DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: CONSUMERS' AND CITY PLANNERS' PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO INTEGRATING LARGE-SCALE RETAIL INTO THE DOWNTOWN

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Abstract

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: CONSUMERS' AND CITY PLANNERS' PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO INTEGRATING LARGE-SCALE RETAIL INTO THE DOWNTOWN

Jennifer Marie Donofrio

Statement of Problem
Revitalization of downtowns across America continues to be challenged by the shift to the suburbs. The barriers to integrating large-scale retail in a small, medium, and large city downtown were examined.

Forces of Data
The System View Planning Theory (Taylor, 1998) guided the study of city planners' and consumers' perceived barriers to integrating large scale retail into the downtown. In order to ascertain the barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown intercept-surveys with consumers (n=30, responded to the intercept survey in each city) and interviews with city planners were conducted.

Conclusion Reached
Some significant differences were found between perceived barriers towards integrating large-scale retail into small and large-city downtowns. Although most consumers reported a positive attitude towards large-scale retail, most consumers in Tucson and San Diego indicated that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits. Traffic, parking, pedestrian-friendly street-oriented environment, and local character are among the major barriers identified by the study cities to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. However, over half of the consumers surveyed agreed that they would shop at large-scale retail on the weekdays if it were available, but less than half of consumers in Tucson and San Diego would shop at large-scale retail on the weekends.

Recommendations
Three recommendations were suggested to successfully establish and sustain large-scale retail in the downtown.
1. Continue to find creative solutions to parking and traffic barriers.
2. Create a multifunctional, walkable downtown, with amenities to meet most consumers' needs.
3. Establish retail stores in the downtown that enhance the local character and cater to residents' needs rather than mostly tourist needs.

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Introduction

Many cities across America have not recovered from the population shift to the suburbs and ultimate decentralization of many downtown functions after World War II (WWII) (Lavin, 2003; Mitchell, 2006; Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998). Prior to WWII, the downtown traditionally served as a gathering place for community parades, festivals, celebrations and other community events. As the population shifted to the suburbs, retail and support services followed. Consequently, an increasing number of people could have most of their needs met without traveling to the downtown (McBee, 1992; Filion et al., 2004). As a result, downtowns once the bustling “heart and soul of the city,” embodying the heritage of the community and providing an array of retail options, entertainment, night life, government activities, community events and professional offices were beset with a pattern of disinvestment (Black et al., 1985).

Downtown revitalization movements encourage growth in downtowns in an effort to slow the advance of sprawl, re-use historic structures, and transform old commercial districts into vital, safe, diverse places. City planners and downtown developers are challenged to overcome the many barriers to revitalizing a failing downtown. Many failing downtowns have a declining middle-class population base and subsequent declining economy with few prospects. The middle-middle class (statistical middle class) is critical to supporting the consumption of goods and services in the community (Birdsall, 2000). The failing downtown has little or no housing, retail, entertainment venues, and offices. Little activity is generated beyond traditional weekday business hours. People only venture into the downtown when necessary. Lack of consumer confidence and subsequent difficulty attracting new development are key barriers to revitalization (Robertson, 1999). Although, many cities continue to struggle with revitalizing downtowns, over the past 15 years there has been a dramatic rebirth in some downtowns across America as consumers increasingly demand walkable vibrant places in which to live and work (Leinberger, 2005).

An interconnected set of forces have contributed to this decline and perpetuate a cycle of disinvestment in downtowns. Many downtowns presently have limited retail options and small populations. These downtowns suffer financially because they no longer attract consumers as they once did (Robertson, 1999). The image of downtown as an obsolete place with vacant storefronts and poorly maintained infrastructure creates a vicious cycle of consumers and retailers shopping outside of the downtown (Robertson, 1999; Filion et al., 2004). As a strategy to redevelop downtowns, many cities throughout the United States have begun to develop downtown revitalization plans.

Some revitalization programs have significantly transformed economically less successful downtowns into popular destinations while other strategies to revitalize downtowns have not been as successful. Pasadena, CA, Santa Monica, CA, and Rutland, VT are three examples of poorly performing downtowns that integrated large-scale retail into the downtown as part of a successful revitalization strategy (Beaumont, 1997). Because research suggests that city size is a significant factor in downtown redevelopment, a small, medium, and large city (San Luis Obispo, CA, Tucson, AZ, and San Diego, CA) were examined to identify issues related to city size as a barrier to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown (Robertson, 1999; Filion et al., 2004).

Research Questions

It was undetermined as to what degree consumer situational barriers (age, gender, residency, income, household size, education, employment status) and city planner organizational barriers (city planners' perceptions of their local government's attitudes toward large-scale retail stores) in the city-metropolitan environment would affect the integration of large-scale retail into downtowns as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. To ascertain an answer to this important question, consumers were surveyed and city planners were interviewed in each of the three selected cities. Respondents answered questions concerning perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail stores into the downtown as a revitalization strategy.

As an initial step to identifying and describing consumers' and city planners' perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown, this study addressed the following questions:

Consumer Research Questions

1. Do consumers perceive themselves as familiar with large-scale retail and issues related to large-scale retail development?

2. Do consumers have a positive attitude toward large-scale retail in the downtown?

3. What are consumers' perceived external barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown?

4. Are consumers' demographics (age, gender, residency, income, household size, education, employment status) related to perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown?

City Planner Research Questions

1. What is the city planners' knowledge concerning overall trends in large-scale retail?

2. What are city planners' perceptions of their local government's attitudes toward large-scale retail stores in their downtown community?

3. What are characteristics of the city that are perceived as assets and weaknesses for integrating large-scale retail into the downtown?

Despite the efforts to revitalize downtowns, previous studies suggest that there remain significant problems in redevelopment (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004). Robertson (1999) describes a set of "interconnected forces" to help explain the most serious problems confronting downtown revitalization. Three major themes emerged from the set of forces that contribute to barriers to revitalizing downtown, (1) characteristics of the city; and (2) characteristics of the stakeholders (consumers); and (3) revitalization strategies. Prior studies (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al.,

2004) implicitly and explicitly used the System View Planning Theory (SVPT) (Taylor, 1998) to examine these barriers confronting downtown revitalization.

Theoretical Model

The SVPT serves as a conceptual model for this study. The SVPT provides the socioeconomic-behavioral context from which to examine and describe the barriers to downtown revitalization in the selected downtowns (Taylor, 1998). This two-directional model, derived from general systems theory, focuses on recognizing that cities are complex systems and multiple factors affect urban planning in the natural community setting. The interconnectiveness of "parts" of the system are central to its function (Taylor, 1998). For example, city planning decisions affect and are affected by characteristics of the city (system) and consumers. A change in one part of the city (system) affects change in another part. Intelligent control over the system (the city including the downtown) requires an understanding of the system to be controlled (Taylor, 1998). Within the SVPT framework, attention will be focused on characteristics of the city (system), consumers (stakeholders), city planning activities (intervention), and revitalization strategies (outcomes). The findings from this study can be used to set the direction for strategies that integrate best practices into revitalization of the downtown area.

This study will contribute to the advancement of urban planning knowledge by examining and describing barriers to integrating large-scale retail stores into small, medium, and large-city downtowns successfully as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. The SVPT is highly relevant to understanding the complex socioeconomic-behavioral interrelationships in this study.

Background

This section will draw from the literature on the history of downtowns, redevelopment, and city planning practices to understand how downtowns within the context of the surrounding city have changed throughout history. Gratz & Mintz (1998) stresses that there is nothing more relevant than the past as a building block for the future of downtown revitalization. The section is divided into six topic areas: (1) downtown decline and early revitalization efforts; (2) the suburbanization and the flight from the cities; (3) retail and suburbanization; (4) big box/large-scale retail and sprawl; (5) emerging ideas on smart growth and compact design; and (6) revitalization strategies.

Downtown Decline and Revitalization Efforts

Since the 1900s, small and large city downtowns have experienced many similar and some different growth challenges. Three significant periods in time, 1910, 1928, and 1950, greatly impacted the planning and identity of most cities in America (Ford, 2003). These periods drastically changed how cities and downtowns were planned and designed in America. The 1900s significantly changed the appearance of downtowns with the influence of European designs. By 1910, many cities across America reached a peak in the “city beautiful movement” inspired by the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair (Ford, 2003). Large cities across America were building and designing grand, monumental civic centers complete with new city halls, libraries, opera houses, fountains, grassy malls, and grand boulevards (Ford, 2003). Small cities also joined the “city beautiful movement” by building grander government buildings, open public space, and improved roadways. Because of this movement, the “thrown together” downtowns of the nineteenth century began to transform into European-inspired Baroque downtowns. Downtowns in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Cleveland, and Washington D.C. are some of the best examples of the “city beautiful movement” (Ford, 2003).

In addition to planning monumental structures, the electric street car, electric light, and grand apartment buildings were born during this era (Ford, 2003). Downtowns thrived during the time of the electric trolley (Jackson, 1985). Unlike the railroads, the streetcars penetrated the downtown. Residential areas were often inextricably tied to downtowns via trolley tracks that radiated outward, similar to bike spokes. The electric trolley system provided a means for people to live outside of the downtown and work in the downtown. The arrival of the streetcar began to change the demographics of the downtown. Many of the wealthier people living downtown moved out of their mansions located near the manufacturing plants to the open space of the suburbs (Jackson, 1985). This exodus pattern began the segregation between those who lived in the downtowns and those who were wealthier and lived in the open space of the suburbs.

The second era that significantly influenced American downtowns was the roaring twenties. This era sparked a building boom and the art deco movement. In the 1920s, skyscrapers and luxurious buildings changed the large-city downtown landscape. Some small-city downtowns also began to build smaller scale versions of grand public buildings. In large cities, this building boom led to some of the tallest towers, biggest movie houses, most luxurious apartment buildings, and largest department stores ever constructed in American cities (Ford, 2003). Smaller cities began to build larger art deco inspired movie theatres, apartments and public buildings. In larger cities, as buildings became larger, streets were more crowded and the mass-transit system improved. At the beginning of the 1920s commuters traveled mostly in streetcars, commuter trains, and elevated and subway trains (Jackson, 1985). The automobile was still a novelty in the early 1920s. However, mass-production methods led by the Ford Motor Company, produced automobiles at significantly lowered cost, making the automobile affordable for most Americans (Ohio State University, 2008). Other carmakers followed Ford's ideas and by the end of the decade car ownership became the norm for the middle-class and even many working-class families (Ohio State University, 2008).

The invention, production, and distribution of the automobile radically altered American society in the twentieth century. By the end of the decade [1920's], there was almost one car per family in the United States (Bruce, 1981). The emergence of the automobile as a consumer commodity even changed the greater landscape of the United States (Ohio State University, 2008). Suburbs grew out of cities and expanded metropolitan areas, and the automobile made it easier for Americans to commute longer distances. The automobile became an increasingly important part of American lives. Workers no longer needed to live close to their workplace but could live farther away from work and travel to their jobs with ease. Poor environmental conditions brought about by the industrial revolution in the early 1920s gave consumers a reason to leave the city. Although the industrial revolution brought about many technological innovations and jobs, the revolution was primarily manifested through large factories that emitted a great deal of dangerous pollutants into the cities. Many workers sought to escape crowded and polluted cities filled with poverty, crime and blight (Borbely, 2007).

The exodus to the expanding suburbs was also spurred the Federal Road Act (1924) which offered federal money to state legislatures for the organization of highway departments with matching of federal funds. Nearly every section of the country launched ambitious road building programs during the 1920s (Bruce, 1981). Roadway designers in the 1920s had to work within emerging field of knowledge that developed through actual application. Rapid changes in transportation led to the formation of a professional specialty in transportation in 1930, the national Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The ITE's early focus on efficient, high-speed road networks and traffic movement that connected the city with expanding suburbs rather than fully developing city roadways contributed to decentralization (Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 2003).

In the 1920s, retail trade was dispersed among hundreds of thousands of small businesses in both small and large cities (Mitchell, 2006). By 1929, although chain stores controlled about one-quarter of the retail market, Americans still spent four out of five dollars at independently owned retail shops

(Mitchell, 2006). This spending ratio continued virtually unchanged through the mid-1950s (Mitchell, 2006). Reasons for the slow growth of the chain store market were the collapse of the stock market and widespread public animosity towards chain stores. In the 1930s and 1940s many Americans believed that chain stores were driving down wages across the economy and undermining the democracy by concentrating economic power to the few (Mitchell, 2006). As a result, the majority of consumers continued to patronize independent businesses.

The great suburban land rush, which began in the 1920s with the advent of increased automobile ownership, accelerated in the 1950s as soldiers returning home from WWII needed housing. Many soldiers were lured from the downtown to the suburbs by Veterans Administration subsidized housing.

This exodus from the downtown contributed to the decentralization and disinvestment of downtowns in large cities (Leinberger, 2005). However, many small-city downtowns experienced the population shift to the suburbs two to three decades later as suburbanization of small-cities followed the saturation of large city markets. Before WWII, downtowns were the hub of the city offering economic and social opportunities to residents (ULI, 1992). During the early 1950s, after years of deprivation and rationing caused by the great depression and WWII, downtowns seemed tired and worn out (Ford, 2003). Very little had been remodeled or built between 1930 and 1945, and many buildings were past their prime (Ford, 2003). While suburban housing tracts were beginning to appear, everything with economic importance still existed in the downtown (Ford, 2003). Even though the total percentage of retail downtown had declined, due to the growth of suburban stores, larger department stores and high quality restaurants were still in downtown (Ford, 2003).

Proclaiming a "renaissance" of downtowns after the WWII, governmental and private investors tore down buildings and discontinued the streetcar systems to build "modern" structures (Ford, 2003). In the 1950s, a pervasive attitude of "out with the old, in with the new" negatively impacted downtowns as older buildings were torn down and replaced with "modern" structures (Ford, 2003). Interestingly, downtowns in many smaller cities remained relatively less effected by the development trends of the early 1900s through the 1950s as they had fewer financial resources (tax base) to fund the changes and they lacked the intense development pressures found in large-city downtowns. The destruction of historic buildings became rampant in larger cities as they had the economic ability to fund "modern growth" stylistically inspired, in large part, by the modernist movement that began in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. Because of suburban competition and the destruction of the historic downtowns, the attractiveness of downtowns diminished. As a consequence, people continued to abandon the downtowns in favor of the suburbs.

Suburbanization and the Flight from the Cities

Many American downtowns experienced troubled times from the 1960s through the 1980s. The noticeable impact on small-city downtowns has been particularly severe because small city downtowns oftentimes possess fewer assets (entertainment, nightlife, professional offices, and governmental offices) than those of larger metropolitan regions (Filion et al., 2004). Larger downtowns also had the workforce, greater market area, and more downtown attractions when compared to small-city downtowns (Robertson, 1999). Furthermore, small city downtowns typically did not include types of attractions that generated activity beyond traditional weekday business hours (Robertson, 1999).

The 1998 *Housing and Urban Development (HUD) State of the Cities Report* substantiates the flight from the both small and large cities to the suburbs. According to HUD, since 1970, six million middle-class and affluent families have left downtowns (Cuomo, 1998). As a result of this exodus, many large cities including New York City and Cleveland experienced financial difficulty and went bankrupt as factories, office buildings and department stores closed. Small cities also experienced economic decline caused by the population shift. This low point was caused by a variety of government and private-sector policies and procedures encouraging and subsidizing urban sprawl (Ford, 2003). The Veterans Administration Housing Insurance program made it easy and affordable for veterans to purchase homes in the suburbs. In addition, the federal mortgage guaranty program strongly favored suburban homes and restricted lending in established neighborhoods (Mitchell, 2006).

The Interstate Highway Program also encouraged the downtown exodus and urban sprawl. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower and Congress approved the Interstate Highway Act, providing a 42,000 mile roadway system, 90 percent paid for by the federal government (Jackson, 1985). The policies used to develop the mortgage guaranty programs and the Interstate Highway Program indirectly supported chain stores by fueling suburbanization at the expense of the downtowns and creating the automobile infrastructure that would make shopping centers more accessible (Mitchell, 2006).

The suburbs also changed how people travel. The population shift to the suburbs dramatically increased the dependence on the automobile (Mitchell, 2006). In downtowns, people had the option to walk or take public transit to their destinations. Comparatively, those who lived in the suburbs oftentimes commuted downtown to work. Many suburban communities were geographically too large for people to conveniently walk to amenities and they offered limited or nonexistent access to public transit. As a result, most people relied on their personal vehicle as a means of transportation. According to Mitchell, driving has become less of a choice and more of a necessity in the suburbs (Mitchell, 2006). More people driving have increased pollution at the local, national and global levels (Mitchell, 2006). Higher volumes of cars and truck traffic have increased the amount of nitrogen oxide, volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (Mitchell, 2006).

Most everywhere in America, suburbanization caused a relative, and in many cases, absolute decline of downtown areas (Filion et al., 2004). To compete with the suburbs, downtown retailers began improving storefront facades, but the results were typically unsuccessful because there were not enough consumers to support downtown retail. Long-established retail chains operating in downtowns including Montgomery Wards, Federated, Caldor, Otasco, Ames, Sears and Kmart were forced to downsize and restructure (Graff, 1998). In reaction to the loss of residential and retail in the downtown, manufacturers began to move out of the downtown to locations near highways to easily transfer goods (McBee, 1992). According to McBee (1992), the most visible symbol of the erosion of downtown retailing in the 1980s was the dark downtown department store. In Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Dallas, Richmond, and across America, downtown department stores closed down as the market shifted from locally owned department stores to chain stores on the periphery of the city (McBee, 1992). Results from a 1974 Gallup opinion poll illustrated the magnitude of the downtown exodus. According to that poll, people interested in living in the downtown sunk to an all-time low, with nine out of ten people wanting to live in the suburbs or a small town instead of the city (Frieden, 1989). As a result, downtowns were facing a fiscal crisis, and turning into unruly, unloved, and unlivable, places where people were afraid to travel (Frieden, 1989).

During the 1970s and 1980s employers followed employees to the suburbs. This move dramatically increased the number of offices and retail stores in the suburbs. At the same time, decreases in the downtown tax base and changes in demographics were transforming downtowns into daytime only environments (McBee, 1992).

The federal government had previously put forth limited efforts to help downtowns recover from economic problems and developed two programs to encourage downtown revitalization. The Housing Act of 1949, an early urban renewal program, promoted the clearing and sale of residential land in downtowns to developers. This program was amended in 1954 to include commercial land (McBee, 1992). The program required renewal to be a part of a comprehensive city plan to encourage cities to deal with the entire downtown area and not just areas with blight. Unfortunately, this program did not attract enough builders back to the downtown. As a result, huge parcels of land remained vacant for years and contributed to the decline of the downtown (McBee, 1992). Another effort to revitalize the downtowns came through the 1974 Community Development Block Grants that gave cities grant money to implement their own revitalization strategies. Regrettably, these too were insufficient to attract a significant amount of new development to the downtown (McBee, 1992).

Retail and Suburbanization

Rapid suburbanization beginning in the 1950s ultimately affected both small and large city downtowns and created a new market for national chain stores. This rapid expansion led to urban sprawl, the spreading of the city out to the fringes, away from the downtown creating an increasing reliance on automobiles (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). Initially, developers did not integrate retail stores into their subdivision plans, because people still traveled to the downtown to shop (Mitchell, 2006). Building in the suburbs initially was challenging, expensive, and it took owners too many years to recoup their investments (Mitchell, 2006). To accelerate retail growth in the suburbs, Congress adopted changes to the tax code, which gave shopping centers highly lucrative tax shelters (Mitchell, 2006). The new tax law allowed owners to set aside a portion of the value of their buildings tax-free each year to cover the eventual cost of replacement. This tax program made new shopping centers highly profitable.

However, the accelerated depreciation program was only applicable to new construction, so downtown business owners could not use the tax shelter (Mitchell, 2006). These tax shelters allowed for shopping center developments featuring chain stores to become very successful businesses. By 1967, as a result of chain stores entering the suburban market, the independent retail market share dropped from three-quarters to about two-thirds of the [chain] retail share (Mitchell, 2006).

In 1962, the same year Wal-Mart became a chain store, the department store company Dayton's opened four Target stores in the Minneapolis and Duluth suburbs and S.S. Kresge opened the first K-mart in Garden City, Michigan. Many other companies opened stores with similar formats, but they no longer exist (Mitchell, 2006). By 1977, the discount store format had the largest share of the general merchandising retail market (Boarnet et al., 2005). In addition, K-mart had the greatest percentage of the share with over 1,200 stores (Boarnet et al., 2005).

Competition from discount stores located outside of the downtown had a greater affect on the decline of small city downtowns than large city downtowns due to the relatively smaller amount of commercial development in small city downtowns (Robertson, 1999). In a typical small city downtown the opening of a regional mall signaled the decline of the downtown (Robertson, 1999). Additionally, the mall not only attracted customers who frequently patronized downtowns, but malls also lured businesses away from the downtown. Due to the smaller scale of the small city downtowns, the impact of vacant lots and empty buildings were much more visible than a similar vacancy in a large-city downtown (Robertson, 1999).

The three leading discount chains, Wal-Mart, K-mart, and Target, emulated successful regional chains by adapting the discount store format for a highly competitive American retailing environment (Graff, 1998). The suburbs were attractive to chains for both their markets and locations (Pothukuchi, 2005). Stores were able to purchase inexpensive land and serve a larger population of consumers. The homogeneity of store design contributed to the stores efficiency. In addition, the store size allowed for an enormous number and type of products to be sold in one store (Halebsky, 2004). The large scale retail format targeted at an auto-oriented population captured an ever-increasing share of the suburban market (Pothukuchi, 2005).

The growth of chain stores since 1990 can be seen as a continuation of a long trend; however the scope and speed of growth is unprecedented (Mitchell, 2006). In 1996, the top ten retail chains accounted for fifteen percent of consumer spending (Mitchell, 2006). Comparatively, in 2005 the top ten retailers accounted for thirty percent of more than $2.3 trillion that Americans spend per year (Mitchell, 2006). As chain stores continue to expand, the amount of retail space in America grows. According to Mitchell, in 1960 America had four square feet of retail store space per person. However, in 2005 there is 38 square feet of retail per person (Mitchell, 2006). One of the biggest concerns according to Ed McMahon, the senior fellow with the Urban Land Institute, is the accelerated consumption of open space (Mitchell, 2006). The development of large parcels of land found on the periphery of cities led to sprawl.

Emerging Ideas on Smart Growth and Compact Design

To combat the negative impacts of sprawl, revitalize downtowns, and protect the environment, “smart growth” principles were developed (Fulton & Shigley, 2005). A variety of advocacy groups working with the Smart Growth America coalition identified ten principles to define smart growth (see list below).

The 10 Smart Growth Principles

1. Create a range of housing options
2. Create walkable neighborhoods
3. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
4. Foster distinctive and attractive communities
5. Make development decisions predictable
6. Mix land uses
7. Preserve open space
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
10. Take advantage of compact building design

Many downtowns already have the physical features, which are necessary to create a smart growth development. Downtowns are typically the largest mixed-use development in a city (Leinberger, 2005). They are often diverse and foster a variety of uses including: offices, different types of retail, cultural attractions, restaurants, and housing (McBee, 1992). Most downtowns are compact, allowing workers, visitors, and residents to walk or ride transit easily within the downtown and surrounding areas (McBee, 1992). Furthermore, many downtowns already feature distinctive landmarks, which create a sense of place and identity for the downtown.

Revitalization Strategies

In both small and large city downtowns across America, attempts at revitalization can be grouped into three phases. The first phase occurred in the 1950s and 1960s and concentrated on the promotion of automobile accessibility. Expressways and widened major roadways were meant to facilitate the flow of traffic toward the downtown. Downtown parking was also increased. However, it became clear that automobile accessibility alone was not a successful strategy to compete with the suburbs (Filion et al., 2004).

The second phase ran from the late 1950s into the early 1980s and centered on competing with suburbs for market share by improving the downtown's image using suburban planning strategies. Policymakers attempted to replicate suburban conditions in the downtown using the suburban shopping format (indoor retail malls with large parking facilities) (Filion et al., 2004). This strategy was based on the assumption that by replicating conditions found in suburbs, downtowns could successfully compete with suburban markets (Filion et al., 2004). In many cities, this strategy resulted in failure to bring consumers back to the downtown area and subsequent economic failure of downtown malls. Even more prosperous downtown malls generated little activity beyond their walls (Filion et al., 2004). For example in downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico, a downtown mall was built in the late 1960s as an "urban renewal" strategy. Common reasons cited for the urban renewal were that the downtown businesses had difficulty competing with the suburban malls and the buildings were "dated". The historic Main Street in Las Cruces was mostly demolished and replaced by a pedestrian mall to “shore up” downtown business. The goal was to make the downtown more like the suburban shopping experience in an effort to effectively compete with the suburban shopping districts. This six-block stretch of Main Street was the home of approximately 160 struggling businesses prior to the construction of the pedestrian mall. Within three years only about one-third of the original business remained (Chamberlain, 2005). By 2005, fewer than 10 businesses remained. A master plan has since been adopted to restore Main Street and revitalize blighted areas (Chamberlain, 2005). The most important lesson learned by city planners and other stakeholders was that there is no magic bullet. Instead, successful downtown revitalization requires a multi-faceted effort that addresses all of a downtown's key issues and problems (Chamberlain, 2005; Leinberger, 2005).

The third revitalization phase, which started in the late 1970s, marked a radical departure from earlier approaches to downtown revitalization attempts. This phase focused on creating a unique identity (sense of place) in the downtowns similar to that found in pre-WWII (Filion et al., 2004). The rediscovery of pre-WWII built environments lead to a planning philosophy that emphasized the preservation of unique features downtown. This new ideology signaled mounting sentiments that the downtown could no longer compete with the suburbs on its own terms and the survival of the downtown rested on distinguishing itself from the suburbs (Filion et al., 2004).

Summary

Over the past century, both small and large city downtowns once the “the heart and soul” of cities have decentralized. In the early 1900s, downtowns were central places where people lived, worked, and found entertainment. However, because of many contributing factors including war, advancements in technology (the streetcar and automobile), and government financial incentives, downtowns began to change as the wealthy population shifted to the suburbs. This dynamic shift, which has been observed over the past century, resulted in the decline of many downtowns across America. As the population migrated to the suburbs, downtown employers ultimately followed their employees to the suburbs. This relocation of the workforce to the suburbs led to empty storefronts and areas of high crime where people were afraid to travel, especially after daylight. In many ways, contributing factors that affect the decline of small and large city downtowns are similar yet there remain significant differences.

The contributing factors related to the decline of downtowns and subsequent revitalization efforts are multifaceted and interconnected. Two key barriers to revitalization of downtown emerged from the literature: city characteristics and stakeholder characteristics. Many early efforts to revitalize downtowns have failed. However new strategies have been developed in an effort to shift the population back to the downtown. The Smart Growth America Coalition was created in 1995; this coalition developed 10 Smart Growth principles, which capitalize on existing infrastructure and amenities in the downtown. These principles highlight the importance of revitalizing downtowns because they already have the infrastructure in place to serve a “new” downtown population.

CHAPTER 2

Problem

Introduction

Revitalization of the downtown remains a challenge both for consumers and city planners throughout America. In this chapter, the relevant literature was reviewed to understand a set of interconnected forces identified as barriers to integrating retail into the downtown. This chapter will also describe how the relative size of a city can also effect the integration of retail (including large-scale retail development) into the downtown as a revitalization strategy.

The SVPT (Taylor, 1998) provided the socioeconomic-behavioral context from which to examine and describe perceived barriers to integrating retail into the downtown. The downtown and surrounding city (system) characteristics are defined as the traditional structures and processes of the city/downtown. In the natural city setting, competition from suburban malls, available retail space, parking, and available housing are among the characteristics that interact with city planning activities (intervention), the consumers (stakeholders), and revitalization strategies (outcome). Consumer (stakeholder) characteristics are defined as demographics, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that influence decision-making. Each interrelated construct (system, intervention, stakeholder, and outcome) effects and is effected by one another. The whole is enhanced by each of its parts, but those parts must relate to make a complex whole (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). For example, any revitalization strategy that includes integrating large-scale retail into the downtown community is likely affected to some degree by stakeholder attitudes and perceptions towards historic preservation. Conversely, historic preservation efforts (e.g. design guidelines and financial incentives) affect stakeholder attitudes and perceptions. The SVPT constructs: city/downtown (system), consumers (stakeholders), city planning activities (intervention), and revitalization strategies (outcome) were examined to help understand the interrelationships amongst constructs as barriers to the revitalization of small, medium, and large city downtowns.

City/Downtown (System)

Characteristics of the City

Design and Appearance of Downtowns

Downtown design. The design (shape and placement of buildings) of the city/downtown affects how the system functions (Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Taylor, 1998). Distinct physical characteristics differentiate downtowns from suburbs (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). Large-scale operators have recognized many of these differences and are taking steps to ensure that large-scale retail relates better to the environment and neighborhoods (Duerksen, 1996). The goal is to encourage development of large-scale retail that contributes to the downtown's sense of place by reflecting its physical character and adding to it in ways that complement the surrounding neighborhood (Duerksen, 1996).

Many traditional downtowns were developed "organically" over time with sidewalks adjacent to buildings, relatively high-density development, mixed-uses, and narrow streets with wide sidewalks (Brodeur, 2007). While large city downtowns typically have several activity generators (stadiums, museums, entertainment areas) and major employment centers, small-city downtowns tend to have few activity generators. Retail, professional and business office space, movie theatres, and government offices are the primary functions of small-city downtowns (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998). A traditional pedestrian-scale downtown development pattern was based on providing residents with the majority of their needs within walking distance of their homes (McBee, 1992). However, in large city downtowns, a well-performing mass transit network is essential for pedestrians to travel to distant destinations (Gratz & Mintz, 1998).

The design of the city/downtown also affects street-level activity. Downtowns are designed to encourage pedestrian street-life with a full spectrum of activities (Gratz & Mintz, 1998; McBee, 1992). Some large-scale retail operators have radically changed their format to a pedestrian-friendly design by capitalizing on the street-level activity of the downtown. Large, inviting display windows facing the street with multiple entrances easily accessible to street traffic are crucial to downtown revitalization to attract consumers (Beaumont, 1997). The high-density development, variety of retail opportunities, wide sidewalks, and mixed uses promote a sense of community and stimulate social interaction (Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Robertson, 1999). Gratz & Mintz (1998) describes sidewalks as the life of the community creating a shared communal place to interact with others.

Comparatively, the design of suburbs is based on Euclidian zoning, which segregates the suburbs into single-use districts, e.g., the housing district, the entertainment district, and worker district (Brodeur, 2007). Many suburbs lack a sense of community because the residents stay behind "close doors" (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). Rather than walking to destinations many suburban residents, commute by automobile. In many cases there are no attractive destinations (parks, retail, and public spaces) within walking distance (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). The resulting dependency on the automobile stifles experiencing the community on foot. The intermingling, street theater, human interaction, and sidewalk bustle that enlivens the downtown streets is missing (Gratz & Mintz, 1998). In general, the high density and high intensity environment that makes a city downtown vibrant, is the opposite of what is desired by most consumers in the suburbs.

Large-scale retail design. The resistance to large-scale retail is well documented. Consumers have mounted public, well organized protests against the entry of large-scale retail into their downtown neighborhoods (Lavin, 2003). Consumers argue that revitalization efforts that make the downtown indistinguishable from "everywhere else" does not save the downtown at all (Lavin, 2003). The "formula" design and size of large-scale retail stores drastically differs from the unique, historic character of both small and large-city downtowns. Halebsky (2004) argues that the local identity, regional charm, and sense of place are adversely affected when traditional architecture is replaced by "homogenous retail chains that are incongruous with the existing environment". The traditional big box design is also referred to as a "plain vanilla rectangular box" of industrial quality construction that diminishes the aesthetics of the community (Duerksen, 1996).

The typical design of the large-scale retail stores is typically a one-story, fortress-like, inward-looking building, with no relationship to the community (Beaumont, 1997). The parking is placed in the front of the building. Several large monument signs are placed on the periphery of the property facing the adjacent streets and few landscaping features are located in the parking lot (Beaumont, 1997; Mitchell, 2006). In the suburbs, large-scale retail stores are often built on vacant developable land large enough to accommodate a store ranging in size from 70,000 to 250,000 square feet and a many acre parking lot (Beaumont, 1997).

Some downtowns, for example, Santa Barbara and Pasadena are establishing zoning and site/design regulations that promote the integration of large-scale retail stores into the downtown while retaining community character. These regulations include aesthetic orientation of the building façade, changing the appearance of the building to fit in with the surrounding buildings and integration of stores into existing vacant buildings, and modified signage that blends with the architecture of the surroundings (Siwolop, 2006). A few large-scale retail stores are incorporating smart growth principles by including mixed used and pedestrian-oriented design into their stores (Wooley, 2005).

<u>Appearance of downtowns</u>. The appearance of downtowns across America has changed since the population shift to the suburbs beginning in the 1950's. Downtown buildings once bustling with consumers are now vacant and not maintained as in the past (Filion et al., 2004; Beaumont, 1997; Robertson, 1999). The disregard for these vacant buildings has negatively affected the

appearance of the downtown. Lack of historic preservation and the push for "new growth" has lead to historic buildings, especially in large-city downtowns, being demolished (Beaumont, 1997). Vacant buildings in the downtown stand where independent retailers once flourished.

Large-scale retail in the suburbs now lures many consumers away from the downtown (Filion et al., 2004). Downtowns including Spokane, Washington have suffered especially hard from large-scale retail stores operating outside of the downtown. Spokane, Washington once with a vibrant downtown struggles to survive because both city and county governments allowed large-scale retail stores, malls, and strip mall developments to glut the local economy (Beaumont, 1997). The vacant buildings in Spokane and other downtowns across America left by the exodus to the suburbs not only influence the appearance of the downtown, but also affect community fabric and community life downtown. However, as large-scale retailers in the suburbs lured consumers away from downtown, some vehemently argue that integrating large-scale retail into the downtown will capture significant sales from local independent merchants, forcing them to abandon their businesses (Halebsky, 2004). Abandoned businesses and displaced independent merchants perpetuate a cycle of city decline.

Parking and traffic/ congestion

In most large cities, downtown parking and congestion are very complicated issues and addressed with high priority. The high-density design of large downtowns, mixed with limited space, and alternative transit modes creates congestion and makes parking requirements challenging. The availability of off-street parking is an essential element necessary for the success of downtown shopping (Drachman, 1982). Although most large-scale retail has been welcome in suburban neighborhoods, many vehemently argue that the development of auto-oriented large-scale retail in the downtown would generate even more traffic, congestion, and pollution onto the already strained roadways (Mitchell, 2006). However, in many small cities, parking issues and congestion ranked low on the list of downtown problems (Robertson, 1999). In small-city downtowns, parking problems are based more on perception than reality (Robertson, 1999).

Estimating parking demand for downtowns is more complex than for single-use developments (Urban Land Institute, 2003). The synergistic relationship among different land uses in a downtown often encourages multi-purpose trips in which consumers visit more than one land use on a single-trip (Urban Land Institute, 2003).

Finding the right amount of parking to serve the mix of uses in the downtown takes finesse. Jane Holtz Kay, an architect and planning critic, puts it best, “The more parking, the less place. The more place, the less parking” (Shoup, 2005). Some planners and stakeholders argue that parking lots are asphalt holes in the urban fabric and that past some point, additional parking spaces harm rather than help the both small and large-city downtown (Shoup, 2005). However, consumers expect free parking especially when they shop at large-scale retail stores. If parking spaces are too far from the stores or if there is not enough parking, consumers will be discouraged from entering the area

(Levy, 2001). As a strategy to find parking solutions that meet consumer's needs, some large-scale retailers have capitalized on the high-density, pedestrian friendly downtown environment to develop successful large-scale retail without parking or drive-through. These street accessible large-scale stores have fit into the urban market by altering their usual design in favor of a design that promotes easy accessibility to pedestrian traffic (Lavin, 2003).

In addition, Shoup believes that off-street parking requirements are harmful to downtowns (Shoup, 2005). In his 2005 book, *The High Costs of Free Parking,* Shoup points out findings from Richard Voith that there is a conflict between high density and inexpensive parking in the downtown. According to Voith, "abundant inexpensive parking would make the downtown more attractive, if it has no consequences; however plentiful, low cost parking may be at odds with the very aspect that makes downtowns unique – "high density" (Shoup, 2005). As a means of balancing parking with land uses, Shoup suggests that cities reevaluate their parking requirements. According to Shoup, "minimum parking requirements, with no maximum parking requirements, imply that cities only care about having enough parking spaces and that there can never be too many [spaces]" (Shoup, 2005).

According to Levy and Weitz, it is difficult to assess how many parking spaces are enough to serve the demand. However, the standard rule of thumb is 5.5 parking spaces per thousand square feet of retail store space (Levy, 2001). Target Corp. requires at least five parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of retail (Beaumont, 1997). The amount of parking required for a store is typically bigger than the store itself (Beaumont, 1997). Comparatively each city has their own parking requirements, which may not coincide with a retailer's parking standards.

A typical home improvement store can generate as many as 948 car trips an hour or 9,710 per day, exacerbating traffic congestion and stressing the local residents (Chazan, 2006). In addition, off-street parking impacts accessibility. According to Shoup, "abundant parking makes it easier and cheaper to drive, but pandemic parking lots spread activities farther apart making cars more necessary" (Shoup, 2005). Off-street parking increase mobility for vehicles, however it reduces mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and those utilizing public transportation (Shoup, 2005). While in parking lots, drivers compete for close-in parking spaces and create pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.

Placing large-scale retail stores on the periphery of cities is increasing the amount of miles Americans are driving. The development of large-scale retail stores has effected congestion and accessibility. Long [operating] hours and steady traffic leads to noise pollution and congestion of neighborhoods (Chazan, 2006). According to Mitchell, driving for shopping has been growing more than twice the rate of driving for any other purpose (Mitchell, 2006). Between 1990 and 2001, the number of miles driven by average households for retail purposes increased by 40 percent (Mitchell, 2006). As chain stores continue to build more stores they increase their geographic coverage and provide more people with large scale retail amenities. As a result of spreading out and attracting more customers, the average length of a retail trip increased from five miles in the

1990s to seven miles in 2001 (Mitchell, 2006). Few large-scale retail stores in the suburbs accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. The auto-oriented design and distance from residential housing and transit lines dissuade consumers from traveling to the store by alternative modes.

Crime

Many perceive larger downtowns as dangerous places (Robertson, 1999; McBee, 1992). Consumers are less likely to travel downtown where there may be risk, when they can shop “safely” in their local mall (McBee, 1992). However, crime ranked at the bottom of concerns for small and most medium-sized cities. The relatively low ranking of crime as a problem effecting smaller cities was explained by the relative homogeneity perceived by people in small cities when compared to large cities (Robertson, 1999). The more people perceived others to be like themselves, the safer they felt in the downtown (Milder, 1987). Perceived and actual crime negatively impact the number of visitors to the downtown. Due to the population size in large cities relative to small, the incidence of serious crime and the subsequent coverage in the media is greater (Robertson, 1999).

In both small and large-city downtowns, the addition of a large scale retail has resulted in a greater number of criminal offenses. According to Mitchell, some large-scale retail stores generate large volumes of crime. In Royal Palm Beach, Florida, East Lampeter, Pennsylvania, and Pineville, North Carolina, the arrival of large-scale retail stores resulted in hundreds of additional police calls each year related to shoplifting and check fraud (Mitchell, 2006). To compensate for the increase in crime, all of these police departments needed to increase their staff resulting in city revenue being spent on new police officers (Mitchell, 2006).

Local Character

The integration of large-scale retail stores into downtowns of all sizes has been fervently debated because of its affect on the local character of the community while others welcome the needed retail. Local character is important to maintaining quality of life for community stakeholders (Robertson, 1999; McBee, 1992). The ability to establish a "sense of place", the unique positive qualities that distinguish one city from other, is one of the strengths of traditional downtown areas. Characteristics related to a strong sense of place such as waterfronts and older architecture are among downtowns' greatest assets (Robertson, 1999). Cities that have lost many historic buildings and existing infrastructure tend to have a "nowhere syndrome", referred to by Kunstler (1993) as "the anonymity of many newer built environments" with the same stores, architecture, and large parking lots. Kunstler writes that historic buildings within downtown areas offer an opportunity to create a new and unusual combination of activities in stark contrast to the "nowhere syndrome" (Kunstler, 1993). Downtown's traditional role as a regional center coupled with the city's unique characteristics supply the foundation upon which the current sense of place can be established (Robertson, 1999). However, traditional large-scale retail development and subsequent sprawl can lead to the demolition of historic buildings, which are not found elsewhere in the city or surrounding regions (Robertson, 1999).

Depending on the area (suburbia, strip malls, inner-cities, and downtowns) chain stores and large-scale stores have been welcomed or vehemently protested (Lavin, 2003). In Lavin's 2000 study on consumer attitudes towards placing drug store chains into New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; and Madison, Wisconsin, residents did not acknowledge the convenience of stores, but instead focused on the blight of their urban landscapes (Lavin, 2003). Residents argue that the national chains threaten the social fabric of their communities because the stores are "sprawling, ugly, and cheap" (Lavin, 2003). In New York City and Madison, Wisconsin, residents have mounted public well-organized protests against the entry of CVS and Walgreen into their neighborhoods (Lavin, 2003). During a meeting in New York City drawing 300 persons, one speaker stated, "Don't think CVS is interested in serving the needs of the community" (Lavin, 2003). Another argued, "We do not want to become a suburban mall. We want to maintain and continue the diverse flavor of our neighborhood" (Lavin, 2003).

Comparatively, in some communities placing a large scale retail on the periphery of a community creates conflicts between the developers and the community (Lavin, 2003). According to Weinstein (1994), critics note that a growing number of empty storefronts in the downtown raise concerns that go much deeper than the purely economic. Concerns include the decline in the traditional patterns of informal interchange among neighbors as downtown stores close due to competition from the big box retailer and a loss of community autonomy as economic power shifts from local shopkeepers to distant corporations (Weinstein, 1994). However, in some cities, residents are so desperate for retail that the benefits of having shopping are greater than the costs of the large scale retail on the character of the community.

In 2008, the City of Albuquerque Planning Commission approved a large-scale retail development (Lowe's Home Improvement Store as an anchor, a few additional retail stores, and nine drive-thru businesses including restaurants, a gas station, banks, and a drug store), which when completely developed will have significant negative impacts on the adjacent neighborhood. The front of the mall would be oriented towards the main street with a large parking lot being the predominate feature. Buildings are box shaped structures that lacked any type of architectural interest. The back elevation with unsightly and noisy loading docks is oriented toward the adjacent neighborhood. The Albuquerque Staff Report stated that this 56 acre project was a "un-pedestrian-friendly design, noise, and light pollution created by this development would affect the nearby residents." However, despite the planning department's strong concerns, the adjacent residents supported the development because they lacked retail near their homes (DiMambro, 2008). Fearful of losing a retail opportunity if they protested the development plans, the residents indicated they would allow the developer to build their standard "formula" building. Despite the residents' hesitant support for the development, city planners requested a redesign of the development to address the fact that the project did not meet current regulations for large-scale retail identified in Albuquerque's Comprehensive Plan. The Lowe's project consultant complained to the city planning director that city planners were too "harsh" and requested a more "liberal interpretation" of the regulations that resulted in the acceptance of a formula box store and accompanying strip mall. Although the city planners attempted to enhance the character of this project with a plan that included a walkable, "town center" concept with smaller groupings of parking lots clustered around shops, interesting architecture and open spaces, ultimately a retailer's influence and an apprehensive public created a far different project.

<u>Retail Gap</u>

As defined by the J.C. Williams Group (2008), retail gap is the difference between the retail space available compared to what the trade area can support. Retail gap describes the potential for the utilization of the retail space available in the marketplace when there are consumers to support the system (J.C. Williams Group, 2008). For this study, retail gap will focus on the contributing factors related to available retail space in the downtown and declining retail consumerism in the downtowns. According to Black et al., Howland, and Rogel, (1985) and Robertson (1999), many factors contribute to retail gap in downtowns including: (1) attracting new development to the downtown; (2) attracting consumers to the downtown; (3) competition from suburban retailers; (4) the availability of space for large scale retailers; and (5) vacant/underused retail space (Black et al., 1985; Robertson, 1999).

<u>Attracting new development to the downtown</u>

In his 1999 study of downtowns, Robertson identifies attracting new development to downtowns as the primary issue affecting downtown redevelopment. According to Robertson, several factors contribute to this problem. In general, the problems related to attracting new development to the downtown are largely due to the difficultly of attracting people beyond the traditional workday business hours, and the competition from discount stores and suburban malls outside of the downtown. Furthermore, with most housing and sufficient shopping located on the periphery of the city and beyond, there is little need to remain in the city after dark (Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Robertson, 1999; McBee, 1992). Underused retail space further perpetuates the image of the downtown as “obsolete” and uninviting. The availability of parking and crime were identified as a lesser but still significant problems. Robertson’s national survey describing barriers to downtown redevelopment is summarized in Table 1 below. Barriers were rated from constituting a major problem (Likert score 5) with high priority to not a problem (Likert score 1) to integrating retail in downtowns.

Table 1

Problems Identified by Robertson as Barriers to Integrating Retail in Downtown

Downtown Barrier to Redevelopment	Mean Rating
Attracting new development	3.74
Attracting people downtown evenings/ weekends	3.68
Competition from discount stores and or/ suburban malls	3.61
Vacant/ underused retail space	3.54
Parking	3.53
Shortage of suitable housing	3.42
Image	3.26
Vacant/ underused office space	3.19
Preservation of older buildings	3.09
Unattractive building facades	3.00
Crime (real and perceived)	2.93
Traffic circulation/ congestion	2.90
Organization/ cooperation of downtown interests	2.77

Source: [Robertson, 1999 #33]

Respondents were asked to rate the identified problems above on a scale of 1 to 5.

5- A major problem and a very high priority
4- A clear problem, medium priority
3- A moderate problem, but no major priority item
2- A minor problem
1- Not a problem in this downtown

Attracting Consumers to the Downtown

Another serious problem related to downtown revitalization is the difficulty attracting people downtown in the evenings and on weekends (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004). This problem is a result of the downtown not offering sufficient retail, housing, nightlife and weekend activities (Black et al., 1985). Many downtowns serve as an employment center during the day, however, in the evening people travel to their homes in the suburbs. As a result of the lack of diversity in activities and businesses, downtowns are underutilized after workers leave. Retailers are less likely to enter markets with an inadequate consumer base to meet the retailer's market area requirements (Robertson, 1999). According to Black et al., one of the biggest obstacles facing a downtown is attracting consumers who could shop at convenient, well-designed, and well-stocked shopping malls or strip malls.

Competition from Discount Stores and/or Suburban Malls

Another problem identified by Robertson and others regarding small and large city downtown redevelopment is the competition with discount stores and suburban malls outside of the downtown drawing in potential downtown consumers (Robertson, 1999). Robertson states that the opening up of a regional mall is correlated with the decline of small-city downtowns. Regional malls also impacted large cities; however the greater amount of retail (assets) resulted in a slower decline of the downtown. One reason people may be more attracted to the mall is because it offers stores not previously located in the downtown (Robertson, 1999). Another reason that suburban retailers negatively affect the downtowns is that suburban shopping centers have a competitive advantage. Suburban shopping centers are typically easier to access, they are designed for convenient shopping and easy pedestrian circulation, they are generally well-lit, clean, safe and climate controlled (Black et al., 1985). In addition, suburban stores are normally open at night and on weekends, in contrast to most downtown retail. As a result, as more stores in the downtown become vacant because of consumers shifting their buying power to the suburban malls, and the retail gap between downtowns and the suburbs widens.

Vacant/Underused Retail Space

As some cities began a pattern of disinvestment in downtown in favor of the suburbs, many businesses were left vacant. Some retail vacancies are large prominently situated buildings that further promote the image of a "decaying" city [Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004; Black et al., 1985). Integrating retail into existing vacant buildings in the downtown could make it possible to maintain a sense of place while meeting the retail needs of the consumers who presently shop in the suburbs. The feasibility of integrating large-scale retail into the downtown is not simply a question of market support, but is also based on space availability and consumer attitudes towards the large-scale format. Black et al. (1985) report that unavailability of sites for new development in the downtown has long been recognized as a problem. Many retailers not willing to scale the size of their stores to fit the downtown will not enter the downtown market continuing to broaden the retail gap.

Economic Impact of Large-Scale Retail

While some communities welcome large-scale retail for providing jobs, convenience, and needed products and services at a low prices. Others vehemently argue large-scale retail brings low wages and low prices that negatively impact the community. The negative impact that large-scale retail has on downtown business is well documented (Lavin, 2003). In general, those residents/consumers with higher incomes and higher levels of education have traditionally led the resistance to chain-stores including large-scale retail in downtown locations (Lavin, 2003). Halebsky (2004) reports that large-scale retail integrated into the downtown and on the periphery of downtown adversely effects local small retailers and local economies by capturing significant sales from local independent merchants. Subsequently, the financially weakened local merchants are forced out of business. Furthermore, because many large-scale retail headquarters are out of state, their sales [profits] are transferred out-of-state which further weakens the local economy (Evans-Cowley, 2006).

Some large-scale retailers, such as Wal-Mart, have been criticized by labor unions, politicians, and community groups for their business practices concerning wages and benefits (Evans-Cowley, 2006). Evan-Cowley explains that the types of jobs in a community determine the quality of the local economy. A vibrant, diversified retail sector is not the cause of a strong local economy but rather the result of it (Fruth, 2003). When retail wages are lower than normal, when compared to local wages, an overall negative effect on the local economy ensues (Evans-Cowley, 2006). Wages from low paying retail jobs offer less disposable income to support the economy in their community. Most of the social benefits for employees of Wal-Mart and other low paying retail are paid at the county, state and federal level through social programs such as Medicaid (Evans-Cowley, 2006).

Stakeholders

Characteristics of Stakeholders

This study focused on consumers and city planners as stakeholders, i.e. individuals that have an interest in and are effected by the characteristics of the city. Local government and property developers are also stakeholders; however, it is outside the scope of this study to focus on these groups. Stakeholder characteristics are significant contributing factors to integrating retail into downtown areas. Key characteristics of stakeholders: demographics and perceived knowledge, attitudes and behaviors are presented below.

Demographics of Downtown Consumers

This section will identify the population segments that shop in small, mid-size, and large downtowns. The consumer mix of downtown shoppers is important to identify because it relates to the buying power of a market. According to McBee there are four categories of potential consumers: (1) downtown residents; (2) metropolitan residents; (3) downtown workers; and (4) visitors (McBee, 1992).

Downtown Residents. Historically, downtowns have been dominated by non-family households (empty-nesters, and young professionals) (Birch, 2005). Without children, empty nesters and young professionals favor the downtown lifestyle of having more leisure time to dine out and take part in cultural activities (museums, concerts) (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). The young professionals are often drawn to downtowns because of the low-maintenance housing, urban housing convenient to work and downtown-friendly amenities such as coffeehouses and nightclubs (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). According to U.S. Census estimates, the number of households without children is expected to swell to 72 percent by

2010 (up from 66.4 percent in 1990) thereby potentially increasing the number of households interested in downtown living (Moulton, 1999).

Metropolitan Residents. As downtowns are decreasing in population, the metropolitan areas serving the suburban population continues to grow. McBee (1992) reports that the extent to which downtowns can capture retail expenditures from the metro area residents who do not live or work in the downtown is based on the downtowns' ability to attract consumers. Robertson (1999) reports that a sensible downtown revitalization plan uses the existing strengths of the city as a foundation and strategies to best capitalize of those strengths. Examples of downtowns which capitalize on their unique identity to attract consumers include Union Square in San Francisco, Fifth Avenue in New York City, and Pike Place Market in Seattle (McBee, 1992).

Downtown Workers. Downtown workers, especially office workers, are an important part of the retail market especially as the number of downtown residents declines (McBee, 1992). Downtown office workers represent a growing source of potential sales for downtown retailers (Black et al., 1985). The ULI estimates that downtown workers may contribute from 15% to as high as 50% of downtown retail sales (McBee, 1992). However, when compared to downtown residents, downtown workers have less time to shop and are often restricted to their lunch hour and limited time after work (McBee, 1992). In addition, many downtown employees walk around downtown and are less mobile than other market segments. Findings from a 1988 study conducted by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) show that three out of four workers reach their lunchtime destination within 10-minute walk (McBee, 1992). Research findings also suggest that the ideal downtown shopping distance is within a 1,000 feet of downtown offices. In addition, the ICSC study reports that the spending pattern of downtown workers is correlated with the amount and quality of shops in the downtown (McBee, 1992).

Visitors/Tourists. The extent to which the downtown market benefits from visitors is based on the attractiveness of the market as a tourist destination. This group does not usually constitute a market which can provide basic support for downtown retail (Black et al., 1985). However, if tourism does exist in a downtown, tourist-oriented retail can be very profitable. The Rouse Company, a developer of downtown festival retail complexes that attract out of town tourists finds that tourists are generally bigger spenders than local shoppers (Black et al., 1985).

Stakeholder Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviors

Consumer's perceived knowledge, attitudes and behaviors toward influential factors that account for the success of the downtown and attitudes toward large-scale retail are important for planning revitalization strategies. Two topic areas were identified to better understand the perceived knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of consumers' toward integrating large-scale retail into the downtown: (1) confidence in downtown revitalization, and (2) perceptions of what defines a successful downtown.

Confidence in Downtown Revitalization. Difficulty attracting new development to the downtown and resulting lack of confidence in the downtown was cited as a serious problem confronting revitalization efforts in downtowns of all sizes. This lack of confidence resulting from the disinvestment in the downtown was cited as a major contributor to consumers and developers being scared away by images of poorly maintained buildings and empty streets and storefronts resulting in a vicious cycle of disinvestment in the downtown. Robertson (1999) reports that small and large-city downtowns projecting a negative sense of place face many challenges; however, sense of place is more critical in small-city downtowns. The large-city downtowns have multiple distinct places (e.g., financial district, entertainment district, and civic center), each with their own function, character, and sense of place (Robertson, 1999). Downtowns of all sizes, which are perceived as less unique and attractive, and less pedestrian-friendly, are less likely to attract consumers and retailers. The images of a declining downtown influence the perception of the downtowns' attractiveness and results in lack of confidence in the downtown.

One of the biggest obstacles developers must overcome when entering a downtown in need of redevelopment is who will be the first one to enter the downtown redevelopment market. Columnist Michael A. Chihak of the Tucson Citizen colorfully compares developers "waiting for the first person to begin constructing in the downtown to wildebeests with their noses on the river's edge nervously waiting to plunge into the river infested with crocodiles" (Chihak, 2007). No one wants to be the first in the river because of the hungry crocodiles. However, after the first "wildebeest" enters, others follow, and only a few of the thousands of wildebeests become crocodile dinner (Chihak, 2007).

Comparatively, private developers are lining up at banks of the revitalization river waiting to see who makes it across to profitability (Chihak, 2007). According to Chihak, "no one wants to be the first because the river is populated with impatient investors, red tape entangling bureaucrats and cranky creditors ready to clamp their jaws on anyone not quick enough or strong enough to make it across" (Chihak, 2007). Developers choosing to be the first to redevelop in a downtown are taking on high risks in areas which have suffered economically in their past.

Perceptions of What Defines a Successful Downtown. The literature reveals a great deal of agreement about the important attributes of a successful small-city and large downtowns (Filion et al., 2004; Leinberger, 2005). Although several similarities were reported between the importance of downtown attributes for a successful small-city and large-city downtown, several difference were reported. Several studies (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004; Mitchell, 2006; Leinberger, 2005) report that factors related to the success of downtowns of all sizes were active retail scene, jobs, friendly pedestrian environment, and cultural activities. The success of large city downtowns also included vibrant cultural life (24-hour atmosphere), high-density residual development, sense of safety, traffic circulation, and access to parking. Leinberger (2005) stresses that creating "walkable urbanity" in the downtown is critical to establishing and maintaining a successful downtown. According to Leinberger (2005), fostering walkable urbanity requires development of a complex mix of retail, offices, entertainment and housing that provides interesting streetscapes for residents and visitors while comfortably meeting residents' daily needs. An enjoyable mix of sights and sounds for a pedestrian to take pleasure in as they walk to their destination encourages them to linger in the downtown (Leinberger, 2005). Because most people will walk only about 1500 feet or more if the streetscape is safe and interesting (Leinberger, 2005), parking is an important issue for the downtown.

While abundant parking was rated as important to the success of large-city downtowns, parking was not considered as important in the small cities. Additionally, although crime was perceived as a significant problem related to the success of large cities, it was not considered an important problem in most small cities. A strong sense of place, those unique elements in a community that distinguishes it from others, was ranked as important to the success of both small-city and large-city downtowns, however, to a greater degree by those in small-city downtowns.

A common feature that accounted for the success of both small and large city downtowns was historic character. Virtually no small cities perceived as "very successful" had undergone a change in their architecture based on redevelopment initiatives. The pre-WWII downtowns feature historical character, well-preserved neighborhoods, distinctive architecture and employment (Filion et al., 2004).

Outcome (Revitalization Strategies)

Characteristics of Redevelopment Strategies

Small and large cities have implemented a multitude of strategies to revitalize their downtowns. Implementation, use, and success of redevelopment strategies differed in small and large cities. Some small cities, cognizant of large city successes, have attempted to build smaller scale versions of activity generating places (stadiums, convention centers, regional theaters); however, many small cities experienced relatively low utilization rates of their activity generators. The size of the small city was often inadequate to meet the market area requirements. Unlike the other large activity generators which have much success in large cities, new office space ranked as one of the most successful revitalization strategies for small cities (Robertson, 1999). This success is mostly due to an economic shift in small-city downtowns from retail to service based. Characteristics related to a strong sense of place, such as historic buildings, waterfronts, and attractively landscaped pedestrian walkways with benches were rated highly among the greatest revitalization assets for both small and large city downtowns. Historic preservation and pedestrianization of downtown were reported as exerting a “tremendously positive impact” on downtowns sense of place. While a strong sense of place is a critical component for all downtowns, it takes on a somewhat different meaning in small city downtowns. In many small city downtowns, a sense of place ranks as a high priority for revitalization when compared to large cities due to less emphasis on large-scale buildings, less sheer size of downtown, and more stock of older buildings (Robertson, 1999).

Furthermore, multifunctional downtowns were rated as the most successful. Strategies that include the widest variety of functions and activities attract the greatest volume and range of consumers. Creating a multifunctional downtown is especially important for attracting consumers to small city downtowns after traditional business hours due to fewer diversified assets (i.e. housing, businesses, and entertainment) in small-city downtowns. Frequently, in small and large-city downtowns, too many people leave to shop for necessities in the suburbs. As a result, large-scale retailers are increasingly opting to enter multi-functional downtown markets guided by "good neighbor" policies to ensure large-scale retail co-exists with existing development (Anonymous, 1996). Integrating large-scale retail with mix use including entertainment venues, restaurants, loft apartments and offices in the heart of downtown has been an especially success revitalization strategy in many small and large-city downtowns (Isaacs, 2000).

Additionally, increasing the number of people living in the downtown adds to the shops, services, restaurants and serves to increase activity levels on evenings and weekends. However, consumers have been resistant to move to a downtown area that does not already meet most of their shopping needs (McBee, 1992). This underscores the importance of integrating pedestrian-friendly entertainment and retail into the downtown as a strategy to both retain downtown residents and lure consumers to live in the downtown.

Although creating a multifunctional downtown was reported as greatly important for attracting consumers on evenings and weekends, the success of developing entertainment/nightlife has had mixed results. In many small-city downtowns, few "spin-off" restaurants, hotels and other nightlife attractions were generated. In general, Gratz and Mintz (1998) explain that the downtown is only the synergy of its parts. The pieces cannot be isolated from the parts. Small-city downtowns with relatively few residents had less success attracting and supporting retail and entertainment which subsequently resulted in fewer consumers living in the downtown and visiting the downtown after traditional work hours. In large-city downtowns, their relative assets determined their ability to sustain downtown residents and after traditional work hour consumers. In both small and large-city downtowns, successful revitalization of downtowns required a multifaceted approach, which includes accessible retail while maintaining a strong sense of place that does not suburbanize the downtown.

Summary

The literature indicated that the revitalization of downtowns of all sizes continues to challenge consumers, city planners, and developers. Increasing suburbanization over the past century has caused downtowns to experience economic and population declines. As a result of disinvestment in the downtown, a vicious cycle ensued wherein prospective developers and consumers are scared away by images of a decaying city. Small-city downtowns have been particularly affected by this decline due to their relative lack of diversified assets such as world-class attractions, concentrations of retail, large stadiums, and important employment (Filion et al., 2004). An interconnected set of forces act as barriers to the revitalization of downtown. Three major themes emerged from the literature as a set of forces that contribute to barriers to revitalizing downtown: (1) characteristics of the city, (2) characteristics of the stakeholder, and (3) characteristics of the revitalization strategies.

In many ways a set of interconnected forces that contributed to the decline of city downtowns and principles for revitalization of the downtown are similar in small, mid-sized, and large cities. Design and appearance, parking, crime, local character, retail gap, attracting development and consumers to downtown, competition, and vacant/ underused space are among the city/downtown (system) characteristics identified as barriers to revitalization. Demographics and attitudes/perceptions are among the stakeholder characteristics identified as forces that contribute to barriers to revitalization. Downtowns of all sizes have implemented a variety of strategies in an attempt to revitalize their downtowns although many of these attempts have been unsuccessful. In general, characteristics related to a strong sense of place such as a waterfront and older buildings were identified among downtown's greatest revitalization assets. Successful revitalization strategies promote a multifunctional downtown, prominent street activity, historic preservation, high-density, and public places.

CHAPTER 3

Definitions and Methodology

Introduction

The focus of this study is to determine the most significant barriers to successfully integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. To evaluate the relative significance of the potential barriers, stakeholders' perceptions and related consumer demographics were assessed.

Definitions

System: The City including Downtown and Surrounding Metropolitan Area

The system is comprised of complex and interconnected city characteristics including the built environment (design and appearance, parking, historic character, and vacant/ underused space) and processes of the city (urban planning, local economy and retail gap). The city and larger metropolitan area (city including surrounding suburbs) interact with and are affected by stakeholders, city planning activities, and redevelopment strategies. Specific characteristics of the city (system) that were perceived by survey participants (consumers) as barriers to both using large-scale retail in the downtown and integrating large-scale retail into the downtown were assessed with intercept-surveys. City planners and a large-scale retail professional's perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown as a revitalization strategy were assessed using interviews.

The City. The city is a component of the system. For this study, the city is defined as a freestanding municipality, not a suburb of a larger city. The three cities selected for study range in population size from small, mid-sized, and large and are geographically distributed across the Western United States. Although the literature reports no city-population standards that classify a city as small, medium, or large, the population classifications in this study were based upon Filion et al. (2004) previous research. Filion et al. study defined small city-metro area as between 100,000 and 500,000 and medium and large sized city-metro areas were derived from the Filion et al. study.

In this study, the size of the population within the city limits and surrounding metropolitan area was also examined to understand how increasing suburbanization contributes to downtown decline and acts as a potential barrier to revitalization efforts in small, mid-sized and large cities. Characteristics of the downtown built environment (design and appearance, parking, historic character, and vacant/ underused space) and processes of the city (urban planning, local economy and retail gap) were examined to describe both strengths and potential barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

In most cases, the population of a city and metropolitan population differ. For example, Tucson's city population is 516,000 while the metropolitan population is approximately 900,000 (U.S. Census, 2008). For the purposes of this study, small metropolitan populations are defined as municipalities with a population less than 500,000. Mid-size metropolitan populations are defined as municipalities ranging in population from 500,000-1 million. Large metropolitan populations are defined as municipalities with a population greater than one million.

The Downtown. The downtown is a component of the system. According to Fannie Mae and the Brookings Institute (Leinberger, 2005), the definition of downtown varies from city to city. In addition, the U.S. Bureau of the Census does not officially define “downtown” in terms of an area in a city (the U.S. Census does define “edge cities”) (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). Historically downtowns were defined as the central business districts (Ford, 2003). Traditionally, downtown is where the city originated and embodies the heritage of the community. The downtown also served as the traditional gathering place for community activities (Robertson, 1999). However, this description no longer applies as many downtowns no longer serve as the central business district or a gathering place for the community (Ford, 2003). As a result of the lack of consensus on what constitutes a downtown, it is nearly impossible to gather comprehensive data on downtown populations, employment, densities, open space, cultural attractions, or crime (Ford, 2003). For the purpose of this study, downtowns are defined as the area defined as a downtown in the respective study city’s general plan~~s~~.

The Inner-City. The inner-city is defined as economically depressed areas. Typically, inner-cities lack retail alternatives. According to Pothukuchi (2005), low income zip codes tend to have fewer and smaller stores than their more prosperous counterparts. In 2003, there were over eight million households living in the inner-cities in America with an $85 billion annual buying power (Levy & Weitz, 2001). There has been a resurgence of chain stores opening stores in economically depressed areas serving consumers with expanded product assortments and competitive pricing, which were not previously available (Lavin, 2003).

Retail Gap.

The difference between the retail space available compared to what the trade area can support. The retail gap estimates the potential for the utilization of the retail space available in the marketplace when there are consumers to support the system (J.C. Williams Group, 2008).

Large-Scale Format Stores.

There is no single definition of big box retailer, but most definitions tend to focus on the square footage of retail outlets and exempt stores whose primary focus is the sale of grocery items (Evans-Cowley, 2006). The state of California defines a big box retailer as a “store of greater than 75,000 square feet of gross buildable area that will generate sales or use tax” (A.B. 178 § 1(f) (1), 1999). In addition to the state of California’s definition of large-scale retail stores, the Rodino Report (Rodino Associates, 2003), commissioned by the City of Los Angeles to identify potential impacts of big box retailers in the city’s neighborhood, defines superstore, large scale retail, and warehouse.

The definitions listed below are from the Rodino Report:

Big box retail. Any large store format that is larger than a specified threshold of square footage in size. Generally this threshold ranges from as low as 60,000 sq. ft. to 130,000 sq. ft (Associates, 2003). Examples: Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Target, COSTCO, Home Depot.

Superstores. Big box discount stores that sell groceries in at least 25% to 33% of their store area (Associates, 2003). Examples: Wal-Mart Superstores, Target Superstores.

Warehouse Clubs. Large-scale retail stores specializing in groceries and discount general merchandise, but with more limited selection of goods (called "stock-keeping units") than either general discount stores or supermarkets, and requiring annual membership dues. Inventory is often variable due to their focus on large stocks of goods that can be purchased, and consequently sold, at deep discounts (Associates, 2003). Examples: COSTCO, Sam's Club.

For the purpose of this paper, the term large-scale retail will be used. Gratz and Mintz (1998) describe traditional large-scale retail stores as windowless box designs with several acres of a single-floor layout requiring vast surface parking area. However, this definition of large-scale retail has changed to include non-traditional large-scale retail stores that adapt (size, location, architecture, scale, products, and decreased parking ratios) to the unique downtown environment. Breaking away from the standard large-scale retail formula, some large-scale retail stores are working with community leaders to develop stores in the downtown that preserve local character while meeting the needs of the consumers (Evans-Cowley, 2006).

Target Corporations Senior Regional Real Estate Manager, Scott Columb states that instead of Target focusing exclusively on suburban sprawl, the company is shifting growth to the central business district (Craig, 2004). As a result of this shift, Target is changing the layout of their stores by designing multilevel Targets which no longer look like the traditional large scale retail (Craig, 2004). However, most literature and city planning data uses the term big box.

Chain Stores. Chain stores are defined as a number of retail stores under the same ownership and selling the same type of merchandise or service. Examples: Wal-Mart, Target, Safeway.

Supermarkets. Supermarkets are retail stores which sell predominantly food items. They differ from superstores because they sell fewer nonfood items and are typically smaller than a superstore.

Stakeholders. Individuals or groups that have a vested interest in the quality of the downtown and its relative success. Although, stakeholders include: consumers, city planners, local government, developers, and retail operators, this study will focus on consumers and city planners as stakeholders.

Consumers. For this study, consumers are those people or households who live or work in the city or surrounding suburbs. It is assumed that this population will purchase and use goods and services generated within the selected city's economy.

City Planners. City planners work for the city government and manage a variety of land use, redevelopment, and environmental issues within their downtown. With the support of the city council and planning commission, planners can affect downtown revitalization by providing local government financial resources, political support, and leadership in downtown revitalization (ULI, 1992). Although city planners are stakeholders their functions are considered to be an interventional force in this study.

Large-scale Retail Professional. Property owners and store managers who have a vested interest in financial profits of the large-scale retail store.

Methodology

The goal of this research is to identify and describe issues related to city characteristics (including city size) and stakeholders' perceived knowledge, attitudes and behaviors as barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. Three municipalities (city including the metropolitan area) ranging in population size from less than 500,000 (small) to greater than 1 million (large) were selected. Each of the selected cities had single rather than multiple downtown districts. Cities with multiple downtown centers and cities that are not freestanding (for example: the City of Pasadena is considered a part of metropolitan Los Angeles City) were not considered for the study.

Data was collected from (1) case studies; (2) consumer intercept-surveys; and (3) city planner and large-scale retail professional interviews. Market analysis reports written by cities and private economic development agencies provided additional data. The three-part research data collection was conducted in the Spring/ Summer of 2008. Phase 1 of the study included site analysis and in-depth case studies on selected downtowns (see Chapter 4). Phase 2 consisted of consumers (stakeholders) completing a demographic and intercept-survey that examined retail needs, and perceived barriers to both using large-scale retail in the downtown and integrating large-scale retail into the selected downtowns. Finally, Phase 3 entailed interviews with city planners and a large-scale retail store representative. Phase 3 examined perceived knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral barriers related to integrating retail into the downtown.

The Consumer Intercept-Survey

Selection Criteria. Consumers (participants) were comprised of a convenience sample of random adults who voluntarily agreed to participate in completing the intercept-survey. The survey participants lived or worked in the selected city metropolitan area (city, suburbs, downtown) and were in the downtown area at the time the survey was being administered.

Data Collection. Thirty surveys were conducted in each city downtown over a two-day period. Of the participants (consumers) approached to participate in the data collection, in the three studied cities, eight did not meet the criteria for either residency in the city/surrounding suburbs or working in the downtown area and were not given intercept surveys. Participants were invited to complete a survey about the accessibility of large-scale retail merchandise in the downtown and barriers to using/integrating large-scale into the downtown. Participants were told that the study was for a master's thesis research project. Prior to conducting the survey, an information sheet was provided to each participant with verbal instruction describing the purpose of the study and the right of refusal during any phase of data collection. Participants were also informed that they were participating in a five-minute, voluntary, and anonymous study. All participants were shown the human resources assurance form and were given the option to retain a copy of that form. Participants were approached in a public plaza area of the downtown business district while sitting on benches, at outdoor tables, or walking. All potential participants were asked a screening question to determine if they worked or lived in the downtown or suburbs before the survey was administered. Survey participants were either read the survey questions and the surveyor completed the form or participants completed the survey form independently based on each participant's preference.

The Collection Tools for Phase 2 and Phase 3.

A twenty-question intercept-survey was designed for this study to identify consumers' perceived barriers to using large-scale retail in the downtown. An interview questionnaire was developed for this study to examine city-planners' and a large-scale store professional's perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

The intercept-survey instrument was developed for this study after a review of over 40 previous studies that assessed barriers to integrating retail into the downtown. As a result of this literature review, three major categories of perceived barriers to integrating retail into the downtown emerged: knowledge, attitude, and behavior. The intercept-survey was used to identify consumer's perceived knowledge, attitude, and behavior barriers to patronizing large-scale retail in the context of the downtown characteristics (parking, design/appearance, crime, traffic, and local character). For the each of the studied cities, reliability was measured by Chronbach's alpha. The reliability of the intercept-survey's 17 Likert-scale based questions were: San Luis Obispo 0.833, Tucson 0.774, and San Diego 0.834.

The interview questionnaire was used to identify city planners' and large-scale retail professional's perceived knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown as a revitalization strategy.

Phase 2: Intercept-Surveys

Intercept-surveys and interview questionnaires were administered in a small (San Luis Obispo, CA), medium (Tucson, AZ), and large-city (San Diego, CA downtown) during Spring/ Summer 2008. The intercept-survey was administered to downtown workers, downtown residents, as well as residents of the metropolitan area, in San Luis Obispo, Tucson, Arizona and San Diego, CA over two-weekdays in each of the locations in the Spring/ Summer 2008. All surveys were conducted from 11 am to 2 pm, in the heart of the downtowns, to capture the lunchtime downtown worker population and potential consumers traveling from the suburbs. Consumers were asked to rate 17 statements using a six point Likert-scale. In addition, there were three fill-in-the-blank questions. Both the intercept-survey and interview questionnaire examined perceived knowledge, attitude, and behavior barriers related to characteristics of the city. Conceptual definitions of these terms are presented below.

Knowledge. In this study, consumers' perceived knowledge is defined as what the consumer believes he/she knows and their awareness of characteristics of the city rather than actual knowledge. This study established consumers' overall perceived understanding of available large-scale retail in the downtown and current issues related to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

Perceived knowledge barriers were evaluated using intercept-survey questions 1-2. Consumers were asked questions concerning perceived familiarity with the large-scale retail concept/issues and accessibility of merchandise in the downtown area.

Attitudes. The concept of attitudes includes the consumer's beliefs about the strategy's relevance to revitalization, its perceived benefits, and value. Consumer's dispositions towards the integration of large-scale retail into the downtown as a revitalization strategy and use of large-scale into the downtown were measured using the intercept-survey. Questions 3-11 of the survey asked questions concerning benefits of large-scale retail in the downtown, whether the consumer would choose to shop at large-scale retail if it was available in the downtown and, the perceived economic impact of integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

Behaviors. Behaviors are defined as perceived external barriers in the city-downtown-suburb built environment that are believed to interfere with the behavior of integrating retail into the downtown rather than actual observable behaviors. Determining actual observable behaviors is outside of the scope of this study. This study focused on what consumers' believe to be barriers to integrating retail into the downtown based upon prior studies that suggest that consumers' beliefs strongly influence observable behaviors (Leinberger, 2005; Robertson, 1999; Lavin, 2003; Mitchell, 2006). A review of the literature was used to identify perceived external barriers (Filion et al., 2004; Robertson, 1999; Evans-Cowley, 2006). Questions 12-17 of the survey ask questions concerning consumer-perceived barriers to both using large-scale retail in the downtown and integration of large-scale retail as a revitalization strategy. Participants were asked questions concerning perceived situational/environmental barriers (parking, design/appearance, crime and traffic).

Questions 18 and 19 are fill-in-the-blank questions asking the consumer the "most important factor" and "most important" barriers to using large-scale retail in the downtown and barriers to integrating large-scale into the downtown. Participates were also encouraged to "fill in the blank" for greater response choices.

Question 20 asked the consumer what percentage of the time they patronized large-scale retail.

Phase 3: City Planner and Large-Scale Retail Representative Interviews

Selection criteria. Interview participants were chosen based on the below selection criteria. City planners selection criteria included: (1) current perceived knowledge of downtown redevelopment and (2) experience with downtown redevelopment in each of the selected city. Selection criteria for the large-scale retail store participant included (1) a corporate executive with knowledge of issues related to integrating a large-scale retail store into the downtown and (2) at least one large-scale retail store operating in a downtown.

Data collection. Interviews were conducted with city planners and a large-scale retail representative in Spring 2007 and Summer 2008 in-person, over the phone, and via email. Five interviews were conducted for this phase of the study (see Table 2). At least one interview with a city planner was performed in each of the selected cities and one interview was completed with a large-scale store representative (Target Corporations). In San Luis Obispo and San Diego, an upper level city planner was interviewed. In the City of Tucson, the director of planning for the city and the director of the Rio Nuevo Redevelopment Project (the downtown revitalization project) were interviewed. A representative of Target Corporation from the media relations department answered emailed interview questions. Further discussion of Target's relevance to the study as a downtown large-scale retail operator is presented later in this chapter.

Table 2

Interview Locations, Organizations, and Interviewer Job Titles

Location	Organization Interviewed	Interviewer Title
San Luis Obispo	City of San Luis Obispo	City Planner
San Diego	San Diego Centre City Development Corporation	City Planner
Tucson	City of Tucson	Planning Director
	Rio Nuevo Downtown Redevelopment	Director of Rio Nuevo
Large-Scale Retail	Target Corporation	Target Media Relations

<u>The Interview Process.</u> Open-ended, structured interviews were modified to focus on the point-of-view of the person being interviewed i.e., the point-of-view of a city planner is different from a large-scale retail store participant; however, the overall interview concepts remained the same. The interview questions were divided into two categories (1) characteristics of the city and (2)

characteristics of stakeholders. These categories examined city planner' and large-scale retail representative's perceived knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown as a revitalization strategy. Initially, interviewees were asked to describe zoning laws, design/appearance requirements and business practices that affect large-scale retail in their community's downtown. Then, specific questions were asked about the selected city's attitude towards large-scale retail development in the downtown. Finally, city assets and weakness as they pertain to attracting adequate retail to the downtown were examined. Handwritten notes were used to collect data from in-person interviews and phone interviews. In addition, an email response was collected from the Target representative.

Knowledge. In this study, city planners' perceived knowledge is defined as what the participant believes he/she knows about overall trends in large-scale retail in terms of design innovations, zoning laws, and business practices rather than actual knowledge. Knowledge was evaluated using interview question one.

Attitudes. The participant's attitudes are defined in this study as the city's disposition toward integration of large-scale retail into the downtown as an effective revitalization strategy. The concept of attitudes includes the city's position (beliefs) about the strategy's relevance to revitalization, its perceived benefits, and value. The selected city's attitudes towards the placement of large-scale retail stores in the downtown were examined using interview question two. Participants were asked to what degree large-scale retail or the large scale retail format would be considered by their community as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy to meet the retail demands and desires of the downtown community.

Behaviors. Behaviors are defined as perceived external barriers in the city-downtown-suburb built environment that are believed to interfere with the behavior of integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. Participant's perceived barriers to integrating large-scale stores into the downtown were examined using interview question three. Participants were asked to identify city characteristic (assets and weakness) that influence attracting adequate retail to the downtown including large-scale retail. Finally, participants were asked to identify how they would best manage barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

Target's Relevance to this Study

Target Corporation was selected as a representative large-scale retail store because it met the superstore criteria and has successfully integrated large scale retail into several downtowns across the United States. Target Corporation, headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the nation's #2 discount chain (behind Wal-Mart) and the fourth largest retailer in the United States. Target operates 1,556 stores located in 47 states (Hoovers, 2007). As of 2004, Target has 29 multistory locations (Craig, 2004). According to Target's *2006 Annual Report*, Target's growth objective is to enhance access and increase convenience for both new and existing consumers by focusing growth primarily in major metropolitan regions (Target, 2006). In 2003, Target opened a

150,000 square-foot, split-level store in White Plains, New York and a 200,000 square-foot multistory store in downtown Brooklyn, New York (Craig, 2004).

CHAPTER 4

Case Studies

San Luis Obispo

San Luis Obispo, which was founded in 1772, is one of the oldest communities in California (Franks, 2004). Beginning in the 1800s, commercial enterprises began to spring up on the streets surrounding the Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (Main Street News, 1999). In the 1890s, the arrival of the railroad connected the isolated town to the “big cities” (Los Angeles and San Francisco) (Franks, 2004). Over the next century, San Luis Obispo transformed itself from a farming town into a small city. In the 1950s, the first of two malls were built a few miles outside of the downtown and subsequently the downtown began to experience suburban sprawl (Main Street News, 1999). Although the malls proved to be little competition for the downtown, the downtown experienced rundown buildings, car cruising, and lack of parking. Unlike many cities across America, San Luis Obispo city leaders recognized the signs of early downtown deterioration and began to plan for the future (Main Street News, 1999).

The city planners began revitalization by first developing specific design guidelines for the downtown that spelled out improvements for the downtown including streetscapes, facade restorations, sidewalk paving, public art, and lighting (Main Street News, 1999). In 1975, the Downtown Association was formed and in 1986, the Main Street Four-Point Approach was adopted to guide the revitalization efforts. A key revitalization strategy was to keep the downtown the most intensely developed area with a compact and multifunctional mix of residential and business uses (Liveable Places, 1996). To ensure that people have an opportunity to live in the downtown, the revitalization strategies require that existing residential uses be persevered and encourages additional residential uses above street level (Liveable Places, 1996). Additionally, San Luis Obispo's planning laws also encourages compact growth and preservation of historic building by fully utilizing existing commercial centers before constructing new buildings.

Siembieda (1998) reports that perhaps the most important factors in the success of San Luis Obispo's downtown are the public's and city planners' participation in revitalization and positive attitude towards social reforms that promote well-balanced environmental and social health for the downtown. Residents, local businesses, and civic leaders recognized the importance of local ordinances that help to reduce litter, air pollution, and noise pollution. San Luis Obispo was the first U.S. city to ban smoking in all public places. In the mid-1980s, the city council banned drive-through fast food restaurants (Siembieda, 1998). Such ordinances promote well-maintained, clean, and safe places to live and work.

Creating a strong sense of place in the downtown by capitalizing of the city's proximity to a major university, "idyllic" location (nine miles from the Pacific Ocean and midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles), and small town character is an important strategy that promotes an excellent gathering place for residents and visitors (Siembieda, 1998). The general plan calls for a continuous storefront along sidewalks, adequate space for pedestrians and a nearly continuous tree canopy (San Luis Obispo, A Downtown Success Story, 1996). Since the 1970s, local business and civic leaders have promoted a strong sense of place by investing in San Luis Obispo's cultural assets such as creating a waterfront easement for pedestrian pathways and bridge to link the plaza to the downtown thoroughfare (Siembieda, 1998). San Luis Obispo developed healthy public/ private partnerships with the Copeland Investment Partnership. San Luis Obispo is the hometown of the Copeland family, who currently own and operate 12 sporting good stores throughout California (Siembieda, 1998). Copeland's investment in the downtown is a excellent example of how building smart public/private partnerships are critical to the success of the downtown. The Copelands invested $11 million in the downtown to develop retail, restaurants, and a movie theatre, which has become the "heart of the downtown" (San Luis Obispo, A Downtown Success Story, 1996).

Although downtown parking has been addressed, it remains a challenge for city planners and downtown residents. Parking structures located near the edges of the commercial core encourage consumers to walk rather than drive from one store to the next (San Luis Obispo, A Downtown Success Story, 1996). Another challenge for San Luis Obispo is affordable housing and jobs that are sensitive to environmental protection (Siembieda, 1998).

Tucson

In 1880 the Southern Pacific Railroad reached Tucson and connected the "wild west" to "the world" (City of Tucson, 2007). Tucson grew slowly until after World War I, when Tucson began marketing itself as a sunshine city. Thousands of tuberculosis victims seeking relief in the dry climate flocked to Tucson (University of Arizona, 2007). However, the largest population boom came after WWII when solders returned home to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base near Tucson (City of Tucson, 1965). Like many downtowns after WWII, the population began to move to the suburbs in search of low cost housing with more land. Tucson's once vibrant downtown became increasingly vacant and obsolete as first residents and then businesses shifted to the suburbs (City of Tucson, 1965). The competition from discount stores and regional malls in the suburbs continued to decentralize many of the functions of the downtown (City of Tucson, 1965).

Since 1980, numerous studies have been conducted on how to turn downtown Tucson around. Each of the city's revitalization plans focused on one or two "solutions", such as a renovation of the convention center, arena, theatre, museum, hotel, or housing. None of these solutions were the "magic bullet" for the downtown. In 2008, after almost 30 years of numerous unsuccessful attempts at redeveloping the downtown, Tucson has spent tens of millions of dollars on revitalization strategies. In the beginning, Tucsonans hoped that the downtown revitalization project would transform the downtown into the cultural and financial heart of the city. However, over time, consumers have become very disappointed and have lost their confidence in the downtown redevelopment plan. According to the Planning Director, Tucsonans complain that little has changed in downtown Tucson since the 1980s and people no longer believe in Tucson enough to redevelop the downtown.

Lack of confidence in the downtown has become a major barrier to revitalizing the downtown. As a result, attracting new development and consumers to downtown is challenging. The lack of local character, high vacancy rate, and perceived lack of pedestrian-friendly street oriented environment has discouraged developers from building downtown and consumers from coming downtown. According to an article in the local newspaper, The Tucson Citizen, "there remains no compelling reason to venture downtown unless you have a court date, a taste for the theatrical, an interest in the bar scene, an appetite for a few name restaurants, or a desire to attend an event. Many in Tucson have none of these needs" (Vitu, 2007). This disinterest in downtown Tucson has affected the vacancy rate of downtown buildings. In a study conducted by the city of Tucson in 2006, approximately a quarter of the buildings downtown were vacant (City of Tucson, 2006). In downtown Tucson, there are whole blocks of buildings that are vacant standing out like "white elephants" and further discouraging consumers to travel downtown. These vacant buildings and blocks create a perceived lack of pedestrian-friendly environment, which continues to deter potential residents and businesses from moving to downtown Tucson.

To combat the negative image of downtown Tucson, the Planning Director and the redevelopment Planning Director both agree that downtown Tucson needs more residents, residents with a higher annual income, and housing before the city should consider developing retail in the downtown. This redevelopment strategy is consistent with the middle-middle class (MMC) factor, the notion that this segment of the population is key to supporting the purchase of goods, services and housing (Birdsall, 2000). According to Birdsall (2000), the middle class is the heart of an effective and sustainable local and global economy. Birdsall stresses the importance of the middle class as the driving force of local economic sustainability. Although the need for middle class consumers near the downtown is essential, Leinberger (2005) emphasizes that fostering a “walkable urbanity” (walkable, pedestrian-friendly places to live and work) while establishing housing is key to revitalizing any struggling downtown. Leinberger advises that creating walkable urbanity is complex and requires a “critical mass” of pedestrian-scale uses (mix-use retail, housing, offices, restaurants, and entertaining venues) that are put in place simultaneously before “it stalls out” (Leinberger, 2005). Leinberger stresses that a pedestrian-friendly shopping environment is critical to luring consumers and residents to the downtown, while the Tucson city planners’ strategy is to first bring residents to the downtown that will later support retail. In a 1999 study, more than half of the downtown Tucson adult residents earned less than $15,000 per year (150% of the poverty level) (Market Intelligence and City of Tucson, 2007). The Planning Director believes that the existing population could not attract large-scale retail into the downtown. However, the planners agreed that once the downtown population increases and becomes wealthier, the downtown could support large-scale retail stores.

In an effort to attract consumers to the downtown, the City of Tucson is currently expanding the convention center and building a nearby hotel, a new arena, and museums. The redevelopment Planning Director hopes that these additions will promote a strong community base in the downtown. However, these new projects would not provide downtown residents with retail, restaurants, and amenities, which they can find in their suburban neighborhoods. The city is also planning to offer free parking for the first hour to encourage consumers to come to the downtown (Vitu, 2008). According to a survey conducted by the Tucson Citizen, approximately three-quarters of the respondents stated that they would not pay anything to park downtown because the downtown has very little to offer (Vitu, 2008). The head of the Downtown Tucson Partnership agrees that parking is not the problem, but rather not having any activities downtown that are worth paying to park (Vitu, 2008).

Although the city is eager to attract consumers to the downtown, The City of Tucson's Land Use code regulations deter large-scale retail from developing downtown. The city's large-scale retail ordinance prohibits large-scale retail stores within two hundred feet of residential zoned land (City of Tucson, 1999). In the downtown with a mix of uses (residential, commercial, office, industrial) there are limited areas where a large-scale retail store could operate under the current land use ordinance. According to the Planning Director, the city has no desire to amend the ordinance as a means of incorporating large-scale retail stores into the downtown.

San Diego

Following World War I, the Navy's Pacific Fleet made its home in San Diego and the city grew rapidly into a metropolis with a vibrant and multifunctional downtown. In the 1920's the aircraft industry came to San Diego bringing many residents to the downtown (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). Growth continued in San Diego during WWII with the aerospace industry (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). Similar to most downtowns across America, in the late 1960s, San Diego suffered decentralization of many of its functions when residents moved to the suburbs and retail and supportive services followed (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). Subsequently, San Diego suffered from lack of investment, deteriorating tax base, and a shift in its population to a high proportion of older, nonworking or low-income residents and transients (Black et al., 1985). The downtown became dangerous and unfriendly (Black et al., 1985). In the late 1950s, another problem that contributed to the decline of the downtown was the construction of Interstate-5, which nearly severed the surrounding neighborhoods from the downtown. By the 1960s, department stores began to close in the downtown civic core (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). Although the Navy continued a strong presence in San Diego, years of exodus from the downtown took its toll and the downtown was "depressed" by the early 1970s (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006).

In an effort to revitalize the downtown and combat urban blight, the city played an important role in "cleaning up" the downtown by increasing a police presence in the downtown area. Consequently the poor and homeless were displaced to the other surrounding areas. In 1975, another project to support revitalization, The Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), was founded (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). As part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy to attract consumers back to the downtown, the CCDC established incentive programs and implemented design standards that encouraged developers to build in the downtown (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). The developer incentives included site assembly, fee reduction, permit expediting assistance, off-site improvements, commercial facade loans, rebates and agency write-downs (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). The design standards assured development of outstanding architectural and environment quality (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). A major goal of the design standards was to provide attractive pedestrian-friendly and vehicular connections to major downtown activities that strengthen and encourage retail, entertainment, business, cultural, social and other commercial functions (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006).

CCDC first re-established the linkages between the suburbs and downtown. To attract consumers back to the downtown, the Horton Plaza was built in 1985 and Gas Lamp Quarter restored. In late 1980s, the convention center was built which spurred the growth of the hotel and tourist industry (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). High-rise office development peaked in the late 1980s increasing the number of businesses and employees working in the downtown. According to the San Diego Downtown Community Plan, an unprecedented boom in residential development occurred in the early 2000s (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006). As a result, the convention center doubled in size attracting more local residents and tourist to the downtown.

After successfully redeveloping much of the downtown, San Diego currently has several assets that promote successful development in the downtown. The once dangerous and unfriendly streets of the early 1970's were transformed in a downtown that thrives with local character, world-class waterfront location, low vacancy rates, and pedestrian-friendly street oriented environment. These are among the assets that encouraged developers to build in the downtown and consumers to move to the downtown. A major goal of the city is to establish downtown San Diego as a place that allows residents to live close to work, transit and culture (San Diego City Office of the Independent Budget Analyst Report, 2006). In order to accomplish this goal, the city plans to maintain affordable housing and increase downtown employment opportunities. Although San Diego has many assets, the downtown offers a limited amount of local serving retail and services (San Diego Planning Dept., 2006).

In 2007, the Mayor Jerry Sanders continues to make revitalizing the downtown a major priority, building upon initiatives started by his predecessors. Although the downtown currently has no large-scale retail stores, the mayor does not want to restrict large-scale retail in the downtown. The mayor vetoed the large-scale retail ordinance approved by the San Diego City Council because the mayor supports a free enterprise system that offers consumers many retail options (Mayor Jerry Sanders, 2007). The ordinance would have prohibited large-scale retail greater than 90,000 square feet (Mayor Jerry Sanders, 2007). To support downtown growth, approximately 65,000 public and private parking spaces are currently available in the downtown area. However, parking demand within the downtown area continues to outpace supply. In 2006, the CCDC launched the update to the Downtown San Diego Parking to guide long-term parking strategies and program (Centre City Development Corporation, 2008).

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents the descriptive and statistical analysis of the data gathered in phases 1, 2 and 3 of the study. This analysis sought to describe consumers' and city planners' (intervention) perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. The differences and similarities between downtown redevelopment in a small, mid-sized, and large-cities were examined. Several statistical analyses were performed to examine and describe each research question. Data analysis was carried out using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16 (2008). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the results. Pearson's correlation coefficient was performed to evaluate relationships between consumer's demographics and perceived barriers to using/ integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

In general, research questions sought to: (1) examine and describe consumer stakeholders' perceived barriers to shopping at large-scale retail in the downtown and perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail in the downtown and (2) city planners' and a large-scale retail professional's perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. To answer the research questions, consumers were surveyed and city planners and a large-scale retail professional were interviewed.

Demographics of the Consumers

Thirty consumers from each of the selected cities completed an intercept-survey. The characteristics of the consumer participants for each of the selected cities are presented in Tables 2-4. All consumers in the study group were either residents of the downtown or surrounding suburbs and/or worked in the downtown. As indicated, the mean age of the San Luis Obispo consumers was 43.6 years with 26 percent living in the downtown, the mean age of the San Diego consumers was 36.6 with 13 percent living in the downtown, and the mean age of Tucson consumers was 37.2 with 10 percent living in the downtown. Age was unreported for 2 downtown consumers (one in San Diego and Tucson).

Table 3

Characteristics of San Luis Obispo Consumers (Small City)

Group	*N*	*M (%)*	Range	*SD*
Downtown Resident	8	0.26		
Suburban Resident	22	0.73		
Works Downtown	27			
Does not Work Downtown	3			
Age		43.6	18-66	11.95
Male	14			
Female	16			
Household Size		3.5	1-6	1.43
High School/ GED	6	0.2		
Associate's Degree	9	0.3		
Bachelor's Degree	7	0.23		
Master's Degree	6	0.2		
Post Graduate Degree	2	0.06		
# of Days in the Downtown per week		5.53	2-7	.89
Full-time Employment	25	0.83		
Part-time Employment	4	0.13		
Unemployed	1	0.03		
Household Income Level ($10K-$30K)	8			
Household Income Level ($31K-$50K)	10			
Household Income Level ($51K-$75K)	2			
Household Income Level ($76K-$100K)	4			
Household Income Level (Greater than $100)	6			

Table 4

Characteristics of Tucson Consumers (Mid-Size City)

Group	*N*	*M (%)*	Range	*SD*
Downtown Resident	3	0.10		
Suburban Resident	27	0.90		
Works Downtown	23			
Does not Work Downtown	7			
Age		37.2	21-64	10.77
Male	17			
Female	13			
Household Size		3.33	1-7	1.49
High School/ GED	6	0.2		
Associate's Degree	8	0.26		
Bachelor's Degree	10	0.33		
Master's Degree	3	0.1		
Post Graduate Degree	3	0.1		
# of Days in the Downtown per week		4.48	1-7	1.76
Full-time Employment	22	0.73		
Part-time Employment	7	0.23		
Unemployed	1	0.33		
Household Income Level ($10K-$30K)	6			
Household Income Level ($31K-$50K)	8			
Household Income Level ($51K-$75K)	10			
Household Income Level ($76K-$100K)	3			
Household Income Level (Greater than $100)	3			

Table 5

Characteristics of San Diego Consumers (Large City)

Group	N	*M* (%)	Range	SD
Downtown Resident	4	0.13		
Suburban Resident	26	0.86		
Works Downtown	27			
Does not Work Downtown	3			
Age		36.6	19-56	9.69
Male	20			
Female	10			
Household Size		3.16	1-6	1.46
High School/ GED	6	0.2		
Associate's Degree	9	0.3		
Bachelor's Degree	7	0.23		
Master's Degree	6	0.2		
Post Graduate Degree	2	0.06		
# of Day in the Downtown per week		5.53	2-7	.89
Full-time Employment	25	0.83		
Part-time Employment	4	0.13		
Unemployed	1	0.03		
Household Income Level ($10K-$30K)	8			
Household Income Level ($31K-$50K)	10			
Household Income Level ($51K-$75K)	2			
Household Income Level ($76K-$100K)	4			
Household Income Level (Greater than $100)	6			

Each research question was examined and described within the context of the characteristics of the system, the intervention, the stakeholder, and outcomes within the natural setting of the downtown environment. Consumer characteristics (residency, work location, age, gender, household size, education level, employment status, and household income) were examined for each research question.

Data Related to Research Questions

The frequency that consumers reported they currently shop at large-scale retail was examined to establish a baseline for potential consumer use of large-scale retail in the downtown areas of the selected cities. Consumers were asked to report the number of days a month they shop at large-scale retail by "fill in the blank". Data was placed in a frequency table (Table 5). Results indicate that in San Luis Obispo 70% of consumers only shop 0 to 4 times a month at large-retail when compared to Tucson (43.3%) and San Diego (56.6%).

Table 6

Frequency of Shopping at Large-Scale Retail Per Month (n=90)

	0 trips (%)	1 trip (%)	2-4 trips (%)	5-8 trips (%)	9-13 trips (%)	14+ trips (%)
SLO	13.3 (4)	30.0 (9)	26.6 (8)	23.3 (7)	6.7 (2)	
TUC	3.3 (1)	20.0 (6)	20.0 (6)	43.3 (13)	10.0 (3)	3.3 (1)
SD	10.0 (3)	23.3 (7)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	6.7 (2)	3.3 (1)

Research questions (questions 1-4) concerning consumers were answered by intercept-survey. Consumers were asked to rate their perception of large-scale retail on a 6-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, somewhat disagree=3, somewhat agree=4, agree=5, and strongly agree=6). Intercept-survey questions were divided into three topic areas concerning perceived barriers to shopping at large-scale retail and integrating large-scale retail into the downtown: knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

Knowledge. Intercept-survey questions 1-2 asked general questions concerning consumers' perceived knowledge of the large-scale retail concept and access to merchandise in the downtown that is typically purchased in large-scale retail stores. Tables 6-8 contain reported perceived knowledge barriers to shopping at large-scale retail in the study downtowns. Consistencies in responses for question 1 were found in the three study cities. Most consumers (SLO 97%, TUC 93% and SD 87%) either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed that they were familiar with the concept of large-scale retail and issues related to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown (intercept-survey question 1). However, most consumer responses in Tucson and San Diego indicated that merchandise typically purchased at large-scale retail was *not* available in the downtown. Only 40% of consumers in San Diego and 27% of consumers in Tucson either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed that merchandise typically purchased at large-scale retail was available in the downtown. However, 53.3% of San Luis Obispo consumers indicated that large-scale retail merchandise was available in the downtown (intercept-survey question 2).

Table 7

San Luis Obispo Consumers' Perceived Knowledge Barriers (n=30)

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
1	0	0	3.3 (1)	36.7 (11)	33.3 (10)	26.7 (8)
2	0	6.7 (2)	40.0 (12)	40 (12)	13.3 (4)	

Table 8

Tucson Consumers' Perceived Knowledge (n=30)

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
1	0	0	6.7 (2)	33.3 (10)	50.0 (15)	10.0 (3)
2	3.3 (1)	26.7 (8)	43.0 (13)	16.6 (5)	10.0 (3)	0

Table 9

San Diego Consumers' Perceived Knowledge Barriers (n=30)

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
1	0	3.3 (1)	10.0 (3)	30.0 (9)	40.0 (12)	16.7 (5)
2	3.3 (1)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	36.7 (11)	0	3.3 (1)

Attitudes. Intercept-survey questions 3-11 (Tables 9-11) asked relatively specific questions concerning the cost versus benefit of both shopping at large-scale retail in the downtown and integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. Consumers were also asked if they would shop at large-scale retail if it were available in the downtown. Additionally, consumers were asked to rate the economic benefit of large-scale retail in the downtown, its effect on local stores and to what degree they like large-scale retail.

Tables 9-11 contain reported attitudinal barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. There are interesting points to note with regard to individual questions within the attitude section. In general, most consumers (SLO 70%, TUC 63%, and SD 67%) believed that large-scale retail offered convenience at low prices (intercept-survey question 3). However, most consumers in Tucson (53%) and San Diego (60%) strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits when compared to San Luis Obispo (36%) (intercept-survey question 4). When these individual responses were compared within each study city, it was found that most consumers responding that they would not shop at large-scale retail in the downtown on the weekdays (SLO 27%, TUC 43%, and SD 33%) (intercept-survey question 6) were also likely to agree that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits (intercept-survey question 4). Additionally, most consumers in San Diego (63%) and Tucson (60%) either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed that they did not wish to change shopping practices, regardless of what large-scale retail is available in the downtown compared to only 33% in San Luis Obispo (intercept-survey question 7). Furthermore, most consumers in San Luis Obispo (57%) and San Diego (50%) either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed that integrating large-scale retail into the downtown would have a negative effect on local stores when compared to 43% in Tucson (intercept-survey question 9).

No statistical differences were found between employment status, gender and the results from the attitudes section of the study. However, a Pearson correlation analysis yielded both positive and negative statistical relationships between several of the intercept-survey responses when compared to consumer characteristics. One of the strongest positive relationships (SLO $r = 0.750$, $P < 0.000$, Tucson $r = 0.570$, $P < 0.001$, SD $r = 0.621$, $P < 0.000$) in this group was found between the number of days that the consumer currently shop at large-scale retail and the perception that large-scale retail offers convenient shopping/low prices (intercept-survey question 3). Additionally, a strong positive relationships was found between the number of days that consumers currently shops at large-scale retail and their willingness to shop at large-scale retail in the downtown (if available) on weekends (SLO $r = 0.542$, $P < 0.002$ and SD $r = 0.593$, $P < 0.001$) (intercept-survey question 5). Similar results were found for consumers shopping on weekdays (intercept-survey question 6) and their willingness to shop at large-scale retail (SLO $r = 0.716$, $P < 0.000$, TUC $r = 0.621$, $P < 0.000$, SD $r = 0.606$, $P < 0.000$) (intercept-survey question 10).

A strong negative statistical relationship was found between education level and a number of intercept-survey results. A negative correlation was found between perceived low prices and convenience of shopping at large-scale retail and education level for San Luis Obispo ($r = -0.590$, $P<0.001$) and San Diego ($r = -0.542$, $P<0.001$). When compared to Tucson, the strength of agreement was less ($r = -0.419$, $P< 0.21$) for this question (intercept-survey question 3). Another strong negative relationship was found between education level and the perceived impact of large-scale retail on local stores in the downtown (SLO $r = -0.474$, $P<0.008$, TUC $r = -0.498$, $P<0.008$, SD -0.742, $P< 0.000$) (intercept-survey question 9). When compared to Tucson and San Luis Obispo, the strength of agreement for this question was greater for San Diego. The strongest negative correlation for this study was found between education level and consumers' perceived "like or dislike" of large-scale retail (SLO $r = -0.520$, $P<0.003$, TUC $r = 0.602$, $P< 0.000$, SD $r = -0.684$, $P<0.000$) (intercept-survey question 10).

A negative correlation was also found between age and the perception that large-scale retail will economically benefit the downtown in San Luis Obispo ($r = -0.434$, $P< 0.017$) and San Diego ($r = -0.444$, $P< 0.014$) (intercept-survey question 8). However, when these results were compared to Tucson, the strength of agreement of this question was less ($r = -0.367$, $P < 0.046$).

Table 10

San Luis Obispo Consumers' Perceived Attitude Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
3	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)	10.0 (3)	10.0 (3)	40.0 (12)	20.0 (6)
4	6.7 (2)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	23.3 (7)	13.3 (4)	0
5	6.7 (2)	30.0 (9)	10.0 (3)	6.7 (2)	30.0 (9)	16.7 (5)
6	10.0 (3)	13.3 (4)	1 (3.3)	10.0 (3)	33.3 (10)	30.0 (9)
7	3.3 (1)	40.0 (12)	23.3 (7)	10.0 (3)	16.7 (5)	6.7 (2)
8	10.0 (3)	20.0 (6)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)	36.7 (11)	13.3 (4)
9	10.0 (3)	16.7 (5)	16.7 (5)	16.7 (5)	26.7 (8)	13.3 (4)
10	10.0 (3)	13.3 (4)	6.7 (2)	3.3 (1)	46.7 (14)	20.0 (6)
11	0	10.0 (3)	13.3 (4)	26.7 (8)	36.7 (11)	13.3 (4)

Table 11

Tucson Consumers' Perceived Attitudes Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
3	3.3 (1)	10.0 (3)	23.3 (7)	10.0 (3)	23.3 (7)	30.0 (9)
4	0	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)	26.7 (8)	26.7 (8)	10.0 (3)
5	0	46.7 (14)	13.3 (4)	3.3 (1)	30.0 (9)	6.7 (2)
6	6.7 (2)	26.7 (8)	10.0 (3)	10.0 (3)	26.7 (8)	20.0 (6)
7	3.3 (1)	26.7 (8)	10.0 (3)	20.0 (6)	40.0 (12)	0
8	16.7 (5)	16.7 (5)	6.7 (2)	3.3 (1)	43.3 (13)	13.3 (4)
9	20.0 (6)	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)	26.7 (8)	16.7 (5)	0
10	10.0 (3)	13.3 (4)	13.3 (4)	3.3 (1)	40.0 (12)	20.0 (6)
11	20.0 (6)	23.3 (7)	30.0 (9)	13.3 (4)	13.3 (4)	0

Table 12

San Diego Consumers' Perceived Attitude Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
3	0	20.0 (6)	13.3 (4)	13.3 (4)	46.7 (14)	6.7 (2)
4	0	20.0 (6)	20.0 (6)	33.3 (10)	20.0 (6)	6.7 (2)
5	10.0 (3)	36.7 (11)	13.3 (4)	3.3 (1)	33.3 (10)	13.3 (4)
6	6.7 (2)	26.7 (8)	0	23.3 (7)	36.7 (11)	6.7 (2)
7	6.7 (2)	23.3 (7)	6.7 (2)	30.0 (9)	33.3 (10)	0
8	10.0 (3)	23.3 (7)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)	33.3 (10)	13.3 (4)
9	16.7 (5)	26.7 (8)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)	33.3 (10)	3.3 (1)
10	6.7 (2)	16.7 (5)	10.0 (3)	3.3 (1)	46.7 (14)	16.7 (5)
11	13.3 (4)	26.7 (8)	26.7 (8)	6.7 (2)	26.7 (8)	0

Behavior. Intercept-survey questions 12-17 (Tables 12-14) asked relatively specific questions concerning perceived environmental and situational barriers that could hinder the consumers' ability to shop at large-scale retail in the downtown. Such barriers include parking, design/appearance, crime, traffic, and lack of street-oriented, pedestrian- friendly shopping environment. Consumers were also asked to "fill in the blank" for questions concerning the most important factor(s) that influence use of large-scale retail in the downtown and the most important barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown. However, most consumers chose not to complete this part of the survey.

Parking in the downtown was found to be a frequently perceived barrier in all selected cities (SLO 53%, TUC 67%, and SD 63%) (Intercept-survey question

12). The most frequently reported barrier reported in San Luis Obispo was the effect on local character (intercept-survey question 11, an attitude question). Seventy-seven percent of consumers in San Luis Obispo either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed that local character was a barrier compared to Tucson (26%) and San Diego (33%). In Tucson, the most frequently reported perceived barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown was lack of street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly environment (73%) when compared with San Diego (33%) and San Luis Obispo (34%) (Intercept-survey question 16). Furthermore, San Diego consumers reported traffic (70%) as a barrier more frequently compared to Tucson (60%) and San Luis Obispo (37%) (intercept-survey question 15). Less than one-half of all consumers in the selected cities reported concerns with crime in the downtown. Consumers in San Luis Obispo (47%), Tucson (43%) and San Diego (40%) either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed that crime was an issue to using large-scale retail in the downtown (intercept-survey question 14).

When intercept-survey behavior results were compared to consumer characteristics, the study cities were found to have several consumer characteristics of statistical significance in common. In all of the study cities, the number of days a month consumers shopped at large-scale retail, education level, and household income yielded statistically significant results. In San Diego, statistical differences were also found between gender and parking as a barrier ($r = 0.474$, $P < 0.008$) (intercept-survey question 12). Surveyed females (70%) reported parking as a barrier more frequently when compared to males

(60%). A Pearson correlation analysis yielded both positive and negative statistical relationships between several of the intercept-survey results when compared to consumer characteristics.

A number of results indicate a statistical relationship between household income and research responses. In San Luis Obispo a strong relationship was found between household income and perception that large-scale retail in the downtown would negatively influence the character of the downtown ($r = 0.504$, $P < 0.004$) (intercept-survey question 11). When compared to San Diego and Tucson, results were statistically significant but to a lesser degree (SD $r = 0.430$, $P < 0.018$ and Tucson $r = 0.411$, $P < 0.024$) for this question. San Diego results yielded a strong correlation between household income and store design as a barrier ($r = 0.688$, $P < 0.000$) (intercept-survey question 13). However, San Luis Obispo and Tucson results were found not to be significant for this question (SLO $r = -0.334$, $P < 0.072$, TUC $r = 0.019$, $P < 0.919$).

Additionally, in Tucson, a significant correlation was found between the number of days per month that consumers shop at large-scale retail and their perception that lack of street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly shopping is a barrier to shopping in the downtown ($r = 0.410$, $P < 0.026$) (intercept-survey question 16).

Table 13

San Luis Obispo Consumers' Perceived Behavioral Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
12	20.0 (6)	3.3 (1)	23.3 (7)	13.3 (4)	36.7 (11)	3.3 (1)
13	0	13.3 (4)	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)	36.7 (11)	13.3 (4)
14	0	20.0 (6)	33.3 (10)	16.7 (5)	23.3 (7)	6.7 (2)
15	3.3 (1)	40.0 (12)	20.0 (6)	23.3 (7)	10.0 (3)	3.3 (1)
16	10.0 (3)	33.3 (10)	23.3 (7)	16.7 (5)	10.0 (3)	6.7 (2)
17	23.3 (7)	43.3 (13)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)	33.3 (3)	3.3 (1)

Table 14

Tucson Consumers' Perceived Behavior Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
12	6.7 (2)	10.0 (3)	16.7 (5)	20.0 (6)	33.3 (10)	13.3 (4)
13	0	26.7 (8)	10.0 (3)	16.7 (5)	43.3 (13)	0
14	6.7 (2)	20.0 (6)	30.0 (9)	23.3 (7)	6.7 (2)	13.3 (4)
15	13.3 (4)	13.3 (4)	13.3 (4)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	3.3 (1)
16	0	3.3 (1)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	40.0 (12)	0
17	0	13.3 (4)	3.3 (4)	16.7 (8)	13.3 (12)	6.7 (2)

Table 15

San Diego Consumers' Perceived Behavioral Barriers

Question	% Strongly Disagree (*n*)	% Disagree (*n*)	% Somewhat Disagree (*n*)	% Somewh at agree (*n*)	% Agree (*n*)	% Strongly Agree (*n*)
12	0	10.0 (3)	26.6 (8)	10.0 (3)	33.3 (10)	20.0 (6)
13	13.3 (4)	33.3 (10)	20.0 (6)	16.7 (5)	16.7 (5)	0
14	6.7 (2)	23.3 (7)	20.0 (6)	33.3 (10)	16.7 (5)	0
15	20.0 (1)	10.0 (3)	16.7 (5)	23.3 (7)	33.3 (10)	13.3 (4)
16	10.0 (3)	36.7 (11)	23.3 (7)	20.0 (6)	10.0 (3)	0
17	3.3 (1)	16.7 (5)	3.3 (1)	33.3 (10)	33.3 (10)	10.0 (3)

Summarization of Significant Statistical Correlations

Table 15 contains a summary of responses for all survey questions found to have significant relationships. In general, education level yielded several strong relationships when compared to consumer responses. Both consumers' perceived attitude towards (like or dislike) large-scale retail and perceived negative effects of large-scale retail were strongly correlated with education level in all study cities. In San Diego and San Luis Obispo a strong negative relationship was found between education level and both convenient shopping/ low prices and the benefits of large-scale retail in the downtown. A strong positive relationship was found between convenient shopping/low prices and number of days that consumers shop at large-scale retail for all study cities. Additionally, a strong positive relationship was found between consumers' willingness to shop at large-scale retail on the weekdays and current use of large-scale retail for all of the study cities.

Table 16

Summary of Responses with Significant Relationships

Quest	Content of Question	Consumer Characteristic	R	P	City
1	Familiarity with LSR	Education level	0.474	0.008	SD
3	Convenient Shopping/ Low prices	Education Level	-0.542	0.001	SD
			-0.419	0.21	TUC
			-0.59	0.001	SLO
		# of Days Shop at LSR	0.621	0	SD
			0.75	0	SLO
			0.57	0.001	TUC
4	Costs Outweigh Benefits	# of Days Shop at LSR	-0.592	0.001	SLO
5	If LSR is Available/ Shop on Weekends	Education Level	-0.515	0.004	SD
			-0.543	0.002	SLO
		# of Days Shop at LSR	0.542	0.002	SLO
			0.593	0.001	SD
6	If LSR is Available/ Shop on Weekdays	# of Days Shop at LSR	0.716	0	SLO
			0.621	0	TUC
			0.606	0	SD
7	I Do Not Wish to Change My Shopping Practice	# of Days Shop at LSR	0.606	0	SD
			0.565	0.001	SLO
			0.665	0	TUC
8	LSR in the DT will Economically Benefit the Downtown	Education level	-0.624	0	SD
			-0.645	0	SLO
		Age	-0.434	0.017	SLO
			-0.444	0.014	SD
			-0.367	0.046	TUC
9	LSR will Have a Negative Effect on Local Stores	Education Level	-0.742	0	SD
			-0.474	0.008	SLO
			-0.498	0.005	TUC
10	Like/Dislike of Large-Scale Retail	Education Level	-0.64	0	SD
			-0.52	0.003	SLO
			-0.602	0	TUC
11	LSR will Have a Negative Effect on Local Character	Household Income	0.504	0.004	SLO
			0.411	0.024	TUC
			0.43	0.018	SD
12	Parking is a Barrier	Gender	0.474	0.008	SD
13	Street design	Household Income	0.688	0	SD
16	Lack of Pedestrian-friendly Street-oriented Design	# of Days Shop at LSR	-0.41	0.026	TUC

SLO= San Luis Obispo, TUC= Tucson, SD= San Diego

Interviews with City Planners and Large-Scale Retail Professional

An Interview with at least one city planner was conducted in each of the study cities. An interview was also conducted with a Target Corporation public representative from the corporate office. Each research question was examined and described within the context of the characteristics of the city (system), planning interventions, the stakeholders, and outcomes within the natural setting of the downtown environment. When research questions were analyzed specific themes emerged. The tables below summarize city planner responses to the research questions. Research questions were divided into three topic areas: knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (behavior is defined as assets or weaknesses related to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown).

Knowledge. Interview question 1 asked city planners (urban planners with a specialty in redevelopment or urban planning department directors) specific questions concerning, overall trends in large-scale retail in terms of design innovations, zoning laws, and business practices. Table 16 contains emerging themes of perceived knowledge barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the study city's downtowns. Consistency was found in each of the city planners' perceived knowledge of zoning and land use laws. City planners in all study groups perceived themselves as very knowledge on this topic.

Table 17

City Planner's and Urban Professional's Perceived Knowledge Barriers as Measured by Interview (Research Interview Question 1)

San Luis Obispo	Tucson	San Diego
The city established LSR design guidelines for all downtown buildings. New construction must be approved by the architectural review committee	An Urban Design Guidelines draft has been proposed and is awaiting approval by the city council. The proposal addresses standards for creating a pedestrian-friendly environment- enhance building design, public art, street furniture and open space.	The Centre City Development Corporation has developed urban design goals and policies for the DT, which continues to promote a walkable urban environment.
A LSR ordinance restricts the size of LSR to 140,000 sq ft.	LSR ordinance prohibits locating store within 200 ft of residential zoning. Restriction of non-taxable merchandise to 10% of store, and store size restriction to 90,000 sq ft	No LSR ordinance (attempt by city council to establish large-scale ordinance in 2007 was vetoed by mayor)

LSR= Large-Scale retail, DT= downtown

Attitudes. Interview question 2 asked specific questions concerning the selected city's position on integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. Table 17 contains reported attitude barriers to integrating large-scale retail in the selected city's downtown.

Table 18

City Planner's Perceived Attitude Barriers to Integrating Large-Scale Retail into the Downtown as Measured by Interview (Research Interview Question 2)

Barriers	San Luis Obispo	Tucson	San Diego
City Position on LSR in the DT	City's position of LSR is a "balance" between LSR and specialty stores in the DT to retain small town local character while "not suburbanizing" the DT and maintaining a strong niche market.	City position on LSR is that it is easier to build LSR outside of downtown than build in the DT	Cities position on LSR is "free market", no restrictions on large-scale retail in the DT
Vacancy Rate/ Underused Retail Space	*No barrier*-Low DT vacancy rate.	High vacancy rate in the DT, "white elephants" are an issue. Difficulty attracting new development to the DT	Moderate vacancy rates
Public Involvement	Strong public involvement from local groups opposing LSR in the downtown	People have given up on the DT. They have been promised retail since the 1980s.	
DT Uses Needed to Support LSR	Increasing mix use in the DT to increase diversification that capitalizes on a multifunctional DT	DT needs housing and people first and retail will follow.	DT needs a larger population to support LSR.
Decentralization of DT functions	LSR (Costco, Home Depot, Sears) located outside of the DT are drawing some consumers away from the DT	DT has lost its strong community base over the years.	Mixed use development has increased and the number of consumers following retail into the DT area
Multi-functional DT	Retail in the DT is mostly specialized. Many consumers must travel outside of the DT to meet all of their retail needs	Lack of downtown resident amenities. Most retail is closed on week nights and weekends.	Lack of downtown resident amenities. City Planner identified a lack of downtown resident serving retail.

LSR= Large-Scale retail, DT= downtown

Behavior. Interview question 3 asked about the (behavior) characteristics of the city that are perceived as assets and weakness for integrating large-scale retail into downtown. Consistencies were found in the assets perceived as promoting redevelopment including attracting and supporting new retail development in the downtown. In general, all selected cities were in close proximity to a major university. City planners reported that San Luis Obispo and San Diego had strong historical character, waterfront development, inviting pedestrian-friendly, street-oriented urban retail, and powerful tourist appeal. San Obispo and San Diego city planners reported that all of these factors promote a strong sense of place and contribute to a “vibrant” nightlife. However, the Tucson city planner reported that the downtown has not sufficiently capitalizing on its distinct historical character and is lacking in many of these key assets.

Consistencies were also found in the weakness perceived as detriments to downtown development including large-scale retail. All city planners’ interviewed in this study perceived lack of sufficient parking, lack of sufficient retail (non-specialty retail) to sustain downtown residents, and available retail space as a moderate to major issue for redevelopment. The Tucson city planner identified several weakness not reported by San Luis Obispo or San Diego. One of the greatest challenges to redevelopment was perceived as the lack of consumer and developer confidence in the downtown following a multitude of unsuccessful strategies at revitalization over the past 20 years. Furthermore, Tucson’s relative lack of sufficient activity generators and relative lack of pedestrian-friendly, street-orientated retail were reported as a major barrier to revitalization efforts. Lack of sufficient downtown housing was reported as contributing to the problem of insufficient retail operating on the weekends and after workforce hours.

Table 19

Summary of City Planners' Perceived (Behaviors) City Assets Related to Integrating Large-Scale Retail into the Downtown as Measured by Interview

San Luis Obispo Assets	Tucson Assets	San Diego Assets
Major university within a few miles of downtown	Major university within a few miles of downtown	Two Major universities within a few miles of downtown
Great degree of historical character-older architecture	Historical character (but not sufficiently promoted in the downtown)	Great degree of historical character-older architecture
Waterfront development adjunct to downtown- creek through DT	*No* waterfront development	Waterfront development adjunct to downtown
Well developed centralized retail district	*Poorly* developed retail district	Well developed centralized retail district
Entertainment and night life	Very limited	Entertainment and night life
Strong tourist attraction	Moderate tourist attraction	Strong tourist attraction
Great degree of pedestrian-friendly, street-oriented areas	*Limited* pedestrian friendly-street oriented area	Pockets of pedestrian-friendly, street-oriented areas
Trolley	Proposed Modern Street-car	Light rail transit
Close proximity to residential neighborhoods encourage "walkability" of downtown.	Close proximity to residential	Close proximity to residential
Mission Plaza	Convention Center	Arena
Strong sense of place	*Limited* sense of place	Strong sense of place
Strong downtown association	Downtown Association currently *without* strong leadership	Strong downtown association

Table 20

Summary of City Planners' Perceived (Behaviors) City Weaknesses Related to Integrating Large-Scale Retail into the Downtown as Measured by Interview

San Luis Obispo Weaknesses	Tucson Weaknesses	San Diego Weaknesses
	Major lack of adequate housing in the downtown to support retail on nights and weekends	Lack of housing in the downtown; however, a major goal of the city is to develop more housing DT.
Parking issues	Parking issues	Parking and traffic issues
Insufficient grocery and hardware stores in DT reduces "livability" of DT and stalls development. Must have complex mix of retail, shops, restaurants, housing and entertainment to sustain DT development	Lack of adequate shopping- image of DT as "vacant" and poorly maintained.	Emphasis on niche markets in the DT. Merchandise that is mostly directed towards tourist and upper scale retail forces many consumers to shop out of the downtown for many of their needs. Strict urban design regulations
Not a barrier- Strong confidence in the downtown	Strong lack of confidence in downtown revitalization	*Not* a barrier
	Lack of activity generators such as "a symphony, cultural center, movie theater, art organizations and arena"	
	Greatly lacking in "urban life style", few pedestrian-friendly areas in the downtown	
	Moderate crime issues	Moderate crime issues
Lack of available retail space/shortage of space	Somewhat lack of available retail space/shortage of space	Lack of retail available retail space/shortage of space

DT= Downtown

Target Interview

Three themes emerged from the interview with the Target Representative: (1) Target *officially* does not consider "barriers" identified by the literature, consumers, and city planners as problems for integrating Target into the downtown, (2) according to Target, no official practices exist for promoting downtown Target stores, (3) selection of merchandise is the same in all Target Stores. The Target representative reported that, Target considers many factors when researching new markets, including community demographics, population, transportation, parking, local economy, zoning standards and local architecture. Rather than overcoming "barriers", Target's official comment is that it "works with communities to build stores that are sensitive to the unique needs of each community". The Target representative reports that "from zoning standards to local architecture and traffic levels, we work diligently with the communities and local stakeholders".

According to the Target representative, development of Target stores in the downtown is determined by city identified needs, not the Target Corporation. If a city is interested in integrating a Target store in the downtown the city approaches the Target Corporation with their request. To determine if Target should enter a market, regardless of location, Target Corporation conducts extensive background research and works with communities and local stakeholders to build Target stores.

Consumers shopping at traditional Target stores and downtown stores will find few differences in terms of merchandise. The merchandise available at traditional Target stores is typically available at downtown Target stores; however, there are smaller quantities of merchandise. The design of the downtown store may differ from a traditional Target store. Currently, Target has several multi-level stores in downtowns. Regardless of store size, Target “prides themselves on offering both what guests need and want in a manner that is design-inspired”. Although Target does not officially consider parking needs as a barrier to integrating a store into the downtown, if would seem that unofficially parking is of great concern. Target “carefully considers parking factors” in the community. When questioned specifically about parking issues related to integrating a Target store into the downtown, the representative reported that “each city’s unique downtown situation must be considered”. For example, a city with a high-density, mix-used environment downtown may require less parking than a city with lower density. Some downtown Target stores in high-density areas have little or no parking.

Summary

Findings from this study revealed that the barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown as a revitalization strategy are complex and multifaceted. The SVPT points out the multiple contextual factors in the city that influence consumers’ and other stakeholders’ perceived knowledge, attitude, and behavior barriers towards shopping at large-scale retail in the downtown and developing large-scale retail in the downtown. Significant consumer and city environmental factors influencing shopping at large-scale retail in the downtown and integration of large-scale retail into the downtown were examined and described.

Although most consumers reported that large-scale retail provided convenient shopping at low prices, over one-half of consumers in San Diego and Tucson reported that the cost of shopping in all types of retail in the downtown area outweighs the benefits. Measuring perceived convenience of shopping at large-scale retail in the study cities' downtown could not be measured due to the current lack of large-scale retail in Tucson and San Diego's downtown. However, consumers were asked to what degree they would shop at large-scale retail in the downtown on weekends and weekdays if it were available in the downtown (survey questions 5 & 6). In all of the study cities, parking and traffic were among the major barriers that respondents reported as contributing to difficulties with shopping in the downtown (traffic to a lesser degree in San Luis Obispo). When barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown were examined, the effect of large-scale retail on local stores and design of large-scale retail are among the most frequently reported barriers.

Some significant relationships between perceived knowledge, attitude, and behavior barriers and consumer characteristics (income, education level, and employment status) were found. In general, the number of days per month that the consumer shops at large-scale retail, household income, and education level yielded a significant correlation when compared to a number of intercept-survey questions.

When city size was compared similarities and differences were observed. Approximately one-third of surveyed consumers in Tucson (mid-size city) and San Diego (large-size city) reported that the cost of shopping at large-scale retail outweighed the benefits when compared to San Luis Obispo (small-city). When compared to San Luis Obispo, nearly twice as many consumers in Tucson and San Diego reported that they did not wish to change their shopping practices. Additionally, the most frequently reported barrier in San Luis Obispo was effect on local character when compared with Tucson (lack of street-oriented design) and San Diego (traffic). In Tucson, twice as many consumers reported lack of street-oriented pedestrian-friendly design was a significant barrier when compared to San Luis Obispo and San Diego. Nearly twice as many consumers in Tucson and San Diego reported traffic as a barrier when compared to San Luis Obispo.

Similarities and differences existed between city planners perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the studied downtown. All city planners agreed that downtown housing; historical character/ sense of place, and a multi-functional downtown (retail, professional offices, movie theatres, hotels, and government activities) were important characteristics of a successful downtown. City planners also identified lack of both adequate parking and retail (non-specialty retail) to sustain downtown residents, and available retail space as a moderate to major issues for redevelopment. In both, Tucson (medium city) and in some downtown area of San Diego (large city) city planners identified inadequate retail to serve downtown residents and retail hours not extending past traditional weekday business hours as barriers resulting in inactive downtowns on the evenings and weekends.

When questioned on potential situational and environmental barriers to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown, the Target representative did not officially acknowledge any barriers. However, Target reported that “they frequently work around ordinances” but would not specifically comment on how Target would, if at all, work with the city to find solutions to integrating a Target into downtown Tucson. Both consumers and city planners perceived many barriers to using large-scale retail in the downtown and integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overview of Study

Barriers to the revitalization of downtowns have been addressed with various degrees of success in downtowns across America. In general, the most successful downtowns are attempting to enhance or recapture a "walkable urbanity", similar to that found in the typical pre WWII downtown, including a retail mix, entertainment venues, hotels, high-density housing, public buildings, offices, and restaurants (Leinberger, 2005).

An intercept-survey method was used to gather data on consumers' perceived barriers (knowledge, attitudes, and behavior) to revitalization of downtown. Interviews were conducted to gather data on city planners and other professionals' perceived barriers. Case studies were used to further examine characteristics of the city and consumers. Interviews with urban planners and a Target Corporation representative explored the research questions.

Interpretation of Findings

The significant findings of this study were interpreted primarily within the construct of the consumer and city (system) characteristics. The important findings pertaining to each research question are presented below.

This study revealed that in general, most consumers in the study communities are shopping at large-scale retail and most consumers are leaving the downtown to do so (only San Luis Obispo has large-scale retail currently in the downtown). Despite a relatively small but vocal opposition to large-scale, retail for a variety of reasons, including economic impact on local stores and downtown local character, many consumers continue to demand a greater presence of large-scale retail in the downtown area (Evans-Cowley, 2006; Gratz & Mintz, 1998). Evans-Cowley (2006) reports that large-scale retail is “here to stay” and many communities are challenged to integrate large-scale retail into their communities. Furthermore, consumers continue to demand walkable, vibrant places in which to live and work. Although, over one-half of most consumers in Tucson and San Diego reported that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits, consumers indicated that they would shop at large-scale retail in the downtown if it were available on the weekdays.

When research data was analyzed within the context of the city (system) and consumer characteristics a set of barriers emerged that help to explain the serious problems confronting the studied city’s efforts to integrate large-scale retail into their downtowns as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. When research data was examined the following significant barriers related to downtown characteristics and consumer characteristics emerged: (1) the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighs the benefits, (2) setting the stage for development, and (3) the economic effect of large-scale retail located in the downtown on local stores and local character.

<u>Cost of Shopping in the Downtown Outweighs the Benefits</u>

Over one-half of surveyed consumers in Tucson (53%) and San Diego (60%) responded that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits compared to 36% in San Luis Obispo (consumer’s attitudes towards their shopping experience at large-scale retail in the study city's downtown could not be measured due to Tucson and San Diego's lack of large-scale retail in the downtown). Although consumers in Tucson and San Diego do not currently shop at large-scale retail in the downtown, these responses raise important questions concerning barriers to shopping at large-scale retail in the downtown. When specific intercept-survey results were examined to identify consumers' perceived "cost" of shopping in the downtown the following city characteristics emerged: parking, traffic/congestion, and lack of adequate street-oriented pedestrian-friendly retail.

Parking and Traffic/Congestion

Although most consumers reported that large-scale retail provided convenient shopping at low prices, over one-half of consumers in San Diego and Tucson responded that the cost of shopping in the downtown area outweighs the benefits. When specific barriers were examined, parking was perceived as a frequent barrier in Tucson (67%) and San Diego (63%). Although respondents in San Luis Obispo reported parking as a barrier, they did so to a lesser degree (53%). Consistent with these findings, all surveyed city planners reported parking as either an issue or important issue related to using large-scale retail or integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

Similar findings suggest that consumers expect free parking especially when they shop at large-scale retail stores (Shoup, 2005) and most will walk a maximum of about 1500 feet until they seek an alternative mode of transport (Leinberger, 2005; McBee, 1992). If parking spaces are too far from the stores, or if there is not enough parking, consumers will be discouraged from entering the area (Levy & Weitz, 2001). These responses raise questions concerning the consumers' perception of adequate parking and ways large-scale retail can offer free convenient parking to consumers in the downtown. However, in some high-density downtown areas such as Washington D.C. and New York City large-scale retail type stores have adapted well to the downtown built environment including providing little or no store affiliated parking but rather rely upon shared use parking. Large-scale retail has adapted to the downtown by selling smaller packaging of the same product selection found in their typical stores. Downtown consumers have also adapted by purchasing smaller quantities and shopping more frequently. However, for this walkable, pedestrian-friendly shopping environment to thrive, there must be high-density, mixed use, good shopping and the consumers' perception of a safe environment.

In general, most surveyed consumers in Tucson (60%) and San Diego (70%) reported traffic as a significant barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown. However, only 36% of San Luis Obispo consumers indicated that traffic was not a significant barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown. Similar findings were also reported by Shoup (2005) in a study on traffic and congestion in American cities. The researchers found that the high-density design of large downtowns, mixed with limited space, and alternative transit modes creates congestion (Shoup, 2005). However, the volume of traffic in smaller downtowns tends to be substantially less than in larger downtowns with major traffic generators (Robertson, 1999). Results from this study were consistent with these findings, consumers in San Luis Obispo, the relatively smaller city, reported traffic as a barrier less frequently then Tucson (mid-sized city) and San Diego (large city).

Lack of Adequate Street-Oriented Pedestrian-Friendly Design

Tucson consumers identified lack of an adequate street-oriented pedestrian-friendly design (73%) as the most frequent behavioral barrier (for this study, conditions that hinder a behavior). When compared to San Luis Obispo (33%) and San Diego (30%) over twice as many consumers in Tucson identified this issue as a barrier. These results are consistent with city planners' responses and supported by case study. Surveyed Tucson city planners indicated lack of adequate pedestrianization as a major challenge for Tucson. Similar study findings also suggest that lack of street-oriented pedestrian-friendly design was a significant challenge related to downtown revitalization (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004). Findings from Robertson's (1999) study suggest that pedestrianization of the downtown is key to establishing a strong sense of place in downtowns of all sizes and consequently a major factor in the success of downtown revitalization (Robertson, 1999). Streetscapes with trees, benches, and attractive lights are among the features that encourage people to linger and enjoy the downtown environment (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998; Filion et al., 2004).

Findings from this study suggest that lack of pedestrianization also effects consumers' willingness to shop at large-scale retail in the downtown on weekends. The case study on Tucson also indicated that consumers have negative attitudes toward entering the downtown after the traditional workday or on the weekends. Although most consumers responded that they would shop at large-scale in the downtown on weekdays (if available), less than one-half of Tucson's respondents (40%) indicated that they would shop at large-scale retail on weekends in the downtown when compared to San Luis Obispo (53%) and San Diego (50%). Similar findings suggest that consumers willingness to stay in the downtown past traditional business hours and visit on the weekends is related to the downtown providing sufficient diversity in downtown functions, retail, housing, nightlife and weekend activities (Black et al., 1985). These findings raise important questions concerning discrepancies between reported positive attitudes toward large-scale retail and the willingness to shop at large-scale retail. Findings from this study suggest that although most consumers reported a positive attitude towards large-scale retail in the downtown, lack of a multifunctional, pedestrian-friendly downtown is preventing most consumers in Tucson from venturing into the downtown on weekends.

<u>Setting the Stage for Development</u>

The surveyed San Luis Obispo city planners reported that a successful downtown requires [a set of city characteristics] that must occur simultaneously to support and retain consumers and retail in the downtown. The city planner reported that fostering an urban environment required "human-scale design, strong sense of place, local character and a diverse mix of shopping and housing". The San Diego city planner reported the need for similar city characteristics to support a successful downtown and emphasized the importance of establishing “walkable destinations” to draw consumers to the downtown.

However, the Tucson city planner reported that “building the downtown population” was the “number one priority”. These findings were supported by Tucson’s case study, which showed that in general, other than establishing small clusters of high-density housing in the downtown, few large-scale activity generators and culture activities have been completed or in the development stage. The Tucson city planners are concerned that without a strong middle-class demographic to economically support goods and services in the downtown any attempt to build retail, entertainment, and other services would end in failure. A strong middle class demographic near or in the downtown would also be critical for supporting large-scale type retail in the downtown. However, drawing middle-class consumers to live in downtown Tucson is challenging when there is good shopping and entertainment outside of the downtown but, little in the downtown. Most consumers want at least a four hour shopping/entertainment experience before they are willing to venture into the downtown (Leinberger, 2005).

Tucson’s revitalization strategy is in sharp contrast to both San Luis Obispo’s and San Diego’s revitalization strategies that emphasize the need to develop all phases of the revitalization process simultaneously. Similar findings suggest that creating a “walkable urbanity” is crucial for setting the stage for redevelopment in the downtown (Leinberger, 2005). Additionally, Leinberger emphasized the importance of creating a “critical mass” of all phases of “pedestrian uses” to attract consumers to the downtown, before the revitalization project stalls. Walkable streets, parking structures, cultural and entertainment venues, transit and adequate high-density housing are among the elements needed to create a walkable urban environment and establish a strong sense of place (Leinberger, 2005; Filion et al., 2004).

When results from this study were examined, the following consumer and city characteristics that could effect setting the stage for development emerged: confidence in the downtown, competition from discount stores and suburban malls, and lack of sense of place.

Confidence in the Downtown

Most consumers responded (SLO 63%, TUC 60%, SD 60%) that large-scale retail in the downtown will economically benefit the downtown. Similar studies by Leinberger (2005) and Robertson (1999) suggests that consumers and other stakeholders need a predominately positive attitude towards revitalization for successfully revitalize of the downtown. However, nearly twice as many respondents in Tucson (60%) and San Diego (63%) when compared to San Luis Obispo indicated that they did not wish to change shopping practices regardless of what large-scale retail was available in the downtown. Results from city planner interviews and case studies were consistent with these findings. These findings raise questions concerning discrepancies between reported positive attitudes towards the economic benefit of large-scale retail in the downtown and most consumers in Tucson and San Diego not wishing to change current shopping practices.

In contrast to Tucson city planners, San Luis Obispo and San Diego city planners reported that most consumers have strong confidence in the ongoing development of the downtown. Additionally, city planners in Tucson reported that many consumers have given up on redevelopment of the downtown after over 20 years of unsuccessful redevelopment projects. Leinberger (2005) explains that an attitude of failure in the community is important when considering the ability of the community to successfully “pull it off”. Middle-class consumers’ confidence in downtown redevelopment is vital to the successful redevelopment of the downtown. Demographics are important. The middle-class is the driving force behind the local, regional and global economy (Birdsall, 2000). Without middle-class confidence in the downtown, it is unlikely that they will invest in the downtown.

Findings suggest that an unsuccessful attempt at revitalizing a downtown after a previous failure takes a full generation and injection of new leadership to get over the collapse of the effort (Leinberger, 2005). These findings raise important questions concerning Tucson’s redevelopment strategies. Currently, Tucson is developing a modern streetcar system to connect the downtown to the university. Additionally, the Rio Nuevo project, (downtown revitalization project) is continuing slowly after many years of fits and starts.

<u>Competition with Discount Stores and Suburban Mall</u>

All surveyed city planners reported competition from discount stores and suburban malls outside of the downtown as a major concern. This is especially true in Tucson where the periphery retail is superior to that currently found in the downtown. Findings from similar studies (Mitchell, 2006; Robertson, 1999; Leinberger, 2005) suggest that the decentralization of many of the downtown functions and subsequent disinvestment in the downtown has resulted in businesses closing or relocating to the suburbs. Consistent with these findings, only 27% of consumer respondents in Tucson reported that merchandise typically purchased in large-scale retail was available in the downtown compared to 53.3% in San Luis Obispo and 40% in San Diego. Similar findings support the importance of adequate “walkable” retail in the downtown that meets most consumers’ needs to prevent consumers from leaving the downtown to shop (Leinberger, 2005). Additionally, attracting retail including “regional” retail as part of a complex mix of specialty retail and local-serving retail (i.e. grocery, drug and book stores) concentrated into walkable areas is important to downtown revitalization (Leinberger, 2005; Gratz & Mintz, 1998).

Although all city planners in this study reported that development of a strong niche market in the downtown was important to differentiate itself from the suburbs, the planners also emphasized that successful downtowns are multifunctional and must meet many of the consumers’ retail needs. In Tucson, creating a strong niche or unique mix of retail in the downtown would be especially important due to the strong competition from retail on the periphery of the downtown. In general, city planners from the study cities reported that the downtown must have a complex mix of retail, shops, restaurants, housing and entertainment to sustain downtown development. However, the Tucson city planners reported many city characteristics that prior studies (Robertson, 1999;

Leinberger, 2005; McBee, 1992) found to ensue a vicious cycle of disinvestment in the downtown. City characteristics reported by the Tucson city planners include: lack of adequate high-density housing to support downtown retail on nights and weekends, relatively high vacancy rates, strong lack of consumer confidence in downtown, lack of adequate activities generator, and lack of urban lifestyle-pedestrian friendly streetscapes. These findings raise important questions concerning downtown Tucson's revitalization strategies.

Lack of Sense of Place

Downtown characteristics such as a pedestrian-friendly, street-oriented retail, waterfront developments, historic preservation and building architecture are key to creating a strong sense of place (Robertson, 1999; Gratz & Mintz, 1998). When study results were compared to consumer and city characteristics, several topics emerged: store design, local character, and lack of street-oriented pedestrian design.

Store Design

Seventy-percent of consumers in San Luis Obispo somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that store design was a barrier to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown compared to Tucson (60%) and San Diego (33%). Findings from a similar study by Mitchell (2006) suggest that large-scale retail store design has a negative impact on the downtown's sense of place. Consistent with these findings, Robertson's (1999) study on small-city downtowns barriers to revitalization suggest that in small-city downtowns poor design can do more damage than good for a downtown's sense of place because less emphasis is placed on large-scale projects that dominate the downtown. Findings from another study (Beaumont, 1997) on improved design for large-scale retail in downtowns, suggest that the “formula” design and size of large-scale retail stores drastically differs from the unique, historic character of both small and large-city downtowns. Halebsky (2004) found that local identity, regional charm, and sense of place are adversely affected when traditional “homogenous retail chains” that are incongruous with the existing environment replace architecture.

City planners in all of the study cities report strict design guidelines for large-scale retail. In general, these guidelines restrict the size of buildings and promote architectural details to enhance the local character. In a similar study by Beaumont (1997), findings suggest that in an effort to prevent loss of sense of place, some cities are establishing zoning and site/design regulations that promote the integration of large-scale stores into the downtown while retaining community character. These regulations include aesthetic orientation of the building façade, changing the appearance of the building to fit in with the surrounding buildings and integration of stores into existing vacant buildings, and modified signage that blends with the architecture of the surroundings (Siwolop, 2006).

In San Luis Obispo, over seventy-five percent of consumers perceived that local character would be negatively impacted by placing large-scale retail into the downtown compared to Tucson (27%) and San Diego (33%). Interestingly, San Luis Obispo consumers, the only city in the study group with at least one large-scale retail type store in the downtown, were over twice as likely to report that large-scale retail will negatively affect local character. Consistent with San Luis Obispo results, Mitchell's (2006) study findings suggest that in downtowns of all sizes, local character and sense of place are a critical component of the downtowns and the integration of large-scale retail into the downtown will negatively effect the local character. All surveyed city planners reported that balancing local character and large-scale retail is challenging. Similar research findings suggest that local character is important to maintaining quality of life for community stakeholders (Robertson, 1999; McBee, 1992). Findings from others studies indicate that some consumers perceive national chains as threatening the social fabric of their communities because the stores are "sprawling, ugly, and cheap" (Lavin, 2003). According to Lavin and Kunstler, neighborhoods are worried that large-scale retail would make them become suburban malls turning into "nowhere-ville" and they would lose their diverse flavor (Kunstler, 1993; Lavin, 2003).

The Effect of large-Scale Retail Located in the Downtown on Local Stores

Findings from similar studies (Mitchell, 2006; Halebsky, 2004) suggest two major issues related to large-scale retail's effect of the local economy: (1) the effect on local small business and (2) the effect on wages/benefits. Although most consumers in all of the study cities (SD 60%, TUC 60%, and SLO 63%) (intercept-survey question 8) indicated that large-scale retail would economically benefit the downtown, almost one-half or more of all consumers either somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that large-scale retail will have a negative effect on local stores (SD 50%, TUC 43%, and SLO 57%) (intercept-survey question 9). When individual responses were examined, it was found that those consumers who indicated that large-scale retail would have a negative effect on the downtown economy were less likely to support large-scale retail in the downtown and were more likely to indicate that large-scale retail has a negative effect of local stores. Furthermore, a strong statistical relationship was found between consumer responses indicating large-scale retail in the downtown would economically benefit the downtown and education level. Those study group consumers with a relatively higher education level indicated more often that large-scale would not economically benefit the downtown.

Similar findings from Evans-Cowley (2006) indicate that there has been a gradual evolution of concern toward the economic impact of large-scale retail. Economic impact rather than aesthetics and traffic generation has become the main issue of community efforts when communities are concerned with the effects of large-scale retail on local wages and businesses (Evans-Cowley, 2006). Evans-Cowley reports that large-scale retail “is here to stay and will continue to command a greater presence in the retail sector” largely due to its low prices. According to Evans-Cowley, large-scale retail is the future retail model in most communities. Consistent with all city planners’ responses, Evans-Cowley reports that cities are challenge to balance the retail needs of the community with economic impact of local stores. Large-scale retail can bring a large number of jobs to the community; however most jobs are at low wages and provide little benefits.

Effect of Large-Scale Retail on Downtown Local Character

Few surveyed consumers in Tucson (27%) and San Diego (33%) either somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that large-scale retail in the downtown would negatively impact local character compared to most consumers in San Luis Obispo (77%) (intercept-survey question 11). Not surprisingly, more San Luis Obispo consumers (70%) indicated that large-scale retail store design was an important issue when compared to Tucson (60 %) and San Diego (33%). The San Luis Obispo city planner reported that although a few large-scale retail stores are well established and well integrated into the downtown, design of future large-scale retail in and around the downtown remains an important issue for consumers. Much strong local opposition to a planned marketplace (to include several large-scale retail stores) near the periphery of downtown may account for San Luis Obispo's relatively greater number of consumers perceiving large-scale retail's negative effect on store design and local character.

Similar findings indicate that downtown revitalization can bring economic benefits while retaining local character by creating retail that "fits" into the unique walkable urbanity of the downtown (Leinberger, 2005). Evans-Crawley (2006) reports the importance of addressing both aesthetic and function issues when fitting the large-scale retail into the unique community. Many large-scale retail stores have worked effectively with communities to ensure that the store enhances the local community character.

Summary

This study set out to examine consumer and city planners' perceived barriers to integrating large-scale retail into a small, mid-size, and large-city downtown as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. The study examined characteristics of the relationship between the consumer and city (system) perceived barriers and the proposed integration of large-scale retail into the downtown. The integration of large-scale retail into the downtown provides an important shift in perspective from historically considering large-scale retail as a "suburban" retail store concept to part of a complex retail mix that sustains consumers in the downtown. Studies suggest that as a way to fit into the downtown community, large-scale retail stores are continuing to adapt established formats to smaller, multilevel level versions, while attempting to understanding the sensitivity of community concerns and design.

Four key findings were identified in this study:

1. Most consumers from all study cities (small, mid-size and large cities) shop at large scale retail and most consumers report a positive attitude towards large-scale retail. However, consumers may not be willing to shop at large-scale retail in the downtown.

This study demonstrated that consumers who reported a positive attitude towards large-scale retail are not necessarily willing to shop at large-scale retail in a downtown with traffic/ parking issues and lack of a walkable urbanity. Although, most consumers in Tucson and San Diego reported that they had a positive attitude towards large-scale retail, most surveyed consumers reported they did not wish to change their shopping practice regardless of what large-scale retail is available in the downtown. Especially in Tucson where superior shopping is located on the periphery of the downtown, consumers need a unique shopping/entertainment experience to encourage them to live and work in the downtown.

2. Consumers demand walkable, vibrant places in which to live and work.

Findings suggest that creating a “walkable urbanity” is crucial for setting the stage for redevelopment in the downtown and sustaining a vibrant downtown. Lack of a safe, multifunctional, pedestrian-friendly downtown was found to influence consumers’ willingness to shop at large-scale retail in the downtown on weekends. Although most consumers responded that they would shop at large-scale in the downtown on weekdays (if available), less than one-half of Tucson’s respondents (40%) indicated that they would shop at large-scale retail on weekends in the downtown when compared to San Luis Obispo (53%) and San Diego (50%). In Tucson, these negative attitudes appear to also be influenced by a lack of “walkable urbanity” in the downtown and lack of consumers’ confidence in redevelopment efforts.

3. Relative city size was found to influence consumers’ perception of traffic, parking, local character, and store design.

Findings from this study suggest that parking and traffic are major barriers for using/ integrating (future) large-scale retail in all of the downtowns in the studied cities. However, consistent with similar studies, the small city (San Luis Obispo) reported traffic and parking as a barrier to a lesser degree. The most frequently reported situational barrier for San Luis Obispo was local character. Not surprisingly, most consumers in San Luis Obispo also reported store design as a major barrier to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. However, most San Luis Obispo consumers reported an adequate street-oriented shopping environment. In contrast, the most frequent situational barrier reported by Tucson consumers was lack of a street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, shopping environment. Parking, store design and crime are among the city characteristics that consumers identified as barriers to integrating large-scale retail. Consistent with findings from most large-city downtowns, consumers in San Diego reported traffic as the most frequent situational barrier to integrating large-scale retail into the downtown. Respondents also identified parking as a major barrier for using the downtown. As would be expected, most consumers in Tucson and San Diego reported that the cost of shopping in the downtown outweighed the benefits.

4. Consumers demand local serving retail that meets their everyday needs.

Findings support the importance of adequate “walkable” retail in the downtown that meets most consumers’ needs to encourage consumers to both live in the downtown and prevent consumers from leaving the downtown to shop. Most consumers want at least a four hour shopping/entertainment experience in the downtown (Robertson, 1999). Those consumers that reported that large-scale retail merchandise was not found in the downtown were more likely to report that the cost of shopping in the downtown overweighed the benefits.

However, city planners and private developers are challenged to build retail (including large-scale retail) in a downtown without a strong middle-middle class demographic to supports local businesses and goods. Lack of confidence in downtown Tucson has been a key barrier to both middle-middle class and businesses entering the downtown. Currently, middle-middle class residents of the periphery of the downtown have superior shopping in the suburbs and little reason to venture to the downtown.

Recommendations

Recommendations to improve the integration of large-scale retail into the downtown as part of a comprehensive "walkable urban" environment includes "setting the stage" for downtown revitalization. Setting the stage cannot be underestimated. While revitalization efforts have been mostly successful in San Luis Obispo and San Diego, they have stalled in Tucson. Stakeholder and decision-makers' attitudes toward the planned revitalization project need to be assessed to determine if the project should begin in the first place. If the private and public communities' attitudes toward redevelopment are not predominately positive, the project has a greater likelihood of failing.

Four recommendations are suggested to successfully establish and sustain large-scale retail in the downtown.

1. Continue to find creative solutions to parking and traffic barriers.
2. Create a multifunctional, walkable downtown, with high-density housing and amenities to meet most consumers' needs as a means to draw consumers into the downtown rather than expect consumers to move to the downtown or visit

beyond the traditional weekday without a safe, pedestrian-friendly urban environment. Abandon the idea that "retail will *follow* housing". Develop at least some retail that would provide middle-middle class consumers with safe, good shopping and expand retail as the downtown population grows.

3. Establish retail stores in the downtown that enhance the local character and cater to residents' needs rather than mostly tourist needs.

4. Increasing numbers of consumers are moving back to the downtown in search of a walkable, vibrant place to live and work but many everyday essentials must be purchased in the suburbs, so increase everyday essential type retail, which can be done through adaptation of existing stores to add this type of merchandise.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BARRIERS TO INTEGRATING LARGE SCALE RETAIL INTO THE DOWNTOWN PERCEIVED BY LARGE SCALE RETAIL OPERATORS AND CITY PLANNERS

A research project on integrating superstores into downtown cores is being conducted by Jennifer Donofrio in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The purpose of the study is to identify barriers to integrating superstores into downtown cores.

You are being asked to take part in this study by completing a verbal survey. Your participation will take approximately 3-5 minutes. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also decline to answer questions you would prefer not to answer.

There are no risks associated with participation in this study. Your responses will be recorded anonymously to protect your privacy. That is, no information will be recorded that could subsequently be used to identify you. Potential benefits associated with the study include improving city planners' consideration of the incorporation of superstores in downtown cores, and improved access to amenities in the downtown core.

If you have questions regarding the study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Jennifer Donofrio at (571) 921-2700. If you have questions or concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at (805) 756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.ed, or Susan Opava, Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at (805) 756-1508, sopava@calpoly.edu.

If you agree to participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by participating in the verbal survey. Please retain this informed consent cover form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

1. Are you a (circle one): Downtown Resident or Suburban Resident

2. Your Age:

3. Gender:

M	F

4. Size of household:

5. Highest Education Level Completed:

High School (1)	Associates Degree (2)	Bachelor's Degree (3)	Master's Degree (4)	Post Graduate (5)

6. Number of days a week you spend in the downtown:

7. How many days a month do you shop at large-scale retail?

8. Employment Status:

Unemployed (1)	Part-Time (2)	Full-Time (3)

9. Household Income level:

$10K-$30K (1)	$31K- $50K (2)	$51K- $75K (3)	$76K-$100K (4)	Greater than $100K (5)

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding integrating large-scale retail into the downtown.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am familiar with the large-scale retail concept (i.e. Wall Mart, Target, Home Depot)						
2. Merchandise typically purchased in large-scale retail stores is available in the downtown.						
3. In general, large-scale retail offers convenient shopping and low prices.						
4. The cost of shopping in the downtown area outweighs the benefits.						
5. If large-scale retail is available in the downtown, I would shop there on *weekends.*						
6. If large-scale retail is available in the downtown I would shop there on *weekdays*.						
7. I do not wish to change my shopping practices, regardless of what large-scale retail is available in the downtown.						
8. Large-scale retail in the downtown will economically benefit the downtown.						
9. Large-scale retail in the downtown will have a negative effect on local stores.						
10. In general, I do like large-scale retail.						
11. Placing a large-scale retail store into the downtown would negatively impact the local character of the downtown.						
12. Parking is a barrier for using large-scale retail in the downtown.						
13. Store design is a barrier for using large-scale retail in the downtown						
14. Crime is a barrier for using large-scale retail in the downtown.						
15. Traffic is a barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown.						
16. Lack of a street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly shopping environment is a barrier to using a large-scale retail in the downtown.						
17. Driving distance to the downtown is a barrier for using large-scale retail in the downtown.						
18. For me, the most important factor that did or would influence me to use a large-scale retail store in the downtown is:						
19. For me, the most important barrier to using large-scale retail in the downtown is:						
20. On average, what percentage of merchandise do you purchase in the downtown?						

APPENDIX B

City Planner Interview Questions

1. What is city planners' knowledge concerning overall trends in large-scale retail?
2. What are city planners' perceptions of city government's attitudes toward large-scale retail stores in their downtown community?
3. What are characteristics of the city that are perceived as assets and weaknesses for integrating large-scale retail into the downtown?

Large Scale Retail Interview Questions

1. What is large-scale retailers' knowledge concerning overall trends in large-scale retail?
2. What are large scale retailers' perceptions of city government's attitudes toward large-scale retail stores in their downtown community?
3. What are characteristics of the city that are perceived as assets and weaknesses for integrating large-scale retail into the downtown?

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