counting it as FAR.) At Carlyle, in Alexandria, Va., Cooper Robertson was able to plan most of the buildings with underground parking. In Vancouver, high-rise residential point towers with low-rise bases have been built with almost all the parking below grade at a ratio of

one space per dwelling unit.

However, the cost of underground parking is often prohibitive, even in many close-in suburbs. Structured parking is rarely an option in the initial phases of new greenfield pedestrian-oriented environments, particularly those that have to begin their lives competing economically with the suburban paradigm. Public financing vehicles can help, such as TIFFs and PIDs, but often it is left



LAURENCE AURBACH

*"Better solutions are becoming commonplace, and their typologies will become easily valued and understood, sight unseen, by market forces."*

up to the designer to come up with a creative solution to manage parking, without public financial assistance and without structured parking at the beginning. Yet a variety of new strategies have been implemented, often assisted by shared parking agreements where retail and office space can park at ratios exceeding one space for every 300 square feet.

Typical design strategies include "teaser" or convenience parking, where a small amount of the required parking is located at the front door of the project, while the "overload" parking is in a large lot or deck on the periphery of the project. Typically, a liberal use of on-street parking throughout the project acts as convenience parking. A few projects, such as the Portofino at Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla., the Crescent in Dallas, and Riverside in Atlanta, use urban plazas modeled after Eu-

ropean precedents where automobiles can park in the core of the shopping environment.

Teaser strategies will work for retail occupancies where goods are transferred from store to car via bags, but will not work where goods are transferred by shopping carts, such as supermarkets and other "big box" occupancies. Retailers such as Safeway, Whole Foods and Target have achieved success befitting a pedestrian-oriented environment with vertical parking adjacencies, where carts are transferred by special escalators or elevators to structured parking below, beside or above.

The majority of pedestrian-oriented commercial district designs made today relegate parking to large decks at the edge of the projects where they sacrifice the least desirable border of their site or the facade of a "C" street for the benefit of the environment at its center. The edge thus affected is then negatively impacted and limited in its ability to grow in the future.

Street walls consisting of parking decks were to be avoided when David M. Schwarz/Architectural Services had the opportunity to design three new commercial districts from scratch. The firm had seen firsthand the damage street wall parking decks do to urban environments in their experience in Fort Worth, Texas, where they have placed a variety of building types/programs into the confines of the existing 200-foot by 200-foot urban grid. In Fort Worth, whole blocks have been combined, bridged and killed by parking decks. At Reston Town Center in Reston, Va., and the Washingtonian Center in Gaithersburg, Md., this model has been implemented (perhaps as a desperate fallback), and where retail has been placed below decks the tenants survive with effort.

When it came to creating a new commercial district for Southlake, Texas, the city refused to allow any residential uses within the plan (although this has recently changed). Cognizant of the parking load this directive necessitated, potential block arrangements were studied that could accommodate the parking load without sacrificing any of the street wall to a deck. While parking is a land hog horizontally, it is efficient vertically in relation to retail and office occupancies. For every two stories of office over retail, with their standard market heights, one can achieve four levels of parking deck.

After much study, an urban plan where parking decks can be placed in the center, like the earlier 400-foot by 680-foot block at Bethesda Row in Maryland was created. This project was discussed at length at the first CNU Council, so the discussion here will be brief. Blocks used at Southlake allow for the construction of the most efficient, unadorned parking deck at the block's center, and three quarters of all building facades can be built as economically as possible, as they face either the deck or alleys leading to the deck. The block breaks create code separations that allow buildings to be built without party walls and using the least expensive building code construction type (in this case Type III, unsprinklered). The arrangement as an urban plan has the fringe benefit of allowing two sides of each block to be built without requiring a deck. Two adjacent blocks could create what David Schwarz calls an "attachable urban fragment," where the project could begin with a small "critical mass" that would be surface parked but could grow, if tended well by those who follow, into something more.

TYOLOGIES continues on next page

### Commercial District Superblocks Containing Structured Parking

If the project has elicited one criticism, it is the size of the blocks, as identified at the first CNU Council where it was presented. The larger block sizes required for the future parking decks are ameliorated by breaking them down with a series of secondary streets (alley or vehicular block breaks). These breaks act to create a network of smaller, more pedestrian scaled blocks.

While the 460-foot by 460-foot blocks for the two-story buildings at Southlake are large, suburban commercial district plans with greater densities potentially require even greater block sizes. Another, newer David Schwarz project illustrates this point.

Frisco Square, eventually to become the center for a city of 250,000 people by 2020, contains a four-story commercial district, where Frisco's City Hall, library, police station and other municipal offices will be built. It is expected that the Dallas Area Rapid Transit rail system will be extended to the site along the Burlington Northern right of way. Four-story buildings start their lives as residential over retail but over time are intended to convert to entirely commercial uses.

The Frisco superblock attempts to create a block of four-story commercial uses that fully envelopes its parking load, avoids more expensive building construction, phases easily, and allows the creation of a pleasant pedestrian-oriented environment at its perimeter. Parking deck height was limited by the city to four stories, so the resultant blocks at Frisco are large, at 900-foot by 500-foot.

Efforts were again made at Frisco, as at Southlake, to limit the perceived street length by using vehicular block breaks that read as streets and by notching corners of the larger blocks to accommodate squares and plazas. Clearly, the blocks could have been smaller by increasing the height of the decks, burying some of the parking, introducing permanent residential, using smaller non-market floorplates and utilizing more expensive construction devices such as party walls. Nonetheless, the Southlake and Frisco master plans responsibly address one of the biggest challenges facing planners of commercial districts today: how to reduce the actual size and the perceived size of blocks containing structured parking.

The smallest block containing a deck can be achieved by using a "donut" scheme. Donuts are parking decks surrounded by ventilation on two sides, a party wall and 35-40-foot deep wood frame liner residential. Torti Gallas & Partners has designed donuts as small as 220-foot by 246-foot. Donut blocks are almost always built at one time.

A slightly larger donut (330-foot by 360-foot) can be built in phases by marrying the Southlake prototype with a standard donut building. Full depth buildings on the two sides of the block facing a 60-foot alley can provide ventilation to the future deck built later with liner residential.

Blocks can also be made without sacrificing phasing flexibility by incorporating commercial uses on one, short side of a block and residential uses on the other three sides. This can be seen in the 300-foot by 600-foot blocks in Baldwin Park by Torti Gallas, which surface parks.

The perceived sizes of blocks can be ameliorated by planning devices such as vehicular block breaks and corner notches described earlier. One can use clever tartan grids that intersperse larger (deck-bearing) blocks with smaller ones, as in Jindalee Town Center, by Ecologically Sustainable Design and the unrealized Oakhurst Plan, for Orlando, Fla., by DPZ, both seen in earlier Council Reports. If the financial resources are available at the beginning of a project, a large deck surrounded with liner buildings can be built day one at the center of a project to store the overflow parking from neighboring blocks, as in the Mirimar Town Center plan by Torti Gallas.

Paradoxically, the inclusion of mass transit often increases the size of superblocks in urban centers being designed today. Certainly, the presence of mass transit reduces the vehicular load from adjacent uses, so that,

for example, residential buildings requiring two spaces per apartment in the suburbs may only require one space per unit in a transit-oriented development (TOD). However, mass transit stations, particularly those along rail lines in suburban locations, come with a huge parking component to serve the needs of those commuters who live a few miles away. This parking load often places at least one large parking structure near the entrance to the transit station, as in the seven-story garage planned adjacent to the PATH station in Harrison, N.J., by Torti Gallas. The requirements of intermodal bus depots, such as turning radii and bus staging areas, can also be particularly onerous when one is attempting to craft a pleasing pedestrian environment. Integration of their requirements will often challenge the designer to utilize devices, such as the urban plaza at Twinbrook, Md., to hide their impact.

As some optimists have suggested, one can hope that

that create appropriate street environments.

New applications of old suburban products are plentiful and include the previously mentioned office over retail buildings in the plan for Frisco Square. These contain leasing agents ideal, competitive, 100-foot by 200-foot suburban office floorplates. Another example is City Heights Retail Village, CA, by Fehlman La Barre Architects, where four standard 6,000-square-foot pad site restaurants [including Denny's, McDonalds, and Starbucks] create an urban street edge. Standard strip malls with better facades have been placed opposite one another to create a pedestrian realm in a variety of places, including The Avenue at White Marsh, Md., Bowie Town Center, Md., and Valencia Town Center Drive, Calif. These have become a commodity unto themselves, recognized as "lifestyle centers." Two-story Targets have been built in Gaithersburg and Wheaton, Md., Home Depots have parking decks, and urban Whole Foods and Safeways throughout the United States integrate doors onto the street and structured parking.

The new typological workhorses of pedestrian-oriented retail have been the "live-works" unit, as developed by Tom Dolan and others, "flex" buildings and variants of the "podium" building. The typology and code implications of different "Live-Work units: "Live-Within, Live-Above, Live-Behind, and Live-In-Front" were discussed by Andres Duany in the second Council Report and will be passed on here.

One transition product that has been invented, Torti Gallas' flex buildings at Baldwin Park, contains spaces at the ground floor that can be converted from residential to retail as the retail environment intensifies. The Gables buildings in Celebration, across Celebration Boulevard from Market Street, are similarly convertible from residential to commercial uses should demand arise. Koetter Kim & Associates created space in their Canary Wharf Riverside project that will eventually convert to retail as more of it gets built.

Podium buildings contain four or five stories of wood frame construction above a concrete pedestal, separating residential occupancies from retail below. It is a staple of urban center designs, used in 101 San Fernando, San Jose, Calif.; Abacoa, in Jupiter, Fla.; Santana Row, in San Jose, Calif.; West Village in Dallas, Texas; King Farm, Md., and countless other projects.

The podium type has been modified to contain senior housing over neighborhood retail at Otay Ranch, Calif., and expanded to hold huge big-box occupancies below, such as in Pentagon Row, Va. Uwajimaya Village in Seattle's International District puts a network of garden apartments over a large supermarket/home store. Safeway has now built stores with residential above in Portland, Ore. and is building one in Mission Bay, Calif. The most ambitious expansion of the podium type has been Sandy & Babcock's 380-foot by 540-foot podium blocks at Santana Row (San Jose, Calif.). Here hundreds of residential units sit atop a pedestal of a retail garage deck surrounded by liner street-level retail. The residential uses above are an enclave with its own street network and private garages.

As land value is increased in new urbanist master plans, opportunities are created to utilize building types that were previously inconceivable, like the Santana Row block. Some are simple, like the 20-foot deep buildings at Mashpee Commons by DPZ, while others mix types, like the numerous permutations of retail liner along a supermarket or big box. A particularly exciting new development is the DC USA project in Columbia Heights, Washington, D.C., by Bower Lewis Thrower Architects for Grid Properties, where three big box tenants occupy upper floors of a large retail project, leaving the ground floor to a Whole Foods on the side street and smaller tenants on 14th Street. The big boxes (Target, Bed Bath & Beyond, a health club and others) are on floors two and three, accessed by elevators and escalators in a large drum the middle of the block facade, facing the new metro station. The facades in front of the big boxes have large



In regards to retail, it's all about the parking. The ideal solution is to bury the parking so the pedestrian realm is not sacrificed. To address this issue in the plan for Baldwin Park in Orlando, Fla. (shown above), a surface parking lot is surrounded by commercial uses on one side of a 300-foot by 600-foot block and residential uses on the other three sides. In blocks of larger sizes and higher density uses, structured parking replaces the surface parking lot.

TORTI GALLAS & PARTNERS

over time, as urban center masterplans mature, the dependence on the automobile will be decreased. Eventually, portions of the parking structures required for the growth of urban centers will no longer be necessary and can be replaced with housing or other more beneficial uses. Research into parking habits at the urban centers being built today will enable parking consultants to provide more exacting, and therefore less conservative, assessments of parking requirements, and better plans should result. Mechanized parking systems, such as those by Wöhr and Klaus, are now being incorporated in numerous projects in Berkeley, Calif., by Panoramic Interests. As terms such as "puzzle lift" "triple lift" and "dependant lift" enter our vocabulary, the way we look at parking may be completely transformed.

### On Typologies and Commodities

A Montgomery County, Md., pad site, facing the main arterial on the edge of a TND will sell for well over \$1 million dollars, while an identical amount of retail square footage in a mixed-use building, in the same location, is worth less than one-third that amount. Finance mechanisms that are in place for pad sites, shopping centers and malls are not yet available for retail in mixed-use buildings. Pad sites are a commodity like the burgers sold within their confines, as without inspection, one can understand the product and immediately assess its value. Purchasers of pad site retail need not worry about complications from mixing uses. Theoretically, for an investor, if the traffic counts are identical, the value of a vacant pad site in Nevada would be equal to one outside Mobile, Ala.

New urbanists are creating a number of retail typologies that are becoming commodified as real estate products. As new tools like geodemographics help finance markets understand the typologies, they become accepted, and their valuation gets more refined. The new commercial prototypes are taking two forms: the application of old suburban products in ways meeting pedestrian-friendly goals, and the invention of completely new typologies

# The Retail Transect in a Regional Context

By Seth Harry

**T**raditional urbanism represents an outwardly simple, yet highly evolved system for human habitation that encompasses all of the necessary ingredients for daily living in a compact, efficient and pleasing form. Of all the elements comprising traditional urbanism, which includes residential, civic, recreational, commercial and retail uses, retail has proven to be the most challenging to reintroduce into traditional urbanism, when held to contemporary standards of retail planning and market criteria.

The transect, however, provides one means of effectively reintegrating retail uses into a traditional urban context by proportionally allocating land uses and transportation infrastructure, relative to density of population, such that retail uses are accurately provided for in both scale and distribution commensurate with, and proximate to, the demand for those goods and services.

This relationship, when properly realized, hierarchically balances the consumer market's access to retail uses (and vice-a-versa) resulting in a more efficient use of natural resources and infrastructure investment, a reduction in our degradation of the natural environment, and a more convenient means of accommodating daily needs.

The Smart Code describes regional demarcations in two fundamental ways: at the sector (regional) level, by tier, and at the community level, by context zone (T-zone). The Tier defines the larger regional context in which development may occur, while the T-zone reflects more the specific nature in which that development should happen.

To a certain extent, while the Tier designation (which is largely determined by existing regional factors such as existing or proposed infrastructure, current or anticipated residential and/or employment concentrations, the presence – or lack thereof – of sensitive environmental areas, etc.) influences the larger contextual framework to which a development proposal must re-

spond, it is the T-zone that defines the specific scale and nature of the uses that may take place within that development. For this reason, it is the T-zones that most directly affect the generation of retail consumer demand, and should therefore also most directly determine the appropriate physical and market-derived response to that demand.

## DEFINING THE RETAIL TRANSECT

The most significant characteristic of retail in a regional urban context is that its scale grows incrementally, and in a cumulative fashion, relative to its associated placement within the transect. In other words, as the transect zones increase in both density and complexity (from T2 through T6), traditional urban retail should correspondingly increase in both scale and diversity.

The specific nature of this cumulative accretion is generally dictated primarily through the transportation network hierarchy mentioned previously, whereby a full spectrum of street types and transportation modes, hierarchically deployed within the comprehensive regional fabric, yields a full spectrum of retail typologies, serving everything from a neighborhood-oriented, pedestrian-based trade area, to a full regional-scaled retail consumer market. This arrangement is not only efficient and self-regulating, by definition, in terms of balancing location-specific retail demand and supply, it also encourages retail competition to take place primarily between retailers of similar size and resources.

## RETAIL TYPOLOGIES

Fundamental retail center typologies are based upon recognized patterns of consumer spending, relative to tenant composition and frequency of need—all of which also tends to define the sizes of their respective trade areas. These types, which have been codified by the Urban Land Institute to represent standardized models for the purposes of financial and market feasibility analysis, are also applicable to a traditional urban setting. The equivalent traditional retail classifications are as follows:



THE TOWN PAPER

### Neighborhood Store

A retail business that provides a convenient location for quick purchases from a wide array of products (predominantly food). They are usually less than 5,000 square feet in size, with convenient access and parking, and with extended hours of operation.

### Main Street Shops

A collection of stores and commercial establishments providing for the sale of personal services (dry cleaning, barber shop, shoe repair) and convenience goods (food, drugs and sundries). Usually anchored by a small personal/convenience or drug store, and possibilities including a local restaurant/café, it has a typical gross leasable area of up to around 20,000 square feet.

### Town Center Shops

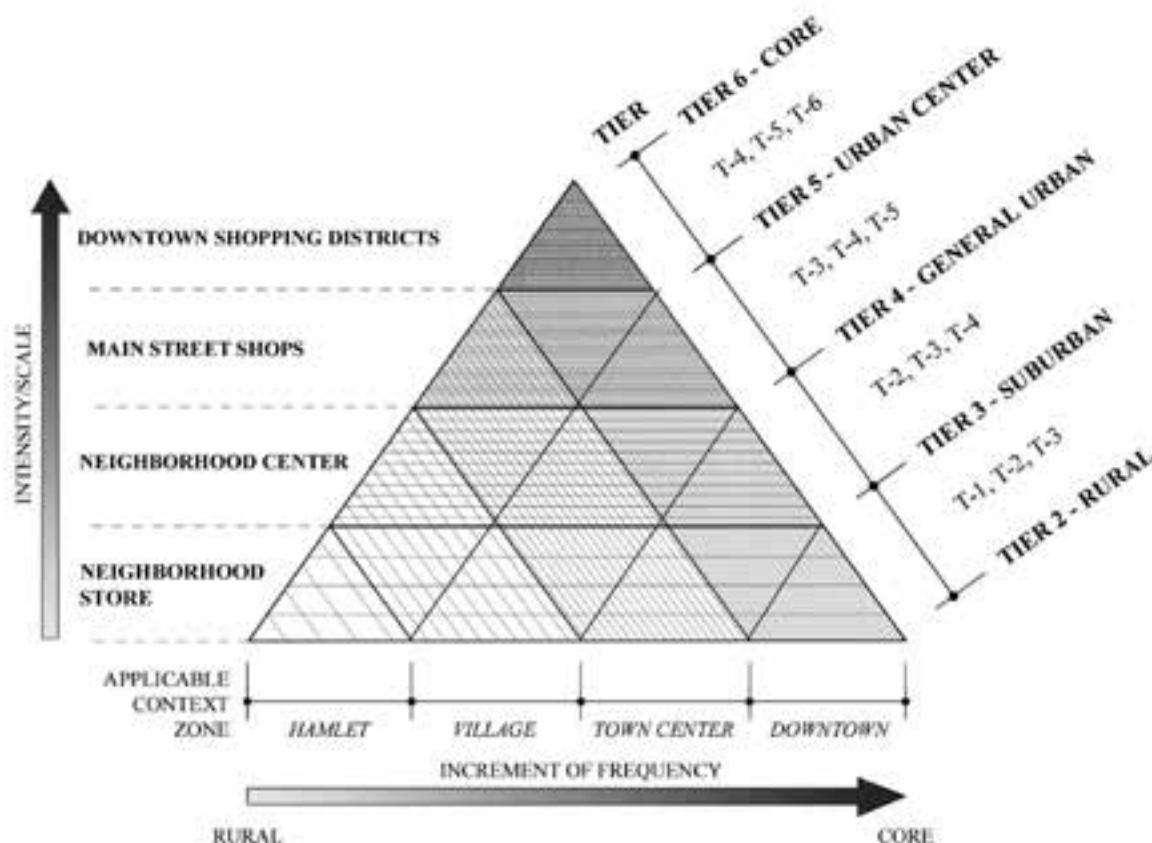
A supermarket-anchored, neighborhood-serving center providing for range of daily needs and personal services. Ideally sized around 50,000 square feet, it can typically range in area from between 30,000-80,000 square feet and may include a junior department store and several food establishments at a variety of price points and service levels.

### Shopping District

A regional center providing for the sale of general merchandise (apparel, furniture, and home furnishings and accessories) in depth and variety, as well as a range of services and recreational facilities, in addition to a wide array of dining and entertainment options. It is anchored by one or more full-line department stores of not less than 75,000 square feet, with a total gross leasable area for the entire center of around 500,000 square feet, although it can range from 300,000 to 850,000 square feet.

In a conventional suburban context, the trade areas of the above center types can vary significantly due to variations in population density and household incomes (and hence spending potential), but more frequently they vary primarily based upon a given retail center's ability to access the market through distortions in the existing transportation networks (i.e., locations on heavily traveled, over-scaled thoroughfares generally provide access to larger markets than are locally available, resulting in disproportionably-scaled formats, relative to localized demand).

However, in a transect-based regional plan, retail center types can be more closely matched to the spe-



SETH HARRY AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

RETAIL TRANSECT *continues on next page*

# Place-Based Retail Strategy

By Dena Belzer and Shanti Breznau

## Understanding Retail Taxonomy

Both the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) have created retail center taxonomies that are intended to help developers and retailers understand what types of retail uses and tenant types go into different kinds of retail centers and districts. The idea is that once a developer understands how much land they want to allocate for retail uses, they will know the approximately physical dimensions of their center, including building square footage and number of parking spaces, as well as what types of tenants they should pursue for their leasing strategy. For many developer and retailers the somewhat simplistic formulas included in these taxonomies make up a very easy recipe for success.

The new urbanists have also wrestled with retail taxonomies including an attempt to translate the ULI/ICSC taxonomies into language that parallels the CNU Charter. At the CNU Retail Council there was a great deal of discussion about taxonomies that are summarized in 1. Although the table is compiled in a shorthand that lacks detail about sizes of centers or stores and tenant types, it is relatively easy to grasp the general ideas, including the similarities and differences among the taxonomies.

However, the real challenge confronting developers and communities trying to make sound land use



policy related to retail and mixed-use development, or trying to revitalize existing retail areas, is determining where any given place fits within any of these taxonomies. Even more confounding, many retail opportunities do not fit neatly within the categories of places defined in any of these taxonomies. So then, how do developers or planners begin to make good decisions about retail places?

## Determining Retail Identity

Traditionally, developers have used market studies to help them determine what kind of retail component to include in any project; cities also often use

market analysis in determining land use policy. Unfortunately, the data available for retail analyses is frequently inadequate to provide enough information beyond generalities that match up with the broad retail typologies. This information is not helpful for more specific tenancing strategies, especially for projects on infill sites rather than green field locations, nor does it provide guidance in understanding how to revitalize existing retail districts.

A better model for assessing retail opportunities moves beyond the traditional two dimensional supply/demand dynamic associated with market studies to a model that looks iteratively at multiple dimensions. These dimensions include supply and demand issues, but also two other key elements: the characteristics of the particular place under consideration and the community capacity to support appropriate development, including adopting supportive land use regulations. Figure 1 illustrates the dynamic relationship between these four elements.

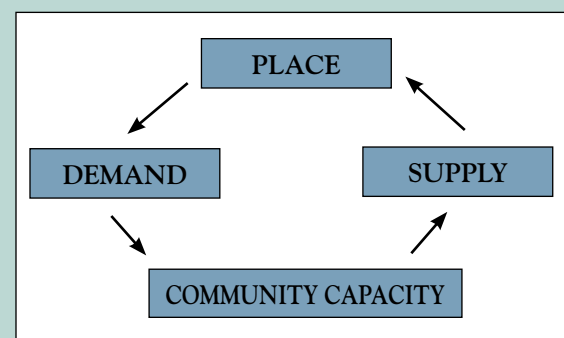


Figure 1: Place-based Retail Model

## Understanding the Model Elements

Each element within the place-based retail model, characteristics of place, demand, community capacity and supply, involves thinking through fundamen-

**RETAIL STRATEGIES** *continues on page 33*

cific consumer patterns and spending potential of the community they're serving, resulting in more consistent economic performance and greater resiliency to changing market dynamics for the centers and the individual retailers contained therein.

## LOCATION WITHIN THE TRANSECT

The following diagram illustrates the optimal relationship between retail center types and transect-based community development models. In general, retail

happens not at all in T1, and in T2 happens only sporadically and is often related to the rural/agricultural nature of its Tier or regional context, such as country general merchandise/farm supply stores. From T3 through T6, however, retail tends to occur in a much more modulated and rational basis - again, increasing in scale and diversity in response the ever-increasing density and complexity of the urban fabric around it.

In reading the diagram, one should also note that as retail grows cumulatively within the Transect (moving from T2 to T6), most of the retail typologies from the

lower levels of the Transect will tend to reoccur, but at increasingly higher frequencies, in response to the changes in population density noted above. In other words - the most fundamental level retail center category, the Neighborhood Store, might only occur at 1/2 mile intervals in T3, but would also be present, albeit at much higher frequencies, such as on every corner, in T5 or T6. This would again be as a result of the correspondingly higher population densities, and greater spending potential, available at those more intensive urban levels.

Also, each preceding retail center increment will generally be embodied in the makeup of the subsequent one (that is to say, most of the components of a neighborhood center would be present in the tenant composition of the main street shops, and so on).

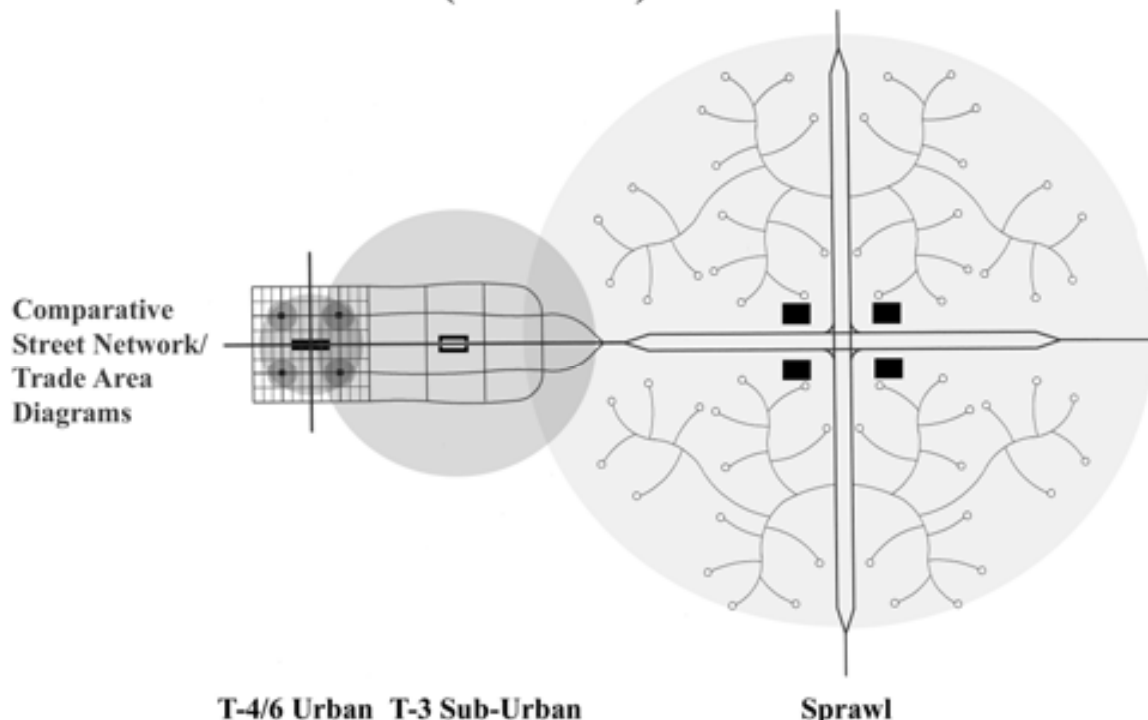
## CHALLENGES TO TRANSECT-BASED RETAIL INTEGRATION

Through its separation of uses, conventional suburban development effectively severed retail from its traditional, intrinsic relationship with the community it served. Combined with a growing suburban reliance on significantly coarser arterial networks suburban retailers have responded in kind. Wider spaced but substantially larger, high-speed, high-capacity thoroughfares, have resulted in increasingly larger retail formats, spaced ever further apart.

This physical disconnect between community and retailer, exacerbated by our over-reliance on large-scale arterials, has created, in effect, a regional population of car-borne, free-ranging consumers - easily aggregated at major intersections in sufficient quantities to sustain virtually any sized retail box imaginable. As a result, "standard" retail formats have increased steadily in size and associated trade area for the past 50 years.

Unfortunately, this model affords no direct proportional relationship between the size of the retailer and its immediate context, bringing significant market distortions into play, and disrupting the ideal balance between consumer and provider, marginalizing both the concept, as well as the viability, of neighborhood retail. And as the viability of neighborhood retail has been impacted,

## Regional Retail Scale Comparative (Illustrative)



	T-4/6 Urban	T-3 Sub-Urban	Sprawl
Square Footage/ Residential Unit	Same	Same	Same
Relative Scale	1.0	1.5	3.0 +
Average Distance To Daily Needs	1/2 mile	2 miles	3 - 5 miles or more

SETH HARRY AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

**RETAIL TRANSECT** *continues on page 38*



New Seabury Shopping Center, ca. 1970s.

## Lessons Learned from Mashpee ...



Photos above: Mashpee Commons today. A greyfield site transformed to a vibrant town center.

IMAGES COURTESY MASHPEE COMMONS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP



Replacing New Seabury Shopping Center, Mashpee Commons is now an established town center. Next on the agenda: infill with several residential neighborhoods.

# Transforming Shopping Centers to Town Centers

By Douglas Storrs

**M**ashpee Commons is a traditional town center similar in most of its physical aspects to any traditional town center found throughout New England. The principal difference is that Mashpee Commons represents the successful transformation of a neighborhood convenience shopping center into a traditional town center. If Mashpee Commons was to fit any category it would certainly fit the definition of a greyfield site. The lessons to be learned from the Commons history are quite simple and, most importantly, are relatively easy to replicate.

For all the praise it has received, it has also been the subject of an equal amount of debate about what is wrong with the plan, what should have been done differently, etc. The bottom line is that Mashpee Commons is a success, and most if not all of the lessons learned in the planning and development of the town center are easily transferred to other sites and projects.

A notable difference between Mashpee Commons and virtually all other TNDs is that the town center was advanced before the residential neighborhoods. Building the mixed-use town center first accomplished two very distinct goals. First, it addressed the immediate and growing market for retail, office and entertainment opportunities in this location. The existence of the former shopping center, the existing regional roadway system adjacent to the site, and the steady population growth in the region had helped to establish the location as a viable retail site. However, the existing center had remained predominately in a static state since it was first constructed both architecturally (1960s' mansard buildings surrounded by parking lots) as well as in its tenant mix. As such, the market demand for new space had been established but was not being fully met.

The second concept for advancing the town center first was based on the belief that a significant comfort level would be obtained by the future resident's if they could see, touch and interact with the town center. This is directly opposite from most TNDs where the resident buys into a residential neighborhood with the hope and belief that the town center will ultimately be built (which does not always happen) and will ultimately look like all the renderings in the marketing brochures. This is a significant difference between Mashpee Commons and virtually all other TNDs and represents a model that should be able to be replicated on other sites to their — and all TNDs — ultimate benefit.

Mashpee Commons began as the transformation of a

neighborhood convenience shopping center comprising 62,000 square feet. Its principal tenants were a food store (20,000 square feet), a home furnishing/hardware store (14,000 square feet), and a cluster of smaller buildings with a bank, restaurant and a two-screen theatre.

In 1986, after working with the town planning and zoning boards for over one year, the plan for Mashpee Commons was adopted. Although it has been altered slightly over the years, the original plan for the town center with 100 units of housing on the upper floors was approved by the town, and the transformation of the center began in the fall of that year. The first phase included the addition of four new buildings, the relocation of the parking lots, the creation of the two new major intersecting new streets (Market and Steeple Streets), which served to establish the core of the downtown, and the construction of the town green.

In most every aspect there is very little magic in the design, merchandising and operations of Mashpee Commons or any other town center.

While Mashpee Commons is not perfect and there have certainly been many real and perceived criticisms of the plan, it does work. It is a financial success for the owners and the community, it has been held out as a model for development elsewhere in the United States, and it has created a template for others to emulate.

### What Makes Mashpee Commons Work

The principal design for the Commons centered upon the goal of altering the appearance and function of the existing center. The first step was accomplished by breaking down the existing buildings in the shopping center into smaller components related to both the architecture and the tenants. New streets were added to each side of the existing buildings with new buildings proposed along the new streets so as to create double loaded streets with on street parking. The parking lots were relocated to the rear of the new buildings. All of the supporting infrastructure was put into place to support the new buildings in concert with the construction of the new streets.

This was an important design element that enabled both the town residents and prospective tenants to understand, in the earliest timeframe, what the ultimate layout of the town center would actually look like and how it would function.

The town center is based upon most of the simple but inherently beautiful design principles of any historical

## Case Study

MASHPEE COMMONS, MASS.

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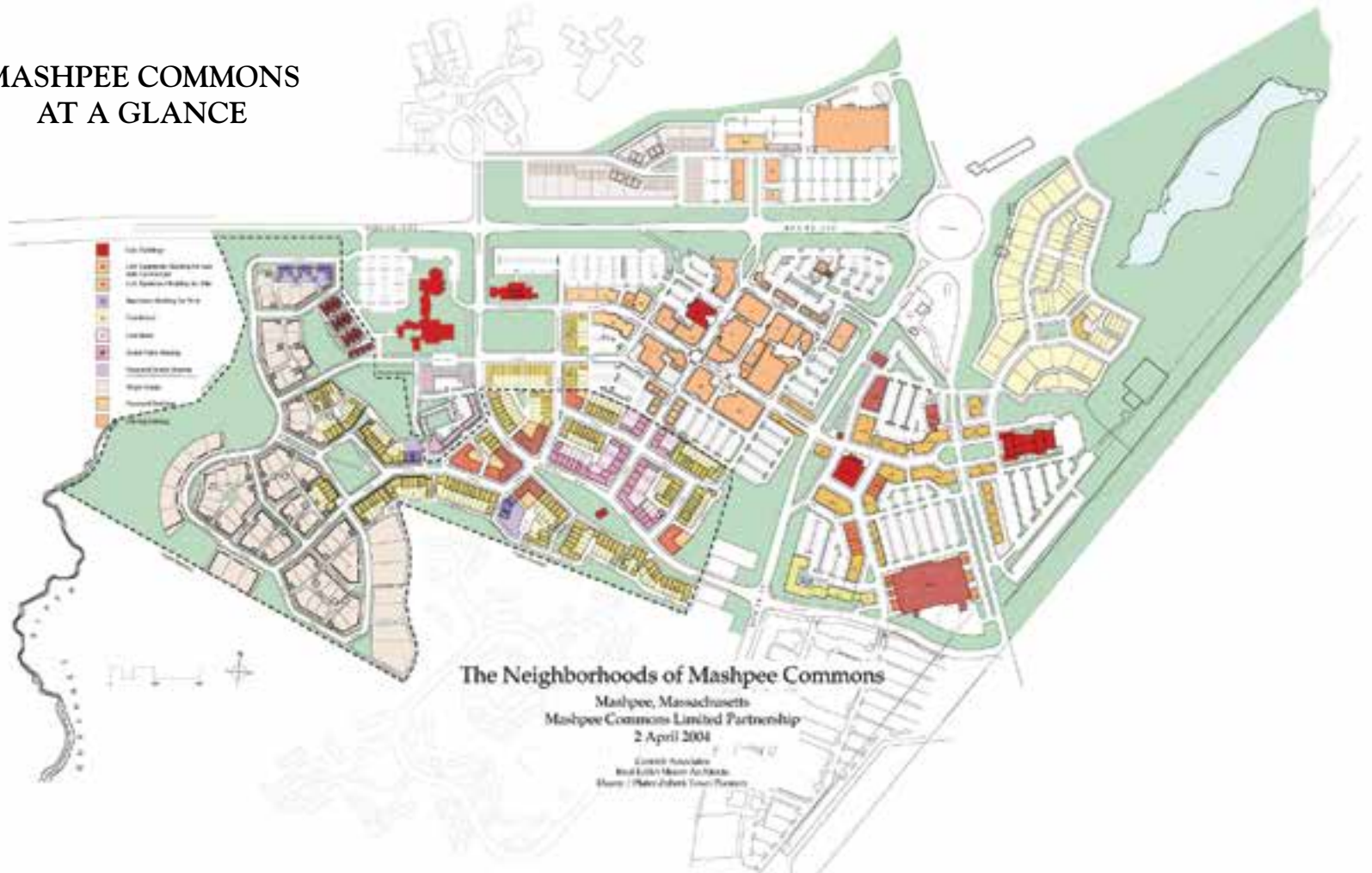
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MASHPEE continues on page 25



**MASHPEE COMMONS  
AT A GLANCE**



- Mashpee Commons represents the conversion and expansion of a 62,000-square-foot convenience shopping center.
- Today Mashpee Commons consists of 278,946 square feet, 85 commercial tenants and 40 residential units above the retail space.
- Mashpee Commons has been built out on a “market demand” basis beginning in 1986. Certain years have seen multiple new buildings constructed, and other years have seen no activity.
- In 1993 Mashpee Commons consisted of 153,362 square feet. At that time, the North Market Street neighborhood located on the north side of Route 151 (a regional connector) was constructed and now consists of 103,000 square feet of mixed retail, office, bank and 60,000-square-foot food store. There are currently 17 tenants in North Market Street.
- Permitting for additional mixed use commercial neighborhoods and two residential neighborhoods is continuing.

New England town center. It is laid out as a simple three-block downtown (long block, short block, long block) in an ascending manner up a slight topographic incline. The church, library, town common and various municipal buildings have been located at the western end of the downtown at the highest elevation in the town center. While the fire and police stations existed at the beginning of the transformation of the shopping center into a town center, the library, 1,200-seat Catholic church, Boys and Girls Club, senior center and elderly housing all have been built over the past decade as Mashpee Commons has continued to expand. This was an opportunity that was seized upon in an effort to create a municipal component of the town center. It has clearly assisted in establishing the Commons as the center of the community but is not a critical component of the plan. It is a benefit but not a criteria for a successful town center.

The blocks are based upon a simple 60-foot dimension from building to building which reflects the standard of a 10-foot sidewalk, 8-foot on-street parallel parking space and a 12-foot travel lane. While there has been a great deal of debate over the size of the travel lane (11-foot vs. 12-foot) and the size of the sidewalk (10-foot vs. 12-foot) neither of these dimensions has a critical impact one way or another on the success of Mashpee Commons. The existence of the on-street parking and the streetscape improvements (trees, etc.) are the most important elements of the street profile.

The post office was located on the center of a block. This was viewed as a very important component of the town center and thus was in a prominent location. This was highly successful in the early years but in recent years has created a point of congestion due to the growth of the town center and the community at large.

Entertainment is provided by a six-screen movie theatre, and multiple restaurants of varying types are interspersed, not clustered, throughout the site.

**Retail Mix Promoted**

It has been the goal from the beginning to provide a broad mix of retail stores that would not be dominated by national tenants. This is an important element of Mashpee Commons’ success. Although national tenants are very important to the mix and are equally important to the lending institutions when they review the make-up of the town center, the tendency in most town centers is to seek them out as the dominate retailer. This



creates a situation where most town centers emulate the tenancy of most malls and shopping centers. The ability to differentiate the merchandising mix as has been accomplished in Mashpee Commons is what enables it to stand out apart from most centers. The mechanizing plan has always been based upon a goal to create a balance of one-third nationals, one-third regional and one-third local tenants. Although local tenants often take more “hand holding” at the beginning they, and the regional tenants create a special and separate identity to Mashpee Commons not found in other commercial properties (shopping center or mall) in the United States. In addition, by building liner buildings in specific locations where we needed to create two-sided streets and “fix” the single-loaded aspect of the former shopping center, opportunities were created for very small retail spaces (350-500 square feet) that could serve as “breeder space” for new local tenants. Starting off in a small space keeps their operating costs to a minimum. If the tenant is successful, they can move to progressively larger spaces as their business expands. This has proven to be a highly successful way in which to nurture and work with new tenants.

Every tenant is required to provide their monthly gross sales figures to us. This serves to accomplish two things. First, every tenant has a percentage rent calculation built into their lease. This provides for a “sharing” of the success in the store. If sales exceed a spe-

cific level then Mashpee Commons, as the landlord, takes a negotiated percentage of the sales above this figure. In this manner the Commons is motivated to market, maintain and improve upon the town center, as it will only serve to create the potential for increased income above and beyond the base rent. Secondly, it provides for a “warning light” if tenants’ sales begin to drop or stray from the industry norm for sales per square foot. When this occurs, the tenant is engaged in a conversation about their business, which can result in any number of outcomes from repositioning, relocating to a better site or termination. Maintaining an unhappy tenant who’s business is clearly not going to be successful benefits no one, and it is best to address it as soon as possible.

The plan for Mashpee Commons continues to be put in place. The development of the three-block downtown has progressed in a very conservative manner with no new building constructed unless it was 50 percent pre-leased at a minimum. While this has lengthened the timeframe for build out, it has enabled the plan to progress in a manner that allowed for a continuing learning curve and in the long run has benefited the town center.

While each TND has its own unique site and market conditions, the lessons learned in the development of the Mashpee Town Center are clearly transferable to virtually any other TND.



Lined with privately owned live/work buildings, Kentlands' Main Street connects the early conventional shopping district with the town center. All three retail components form Kentlands Midtown.

## 15 Years Later, Kentlands Continues to Evolve

By Mike Watkins

I walked over to the diner in downtown Kentlands to proofread this piece over a cup of coffee after a quiet afternoon writing at home. As a regular there, I was not at all surprised when Nicholi, the assistant manager, joined me in my booth. We chatted for an hour or so about all kinds of things, confirming that the retail in Kentlands works well. Looking out the window as he hopped up to fix a drink for another customer, I was reminded that however well it may work, it is ... well, not beautiful. Fortunately, I suppose, the architecture is so cheap that it can really be considered temporary. Along with many others, I look forward to the day when we will have a downtown that works even better and is also beautiful! We very nearly ended up with a retail program here that was not nearly as useful as what we have today. The story of the retail in Kentlands always begins with the shopping mall.

### The Shopping Mall

When developer Joe Alfandre purchased the 352-acre Kentlands property from Mrs. Kent for \$43 million dollars in 1987, he obtained an option from shopping mall developer Mel Simon to purchase 70 acres for \$17 million dollars, allowing Alfandre to pay what he did for the property. Alfandre hired Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company to design a traditional neighborhood on the remaining 280 acres. Duany and Plater-Zyberk were excited about the possibility of seamlessly connecting a traditional neighborhood to a conventional shopping mall. Plater-Zyberk and Alex Krieger worked closely with the mall's developers, carefully respecting the many "rules" (visibility, plenty of parking, etc.) even accepting the footprint of a standard cruciform-shaped mall. In exchange, the mall was oriented so the food court spilled

## Case Study

KENTLANDS, MD.



Kentlands Market Square is owned and managed by a single developer.

out into a square that terminated the neighborhood main street. So, while the rest of the world would drive to the mall on the surrounding system of collector roads and park in the conventional parking lots surrounding the mall on three sides, people in Kentlands could simply stroll down Main Street to the town square and enter the mall.

The economic recession and changes in the shopping mall industry slowed the pace of mall development from 24 new malls a year to six, and Mel Simon decided not to build the shopping mall. Alfandre considered several options; the most exciting of those was a shopping center designed by Aldo Rossi. The giant, oval plaza with "no trees" offered retailers maximum visibility while defining a space of dramatic proportions. A more aggressive developer of Super K-Mart centers in northern Virginia, however, stepped in with a stronger offer to build a conventional shopping center on a portion of the site originally reserved for the mall. The sale of the regional retail ground to Beatty in 1991 was the only deal of its size in the Washington area at that time. The

price of the ground, however, was not what the mall would have commanded.

Simultaneously, Alfandre requested that the city of Gaithersburg allow him to convert some of the commercial density to apartments, which it did. Meanwhile, the development of the traditional neighborhood continued. Although not at its initial robust pace — it slowed with the economy — it consistently out-paced sales in nearby conventional subdivisions. Nevertheless, the failure of the realization of the one conventional piece of Kentlands, the shopping mall, led Alfandre to hand the project back to the lender in a "friendly foreclosure." The Great Seneca Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Chevy Chase Bank, took over the development of Kentlands. They inked the deal with Beatty, and the agonizing process of "refining" the design began.

The early proposals for the shopping center proposed three pad sites as the transition from the neighborhood to the shopping center. DPZ insisted on seamless pedestrian connections between the neighborhood and the shopping center and that the parking lots be designed as a system of streets and blocks that could be retrofitted with mixed-use development and parking garages in the future. The developer reluctantly agreed, not because of the merit of the ideas, but because it did not cost extra to do so. The mayor insisted that if Kentlands was going to have a K-Mart instead of a Nordstroms, it had better look like the recently opened elementary school. (The façade of a standard county school was redesigned by DPZ to look like a neighborhood school, complete with a classical pediment and columns, and not like the nondescript suburban institution that passes for a school elsewhere in the county.) Suggestions to the mayor that perhaps the classical language was appropriate for a school but might not be appropriate for a K-Mart fell on deaf ears. The proposal that perhaps the shopping center buildings might be designed to resemble the warehouse buildings typically found at the outskirts of town might be more appropriate, given both the use and

KENTLANDS continues on next page



THE TOWN PAPER

A recent charrette in Kentlands demonstrated how surface parking areas in the conventional shopping district can be converted to downtown streets and blocks with parking garages.

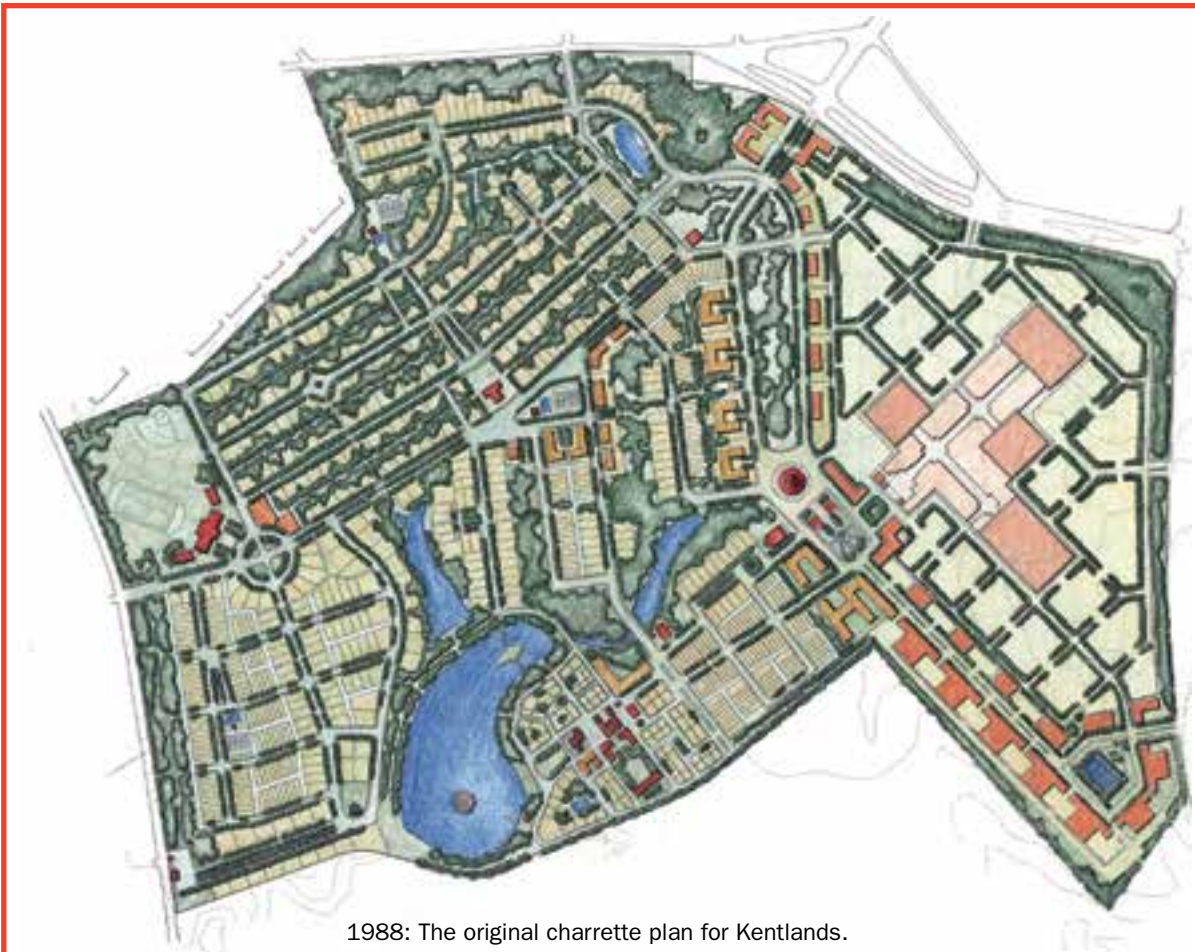
*“With Main Street now completed and the office building under construction in Market Square, it might appear to some that Kentlands and Lakelands are “done.” Not so. No authentic town is ever done.*

location, didn't get beyond the first hearing.

So, a shopping center of the classical order it was. Such a classical order, in fact, that Neil Payton, on seeing it for the first time, cried out “Palladio, call your office!” The details and materials, Eve Kahn reported, make your teeth hurt. Yet DPZ led the charge and campaigned vigorously for the approval of the shopping center. Of course we fought the detailing of the architecture, winning some battles and losing others. With the shopping center as opposed to the shopping mall, however, we knew we would have a far more useful retail program in Kentlands. Nordstroms is great for birthdays and Christmas, but the grocery and bank and dry cleaner and restaurants are useful on a daily basis. Beatty selected the chunk of property in the middle of the mall site for his shopping center. The remnants around the edges were filled in with fragments of development attempting, mostly successfully, to provide the transition from the shopping center to the neighborhood.

**Midtown**

Between the shopping center and the largely residential Old Farm Neighborhood of Kentlands were three blocks of land for which many schemes were proposed. One based on Fells Point, another on Cocowalk, another for “designer direct” stores. For various reasons, nothing got beyond the initial conceptual stage. In 1996 when developer Tom Natelli purchased the 343-acre property adjacent to Kentlands, the city threw the Kentlands' Midtown neighborhood and Lakelands into a development moratorium until a master plan could be developed that joined the two neighborhoods around a shared downtown. Afforded the opportunity by the city to ignore the bizarre location of the property line between Kentlands and Lakelands, DPZ worked with Natelli, Great Seneca Development Corporation and the City in a public design charrette to prepare a master plan for the downtown that was acceptable to three interested retail developers. Market Square was eventually purchased by Guy Beatty (developer of the Kentlands Shopping Center). Using the same architects and a similarly “inexpensive” architecture, Market Square was built and leased to a mix of local and national ten-



1988: The original charrette plan for Kentlands.



2003: The 15th Anniversary Charrette plan for Kentlands Midtown.

DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY

ants. DPZ brought a cinema, the major anchor of Market Square, to Beatty; yet despite the success of the theater evidenced by its recent expansion, Beatty, five years later, has yet to find a tenant for the restaurant site across the street.

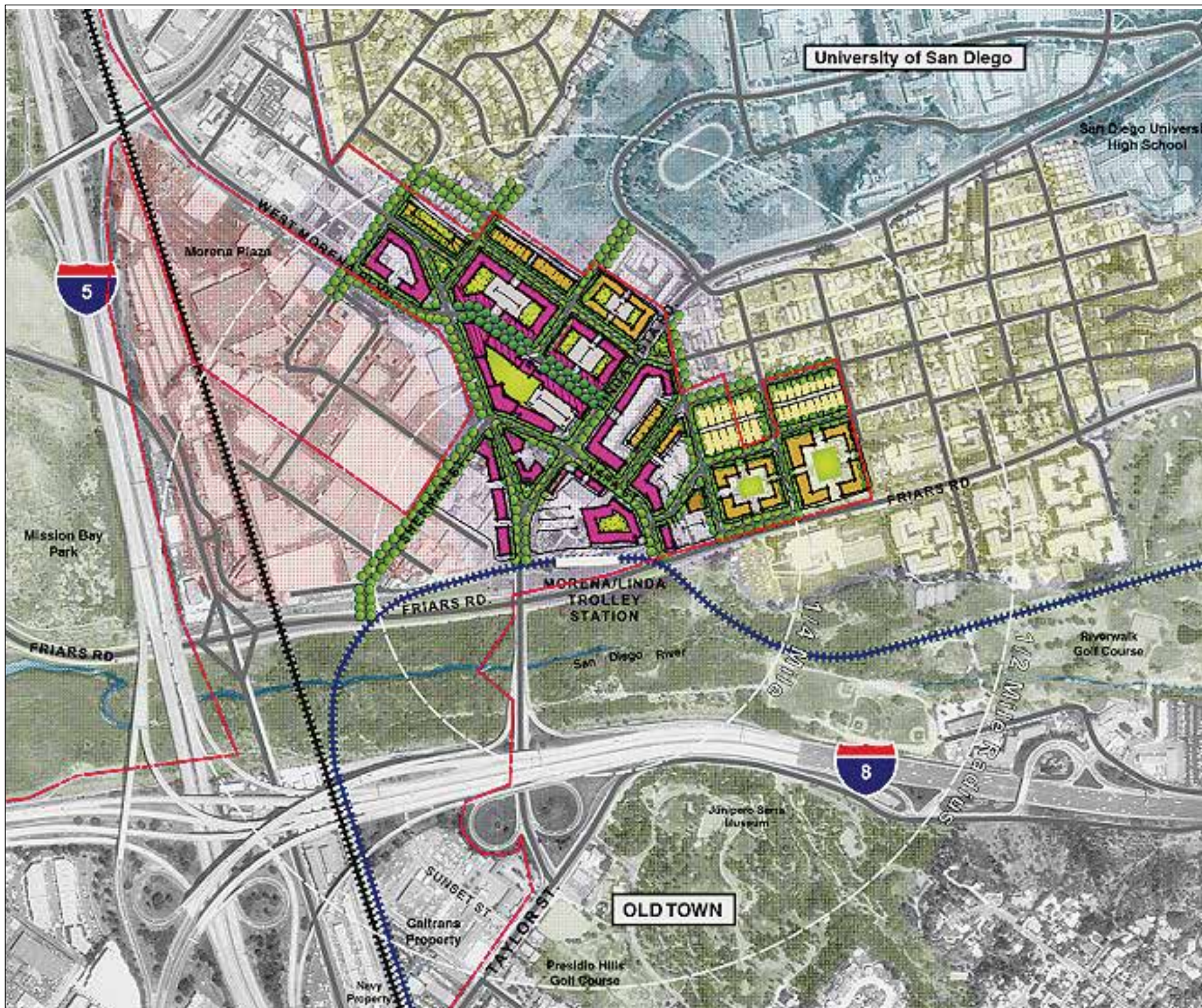
**Main Street**

With virtually all of the residential lots in Kentlands and Lakelands sold and only the live/work units lining Main Street remaining, two Kentlands builders got serious about building the one “product” that “no one had ever built before.” Initial sales for “live/work units” were slow. With such a charming name, it is little wonder. Once the first block was substantially complete and it was clear that it was just an ordinary main street, sales skyrocketed. One owner's unit appreciated \$150,000 between the time they put down a deposit and when they went to settlement. One builder called his sales person following a Monday morning company meeting to tell her they wanted to raise prices for the next block of units only to learn that she had taken options on every one of them that weekend. The live/work units are owned and rented in a variety of combinations. The Vasilis live with their two teenage children above their family's Greek restaurant (highly recommended if you find yourself in the neighborhood, by the way). Others are entirely owned by investors, and others are owned by a resident who leases the ground floor commercial space (as I do). Still others are owned by a business that leases an apartment above.

**We're Not Done Yet ...**

With Main Street now completed and the office building under construction in Market Square, it might appear to some that Kentlands and Lakelands are “done.” Not so. No authentic town is ever done. Last spring, the Upton's department store, poorly located (against the recommendation of DPZ and the city planning staff) behind the grocery store on one of the fragments surrounding the shopping center, was torn down to allow the construction of a parking garage surrounded by 307 luxury apartments. Although initially controversial, the city required the developer to add more ground floor retail, and the plan was approved. This is no small accomplishment and, hopefully, suggests the future of many of Kentlands and Lakelands one-story retail buildings and associated parking lots.

Rather than just throw a big party to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the first Kentlands charrette, a charrette was held to prepare a redevelopment plan for the predominantly retail portions of Kentlands. Nearly all of the original charrette team participated with Leon Krier in this exciting effort. The ideas generated provide the city with a great head start on the state mandated master plan review they will undertake of this area later this year. The variety of owners will make the task more difficult than it might have been. However, the development of design standards for future redevelopment would demonstrate the potential of the area and ensure the redevelopment over time of a still more useful and, this time, a more beautiful place.



A conceptual plan for the Morena District.

# Retail Development Starts with a Good Marketing Plan

## THE CASE OF SAN DIEGO'S MORENA DISTRICT

By Alex Greenwood

Urban retail is the holy grail of city planning: sought everywhere, shrouded in mystery, and maddeningly elusive. No other type of development depends so much on statistics, analysis and proper design. As a result, cities often fail dismally when they try to create an urban retail district.

I am not a retail expert, but I would like to share some practices that have made my retail projects more successful. These practices follow a simple concept: to develop successful retail, you must first craft a sound marketing plan and then use that analysis to guide every aspect of your development strategy.

We are using this approach to bring new life to a 20-block commercial district on San Diego's Morena Boulevard.

Morena is a hodgepodge of stores, warehouses, bars, restaurants and light industrial uses. The district has a central, convenient location, 10 minutes north of down-

### Case Study

SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

town, near the junction of I-5 and I-8. Although the area is blighted, a cluster of independent stores has survived over the years; and a growing number of residents are moving into the area.

Could this be a viable place for retail? If so, what retail strategy is appropriate? To find out, we conducted a step-by-step analysis, beginning with a candid look at retail demand.

#### Analyze Customer Demand

We gathered demographics for all people living in a 1-, 3- and 5-mile radius of the Morena District. Of particular interest were population by age, sex, education level and household income. We gathered similar data for the daytime worker population.

Using these data, we calculated the total disposable income available in the area. This allowed us to estimate the total square footage of retail that could be sustained by the existing population.

We looked for trends. What population growth was expected (residents vs. workers)? How was the population changing over time (e.g., income level, ethnicity, etc.)?

We also looked at nearby regional attractions, which could provide a secondary source of shoppers. Morena is adjacent to three such attractions: the University of San Diego (USD), Sea World and Old Town State Historic Park.

We tried to discern the typical profiles of shoppers in the area: What kind of lifestyle did they lead? Did they have children? What did they spend money on? How much was their average "ticket" when they dined out?

The ultimate goal, of course, was to identify retail needs that were not being met by existing stores – i.e.,

needs that could be served by the new retail district we wanted to create.

#### Size Up the Competition

After measuring demand, we analyzed the competitive market. Using sales tax data, local brokers and other sources, we examined: How much retail (categorized by sector) already exists within 5 miles of the target area? What are the lease rates, vacancy rates, and sales per square foot for retail? Where do people shop already? What are the strengths and weaknesses of those competing shopping areas?

Competitors lurk in nearly every direction for the Morena District, but the two largest shopping areas lay to the south and east. To the south, Old Town offers over 40 restaurants, plus art galleries and other tourist-oriented retail.

To the east, Mission Valley contains 4.3 million square feet of retail (!) including San Diego's largest shopping center, Fashion Valley Center. Mission Valley has essentially cornered the market on soft goods, specialty and lifestyle retail.

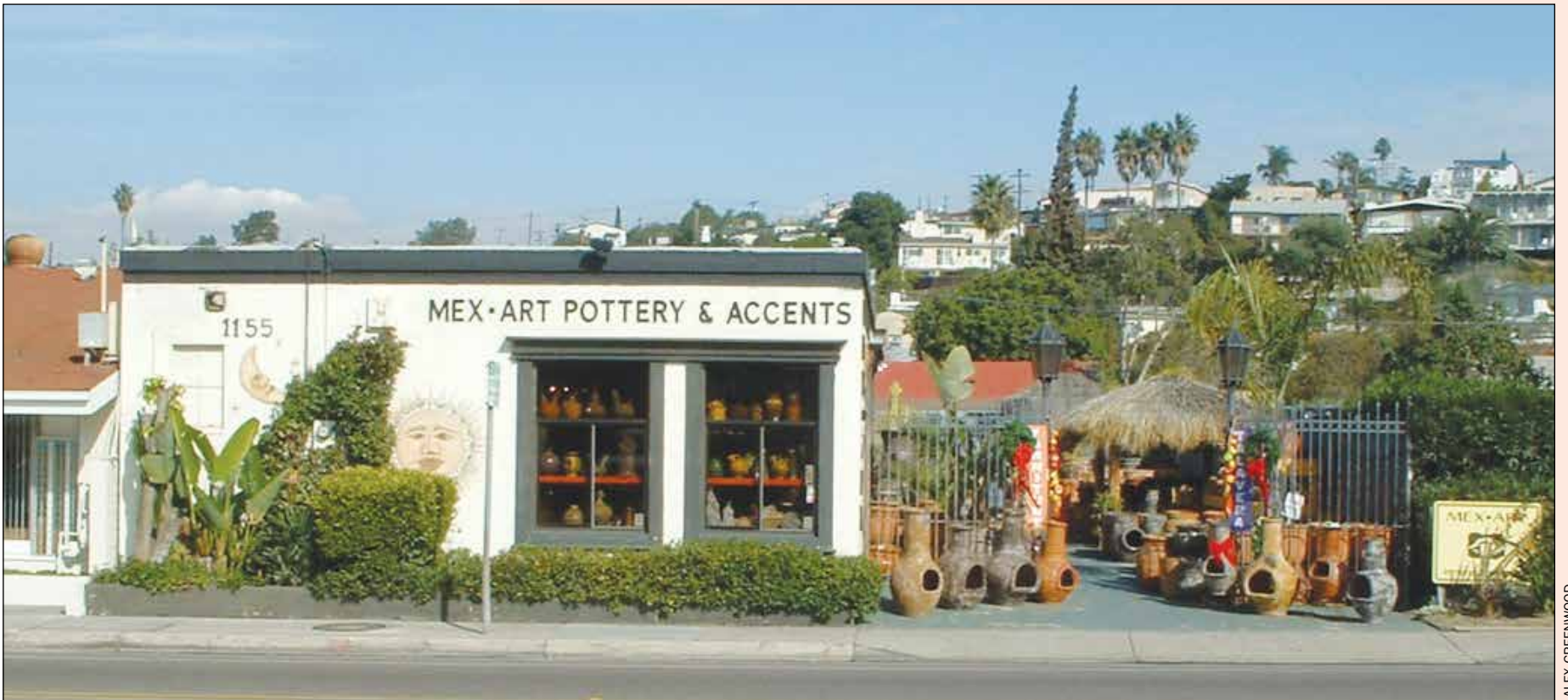
#### Assess Strengths & Weaknesses

With such a tough competitive environment, what did Morena possess that would make it viable for retail? We inventoried existing conditions, including property data, zoning, traffic patterns, sales tax receipts, and other data.

From a retailing standpoint, Morena's key strengths are:

- Access to I-5, I-8 and the San Diego Trolley.
- Prominent arterials with high traffic volume.
- Existing cluster of home furnishing and home improvement stores.

MORENA DISTRICT continues on next page



ALEX GREENWOOD

Conveniently located near downtown San Diego, the Morena District is a hodgepodge of stores, warehouses, bars, restaurants and light industrial uses.

- Adjacent to USD and Old Town.
- Strong residential population that will increase 27 percent over 20 years.
- Ethnically diverse population (22 percent Asian, percent Hispanic).
- Strong daytime population.

**Morena’s key weaknesses are:**

- Lack of amenities/ambience.
- Traffic congestion.
- Lack of parking.
- Fragmented ownership of property.
- Light industrial uses interspersed between stores and restaurants.
- Awkward intersections and streetscapes.

**Identify a Competitive Advantage**

A retail area can only survive if its customers perceive it to be superior to other locations. Each district must find a way to differentiate itself from competing shopping centers. To accomplish this, the district must establish itself as a place that offers one or more of following:

- The lowest prices.
- The most convenient location.
- The best service and/or highest quality merchandise.
- A one-stop destination with the best selection.
- A unique, compelling, fun experience.
- A place where shoppers can express their lifestyles and feel good about who they are.

Morena has a potential competitive advantage in several areas. First, while other shopping areas target tourists and wealthy residents, Morena could serve residents and workers in the immediate area, offering lower prices and more individual service. Morena could also target the students and faculty at University of San Diego (USD) – an untapped group with significant disposable income. Most promisingly, Morena had already become known for its eclectic group of independent home furnishing and home improvement stores.

**Envision the Retail District**

The Redevelopment Agency hired Calthorpe Associates to help envision how the Morena District could be reinvented. After analyzing the data and meeting with community members, a potential retail strategy began to take shape:

- Retail Mix: Morena would build on its existing reputation as a home improvement center. In ad-

dition, Morena would attract more shops, restaurants and convenience retail to serve local residents as well as the students and faculty at USD.

- Layout: The core shopping area would be seven blocks along Morena Boulevard, from Linda Vista to Tecolote Street. This area would be convenient, concentrated, next to USD and Old Town, and accessed by the freeway and Trolley. The seven blocks contain about 338,000 square feet of existing space for retail. Several parcels afford the opportunity to build new retail space.

- Customer Experience: The new district would need to attract specific customer groups, i.e., people wanting to improve their homes and/or buy neighborhood services. It would be critical give shoppers a pleasant experience at every stage of their visit, e.g. as they drove or walked into the district; searched for parking; walked down the street; entered a store; shopped; and exited the district. By visualizing the shopper’s experience, we could identify places where, for instance, we might need directional signs, brighter street lights, curbside parking, benches, trash cans, etc.

**Craft the Strategy**

To implement this vision, we have started working with local businesses and property owners in several areas:

- Physical Improvements: New infrastructure (e.g., parking, streetscape improvements, landscaping, facade improvements, etc.) will improve traffic and pedestrian safety, express a coherent identity for the district, and help create a pleasant ambience. One early success has been the Agency’s facade improvement program, which is providing \$150,000 in matching grants to local merchants.

- Catalyst Projects: Several new projects will stimulate retail in the area. At the south end of the district, next to the trolley station, a 184-unit mixed-use project has just started construction. At the north end, the “Bayview Plaza” project will add 75,200 square feet of new retail. These projects are sited so as to extend activity from adjacent areas into the heart of the Morena District. Special attention was given to the design, location, layout and utilities of the retail spaces, to make sure they could be successfully leased.

- Leasing Strategies: Unlike a shopping mall, where one owner has total site control, the Morena District will need to change incrementally, and will rely on teamwork among property owners and their tenants. Some existing stores will need to expand,

*“Too often, the district will choose the right strategic focus, but then fail to carry out the right mix of projects and programs needed to support that focus.”*

update their merchandise, improve their storefront/showroom, or make other changes. Additional home improvement, bookstores, restaurants and other shops will be attracted, to strengthen Morena’s appeal as a one-stop destination. The Agency will target specific retailers that will upgrade the overall retail mix over time. To attract these tenants, the Agency will offer matching grants to help fund tenant improvements.

- Marketing & Publicity: The city and local businesses will implement a coordinated campaign of press releases (highlighting the rollout of new public improvements and tenants), special events and an advertising campaign funded by a new business improvement district.

- City Services: Police, street cleaning, garbage pickup and other municipal services will need to be provided at a very high level of quality.

**Conclusion**

Why do retail strategies fail? Too often, a district will try to mimic a more established shopping center, rather than using its existing strengths to create a unique experience. Too often, the district will choose the right strategic focus but then fail to carry out the right mix of projects and programs needed to support that focus. And too often, planners expect to transform a district overnight, rather than taking a long-term, phased approach. Sound analysis needs to be the foundation for every aspect of the retail strategy. Using this approach, we hope to make Morena Boulevard the premiere home improvement district in San Diego.



By Jack Illes

**The “Village” as a Center in the Metropolis**

**T**he sprawling landscape that is Southern California is essentially one continuous metropolis that stretches from Ensenada to beyond Santa Barbara. Although there are legendary road warriors that endure heroic commutes moving from part of the region to the other, the average local commute is only about thirty minutes, about the same as the rest of the country. When you consider the statistic that the average resident loses 50 hours a year to traffic congestion, it becomes clear that congestion is impacting drive times for a wide variety of routine-trip traffic beyond traditional rush hours. There is more to come—the region will add a population the equivalent of two Chicagos by 2025.

Southern Californians are choking on their own traffic, and the result is that they are hunkering down around a new species of “urban village.” These community focal points might not resemble a village at all, and most of the neighbors probably don’t like the sound of the word “urban,” but these “urban villages” now in large part represent the center of their public life. They may in actuality be small commercial nodes with a pedestrian orientation, or more likely they are a collection of mature strip commercial uses that function as a defacto community gathering place. As it becomes more difficult to travel beyond the immediate neighborhood, these

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RETAIL OVERVIEW:**

**The Emergence of Post-Suburban “Villages”**

new “villages” serve many of the same functions as villages in ancient times.

**Public Policy Support**

In a rare display of cohesion between public policy and what is actually occurring, public policymakers have been supportive of the evolution of these “villages” as a way of fostering community growth and benefits. For municipalities, a stable community focused on a thriving commercial district requires fewer public services, promises a greater tax base from its commercial uses, promotes a higher incidence of home ownership, and probably most important to politicians, provides a more predictable voter base at election time. A cohesive village as a center of community life offers an appealing stability for politicians eager to manage their unruly communities.

In Los Angeles, the establishment of neighborhood councils of citizens of around 30,000 people or so has helped define the city in new ways. Smaller pockets of established communities have indulged in the politically simple process of renaming their neighborhoods with more appealing monikers—sometimes to the bemusement of their inhabitants. A still evolving stretch of Spring Street in Downtown’s newest loft district was dubbed Gallery Row in less than three weeks—and the nascent art gallery district has yet to catch up.

In San Diego, the Planning Department has gone so far as to create a pilot program for a “City of Villages” and has selected four pilot projects as model projects to demonstrate the “ideal” template. Sadly, none of the finalists is a commercial developer, and the political nature of the process has freighted the program with a variety of political agendas that will add cost, complexity and slow their completion. Even so, the program promises to open residents’ eyes to the possibilities of these small-scale infill developments.

**Private Agendas: The 20-Minute Rule**

Social observers have commented on the effect the sprawling nature of the metropolis has on the social lives of its inhabitants. Prospective mates residing more than 20 minutes away are termed geographically undesir-

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RETAIL**  
*continues on next page*





IMAGES COURTESY URBAN LABS

able—inconveniently and perhaps dangerously located for a nocturnal commute during courtship. Shrinking the available pool of prospects to the residents of the immediate vicinity has the predictable result of more than 30 percent of the population being single. Clearly a successful village needs a selection of sandboxes for the residents to play in. The “local”—the British term for the local pub and neighborhood gathering place—may in Southern California be replaced by a yoga studio or a golf course, but seemingly their role as social center and retreat is identical to, and as necessary a social function as, the British local pub.

### Transit Villages

As in other areas of the country, much has been made locally about the emergence of mixed-use transit villages. Pasadena in particular has been the beneficiary of several new projects, and one at Del Mar station by Urban Partners and Moule & Polyzoides looks to be especially interesting. Several more are in the works, such as J.H Snyder’s NoHo Commons, and a new Jon Jerde project at San Diego State, but transit is the exception in Southern California. Despite the surprising-to-some popularity of new rail systems in San Diego and Los Angeles, funding issues and politics limit the number of transit station opportunities for new urban villages. An example is the CenterLine proposal in Orange County, proposed to link the airport, University of California Irvine and South Coast Plaza with the government center at Santa Ana. Residents of the “planned community of tomorrow” called Irvine apparently don’t care for the monorail at Disneyland and have nixed plans for one running through their community. In Irvine the future appears to be driven by an SUV.

### Parking the Car

Much has been made of the return of the pedestrian scale, but the reality is that in Southern California, appealing pedestrian-oriented places are actually built rarely, and are almost always backed up by major parking facilities. For every Grove, the faux-Main Street backed by a gargantuan parking structure next to the iconic Farmer’s Market at 3rd and Fairfax, there are 10 big box centers clearly cognizant of the rarity of cross shopping from box to box. Their very scale discourages pedestrian activity anywhere but the through the front doors.

As a result, existing pedestrian-oriented shopping streets have seen a resurgence in popularity once the basic issue of parking is addressed. Many historic urban cores, from San Diego to Santa Barbara have added parking and seen years of efforts to fight off mall retailers come to fruition (partly due to the mall chains themselves being devoured by “category killer” big box stores). Even “given up for lost” retail districts in Riverside and Hollywood, have become pedestrian attractions again with a unique mix of retail and entertainment. In Hollywood’s case, this renaissance came only after the nearly half century stranglehold by entrenched surface parking overlords was broken by a pair of gigantic, city financed

parking structures and retail developments. Hollywood and later, Westwood both lost their retail base when they ignored the need for parking and let the savvy merchants in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica lure them away with free parking in municipal lots.

### Following the Money

One of the obstacles for the commercial developer interested in participating in the development of these emerging village centers is financing. Put simply, the financial community has limited technology for accommodating anything beyond single-purpose real estate types. Mixed-use is at least twice as hard to evaluate as more traditional real estate projects, and small-scale projects are equally difficult as more large-scale urban projects. Some developers respond to this by adopting the look of a “real” urban street while utilizing the same old models. The much lauded Grove in Los Angeles is really a standard retail mall that is highly decorated to appear as the something akin to the idealized Main Street set from “The Music Man”. Across town, Paseo Colorado, with apartments above a mix of mall based and local serving retail, is truly a mixed use but recently sold at a significant discount to comparable retail-only or residential-only projects. The developer of The Grove is working on a truly mixed-use project in nearby Glendale, so it will be interesting to see how that project is valued in the financial markets when it is completed.

### Drug(store) Wars: A Missed Opportunity

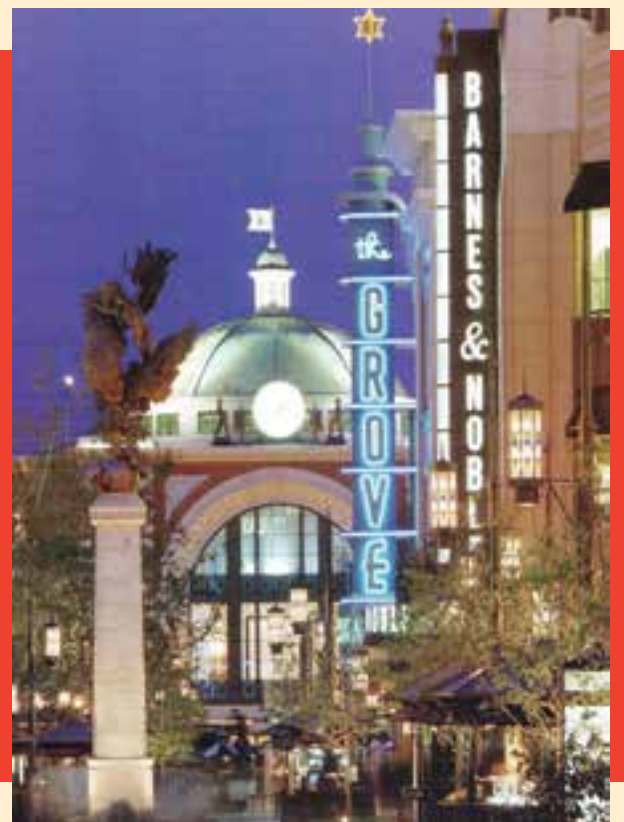
One of the most logical anchors, (both as a use and as a desirable credit tenant) for an urban village in any form is the drugstore. In Southern California the national chains have been battling for market share and

competing bloodily for sites. Sadly, the new prototype has in some cases literally demolished the “corner drug store” paradigm and replaced it with a parking lot on the corner and a drive thru window. The constraints of urban sites mean that parking lots are often undersized, alleys are used for drive-thru windows, and their-one-size-fits-all strategy means that countless fragile smaller districts have been brutalized by these retail extrusions.

### Urban Strips: Opportunities for The Future

Perhaps the good news is that one of Southern California’s land-use signatures, (and sadly, exports) the urban strip, is fertile territory for new infill village development. Mile after mile of decaying one- and two-story low-intensity commercial development lines the arterials of Southern California. In most cases, the residential neighborhoods adjoining these strips retain their established single family character. Typically, the condition of the residential properties is better than the commercial strips, and often the decaying commercial properties impact property values in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Sensitive redevelopment of these underutilized parcels can stabilize and improve the existing residential base, while at the same time add new housing without destroying established communities. The city of Los Angeles has taken the step of rezoning these properties, paving the way for more intensive development along its busy arterials. Senior housing, second generation housing and work force housing all could be created to strengthen these established populations in the long term communities. These omnipresent urban strips represent perhaps Southern California’s best opportunity to create good examples of quality urban development in established neighborhoods.

*“Southern Californians are choking on their own traffic, and the result is that they are hunkering down around a new species of “urban village”*





COURTESY THE OTAY RANCH COMPANY

Heritage Towne Center in Otay Ranch is a three-story, mixed-use complex with retail space and seniors apartments.

# New Approaches For Retail in Suburban Settings

By Kim John Kilkenny

The Congress of New Urbanism toured Otay Ranch's Village of Heritage and the Heritage Towne Center during its San Diego Council Conference. Heritage is the first of 13 villages completed within the 23,000-acre, 26,000-unit Otay Ranch.

Belying its size, Otay Ranch is not a classic new town situated away from an urban area. Rather, Otay Ranch is 12 miles south of downtown San Diego, generally bounded by suburban development patterns and intensities, with public services and facilities already in place adjacent to the property when planning started in 1989.

Half of Otay Ranch is in the city of Chula Vista and half in the unincorporated County; thus the Otay Ranch plan was jointly processed by both jurisdictions. They adopted identical general plans for all 23,000 acres in 1993. Not only are Otay Ranch's size and the joint planning unique, but also the adopted land plan has proved to be a bold departure from contemporary land planning practices.

Southern California developers, for decades subdivided land on the urban fringe into single family tracts, served exclusively by the automobile, with modest patches of open space set aside to provide some visual relief. Otay Ranch broke that mold by concentrating development on previously disturbed lands close to existing neighborhoods and urban services while preserving large pieces of interconnected sensitive habitats as permanent publicly owned and managed open space.

While the focus of the CNU tour was on the plan's goal of creating a "sense of place" within the Village of Heritage, to best understand Otay Ranch's development structure, it is first necessary to understand the Otay Ranch's open space preservation ethic.

Over 60 percent of Otay Ranch is designated as open space, the lion share of which is the 11,375-acre Otay Ranch Nature Preserve. This preserve is one of the

largest in the nation and is valued at over \$160 million. The preserve forms an urban limit line for South San Diego County, conserving sensitive habitats, wetlands, unique landforms, wildlife corridors and special viewsheds. Preserve land is assembled as development proceeds: For each 1 acre of land developed, 1.18 acres is dedicated to the preserve. Perpetual Preserve management is funded by assessing Otay Ranch's developed property. The Preserve is the keystone of the San Diego Multi-Species Conservation Program, which has been praised as a national model by former Interior Secretary Babbitt.

The creation, management and funding of this mammoth open space system is made possible by concentrating development onto land relatively free of natural resources. This provides the intensity to plan each village to reduce reliance on the automobile, foster walking and biking, and create a sense of place. Without the preserve, Otay Ranch's development would have been a lower-density, auto-oriented pattern, typical of much of Southern California. Conversely, without the concentration of development in a

more intense pattern, the preserve could not have been achieved.

The Otay Ranch general plan is implemented through specific plans adopted for each village. The city of Chula Vista adopted the Heritage Specific Plan in 1996. Construction started in 1999, and home sales were completed this year.

Heritage is 579 acres, roughly 1 mile square. The Heritage land plan places six-lane arterial roads, which carry regional thru traffic, on the outer edges of the village. Contemporary development patterns would place retail uses at the intersection of these arterials on the village's edge to maximize their visibility and automobile access. Otay Ranch rejects this pattern in favor of creating a Village Core in the center of the Village away from arterial roads.

The Village Core is the area within a 1/4 mile of the Village's transit stop and contains the Village's activity centers. Activity centers are land uses that generate significant traffic and include the Village's retail center,

elementary school, neighborhood park, church site, four apartment complexes, and 271 affordable apartments. Roughly half of the Village's 2,968 homes are in the Village Core, with single-family detached homes at decreasing density moving away from the core. The Village's overall density is 7.8 units per acre, over twice the typical suburban San Diego County density.

The transit stop is located in the middle of the core, in the middle of the village, on a 40-foot wide, highly landscaped street median between the Heritage Towne Center and Heritage Park. The stop is part of a regional plan to extend the San Diego trolley system (or alternatively, bus-rapid-transit) through the heart of the village, eventually connecting six Otay Ranch Village Cores. Until the trolley system is built, the transit stop is served by the Chula Vista bus system.

Heritage Park is a 10-acre neighborhood park with a 6,000-square-foot community center, small amphitheater, swim club and other recreation amenities. The park faces the Heritage Towne Center. It is not programmed to serve structured sports activities, but rather enjoys tremendous use for passive recreation, non-organized sports, social activities and community gatherings. This is in keeping with the plan's goal of creating an environment that fosters informal social interaction amongst village residents.

In addition to Heritage Park, the village also contains the 7-acre Harvest Park oriented to organized sports, away from the core. There are also four 1-acre pedestrian parks evenly spaced throughout several single-family neighborhoods ensuring all residents are within easy walking distance of a park. Each park is surrounded by residential streets and fronted by homes.

Facing Heritage Park and centered on the transit stop is Heritage Towne Center, a three-story, mixed-use complex containing 40,000 square foot of retail space on the ground floor and 91 affordable senior apartments on the top two stories. Next to the Towne Center is a three-story 67,000-square-foot medical office. The Towne Center and the medical office offer storefronts directly facing a 15-foot sidewalk, with diagonal parking at the street's edge creating a traditional main street environment. The extra-wide sidewalk is part of the "Village Pathway" network enabling residents to walk

OTAY VILLAGE *continues on next page*

## Case Study

SAN DIEGO, CALIF.





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or bike throughout Otay Ranch's villages without crossing an arterial street at street grade. The Towne Center main parking lot is located in the back of the building and reached from side streets. Arcades provide pedestrian access between the village pathways and the parking. Most of the stores offer customer entrances on both the front and the back of the building.

The middle of the Towne Center is dominated by a food court and accented by a 45-foot high clock tower, which is an icon visible throughout the Village. The food court is directly across from the transit stop and Heritage Park with an enhanced pathway inviting those in the park to the Towne Center, creating a synergy between the park, the Towne Center and the transit stop.

The tenant base and leasing experience has been instructive. Commercial consultants cautioned that the Towne Center would not be viable tucked inside the Village. In part, the consultants were correct – the major anchors and nationwide franchises were not interested in locating in the Towne Center. But there has been no trouble leasing the space. The center is 100 percent occupied at lease rates comparable to tenants in more traditionally located centers.

The Towne Center attracted a host of small business owners, many of whom live in Otay Ranch. Thus, tenants have taken a real investment in the success of the

center and the community. This has contributed to a small town ambience, as opposed to a franchise-laden strip mall populated with all-too-familiar storefronts. In spite of its less visible location, the Towne Center's broker gets more calls from prospective tenants than any other center he represents.

The Towne Center contains three restaurants; a candy/ice cream shop; a doctor's office; a dentist's office; a day care center (10,000 square feet); a woman's exercise facility; a children's exercise facility; a hair salon; a children's hair salon; a nail salon; a postal center; a title company; a mortgage company; a dry cleaner; a gift shop; and a home goods shop. These shops are complemented by an optometry, pharmacy and physical therapy center on the ground floor of the adjacent medical office building.

The Heritage Specific Plan has an "inclusionary housing" requirement that 5 percent of the Village's homes be affordable to low income households. Often this requirement is satisfied by placing affordable housing on less desirable parcels. Heritage did the opposite, placing low income housing in the village's most prominent – and arguably the most valuable parcel, in the middle of the Village Core.

As discussed above, the Heritage Towne Center has 40,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and 91 affordable senior apartments on the top two

stories. Adjacent to the Towne Center is another 180 family-oriented affordable housing apartments. The affordable housing is developed at 39 units per acre, a remarkable density for a development in a suburban environment. The affordable housing project was able to compete successfully for tax credit financing because it included units for large families (three-and four-bedrooms); and because it was located close to transit, the park, the retail center, the day care center and the elementary school. The design and cost of the project were considered superior.

Next to the Towne Center is a 4.5-acre church site, which remains the only undeveloped parcel in the Village. The Village Core also includes Heritage Elementary School, which serves 715 students on a 10-acre site. The school is located across the street from the neighborhood park, facilitating joint use.

The Village Core is connected to the neighborhoods by a 60-footwide landscaped paseo, which allows residents to access the school, park and Towne Center crossing a minimum number of residential streets.

In conclusion, Otay Ranch, Village of Heritage and Heritage Towne Center provide a successful example of applying land planning strategies in a large-scale suburban setting to protect the environment and create a community with a sense of place.

## Retail Strategies

*continued from page 23*

tal issues that will together determine the appropriate tenant types and mix. As the evaluation evolves and becomes more refined, it becomes clear what specific types of tenants are appropriate, and ultimately what type of retail place this will be. Instead of picking a retail type from any of the taxonomies mentioned above and using this as a "top down" model for picking retail tenants, the model involves using specific kinds of information about a place to determine what retailers are appropriate, thus creating a "bottoms up" strategy for deciding what type of retail place this will be.

The specific factors to be considered for each of the four dimensions in the place-based retail model are defined in the figures below.

### Working Towards a Tenanting Strategy

After researching the various factors making up each element, the four elements should be considered together as a profile of the area from the perspective of retail potential. By understanding the interactions among the four elements and looking at "role model" areas, i.e., existing successful retail places that have similar characteristics to the area under consideration,

a sense of the total amount and appropriate mix of types of retail should emerge. For cities or community groups working on revitalization, key supporting actions should also be identified through this process, such as implementation of a facade improvement program, creation of a business improvement district, development of a financing strategy for crucial physical improvements, changes in land use or zoning designations, or the creation of a district marketing plan, etc.

Once a preliminary strategy is devised, potential tenant fulfilling the strategy should be contacted to ascertain their more specific location requirements, such as specific trade area demographics. Depending on how the retailers respond, it may be necessary to do more in-depth analysis or refine the strategy to determine whether or not there is a good fit between the prospective tenants and the place.

Specific factors to consider in developing a tenanting strategy include:

#### Anchor

Does this place need an anchor store or stores, like a grocery store or a movie theater, or some other unique store or set of stores?

#### Synergism and Critical Mass

Is there a group of stores in the area that are already drawing from the same customer base that might complement new stores coming into the areas? For example,

if an area already has a few furniture stores, more might be appropriate, and/or other stores selling housewares, such as kitchen supply stores could easily draw from and expand the customer base for the existing stores.

#### Mixing Independents and Chain

Depending on the place, any tenanting strategy should include some mix of independent and chain stores. The chain stores can sometimes function as anchor tenants, even if they are relatively small stores, like a Starbucks. But these stores often have an established customer base who can then also support the independent stores. Independent stores are critical because they add character and make places distinct from each other.

#### Services

Not every storefront in a retail district has to be occupied by a store. Service businesses including insurance brokers, architects and small health clubs, like Curves, can also help to round out the tenant mix and attract a wider range of customers.

#### Strategic Tips

Creating a successful retail district can depend on making strategic decisions regarding tenant mix and recruitment, as well as other physical considerations. Key strategic points include:

# Transit as Retail: *Selling the Product*

By William Lieberman

**T**ransit is retail. At least, that's the approach I've been advocating for the past five years. If transit is, indeed, a form of retail, then its "sellers" need to understand the market and how to attract "buyers" from various segments of this market. That, in a nutshell, is the message I tried to convey at the Council VI meeting in San Diego last month.

Many in the marketing community have advocated such an approach for years. What brought me to this conclusion was collaboration with marketing experts when I was planning director of San Diego's public transportation system. Our experts urged us to conduct an audit of our riders and — more importantly — our non-riders, to determine what they valued in choosing a mode of travel for local trips. So, we carried out interviews of over 800 residents and followed these up with focus groups and specialized surveys. The results opened our eyes, and we began to change the way we did business.

For example, ask a planner what kinds of questions people consider when thinking about using transit, and you'll get a litany of typical responses: Does transit connect the place I live with the place I work? How long does it take? How often does it run? How much does it cost? All are important considerations, to be sure, but for many people they are only secondary concerns. For them, the primary question is this: "Is transit used by other people like me?" If the answer in their minds is no, then they are likely to use transit only as a last resort. If the answer is yes, then they'll start to consider the other questions listed above. Unfortunately, many will never get past that first question. So how do we get these potential consumers to the point of feeling that transit has something to offer? Well, the first thing to do is understand what's important to them.

## Deciphering the Market

One way to better understand the different values held by the public is through market segmentation. This technique divides the public into a small number of groups, or "segments." These segments are created in such a manner that differences among them are maximized while differences within each segment are minimized. As a result, people in the same segment tend to react similarly to a particular product or service. Once the seller understands what's important to a market segment, he/she can create products that appeal to that segment and remove those that don't. Our surveys revealed that there were at least six distinct market segments in our region. We suspect that these segments,

with some variations, are present in most urban areas, though perhaps in different proportions.

Our segmentation process depended on a series of stated preference questions dealing with eight different attitudes. These included concerns about flexibility and speed, use of time, personal safety, cost, stress, the natural environment, crowding, and their personal travel experience. Utilizing these data, profiles emerged of the six market segments, each differing in the way that they rated the eight attitudes.

For example, one of the most demanding market segments is the one we named, "Road Runners". People in this group are very sensitive to the need for flexibility and speed, as well as to their personal travel experience (e.g., who they're traveling with, the quality of their surroundings, etc.). Perhaps the least demanding segment is the "Easy Goers". They care little about these attributes, though their ratings for some of the others were a bit higher. The remaining four market segments also showed distinctions in what they valued and, presumably, how they reacted to local travel alternatives.

Both the Easy Goers and the Conventional Cruisers — another less demanding market segment — comprise about 45 percent of the residents in our area. This is a good omen for public transportation, since these segments are most likely to be attracted to existing transit services. Many of our current riders come from these two segments. However, more than half the local population comes from other segments, many of whom we do not cater to very well. Moreover, even within these two groups, there's plenty of room for growth. It's a matter of understanding what kind of features they are looking for in their local travel and then providing services with those features.

In this discussion, we haven't dealt with demographic factors at all. That was another revelation of our research. The usual groups that transit distinguishes can lead to false notions of how to attract more ridership. For example, we often consider that the elderly have little money but plenty of time. Therefore, we offer them meandering transit routes and relatively low fares. However, the residents of many of our area's retirement communities are both affluent and busy. They would prefer more direct routes, even at higher rates of fare. A similar example relates to the region's poor. Although they are one of the large components of current transit ridership, most poor people in this country commute to work by car. Many won't be induced to use public transportation by simply offering them more of the same kind of service that's already available. They want transit services that are competitive with the automobile. In effect, the use of market segments changes the focus of this discussion from demographics to what has been called "psychographics." It essentially classifies people by "what makes them tick."



THE TOWN PAPER

## Molding the Service

So, armed with all this new information, what's a transit provider to do? While it's technically feasible to create six distinct types of transit service for each of the six market segments, this strategy is impractical and probably not necessary. Better services can be designed by incorporating features that most of the segments desire and avoiding features to which most are averse. For example, speeding up buses on city streets has strong attraction to all market segments, especially those not using transit very much today. This improvement can be accomplished by giving buses priority in congested traffic (through signal preemption and "queue-jumper lanes"), using faster fare payment methods (such as proof-of-payment and smart card systems), inaugurating limited stop service, etc. Rail transit has even more appeal across all market segments because of these very qualities, plus its appearance of permanence and its higher level of reliability.

Sometimes a small feature that may be neutral to some members of the public can be very important to others. In our focus groups, for example, we discovered that many people, women in particular, prefer seating that provides a buffer from the person sitting next to them. Such seating is already available in our commuter trains. Why not incorporate it into our buses and light rail vehicles as well? It could be critical in attracting some non-users to transit without inhibiting current users from riding.

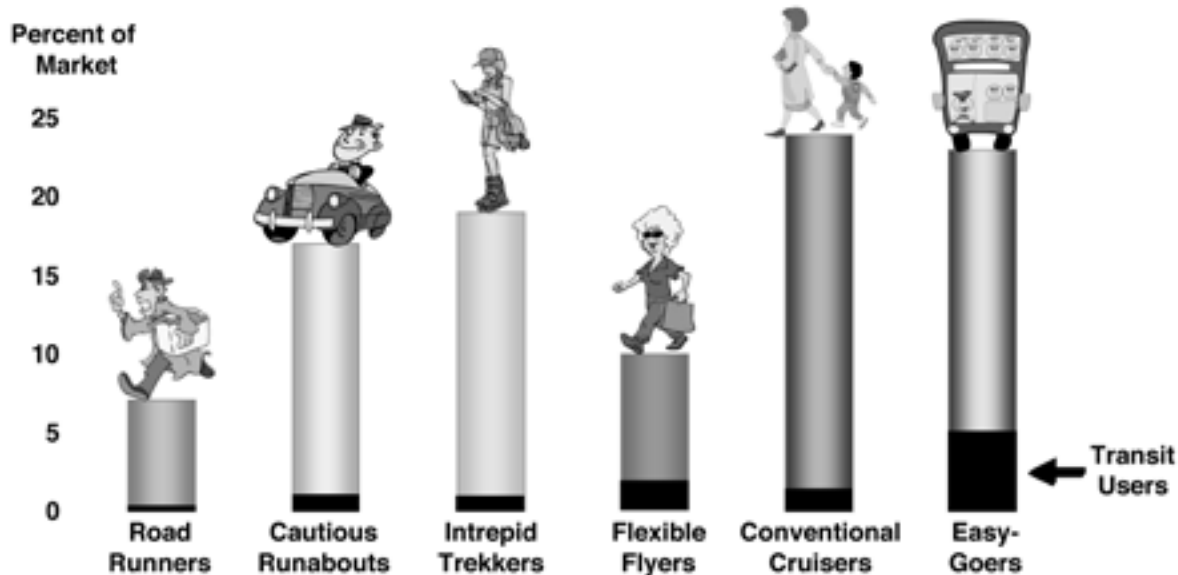
Of course, there are cases where we should create services that target a particular market segment if there is payoff in attracting that segment. Auto commuters who are sensitive about their personal travel experience and how long their trip takes could be attracted to cross-regional express services. These could be operated with upscale buses offering amenities such as coffee and newspapers, and avoiding all but the most important destinations en route. Fares could be higher because many travelers are willing to pay considerably more for a ride if it provides them with the features they desire. All too often, transit systems have focused on low fares at the expense of amenities.

Some may object that these upscale services will be priced beyond the ability of the poorer members of the traveling public to pay. However, in most instances, such express buses would connect places already reachable by public transportation. They would simply do it in a faster and more luxurious manner. Those riders particularly sensitive to cost could still take the old routes, albeit at slower speeds and with fewer amenities. On the other hand, if a high-fare transit service allows access to a better paying job that would be too hard to reach otherwise, the extra travel expense could easily pencil out for even the poorest travelers.

## Breaking Through

Ultimately, public transportation should be designed like most other products and services in the marketplace.

## Market Segments for Local Travel



WILLIAM LIEBERMAN

TRANSIT AS RETAIL continues on page 38

# One Way Couplets and Town Centers

Peter Swift, PE

There was a presentation at the San Diego Council by Peter Calthorpe and Bob Gibbs relating to retail in general. Peter presented one-way couplets as a solution to traffic volume problems. This has been a hotly debated issue that centers around the appropriateness of one-way streets in a walkable environment. It is true that they convey traffic in a more efficient way, but there are problems associated with this vehicle dominant approach. This article addresses Peter's comments but also refers to a paper entitled "Technical Paper; Couplets vs. Single Point Intersections".

Reduction in vehicular conflicts is one of the advantages of a one-way street compared to a conventional two-way intersection. Vehicle conflict points, or locations where potential vehicular accidents can occur within an intersection, are represented to be reduced from 16 to four conflict points when one compares a two-way to a one-way intersection. This is a clear advantage to drivers, but not to pedestrians. A study of couplets done in the last year or so looks at conflicts from a pedestrian standpoint with disparaging results. The analysis expands the Fher and Peers work by evaluating signal phase sequences for two- and one-way intersections. That is to say, the evaluation took into account pedestrian-vehicle conflict points for all possible movement scenarios. The results were that there were two conflict sequences at a two-way intersection and 16 conflict sequences in a one-way environment. This is a significant increase in potential pedestrian accident opportunities. The defense of the one-way couplet ignores this possibility. This is surprising as the underlying theory governing these places relies strongly on the protection and comfort of non-motorist.

The elimination of the need for left turn signal phasing in one-way couplets is a clear advantage in terms of vehicle delay time. The green phase can be used exclusively for through traffic and will decrease travel time through the corridor. This would also allow longer green phase time at peak hour conditions. This may be an inhibitor, albeit somewhat minor, to pedestrians trying to cross the street because they must wait for a longer period of time until the light changes.

Operating conditions improve with one-way couplets. As stated in the Fher and Peers paper, a longer cycle length (the time it takes for one complete cycle of signal phases, for example, from red to red) creates longer vehicle queues. Their example reveals the following:

<b>Cycle length (sec)</b>	80	90	100	120
<b>Queue length (ft)</b>	413	488	525	638

This was based on a volume of 500 vehicles per hour per lane. Although not mentioned in the paper, the designer does not want gridlock to happen by allowing the queue to extend into the next intersection. Traffic volume and cycle length may dictate certain block lengths.

The above example also may represent about 20,000 vehicles per day (ADT) for a four lane, two-way street. The San Elijo Hills Town Center project was introduced in their paper. This project may represent total intersection daily traffic volumes in excess of 70,000 ADT. This volume is atypical when compared to most "main street" environments. Usually we see ADT ranges, say, from 12,000 to 30,000. It becomes clear why one-way couplets were chosen for the San Elijo Hills Town Center project. But it doesn't answer the question why one would design a town center on a thoroughfare with near-freeway volumes. Not knowing the regional conditions, it may be fair to speculate why through traffic is not routed away from the walkable town center. Perhaps the DOT insisted on the route and the land area was constrained. It seems that there was no regional control offered to the designers. Under those conditions, one may be forced to consider the use of one-way couplets as the only viable option. Otherwise, it would be prudent to design the place to have no more than four through lanes in a two-way condition. This is perhaps one of the most important question to answer when choosing intersection types. Not even two-lane roundabouts can effectively handle such a large volume of traffic. It is strongly suggested that the designer avoid that type of traffic condition if at all possible. It becomes vehicle dominant by nature and reduces walkability. One way couplets should not be used in thoroughfares that reach 50,000 ADT or less. There are other techniques that can enhance pedestrian safety and comfort and allow a healthier retail environment. The paper also mentions Issaquah Highlands with projected volumes representing around 50,000 ADT. Two-lane roundabouts can deal with that volume in a four-lane, two-way condition while allowing no more than four lanes on the primary thoroughfares.

Another aspect to the question of capacity is the representation that capacity increases with faster traffic. This is not necessarily true. The usual Highway Capacity Manual method of determining capacity may not fully realize that capacity increases with slower average speeds. Therefore, actual capacity in urban arterials may be underestimated by using conventional methods.

The paper also states that lane reduction in a couplet is pedestrian friendly. Certainly it reduces crossing time, but speeds are often higher on a one-way street. A few miles an hour difference in speed can change pedestrian accident severity from a broken leg to a severed spinal cord. This is unacceptable. Pedestrians are also sensitive to noise emitted from faster vehicles. The usual metric is decibels (DbA). It becomes uncomfortable for pedestrians to be exposed to 55 DbA or more and represents an SUV moving at about 20 to 23 miles per hour. Faster speeds will create an aversion to pedestrians within 50 feet of a vehicle traveling at speeds common to one-way streets.



THE TOWN PAPER

Absent from the Fher and Peers paper is an evaluation of the impact couplets have on retail exposure. The Walker paper analyzes the reduction in exposure of retail space commonly occurring with one-way streets. The driver usually has about a 120 degree field of vision from left to right. Block size impacts "eclipsed" retail exposure. Smaller blocks have an advantage. But there is still a minimum of 25 percent loss of retail exposure in ideal circumstances. A number of couplets built in the 1950s have failed from a retail point of view. One theory posits that drivers are unwilling to park at a location that requires crossing one-way streets and a central square to shop. This was confirmed anecdotally from the developers at Mizner Park. This was also observed by the author at the Chico, Calif. town square. It is junk space. The primary retail activity is near the college, away from the town square, and is kept healthy by the pedestrian traffic within easy walking distance from the college.

Access to transit in one-way couplets is difficult for pedestrians and very confusing for first-time users especially in inclement weather. Walking an additional block or two may discourage transit ridership.

The conclusion to this analysis is that one-way couplets are appropriate in certain high volume circumstances and the designer is wise to have it as part of their palate of design techniques. But it should only be used in very special circumstances. The primary element in the design of walkable communities is the pedestrian, not the vehicle.

It is also important to avoid excessively high traffic volumes within town and neighborhood centers. Every effort must be made to allow no more than four lanes for any thoroughfare. It is a well known fact that drivers will find alternate routes, and discretionary traffic will disappear when the number and width of lanes is reduced in a congested situation.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was thought to be created by Fher and Peers, Engineers and was brought to the conference by Peter Calthorpe as a reference.  
<sup>2</sup> Walker, Wade, Walter Kulash and Brian McHugh, "Downtown Streets, Are We Strangling Ourselves on One-Way Networks?", Gilkating, Jackson Lopez Reinhart, Inc., no date.  
<sup>3</sup> Roess et. Al., "Traffic Engineering", Prentice Hall, 1998, 2nd edition, p. 656.

# Encouraging Better Retail Environments through Federal Transportation Spending Policy

By Scott Polikov

In order to encourage development patterns more accommodating of neighborhood-scale retail, certain reforms and incentives should be considered. Reforms and incentives should be facilitated through mechanisms that increase in the more successful markets so that local support and programmatic viability can be maintained. This strategy has been employed successfully by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the D/FW Region, in implementing its Land Use/Transportation Joint Venture Program that funds transportation projects linked to sustainable development.

Little known to the public, but ubiquitous in the transportation world, MPOs are responsible for allocating each year billions of dollars for transportation infrastructure. Principally generated from federal gas taxes, those funds are sent back to each state, and in turn to the MPOs, according to a multi-year authorization passed by Congress every six to seven years. Save a few, such as the Atlanta Regional Commission or NCTCOG, MPOs typically award the funds for transportation projects based on local political horse-trading. Usually, those communities within an MPO's jurisdiction that muster the preponderance of political momentum secure funding for that extra highway lane or that new road. The process of funding specific projects, however, rarely incorporates the infrastructure's relationship to meaningful regional growth planning or local land use opportunities.

Utilizing the concept of value capture, NCTCOG (in its role as the MPO for the D/FW Region) has set aside and prioritized some of its federal transportation funds



THE TOWN PAPER

(i.e., \$40 million in its first call) for projects that make for a better use of those funds in terms of supporting sustainable development. In other words, the MPO's award of money for a new street or a transit facility is based on whether a developer and municipality propose a sustainable context for the transportation investment. For example, NCTCOG awarded \$2.3 million for a parkway for the Craig Ranch TND town center in McKinney, Texas, designed under a new urban code. Thereby, the MPO was essentially awarding the limited federal funds allocated to

the region based on contextual efficiency and sustainability in terms of quality of life, reduced vehicle miles traveled, transportation choice, support for transit and ultimately harnessing growth in patterns of walkable neighborhoods. In other words, this "carrot" approach can transform an MPO into a promoter of a physical development patterns that better accommodate pedestrian-scale retail in terms of density, street design, connectivity and codes.

# To Improve Retail, Urban Structuring and Movement Networks

By Chip Kaufman

**T**his article offers a differing viewpoint to an apparently widespread but possibly reluctant acceptance during the San Diego Retail Council of large, conventional Big Retail increments for sizes of anchor stores, shopping centres and their catchments, and resultantly for the urban structures and coarse movement networks that support them. These retail conventions and their corollary urban structures cause systemic damage to existing urbanism and represent fundamental impediments to a more sustainable urbanism. I offer an alternative exemplary retail hierarchy with corollary urban structure and movement network, and I refer to project plans to illustrate how these principles may be applied.

While the ideas in this article have been gestating for years, they are still in an early stage of development and would benefit from peer review.

## Lack of NU Agreement on Retail

At least three different taxonomies of retail centres and catchment sizes were discussed during the San Diego Retail Council, without consensus about which is "right." I found little support for alternative exemplary new urban retail and urban structuring, or even widespread recognition of a need for it. New urbanism does not yet seem to be taking the lead in the understanding, promulgating or building of more sustainable retail centres with appropriate corresponding urban structures and movement networks.

## Systemic Damage by Big Retail

The systemic damage that Big Retail is doing to existing urbanism in America and elsewhere is self-evident to some of us and adequately documented (by Kenneth E. Stone et al.), but this has clearly not been adequately appreciated by the general public or government. Otherwise, a much stronger challenge would have been mounted against current retail structuring and the systems on which it thrives.

Interdependent systems, on which conventional Big Retail structuring flourishes, include:

- Oversized and heavily subsidised arterials, spaced a mile or more apart;
- Government permission for often oversized retail developments in locations that damage regional sustainability and existing local retail (see two paragraphs below);
- Globalisation with large-scale distribution and financial systems (which could/should be harnessed for better outcomes in terms of urban sustainability globally);
- Refrigeration, speedy transport and inexpensive subsidised fuel.

Retail is naturally opportunistic and will generally enlarge (for economy of scale and to kill off competition) to the most profitable format and location, within the physical and legal context, regardless of impacts to sustainability.

While the damage to existing urbanism may be self-evident to some of us, the role of urban structure and corresponding movement networks in this damage may not be as clear. The coarsely grained retail structuring outcome of the Big Retail syndrome is often oversized boxes, centres and catchments (often spanning 5-10 kilometres/3-6 miles or more), capitalising on oversized arterials, and leaving large car-dependent urban areas between centres, often bereft of locally accessible retail, local jobs or other urban or community services. I do

not believe such sizes should so easily be accepted in this retail debate.

It is noteworthy that full-range supermarkets here in Australia average about 3,500-4,000 square meters (35,000 - 45,000 square feet). There is also a distribution company that supports a chain of more independent grocers with smaller grocery stores still with reasonable selections ranging in size from about 900 to 2,000 square meters. Our local quite full-range supermarket, catering to Italians, Asians, vegans, yuppies and us, is about 2,000 square meters. Part of the challenge for exemplary retail structuring in America may be at least to recognise that present retail size conventions are only conventions rather than functional necessities. Especially by means of computer-assisted just-in-time delivery systems, supermarkets might reduce in size while retaining choice, if they were motivated to do so.

## The Need for Viable Alternatives and Support from Government

New urbanism has successfully produced superior alternatives to sprawl for the market to choose, but thus far primarily at the neighbourhood scale. New urbanism mixed-use urban centres, as Chuck Bohl noted during the San Diego Retail Council, have thus far been generally less successful in demonstrating improvements to prevailing retail structuring.

Our hands will be tied in combating the bad aspects of conventional Big Retail structuring until we have identified and built superior alternatives so that the market can respond. Concurrently government needs to recognise the damage being done and to implement legislation that protects existing urban centres from the present destructive retail development dynamic, and that induces retail development to evolve into more sustainable structures. Such legislation often needs to be national, as local and state jurisdictions are insufficient with today's shopping mobility across state borders. Other countries (United Kingdom, France, Germany) have already instituted related measures; why can't the United States?

## Need for the Exemplary and the Compromise

In my opinion two streams of solutions are needed in response to current Big Retail structuring. Compromises should deal with existing systems to turn the tide toward better retail structuring. However, such compromises risk being misinterpreted as exemplars, potentially limiting outcomes.

Exemplary solutions, probably requiring a different "regulatory playing field," are at least as important. The role of exemplary solutions for retail structuring is the equivalent of the new urbanism neighbourhood's role as an "exemplary" alternative to single-use residential sprawl. The "exemplary" should embody "the moral high ground" with all known sustainable urbanism criteria to ensure the broadest support and minimise legitimate detractors.

## Exemplary Retail Performance Criteria

Existing retail conventions, in my view, should not drive urban structuring categorically if those conventions do not generally support sustainable urbanism. I propose here a set of exemplary retail performance criteria, by which to evaluate retail and urban structures:

1. Efficient, achievable, sustainable and equitable access to shopping
2. Viable choice of commodities
3. Compatibility and synergy with other urban uses
4. Complementarity with other centres instead of predation (complementarity does not exclude healthy competition).



THE TOWN PAPER

I discuss these exemplary performance criteria later, in conjunction with a proposed hierarchy of retail centres, which satisfies these criteria by means of a supporting urban structure and movement network. After briefly discussing projects, which embody these recommendations, I will explain how the projects meet these retail performance criteria.

## The Interdependent Triad of Retail Centres, Urban Structure and Movement Network

Just as conventional Big Retail structuring depends on oversized centres and catchments born of coarsely grained movement networks, I think we need a corollary change toward more sustainable urban structuring and the movement networks in order to attain the exemplary retail performance criteria noted above. Government will probably need to regulate for this to happen. This may seem far-fetched in the United States, but it certainly will not happen until government recognizes the need and benefits thereof. This initiative will find allies with reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, public transport and access equity.

## Conventional Big Retail Structuring Often Fails Exemplary Retail Performance Criteria

Even with other benefits of new urbanism applied, conventional Big Retail structuring often fails some of these criteria. Access (1) is not sustainable and choice (2) is not adequate, when there is no retail in the neighbourhoods, when walking access even for limited neighbourhood corner store retail ceases to be possible for most residents, and when retail car dependence prevails. The argument that supermarket shopping generally requires a car to carry the bags is less valid now, as the duration of shopping and purchase sizes are dropping (at least in Australia). Complementarity (4) is difficult in regulatory environments that do not control size, configuration and location of retail centres and their catchments.

It is also important to consider the global equity implications of Big Retail. Chains such as Wal-Mart may sell commodities with low price tags but oftentimes at the expense of the third world labour forces that supply these commodities (along with damage to existing downtowns with catchments of these giants). It may not be appropriate to consider retail "affordability" at the cash register in isolation.

## An Exemplary Hierarchy of Retail Centres with Supporting Urban Structures and Movement Networks, as Illustrated by Projects

An exemplary hierarchy of retail centres, which satisfies these exemplary retail performance criteria, should start with neighbourhood centres, each with a retail

component (albeit initially small). The neighbourhoods should cluster together to support town centres, which are sized and spaced so as not to leave large areas of car-dependent areas devoid of retail and other services. Groups of these properly sized town centres may in turn support a regional centre, if the group is large enough and relatively remote from the city centre. Groups of towns, possibly with a regional centre, should then support one city centre per city. A corresponding urban structure and movement network is also needed, as explained below.

I will refer to actual projects here because they demonstrate how these exemplary retail performance criteria may be met and applied on the ground, and because some readers may question the regulatory or development feasibility of such recommendations. Of course, we cannot fully base a paradigm shift in retail structuring on feasibility evidence just from a few projects so early in their development, but these projects may give some credibility to the proposed principles.

One project is the 1996 regional plan for the northern growth corridor of Perth, Western Australia, designed by a team including Ecologically Sustainable Design (ESD) to inform the Western Australian Liveable Neighbourhoods Community Design Code (2001 CNU Charter Award), managed for the Western Australia Department of Planning and Infrastructure by Evan Jones, then with that department. The plan for part of Perth's Northern Growth Corridor shows structures for neighbourhoods and two towns. Slight revisions to this plan are now constructed or being implemented, including one neighbourhood designed by DPZ.

Two other more recent projects, which aim more thoroughly to embody the retail and urban structuring principles proposed here are Northwest and Southwest Sydney, urban extensions respectively for populations of 100,000 and 250,000. Evan Jones, now director of Sydney strategy for the NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), initiated and led two Enquiry by Design Workshops for these Sydney projects a year ago, assisted by several consultants including ESD. Jones' DIPNR team is responsible also for the regulatory and infrastructure implementation of this government-led initiative. Because these Sydney projects are not yet publicly released, this paper cannot show these plans or explain their regulatory and implementation mechanisms in detail. They should be public soon.

Northwest and Southwest Sydney are planned with a movement network and urban structure similar to the Perth plan, but for a much larger area and population. Southwest Sydney is being structured for a "movement economy" that supports a range of centres, from dozens of neighbourhood retail centres to eight mixed-use town centres to one regional centre for this quarter-million population, the eighth regional centre in Sydney, supporting Sydney's city centre. "Movement economy" means the exposure and patronage synergy between centre locations and the movement networks that support them.

### Exemplary Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres should generally at least offer a corner store and childcare centre, generally for a minimum of 700 dwellings in each neighbourhood. While the relatively low density of some of these projects (10 dwelling unit/gross hectare at the peripheries) may initially challenge the viability of some neighbourhood centres, their long-term viability has not been abandoned. The arterial network spacing of about 800 meters (half a mile), connecting all neighbourhood centres, helps to ensure the long-term viability of each centre and distributes the traffic so that most neighbourhood connectors are two-lanes and generally served by bus routes. There are a few four-laners and dedicated "transit boulevards" in Southwest Sydney due to its magnitude, the need to accommodate through traffic, and the jobs concentration in its regional centre. This 800 meters arterial filigree, with properly detailed street sections and intersections, generally enables all but the

smallest centres to straddle the prevailing two-lane arterials and their intersections (instead of the conventional suburban format of locating on one arterial corner behind a parking lot). This combination of circumstances increases feasibility for neighbourhood centre retail, which may otherwise be severely challenged.

### Exemplary Town Centres

Neighbourhoods cluster to form main street-based town centres, with towns opportunistically structuring themselves for an optimum "movement economy" within their available catchments, varied due to sub-regional circumstances. The size of the town centres should, in my view, be determined by their available catchments, and not by forcing the urban structures to fit a preconceived conventional set of sizes for retail centres and their catchments, as was discussed in the San Diego Retail Council.

Towns are generally three neighbourhoods wide, with the central "neighbourhood" being the walkable catchment for the town centre itself. The maximum size of



Southwest Sydney is being structured for a movement economy that supports a range of centers.

each town's primary retail catchment is generally limited by the number of neighbourhoods that can cluster immediately around the walkable catchment of the town centre itself (generally six to nine neighbourhoods). Neighbourhoods outside this "ring" of neighbourhoods generally form part of a different town with its own catchment. The minimum size for each town of clustered neighbourhoods is generally that which will at least support one supermarket and related retail, business and civic uses in a main street format.

Depending on densities and the number of clustering neighbourhoods, the initial build-out populations generally range from a minimum of 10,000 supporting one supermarket and related shops and businesses, to about 30,000 supporting two competing supermarkets, a discount department store, and an array of other business and community facilities.

Some main streets for town centres intersect with arterials larger than two lanes (instead of running along them) and connect to other significant destinations in order to feed the intersecting main retail streets with adequate traffic (ideally about 15,000 vpd on two lanes with parallel parking).

### Exemplary Regional Centres to Support the City Centre

As with Southwest Sydney, one regional centre, offering extensive comparison retail, the highest development density in the region, and major government, cultural, sports and educational facilities, will serve and capitalise on several town centres nearby. This regional centre appropriately locates at the juncture of converging public transport and vehicular thoroughfares en route to the centre of Sydney to the east, capitalising

on this regional movement economy.

### Satisfaction of Exemplary Retail Performance Criteria

This (in my view) more exemplary hierarchy of complementary centre types and sizes seems to meet the exemplary retail performance criteria noted above.

**Retail Performance Criterion 1:** Efficient, achievable, sustainable and equitable access

This hierarchy of structures ensures that almost every dwelling is within about a five-minute walk of a corner store on a bus route, and within a 15-minute walk (or short cycle, drive or bus ride) of their town centre. People who can't drive have reasonable, efficient and equitable access, and travel demand is reduced.

**Retail Performance Criterion 2:** Viable choice of commodities

Neighbourhood centres, with at least "top-up" convenience retail, are the lowest common denominator in the hierarchy, enabling at least some choice within walking distance of most dwellings.

The town sizes in this hierarchy are generally smaller than those discussed during the San Diego Retail Council, whose large catchments induce too much travel. The towns in this retail hierarchy are big enough to provide a full choice of convenience shopping and complementary non-retail jobs, but with smaller, more sustainable catchments.

In our experience, two small, competing supermarkets in a town centre, with corner stores in each neighbourhood (as shown here) may offer better value at the cash register and serve that catchment better, while one very large American supermarket with no competition of even corner stores in its oversized catchment may more easily raise prices due to less local competition.

**Retail Performance Criterion 3:** Compatibility and synergy with other urban uses

This criterion is the norm across successful new urbanism projects, where town centre uses are mixed, compatible and synergistic.

**Retail Performance Criterion 4:** Complementarity with other centres instead of predation

While I have not done a rigorous analysis, the built evidence suggest inadequate regulatory control in America either for sizing of centres and their primary catchments, or for their location in respect to each other. Combined with the prevalence of very large arterials spaced usually a mile or more apart, this predatory survival of the fittest therefore leads usually to the survival of the biggest (and/or the cheapest remote location subsidised by cheap auto access), often at the expense of accessibility, sustainability and existing businesses. This regulatory environment should be seen as a choice, not an imperative.

In contrast, the regulatory context for Southwest Sydney may aim to deliver an urban structure and movement network that supports retail complementarity instead of predation, with retail centres sized for their particular catchments.

If such a smaller scale of towns and movement network could take hold (and gain widespread regulatory support), this might lead to a systemic reduction in the size of big boxes and their catchments.

### Conclusion

With, in my view, Big Retail systemically weakening urban sustainability across much of America and beyond, it is high time that healthy debate has increased within CNU about urban and retail structuring. There seems thus far to be little agreement within our ranks on these matters.

This article offers a hierarchy of retail centres, with related urban structures and movement networks, which satisfies the Exemplary Retail Performance Criteria proposed here, rather than being overly driven by Big Retail size convention. In this hierarchy the centre sizes, urban structures and movement networks cooperate for a "movement economy" that helps make the system more feasible.

Better retail structuring principles and exemplars are badly needed to lead the way. Government regulation is needed to help change retail structuring, but who inspires government to change? In the case of Northwest and Southwest Sydney, government is leading the change.

## The Missing Element

*continued from page 7*

cinemas, restaurants, and stores selling fashion and home goods, are particularly well suited to locations in town centers and subregional centers.

### PRIMARY TRADE AREA

Retail developers use trade areas, the distance from the center from which 60 to 80 percent of retail sales originate, to determine whether potential sites are closer to a customer base than competing centers. Similarly, mixed-use centers should be located at a sufficient distance from one another so that retail uses are not undercut by excessive competition.

### JOBS AND HOUSEHOLDS PER DEVELOPED ACRE

The recommended ranges of jobs and households per developed acre are meant to assure a sufficient concentration of destinations and a balance of uses within the center. Rather than computing density for individual projects or uses, the recommended ranges are meant to be achieved in the aggregate over the entire area of the center. For example, households per developed acre means the total number of households in the center divided by the total developed area in the center, regardless of use.

Clustering higher-density forms of development in

mixed-use centers maximizes the potential for transit, biking and walking trips. Balancing jobs and housing in centers helps maximize the potential for capturing trips within the center, relieving the pressure on the regional roadway system. It also makes transit service more viable by combining home and work destinations so that transit is well patronized in multiple directions. In smaller centers, most of the jobs will likely be retail or professional office uses. Larger centers can integrate large-scale office or R&D campuses, allowing workers to reach restaurants and services on their lunch hour or on the way to or from work without needing to drive to every destination.

### STREET CONNECTIVITY

Connected street patterns encourage walking and bicycling within centers. Neighborhoods built before 1945 typically had 20 or more street intersections per 100 acres, yielding typical blocks of around 4 acres in size. People value these older centers because of their human scale and walkability. New centers can comply with the demands of the marketplace while recreating these valued qualities. Subregional centers with large-format retail and office uses may require larger blocks, but these can be balanced with residential areas that use smaller, human-scale block sizes. Measuring the number of street intersections per 100 acres over the entire area gives a good measure of street connectivity. As with jobs and household benchmarks, the total number of developed acres in the type should be used in the calculation.

## Typologies

*continued from page 21*

picture windows, where Target will place super graphics in front of its box and the rest will be used as billboard advertising for new Hollywood films, etc. Parking is below grade, but an adjacent scheme could easily be conceived. This project solves two of the biggest design challenges facing anyone attempting to incorporate big boxes into a pedestrian-oriented realm, namely activating the street edge with doors and providing interest to the facade.

Sandy and Babcock's Santana Row block and the DC USA project show that some of the most innovative architecture of the past 15 years has resulted from architects attempting to fit today's state-of-the-art retail notions into pedestrian-oriented environments. As new

typologies gain acceptance in the retail industry, a caution must be sounded that just because the typologies can meet CNU charter principles doesn't mean they always do. Offenses to urban sensibilities abound of buildings that hold the street face but have no doors that open to it (Falls Grove, Md.), terminate a vista in the cheapest detailed facade in its public realm (Bowie Town Center), or entire "lifestyle centers" that are single use (Bowie, The Avenue at White Marsh; Clinton Crossing, Conn.). Most onerous of all are the numerous permanent "urban fragments" that, because of ill-considered phasing or parking adjacencies, cannot adapt, change and grow. The high bar for retail environments should insist on exemplifying CNU charter principles over the long run. Typologies can be co-opted; enduring success lies in enhancing the specificity of place with enchantment, delight and mysteries that stem from the passage of time.

## Retail Strategies

*continued from page 33*

### Think Restaurants

Restaurants, especially those with outdoor seating, are a good anchor for most types of retail district.

### Encourage Locals

There may be an existing independent store operating in the area that would do well in the retail district under consideration. Work with that retailer to open a second store. This will provide the benefits of having local stores without the risk of start-up businesses.

### Food Stores Bring Frequent Shoppers

People shop for food more often than they do for other items, so having one or more food store in an area ensures that customers will see and hopefully patronize other adjacent stores more frequently as well. Additionally, local residents will often walk to food stores more frequently than to other types of stores. Shoppers without cars generate sales without demanding expensive parking. Examples include produce stores, cheese and/or wine stores, small grocery stores, and other stores selling specialty food items.

### Look for Leasing Agents with Vision

Just as not all developers are the same, there is tremendous variation among leasing agents. Some only work with conventional tenants, but others specialize

in working with small independent stores. Leasing agents who are willing to work with a wide range of tenants are critical to the success of most retail areas.

### New Residential Construction Helps

Even infill locations with relatively strong market demographics can benefit from an infusion of new disposable income associated with new residential development. A few hundred new units can be enough to attract retailers to a place that they would not have considered previously.

### Summing Up

Every place is different; place is complex. Especially in infill locations, without understanding these complexities, retail strategies that are simplistic and, in the long run, unsustainable will be devised.

There is no "one size fits all" tenanting strategy. Work from the bottom up to identify a district and place appropriate group of tenants.

Understanding the right tenant mix is an iterative process. Information about place, demand, community capacity, and supply must be considered in response to the needs of different retailers on an ongoing basis until a complete tenanting strategy has been fleshed out.

Every place is part of a bigger place. No retail district exists in a vacuum, no matter how small or big. Different places serve different needs for shoppers, and it is critical to understand how each place fits into an overall hierarchy of retail shopping opportunities.

## Retail Transect

*continued from page 23*

the inherent advantages of compact, mixed-use development have been likewise diminished.

The following diagram, based upon a typical contemporary metropolitan area, and depicting the evolution of the traditional urban street network/retail hierarchy over a period of time from pre-war urbanism, to pre-war suburbanism, to post-war sprawl, illustrates the above concepts perfectly:

The network evolves from a compact, walkable, mixed-use urban fabric in the first diagram, to less dense residential neighborhoods, but with a still visible articulated street network, to full-blown sprawl, with low-density residential development, segregated uses, and a dendritic residential street configuration, which forces all trips for daily needs out onto a single, large arterial network, around which is clustered a group of large box retail responding to the correspondingly high number of traffic counts.

Because the basic merchandise categories haven't changed, only the scale of the retail formats in response to the ability to capture a much larger number of residential units through the increased dependence on fewer, but much larger arterials, the actual sales per square foot of the individual stores, as well as the square footage allocation per household unit will not vary greatly. However, the larger capture, combined with the much lower densities typical of sprawl, results in substantially larger trade areas, geographically speaking, resulting in proportionally more vehicle miles per trip, to satisfy basic needs.

### Conclusion

The sector plan, when properly implemented, balances transportation infrastructure against regional demand, in a finely articulated fabric that acknowledges the detail specific planning criteria of the community, from hamlet to regional center. In so doing, when coupled with appropriate land use planning, this plan provides an ideal framework for integrating a full complement of uses, including retail, in a healthy, sustainable, and equitable fashion. In other words, retail in a traditional urban context is, by nature, both self-regulating and self-correcting.

Application of the Smart Code at the regional, or sector level, not only provides a clear framework in which new development can take place, it can also help rationalize existing development: Where retail concentrations exist out of proportion to its place within the transect, remedial actions can be justifiably implemented, wherever possible, to put the retail back into more appropriate balance and scale, relative to its transect context. This can be accomplished by either gradually reducing the amount of retail, or by adding additional density of other uses, or – ideally – by a combination of both.

## Transit as Retail

*continued from page 34*

There are the basic, low-end models that appeal to the price sensitive, and high-end models with all the bells and whistles. Each model does not attempt to appeal to every market segment but, rather, is specialized to the wishes of certain ones. Before reaching this stage of specialization, however, transit providers can fall back on the old adage that a rising tide lifts all boats. They can simply incorporate those improvements that have universal appeal.

In conclusion, public transportation will never make the break—through to more demanding travelers without a drastic change in how it conducts business. Transit providers and the elected officials who support them need to have a better understanding of the public's desires and how to satisfy them. Using the kinds of techniques described here will enable them to make some very large strides. These will be necessary to cope with the huge travel demands that we are trying, often in vain, to cope with today.

# Can Wal-Mart Become A Good Neighbor?

By John H. Hooker

This commentary is in response to the editorial that defended Wal-Mart in the March 2 Insight & Opinion.

**W**AL-MART MOVES IN, AND IT BECOMES OUR NEIGHBOR, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT. A 220,000-square-foot Wal-Mart in the abstract is not a problem, but the store does not exist in a vacuum.

There is definitely a public interest in granting entitlements to landowners and their agents to build what they want. There are clear public needs and interests in how major pieces of land are developed, including old alfalfa fields. It is reasonable and fair to require businesses and developers to be good stewards and good neighbors.

Local governments manage traffic, crime, pollution, storm water and more. Wal-Mart Corp. cannot.

Stores like this can work some of the time and in some places but not every place and not every time. Local governments have to make those decisions.

Wal-Mart poses significant public policy challenges. For example, it is not in the public interest to replace high-wage retail operations with low-wage retail jobs. But that is what these stores do. According to one congressional report, for every job Wal-Mart creates, two other local jobs are lost. Local communities need both jobs and stores.

We struggle to reconcile Wal-Mart's growth with stories that equate its success with "disinflation" across the United States, falling wages across America and the collapse of small, local businesses from shore to shore.

Wal-Mart is an impressive success story. All local governments can do is manage the price of its success. "Behemoth" is probably an apt name. Its talent and skill at managing inventory and overhead offer important lessons to all retailers. Wal-Mart is doing solid long-range planning and has shown a great ability to adapt. It can also pack up and leave. Small towns cannot.

It is fair for local governments to require that as Wal-Mart and other "big boxes" outgrow their obsolete boxes they keep the old properties lit and clean, even if they don't lease or sell them. It is reasonable to require these large stores to adapt to the character of the local community, whether on the highway or on Main Street

if that is what the community expects.

Wal-Mart can claim it sells the same products. But it does not. Wal-Mart now dominates so many market segments and channels. No other small, local store can begin to enjoy its market advantage as "the largest retailer on Earth." Its gross sales are larger than the economy of the entire state of New Mexico!

Wal-Mart does offer new services in many communities that have been less well served. That was its great beginning. But its success comes at the cost of businesses and communities. One critic has suggested its growth is so fast and its employee turnover so high that soon it will simply run out of Americans to hire.

Wal-Mart is not for "the poor" as we know them. Its whole market position is based on drivers who can afford to own a car and drive to their big box in the suburbs. Who are we talking about when we describe "the poor"? There is a huge number of Americans who have never seen a Wal-Mart SuperCenter and who would be astonished to see such an alien end up in their community – whether in the countryside or the inner city.

Like its old competitors, Wal-Mart has no "right" to success but depends on the customers and the public purse. No Wal-Mart has been built next to a private six-lane road. Today, the super centers absolutely depend on massive public roads that supply it the daily traffic it needs. Wal-Mart is not paying for the air pollution that traffic causes, either.

These roads are being paid for by every taxpayer, not just Wal-Mart's customers.

The accepted wisdom is capitalism in America is "creative destruction."

We are the most dynamic, most aggressive economy on Earth, but that doesn't translate well to the local scene, the neighborhood that wants stability. It is not unreasonable for local governments to draw the line on how much destruction they can accept and how fast that destruction can occur without crippling local services and schools. For example, when a Wal-Mart abandons an old box and moves to the next suburb, the sales tax loss alone can cripple a small town.

Wal-Mart can be a good neighbor, but it can also be a very big bully. After all the public hearings, it is ultimately its choice of how to behave in our towns and neighborhoods. It's not always the neighbor we want.

Editor's note:

A version of this essay first appeared in The Albuquerque Tribune



*"Wal-Mart can be a good neighbor, but it can also be a very big bully. After all the public hearings, it is ultimately its choice of how to behave in our towns and neighborhoods. It's not always the neighbor we want."*

## Gaslight District

*continued from page 3*

City Council for assistance. The city provided \$100,000 for public improvements, rehabilitation loans, and the development of design guidelines. It was an insufficient amount of money to accomplish its purpose but enough to produce a visionary poster and three-dimensional model of the Gaslamp Quarter.

Meanwhile, in 1973, the first structure was rehabilitated at Fifth and K, the Buel-Town Company Building. Its new tenant was a popular restaurant, the Old Spaghetti Factory. Long lines to get inside proved that people would come to the Gaslamp Quarter if there were activities and attractions. Soon the first street improvements were installed at Fifth and Island and Fifth and F. Building owners responded with the restoration of the grand Pacific Hotel and the Keating Building. Others soon followed.

Owners advocated for additional street improvements and other innovative programs, worked to have the district listed on the National Register of Historic Districts, and eventually formed the Business Improvement District. Named the Gaslamp Quarter Association, it initiated many fun-filled public events to entice people to visit the area, including tours, street fairs, parades and concerts.

The Gaslamp Quarter is a national model demonstrating how public/private partnerships can revitalize older commercial areas. Through the extraordinary efforts of countless business owners, The Gaslamp Quarter Association, The Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation, Centre City Development Corporation, and the city of San Diego, the Gaslamp Quarter is once again the vibrant, historic heart of a revitalized downtown San Diego.



# Knight Program in Community Building

## Pushing the Boundaries of New Urbanism and Smart Growth

The Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami School of Architecture addresses today's urgent issues associated with community building, including the complex problems of suburban sprawl and inner-city disinvestment. The program's goal is to advance the knowledge and practice of New Urbanism and Smart Growth across disciplines through an innovative series of initiatives. The program is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of 26 U.S. Communities. The Knight Program extends the Knight Foundation's commitment to community service with a mid-career program of professional development.

*Applications for 2004-05 Fellows are being accepted through July 23rd. The Knight Program is now offering executive education courses in real estate; a course is scheduled for November 2004. For the application form and further information on the real estate courses, visit the website at [www.arc.miami.edu/knight](http://www.arc.miami.edu/knight).*

### Fellows

Each year, the Knight Program selects 12 mid-career professionals from diverse fields to take part in intensive community-building workshops, seminars and a charrette, while pursuing individual projects. Fellows are selected from fields such as architecture, planning, housing, community development, real estate, journalism, transportation and human services.

### Scholars

The Knight Program offers scholarships to promising students entering the University of Miami School of Architecture graduate program in suburb and town design. This unique program provides cutting edge training in the techniques of New Urbanism. Scholars take part in seminars, workshops, research and publications produced by the Knight Program.

### Publications

A variety of publications on topics of community building, smart growth and new urbanism are sponsored by the Knight Program. These include the quarterly *New Urban Post*, the semi-annual *Council Report*, books, journals and other material. The Knight Fellows' projects are published in case studies, research and journal articles on a variety of related topics.

### Symposia/Charrettes

The program sponsors seminars, conferences and an annual charrette in a Knight city. Past seminars include the "Transect Seminar," at Yale University, "New Plazas for New Mexico," "Civic Art 2002" and "Place Making and Community Building: Sharing Experiences from the 26 Knight Communities." Charrettes have taken place in Macon, Ga., San Jose, Calif., and Coatesville, Pa.



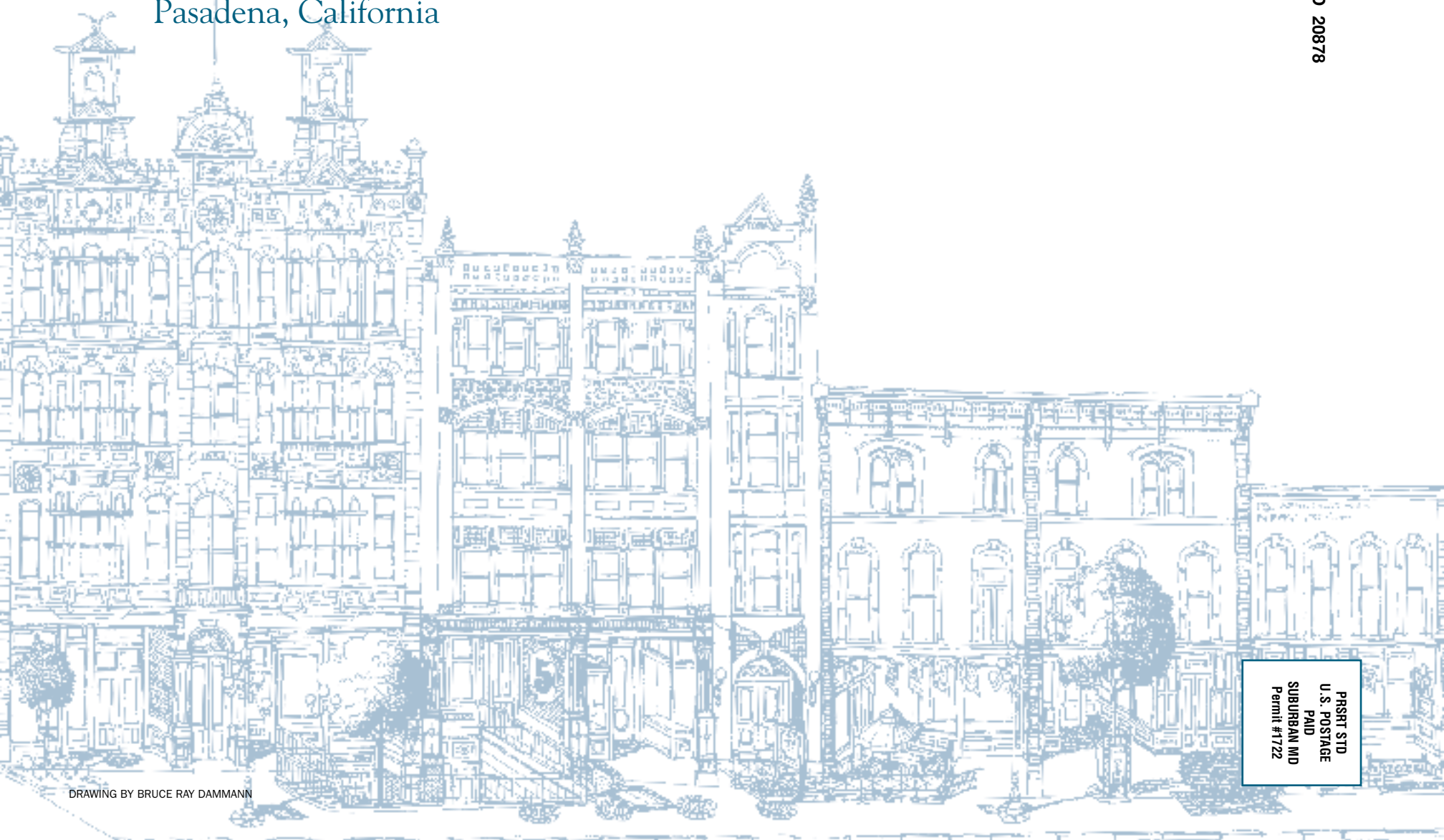
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Key West Rooftops. Drawing by Martha de Quesada, University of Miami School of Architecture.

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