CONCORD PARK AND SHOP
An Innovative Development Model for a Strip Mall in Decline ■ June 2013
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TITLE: Concord Park and Shop: An Innovative Development Model for a Strip Mall in Decline.

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This project would have not been possible without the help and support of select individuals for the duration of the process. First and foremost, I would like to thank my senior project advisor, **Professor Zeljka Pavlovich Howard** for being abundantly helpful and offering invaluable assistance, support and guidance. Deepest gratitude are also due to the **Staff of the Concord Community Development Department** for providing me with valuable documents and materials for the Concord Park and Shop. In addition, I would like to send special gratitude to the **Cal Poly Department of City and Regional Planning** for providing exceptional resources and facilities to complete this project. Special thanks goes out to my **Family** for all the emotional support, strength and endless love through the duration of my studies.
Concord Park and Shop Development Model

The Concord Park and Shop Development Model is the culmination of a two quarter long effort produced as a senior project for the City and Regional Planning Department. This project arose out of a recognition that the traditional strip mall shopping center is on a decline and greater efforts must be made to revive the outdated development model.

This document focuses on the Concord Park and Shop as an example for identifying the problems associated with the traditional method of developing strip malls, and ways to utilize the existing infrastructure and re-configure the layout in an efficient, compact, and pedestrian oriented arrangement. The solution is to transform the typical automobile oriented design into a pedestrian focused “lifestyle center”.

Using the Concord Park and Shop as an example provides planners, architects, and developers with a vision of how to address the problems associated with the traditional strip mall. This model can and will provide direction and guidance to city leaders, downtown stakeholders, and all of the individuals and organizations whose decisions will shape the future of shopping center developments. It provides a framework for coordinating and integrating future developments in a way that will allow sprawling shopping centers to reach their full potential. This document is not a static blueprint, but rather a development model/study that can act as an idea generator.

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MODEL
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Executive Summary

The Concord Park and Shop's prime location in Concord, California, is home to an array of office professional, public facilities, and mostly retail commercial establishments. The site is located in the heart of Concord, adjacent to the Historic Downtown center. Many of the nearby walkable amenities include public transportation (BART) within a mile east of the site, public highway interstate system to the west, and a Brendan Theater directly east of the site. In addition, the Historic Downtown center is home to a beautiful park that houses the weekly farmer’s markets, concerts, and an array of various special events.

The shopping center is one of Concord’s oldest shopping centers, developed in the 1950’s. It houses approximately 400,000 square-feet of retail space, bordered by Willow Pass Road, Market, and Salvio Streets. The layout is in a linear fashion, typical of a 1950’s era shopping center. While this particular development model worked during that time, the socio-economic changes have pushed the need for a new development model for today’s shopping centers. There is a shift that is easily recognized in the way people shop today. In the 1950’s, the development of the automobile has led to the approach similar to that taken by the Concord Park and Shop. The typical layout is comprised of buildings aligned in a linear fashion with parking up front. Today, less attention is being made towards the automobile, and a shift towards a pedestrian-friendly environments is the main focus.

Since the location of this particular site is within close proximity to many local amenities, the Concord Park and Shop was chosen as a development model to strategically manipulate building layouts to take advantage of the maximum value of the space and walkability. One of the main components of this model was to maintain the existing building footprints to maximize economic efficiency. The parking was re-located into parking structures in order to free up additional space for the potential location of future structures. The final design dramatically increases space for additional retail space, office, recreation, and outdoor amenities. Streets are proposed to be more pedestrian-friendly with wider sidewalks, building layouts that enclose space to create large public plazas, parking directed to the opposite ends of the site to promote a safe environment, and an all around development that puts a focus on a healthier lifestyle.

THE STUDY FOCUSES ON THE CONCORD PARK AND SHOP BOUND BY WILLOW PASS ROAD, MARKET, AND SALVIO STREET. THE SITE IS LOCATED IN A PRIME AREA ADJACENT TO AN ARRAY OF AMENITIES.
The Invention of the Strip Mall: Legacy or Failure?

A New Trend Towards A Fading Strip Mall: A potential model for the underutilized strip mall in America.

Shopping centers have been prevalent throughout history for more than 1,000 years. The ancient Greeks and Romans incorporated the purchasing of goods in the form of public markets, which were typically located in a common area such as a public square. There were also forms of commerce and trade in Middle-Eastern bazaars as well as seaport commercial districts located throughout the regions of the world. In America, shopping centers are so prevalent that they have become incorporated into the everyday lifestyle. It is unusual to drive through the average American city and not see a typical shopping center development located somewhere within the city limits.

Many of the strip malls (commonly referred to as mini-malls) consist of a row of multiple storefronts aligned in a linear fashion, which are typically connected by a common wall, and associated with off-street parking. Although the strip mall resembles modern-day American aesthetics, the idea evolved from more ancient commercial planning practices. One of those common practices is the location of a road, which focuses on the movement of people as well as marketing possibilities for passersby. The idea is to capture the attention of the common person in search of obtaining specific goods.

One may question the idea of the strip mall being a positive contribution to society, or a tool for failure. In order to accurately answer this question, one must look at how the strip mall arrived in America, and observe the modern-day social/economic factors affecting the concept today. This section will identify the first shopping center in America and look at how that concept evolved over time.
Before the turn of the 20th century, Bush Creek Valley in Kansas was recognized as a watering hole for many travelers. Among these travelers were fur trappers, Indians, soldiers and early settlers. One man saw this frequently visited valley as a legacy, not as is stood, but what it could become. This man, Jesse Clyde (J.C.) Nicholas, changed the face of the land forever with the development of the country’s first shopping center, the Country Club Plaza (Country Club Plaza; Art and History).

Around the turn of the 20th century, J.C. Nicholas immersed himself in the profession of real estate development. He purchased a piece of land near 13th and Lathrop that was being sold as bankruptcy property. The 1903 flood made many people flee the river bottom towards this piece of land, which Nicholas transformed into a neighborhood virtually overnight. Using the profit from this venture, he decided to build a shopping center for the citizens designed with the automobile in mind. The shopping center incorporated antique sculptures, columns, tile-adorned murals, wrought iron and fountains, all hand picked by Nicholas himself (CCP; Art and History). The Country Club Plaza became one of the first shopping centers in the country to be constructed primarily to cater to people arriving by automobile.

The Country Club Plaza acted as a model for the following years in commercial development. As automobiles began to clog the central business districts of large cities, small strip centers were being built on the outskirts. The typical design for these new outliers was a straight line of stores with space for parking in the front. Grandview Avenue Shopping Center in Columbus, Ohio, which opened in 1928, included 30 shops and parking for 400 automobiles (International Council for Shopping Centers, June 2000). The 1930s and 1940s marked the beginning of the development of various Sears Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward freestanding stores with on-site parking, away from the centers of big cities (ICSC, 2000).
The trend of incorporating shopping strips alongside enormous parking lots continued to be the typical layout for the following years. Single-use shopping centers were being developed for the automobile, and the automobile only. By 1964, there were 7,600 shopping centers in the United States, and nearly doubled to 13,174 by 1972 (ICSC, 2000). The next decade involved a variety of shopping center “types”, one of them being the indoor mall. Superregional centers became ever increasingly popular in the 1980s. More than 16,000 centers were built between 1980 and 1990, with Americans averaging 4 trips per month to these centers (ICSC, 2000). Many critics argue that the strip mall model is contributing to the failure of many of today’s commercial developments. The following section will examine why many of the once thriving shopping centers are becoming vacant, and deteriorated.
A Fading Tradition

Regardless of the statistics, the strip mall model became one of the most dominant models for commercial development. For more than 50 years, retailers have favored the commercial strip: a linear pattern of retail businesses strung along major roadways characterized by massive parking lots, big signs, boxlike buildings, and a total dependence on automobiles for access and circulation (McMahon, E.T., 2011). There was a tenfold increase in U.S. retail space from 1960 to 2000, from 4 to 38 square feet per person. The businesses were once booming, with every space filled and sales tax being a prime source of revenue for the municipalities. Now, the spaces are quickly deteriorating and mall owners unable to fill the vacancies. Changing demographics and shifting residential preferences has created a “tweener” space between urban and suburban. This space is where most of the inner ring suburbs and the associated strip shopping centers are located. A 2008 study by the Center for Urban Environmental Research found that fifteen percent of these inner suburbs have reached a crisis point based on deteriorating economic conditions including declining retail sales and property taxes (Welty E., 2011). It is as if the neighborhoods have reached their tipping point. They have maximized, and often exhausted the use of the traditional strip mall model for retail development.

One of the main contributors that led to the evolution of the fading strip mall is the technological advancement of online shopping. Many consumers are faced with the convenience of online shopping, which allows them to obtain goods in the convenience of their own home. Today, the nations “healthiest” retailer is not Wal-Mart or Costco, but rather Amazon (McMahon E.T., 2011). Amazon has viewed the availability of broadband Internet and mobile technology as grounds for an emerging retail superpower. This has led to retailers seeking smaller retail space, due to the fact that virtually everything can be purchased online now. For example, the rise of Netflix and streaming video leading to the demise of the traditional brick-and-mortar video stores (McMahon E.T., 2011). Books that can be purchased online are resulting in the downsizing of the traditional bookstore, as well as music, greeting card, and other merchandise items. America is a society where we value convenience. The convenience of the traditional strip has been greatly reduced due to a number of issues. High gas prices, overcrowded parking lots, and sprawled shopping locations are all factors that have made making a simple errand an all-day venture. Shopping on the strip is also a place where nobody wants to linger. The developments were designed for the automobile, and with the increase in traffic congestion through recent years, has resulted in a space where chaos often resides. According to an article that ran in The Economist at the end of 2007:

“In the past half century… [malls] have transformed shopping habits, urban economies and teenage speech. America now has some 1,100 enclosed shopping malls, according to the International Council of Shopping Centers. Clones have appeared from Chennai to Martinique. Yet the mall’s story is far from triumphal. Invented by a European socialist who hated cars and came to decide his own creation, it has a murky future. While malls continue to multiply outside America, they are gradually dying in the country that pioneered them”, (Greenseth M., 2008).

While this article is referring mostly to the enclosed-style shopping center, the fact still remains for strip malls alike. The trend is quickly dying and a new development trend is forever quickly changing the face of the traditional strip-mall.

Reasons for Online Shopping Preference

![Graph showing reasons for online shopping preference](image)
SINCE THE POPULARITY INCREASE OF ONLINE RETAIL SHOPPING, THE TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF SHOPPING CENTERS IS LEAVING MANY IN DECAY
An Emerging Development Trend: Lifestyle Center

As the social demographics are changing, so is the American attitude towards the automobile and shopping preferences. What was once a necessity and a legacy to have a mode of transportation to get you from point A to point B, trends are quickly revealing that the reliance on the automobile is quickly diminishing. Young consumers are being raised in an environment where walkability is the new trend. The younger generations are migrating to dense compact environments as opposed to the suburban favoring baby boomer generation. Developers are realizing that this revival is a prime opportunity for future developments. When you combine walkability with shopping, there is an immense amount of development opportunities that arise.

Time-constrained lifestyles and boredom with the dull sameness of most strip centers have meant a slow but steady decline in the number and length of stays at strip malls (McMahon E.T., 2011). The traditional strip-mall is designed in such a fashion that the consumer obtains the goods they desire and immediately leave. There is an absence of additional services that allow the consumer to linger for a while and enjoy the outdoors. A pleasant atmosphere is particularly important to the GenY generation. A mixed-use town center with street life, outdoor dining, and places to hang out, walk, and window-shop are much more likely to get the affection and the dollars of young shoppers than an auto-dependent strip (McMahon E.T., 2011).

According to an article printed in Arboriculture & Urban Forestry, many communities are associating the natural aesthetics with strip-mall improvements. Surveys were performed to learn additional information about public perceptions of the traditional strip-malls and to suggest landscape practices for communities or developers who want to improve the traditional strip-mall setting. Generally, people of all ages and cultural values backgrounds prefer natural views to built settings, and unkept nature in urban settings is less preferred than well-maintained nature (Wolf K.L., 2009). Studies such as the one performed by Wolf, indicate that the consumer prefers to maintain a well-kept natural environment along with walkability, outdoor seating/dining options, places to window-shop, and close-by amenities when dealing with the idea of shopping centers. An emerging development trend is becoming popular by developers due to the fact that they can maximize profitability by developing a site that will attract consumers. This trend is becoming known as Lifestyle Centers.

IMAGE OF A TYPICAL LIFESTYLE CENTER DEPICTING OPTIONS FOR CONSUMERS TO SIT AND ENJOY THE ENVIRONMENT
According to the International Council for Shopping Centers (ICSC):

The term Lifestyle Center refers to developments located typically near affluent residential neighborhoods, which caters to the retail needs and “lifestyle” pursuits of consumers in its trading area (ICSC, no date). The developments are known and recognized for their open-air configuration, which is designed around the consumers desire for a walkable environment. In addition, the development typically includes at least 50,000 square feet of retail space occupied by upscale national chain specialty stores. Other elements differentiate the lifestyle center in its role as a multi-purpose leisure-time destination, including restaurants, entertainment, and design ambiance and amenities such as fountains and street furniture that are conducive to casual browsing. (ICSC, no date). Dan Poag and Terry McEwen are credited with developing the term Lifestyle Center concept. The first Lifestyle Center was the Shops of Saddle Creek in Germantown, TN, which opened in 1987 (Aldinger, 2004). Other Lifestyle Centers include Aspen Grove (Littleton, CO), Alamo Quarry Marketplace (San Antonio, TX), Coco Walk (Coconut Grove, FL) and the Shops at Cameron Village (Raleigh, N.C.) (Ogden D., 2005). By 1990, these were the six original Lifestyle Centers that existed in America. Today, there are well over a couple hundred Lifestyle Centers, and the number keeps rising.

The typical market for a Lifestyle Center is middle aged, affluent, and is not the frequent mall shopper. The average household income of a Lifestyle Center Shopper is $75,000 (Sarkar, 2005). Compared to a typical mall shopper, who spends 76 minutes shopping, Lifestyle Center customers spend 56 minutes, but spend more money per visit (Grant, 2004). The statistics show that the average consumer is willing to spend more money in a less amount of time for the sake of convenience.

Many consumers can argue, despite the fading tradition of enclosed shopping malls that the two development trends can coexist. The two models cater towards differing consumer markets, where there is ample room to keep and maintain both models. What can be true though, is that the trend is emerging at a progressively increasing rate, which can be seen across America.
CASE STUDIES/
DESIGN PRECEDENTS
LOCATION: San Jose, California, USA

PROJECT TYPE: Mixed-Use Lifestyle Center

LAND USE(S): Commercial Retail, Residential Flats, Residential Townhomes, Residential Villas, Restaurants, and Hotels

SITE SIZE: 42 Acres or approximately 10 city blocks

SITE CONTEXT: Intersection of Stevens Creek and Winchester Boulevards
Santana Row is a development that thrives with European Charm, located in the heart of San Jose’s prime shopping districts. When sitting in one of the miniature plazas sipping a delicious cup of joe purchased at one of the finest coffee shops in the areas, you begin to feel that you have been teleported to Spain, southern France, or even Italy. The development has hints of design qualities that mimic those found in these three European countries. Developed by Federal Realty Investment Trust, Santana Row is a residential, shopping, dining, and entertainment district built around a main street in San Jose, California, the heart of the Silicon Valley. According to ULI Development Case Studies, at full buildout, the Richard Heapes designed project will cover an 18-block area and encompass 680,000 square feet of retail space and restaurants, 1,201 dwelling units, two hotels, and seven parks. This is Federal Realty’s largest project to date and one of the nation’s largest mixed-use projects constructed by a single developer.

Project Summary
Special Features

- Adaptive use of a greyfield
- REIT developed with 100 percent private funds
- Transformation of a suburban development pattern into a high-density urban pattern

Developer and Owner

Federal Realty Investment Trust
1626 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852
301-998-8100

Master Planner

Street-Works New York
30 Glen Street
White Plains, New York 10603
914-949-6505

Architects

SB Architects
One Beach Street, Suite 301
San Francisco, California 94133
415-673-8990

Backen Arrigoni and Ross (BAR Architects)
1660 Bush Street
San Francisco, California 94109
415-441-4771

MBH Architects
1115 Atlantic Avenue
Alameda, California 94501
510-865-8663

The SWA Group
55 New Montgomery Street, Suite 888
San Francisco, California 94105
415-836-8770
Site and Surroundings

Located on Stevens Creek Boulevard, Santana Row has direct access within a half-mile to Interstates 880 and 280 and Route 17. The highways are all heavily traveled which makes the project easily accessible from the East Bay, Peninsula, South Bay, downtown San Jose, and the airport.

Directly across Stevens Creek Boulevard is the Valley Fair mall-Westfield Shoppingtown. This is one of the most profitable indoor malls in the country based on sales per square foot. The western boundary of Santana Row is formed by Winchester Boulevard, a major north-south thoroughfare housing an array of commercial uses. The Winchester Mystery House, a major San Jose tourist attraction, is within walking distance to Santana Row. The Southern perimeter houses two office buildings and an assisted living facility. Santana Park is located to the southeast, in which the development received its name. Residential housing lines the eastern edge as well as towards the northeast.

Planning and Design

The planning process involved making decisions about the floor area ratios, street layout based on a grid system as well as traffic studies evaluating existing roadway volume capacity. In order to provide the greatest flexibility in apportioning retail and residential space, blocks were initially designed on a 30-by-30 foot structural grid.

Within the grid system, the streets vary in size and prominence, with the two most prominent streets being the main street, also named Santana Row, and Olin Avenue. Wide sidewalks were incorporated into the design to accommodate outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes intended to give the main street a sense of vibrancy, and set up as a promenade for strolling. Landscaped medians stretch the length of the main street and at one end of the project inside the wide median lies Santana Row Park. The placement of buildings were strategically placed based on their relationship to the streets, views, parking, and access, as well as the need to create a sense of security and privacy. The members of the development team adhered to four distinct strategies to guide them:

- The team attempted to use the retail spaces to give the streets a sense of rhythm
- Noting that residential uses add life to streets, the team placed them in locations where they would have the strongest impact on the street life
- Federal Realty used parks and restaurants as gathering spots
- Each building was designed to promote pedestrian activity and conceal its parking

The project myriad details, ranging from a 200-color paint palette to a super-sized chess board in Santana Row Park, are further examples of how Federal Realty attempted to give Santana Row a sense of place. Artists were commissioned to create original works of art for the project’s streets and buildings. Among them are 16 ceramic mosaic fountains, a progressive moon phase mural gracing the ceiling of a retail arcade, and many freestanding sculptures.
Development Cost

Site acquisition Cost: $55 million
Total Development Cost (upon completion): $532 million

Experience Gained

Encouraged by the popularity and financial success of Santana Row, Federal Realty plans to continue doing mixed-use projects, but with a slightly different approach. The following are a few things the REIT has learned in the process of executing such an ambitious concept on its own:

- Reduce financial risk by partnering with government entities, private developers, or both
- Phase development to capitalize on equity and momentum; allow change over time in response to shifting markets; control cost; and simplify construction management
- Anticipate refinement of ideas and details as the project matures and the learning curve flattens
- Maintain clarity of the relationships between uses at all times
  Shopping streets need variety to remain vital and to “mix things up”. Federal Realty acknowledges it has been an issue grouping luxury tenants in one area without restaurants, in sharp contrast to a livelier street scene where uses are integrated elsewhere in the development
  The creation of a superior street experience establishes significant value for all uses. In this kind of environment, residential tenants will pay a premium to have a unit overlooking the street as opposed to other views
- Plan for the future. In this case, “condo-mapping” all the residential units provides an exit strategy for Federal Realty with respect to ownership of the residential component
SUMMARY FACTS

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California, USA

PROJECT TYPE: Lifestyle/Entertainment/Specialty Center

LAND USE(S): Power Center, Restaurants, Retail, Open-Air Center, Entertainment

SITE SIZE: 17.5 Acres

SITE CONTEXT: Other Central City
The Grove is a 575,000 square-foot, open-air retail and entertainment center located adjacent to the historic Farmers market in Los Angeles, California. The success of The Grove is attributable to the synergy among its entertainment-focused uses – a 14 theater Cineplex, a range of sit-down restaurants that are unique to the area, a three-level Barnes & Noble bookstore, and a complement of major retailers – all placed within an architecturally friendly outdoor, protected, and communal environment. In retailing terms, The Grove has three heavyweight anchors – the 70-shop Farmers Market on one end, a flagship Nordstrom on the other, and the aforementioned 3,000 seat cinema, replete with revolving blade sign and marquee, at its center. Completed in 2002, the center, in just a year of operations, has posted visitor patronage levels exceeding those of Disneyland in nearby Orange County.
Special Features

- Open-air retail and entertainment destination
- Urban infill
- Anchored by the historic Farmers Market, a flagship Nordstrom, and a 3,000-seat cinema

Developer

Caruso Affiliated Holdings
100 Wilshire Boulevard, 14th Floor
Santa Monica, California 90401-1112
310-458-0202

Architects

Architect of Record
Langdon Wilson
1055 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1500
Los Angeles, California 90017-2449
213-250-1186

Cinema Architect
Perkowitz + Ruth Architects, Inc.
15 Corporate Plaza, Suite 200
Newport Beach, California 92660
949-721-8951

Lifescapes International, Inc.
4930 Campus Drive
Newport Beach, California 92660
949-476-8888
Planning and Design

The focus of The Grove’s site plan is First Street, the pedestrian-only road that runs more than a quarter mile from the Farmers Market on the west end of the site to a new valet parking and drop-off area at the east side. From building face to building face, the street is 60 feet wide, including a 28-foot roadbed and 16-foot wide sidewalks on either side. The street bends around a one-acre green, the focal point of the center. The green, The Grove’s “100 percent corner”, is broken up into three areas: a lake at one end, several kiosks on the other, and a grass lawn in the middle. The lake, which features “dancing” fountains computer “choreographed” to music, is ringed by a stone balustrade and crossed by an old fashioned bridge, popular places to view the fountains and to people-watch.

The bulk of The Grove’s patrons park in a 3,500-space, seven-level garage on the northern edge of the site, and funnel through a narrow restaurant-lined walkway, emerging into the green, as does the “streetscape” mix of period – and modern-styled facades. A double-decker trolley that runs down the center of First Street at ten-minute intervals is part tourist attraction and part transportation. Especially popular with families with children and tourists, the trolley runs, in traditional fashion, on steel wheels and in-ground tracks.

The streetscape architecture of The Grove, designed by the Boston firm of Elkus/Manfredi Architects, is intended to be nostalgic, echoing the styles prevalent in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s. The two- to three-story storefronts are highly detailed, with period window and trim, balconies and awnings, and an irregular pattern of façade widths and alignments, all meant to suggest the richness of building-by-building historical development pattern.

All the facades were designed by the developer and its architect, but left some leeway for the tenants. They were given the choice to modify or redesign the facades to suit their corporate or marketing self-image. The “old-town” imagery of The Grove was further promoted through the developer’s substantial investment in mature landscaping and custom-designed street lighting. Several specimen trees, including a 50-year old jacaranda, mature magnolia trees, and 45-foot high palm trees, were installed as part of this effort, as well as to provide areas of shade for strollers.
**Development Cost**

Site Acquisition Cost: $5 million  
Site Improvement Costs: $20 million  
Construction Costs: $100 million  

**Experience Gained**

- The mix of uses at The Grove, with its emphasis on entertainment-related uses – food, movies, and books – along with high-quality shops, appears to be a strong attraction and well tuned to the increasing attention to and dollars spent on leisure time activity.

- The Groves site design, including the open-air First Street and town green, seems to encourage strolling, and contributes to The Grove’s appeal as a destination. The many different seating areas, benches, dining terraces and balconies, as well as the high level of landscaping, fountains, and other site detailing, heighten this appeal.

- The bounded interior space of The Grove creates a sense of place and, with its implied security, further contributes to The Grove’s market appeal. For pedestrians, The Grove offers a sizeable, protected environment for strolling, a place where one can be active and outdoors and yet safe.
SITE ANALYSIS
The Project Site within its Immediate Context

The City of Concord is located in the eastern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area. It is considered to be the largest city in Contra Costa County, California. It is approximately thirty (30) miles from San Francisco, California, or approximately a thirty-six minute car ride. Concord encompasses an area of 30 square miles, and houses a population of 122,000 residents.

Concord was founded under the name of Todos Santos (translated to “all saints”), on the initiative of Salvio Pacheco, whom the 1834 Mexican Land Grant was given to. It started booming in the 19th century as a result of resident’s migrating/relocating from Pacheco in an effort to avoid the devastation of fire and flood, which crippled Pacheco’s formerly booming economy. Concord became incorporated as a municipality on February 5, 1905.

Ygnacio and Clayton Valley, former agricultural areas, surround Concord. The crops produced in these valleys included grapes, walnuts, wheat, hay, and even tomatoes. To the east of Concord, currently the site of the Concord Naval Weapons Station, was the location of a few former wheat ranches of over 5,000 acres. Many of the vineyards were removed during the alcohol prohibition, and replaced with walnut orchards. The town of Cowell was incorporated into Concord and was known as the cement-producing town.

Concord has primarily been considered a bedroom community for San Francisco and Oakland over the last forty years. Until recently, many of the jobs were found in San Francisco, but have been on a steady increase in Concord in the past few decades. Major corporations have located back-office operations in Concord, such as Chevron and Bank of America. Concord is known for the strong retail sector, housing the Sunvalley Mall, formerly one of the 50 largest indoor malls in the United States.
Concord is home to the Concord Naval Weapons Station, which was created in 1942. The primary function of this establishment was to act as a World War II armament storage facility supplying ships at Port Chicago. The naval weapons Station played a vital role in supporting supplies to Vietnam to the end of the Gulf War. Many of the materials were shipped to Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit System, commonly referred to as BART, serves many of the residents of Concord. The city connection provides transportation to and from the San Francisco employment center, as well as various parts of Contra Costa County. Main thoroughfares in Concord include Willow Pass Road, Concord Avenue, Concord Boulevard, Clayton Road, Ygnacio Valley Road, Oak Grove Road and Treat Boulevard. Interstate 680, and state highways 4 and 242 also serve the city. Concord does have a small municipal airport, but does not currently provide scheduled passenger service.
Concord Park and Shop fronts Willow Pass Road in Concord. It is bordered by Market Street to the west; Sutter, Harrison, Broadway, and Salvio Streets to the north; and Mira Vista to the east. It is located within prime amenities such as a 5-minute walking distance to the historic downtown, less than a mile to the nearest BART station, close proximity to interstate 580, as well as the immediate location adjacent to highway 242.

**History and Urban Form**

The Park and Shop Center began its long journey with the construction breaking ground in 1956. It is considered one of the oldest shopping centers in Contra Costa County. It used to be home to one of the major attractions at that time, the Pixieland Amusement Park. The toddler paradise had roots going back to the 1950’s, which has been a major tourist attraction for local families and Bay Area residents alike. Pixieland since then has relocated to Olivera Road across the street from the Naval Weapons Station.

One of the main historical elements of Concord Park and Shop that still exists today is the iconic Park and Shop signage tower. This tower features the shopping center’s name that once featured multi-colored neon lighting. This tower marks the main entrance into the shopping center, and at some 70-feet into the air, can be seen from a great distance. Some of the signage materials have been removed, such as the lettering.

The composition of the center consists of 26 individual building parcels, which adhere to varying property owners. The buildings themselves house one to a dozen tenant spaces. The tenancy of each of the buildings is up to the individual property owners. There does not exist a singular property management company that oversees the entire shopping center. Although, there is a Park and Shop Center Association with a Board of Directors made up of the property owners. Due to the fact that the shopping center is comprised of individual building parcels with multiple building ownerships, the center is not the typical “shopping center”. According to the City of Concord, the shopping center is more of a “hybrid” center, composed of a mixture of small, single-tenant buildings as well as some larger multi-tenant buildings. Some of the owners in the center own multiple buildings.

The tenant frontage can range from 20 linear feet of primary frontage (single tenant buildings) up to 240 linear feet of primary frontage (multiple tenants). The shopping center also houses a few anchor tenants; Fry’s Electronics, Chuck E Cheese Pizza, as well as Mimi’s Café. A majority of the buildings face Willow Pass Road, with approximately 2000 linear feet of façade frontage. There is approximately 1600 feet fronting Market and Salvio Streets.
PARK & SHOP

THE MEDITERRANEAN
LAMB & CHICKEN SHAWERMA
FALAFEL KABAB
ALL VEGAN SALADS
The Concord Park and Shop has multiple site entrances; three along Market Street as well as Sutter Street, One on Broadway Street and Mira Vista Street, and four entrances along Willow Pass Road. The main entrance is on the corner of Willow Pass road and Fry Way with two lanes entering and exiting the site. The layout is fairly simple in terms of design, but extremely complicated to navigate throughout the area due to lack of stop signs, uncontrolled intersections, crowded parking lots, and an absence of wayfinding signage. Due to the fact that the site was designed for and around the automobile, it is extremely chaotic and often dangerous for pedestrians to utilize the space effectively.

There is an enormous amount of potential to maximize the effectiveness of having a main entrance located on Willow Pass Road. Currently there exist two ingress and two egress lanes. Upon entering you immediately approach a stop sign, which offers an opportunity to provide a better means to controlling traffic as well as maintaining circulation.

A main vehicular avenue lines the front façade of the entire length of the shopping center. Angular parking separates the avenue from the front facades and sidewalks. There is very few traffic calming techniques utilized to slow down the speed of vehicles traveling along this avenue. There are a few speed humps, but that is all. Bicycle lanes are completely absent from the entire site, and there are only a few bike racks within the premise. Due to these factors, bicycle traffic is extremely low around the site.

The sidewalks in and around the site are under par and need major improvements. The overall condition is adequate and considered safe. The size and scale of the sidewalks are extremely small and hinder big groups or groups larger than two persons to comfortably walk together. In order to get from the stores to your car located in the expansive parking lot, crosswalks are not in place to make this happen.
Existing Land Uses

The Concord Park and Shop is currently a commercial retail center. A majority of the current land uses fall into the commercial retail sector, followed by vacant spaces, commercial service, office professional, and public facilities. The commercial retail is the primary land use occupying 66 percent of the space. There is a 14 percent vacancy rate in the shopping center, which is a potential opportunity for future development. A majority of the commercial retail uses fall under the restaurant category at approximately 34 percent of the total space in the shopping center.

The shopping center is home to two beauty colleges as well as a grocery store. There exist three anchor buildings, namely, Mimi’s Café and Chuck E. Cheese to the western portion of the site, as well as a Fry’s Electronics store centrally located in the northern portion of the site. A majority of the site is occupied by poorly designed parking with an approximate total of 1,562 spaces. Some of the striping was poorly marked, making it difficult to obtaining an exact number. During peak hours, a majority of the parking space fronting Willow Pass Road will be fully occupied, in addition to the spaces surrounding Fry’s Electronics. There are underutilized parking spaces that occupy the rear/northern portion of the site.
Regulatory Context

The project area is located within the incorporated territory of the City of Concord and therefore falls under the City’s jurisdiction. The City of Concord has developed a vision in its General Plan, in which future development plays a vital role. The Plan envisions Concord as a modern and vibrant urban place, infused with a sense of heritage, a vision that preserves the desirable qualities of the City that makes it an ideal place to live, work, and play.

The General Plan is not intended to be a document comprised of ideas and wish lists, but rather, a focus on what is concrete and achievable out to the year 2030. The objectives set forth in the Plan are only meaningful if they are translated into actions that are tangible and are implemented. The 2030 General Plan is in place to set priorities for implementation programs, incorporate design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve environmental resources, minimize hazards, and provide a framework for consistency with plan policies.

Development Under the General Plan

Full development under the General Plan is referred to as “buildout”. The General Plan does not, nor is it intended to specify when buildout will actually occur. Development on a site for a certain use as outlined in the 2030 General Plan does not mean the site will be built/redeveloped with that use by 2030. It is more of a framework to guide future development.

The General Plan is subject to an Urban Limit Line (ULL), which was established in response to Contra Costa County’s Measure J (2004) in order to promote compact development, discourage urban sprawl, and protect rural lands and open space resources. The ULL was approved in the November 2006 general election. Approximately 43,980 households currently live in the Concord Planning Area. The 2030 General plan is intended to accommodate an additional 5,230 households through infill development, bringing the total number of households to 49,210.
**Economic Vitality**

Being located adjacent to the San Francisco Peninsula, most of the jobs were initially located outside of Concord. It wasn’t until the post-World War II population growth era that the economic progression in Concord began to sprout throughout the city. Schools and retail centers were being constructed to support the growing population. The development of the Bay Area Rapid Transit service in 1973 sparked substantial development of commercial, office, and industrial park space throughout the entire Contra Costa County. This involved a changing skyline for Concord with the completion of the Bank of America Technology Center, Salvio Pacheco Square, One Concord Center, as well as other economic enhancing projects.

Today, Concord has an extremely strong economic base including:

- 4.3 million square feet of Class A office space
- 5.8 million square feet of industrial space
- 70,000 square feet of space for research and development uses
- More than 900 hotel/motel rooms; and
- 48,000 square feet of exhibit space for meeting and convention activities

Even though the economic base is extremely strong currently, there is still room for expansion to compensate for the growing population. The 2030 General plan recognizes the historic economic evolution, and adjusts to take into account the new jobs that the region as a whole attracts. The Plan provides space and opportunity for future economic employment centers well-suited for Concord. Upon adoption of the 2030 General Plan in 2007, it accommodated the following quantities of additional development:

- Office Space, up to 6.1 million square feet;
- Retail Space, up to 4.5 million square feet;
- Industrial and “flex” space, up to 2.2 million square feet; and
- Wholesale and distribution space, up to 300,000 square feet

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**Land Use**

Single-family residential is the most dominant form of land use within the City limits. Specifically, residential uses occupy 32 percent of the land within Concord or roughly 6,270 acres. Commercial and mixed-use development follows occupying most of the downtown core along the major transportation arterials, which radiate outward from the downtown, notably Clayton Road, Monument Boulevard, Willow Pass Road, and areas of bordering the intersection of State Route 242 and Interstate 680. Industrial uses make up a small portion of Concord’s land use, mostly situated along State Route 4.

Currently, the site of the Concord Park and Shop consists primarily of the Commercial Retail land use. The site is intended to be utilized as a Downtown Mixed-Use (DTMU) according to the 2030 General Plan. The DTMU designation is intended for a high density and intensity mix of residential, commercial and office development in Central Concord. The primary function of allowing a mixture of uses is to create a balance of jobs and housing opportunities, including offices, commercial developments, hotels, public/quasi public, and residential uses. Residential densities range form a minimum of 33 units per acre to a maximum of 100 units per net acre. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) includes a range starting from a minimum of 1.0 to a maximum of 6.0.
ILLUSTRATION OF THE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN DOWNTOWN CONCORD
Growth Management

Concord incorporated a Growth Management Element into the 2030 General Plan in order to provide guidance and specific policy actions to manage and mitigate the impacts of future urban growth and development. The main objectives are concerned with ensuring new residential, business, and commercial growth pays for the facilities required to meet the demands resulting from that growth. In addition, the growth management plan ensures there exists an adequate transportation system to support future growth through strategically planned land use designations. Growth management correlates directly with the Measure J Growth Management Program, approved in 2004. Measure J authorized a 25-year extension of the previous Measure C Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth management Program (GMP) approved in 1988. The extension will a lot a total of $2 billion towards funding transportation improvements.

Transportation and Circulation

The Transportation and Circulation Element is in compliance the Concord Municipal Code, which states, “The Transportation Element of the General Plan and studies in conjunction with future development potential in the City have identified improvements that are necessary to the City’s transportation system. As development occurs, improvements to the transportation system must be assured through a planned program of roadway improvements and funding mechanisms.” The Transportation and Circulation Element incorporates three strategies:

- Transportation programs are based on the integration of circulation system planning and land use planning.
- The City’s traffic circulation planning efforts are integrated with those of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Caltrans in a cooperative, regional planning effort.
- State of the art traffic engineering and transportation systems management programs are used to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled and bring planned improvements to reality.

Currently, Willow Pass Road north of Landana Drive operates at a level of service LOS F due to the limited capacity of the two-lane roadway, which services 16,900 vehicles per day. Most of the congestion occurs during the peak commute periods. According to the 2030 General Plan, planned improvements to accommodate buildout will be consistent with the Land Use Element. Willow Pass Road is proposed to be widened to four (4) lanes between Landana Drive and State Route 4. The site is located south of the proposed improvements, thus will have positive effects of the proposed transportation improvements.
Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space are vital for any community. Concord is currently below the set goal of desired space allocated for parks. The current citywide goal for public parkland is 6 acres per 1,000 residents. The goal is inching closer to reality through land dedication within new developments, land donations, in-lieu fees, bond measures, and Regional Park District acquisitions. In 2006, 636 acres of neighborhood and community parks served a population of 124,440 residents, equating to 5.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This is 87 percent of the citywide goal. Using the goal of 6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the total population at buildout would require a total of 1,004 acres of parkland or 368 acres above the current parkland supply. One of the factors when dealing with parkland is the fact that not all residents are within a reasonable walking distance to a park. Concord proposes incorporating neighborhood and pocket parks to address this issue.
PARK & SHOP CENTER
Design Guidelines | CITY OF CONCORD
Park & Shop Design Guidelines

The City of Concord has drafted up a set of Design Guidelines for the Park and Shop Center in the 03/02/2012 Draft. The intention of the Design Guidelines is to provide direction for the current and future property owners for enhancements made to the properties located in the Park and Shop Center. The improvements do not propose any new or additional structures, but rather, improvements to the existing structures to provide a more inviting area for customers. There have been minor improvements throughout the previous years, as the City has required façade improvements and storefront upgrades when an occupant change occurs, or when alterations are being proposed. In order to continue to foster façade improvements, City Staff has developed a set of Design Guidelines to establish a process and procedure for building, façade, storefront and signage improvements. The guidelines also provide assistance for improvements that include providing exterior dining options for customers, including interior pathways, utilitarian areas and improved lighting.

This document will pull from various portions of the Design Guidelines and implement them into the proposed development model. The guidelines will act as an aid in developing this model, as they are the intended direction the City has for the Park and Shop Center. Some of the minimum improvement requirements include:

• Remove the existing blue awnings, patch and repair ends at adjacent buildings. Wall surfaces to be patched and repaired.
• Expose metal canopy to be repaired and cleaned. Fascia shall be free of dents, edges and seams shall be smooth.
• Remove red wall sconces and strip florescent light fixtures, wall packs and other utilitarian type fixtures. Fixtures shall be replaced with decorative features that compliment the architecture and are appropriate for the location.
• Sidewalks shall be repaired and brought back up to current code and ADA standards.
• All existing signage shall be removed. New signage shall adhere to the Draft Design Guidelines.
• All wall surfaces shall be repaired and patched such that they match adjacent wall surfaces.
• Exposed, unused equipment shall be removed.
• New paint and color scheme shall be applied throughout.
CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT
Introduction

A conceptual diagram is an illustration that is used to show basic information of what is proposed for a particular site. The diagram is to be used as a set of ideas for the project, but is not necessarily served as the final solution. There are many phases that parallel the planning process and often many changes and solutions follow the initial start of the conceptual diagramming process.

In this particular case, a conceptual diagram for the Concord Park and Shop was created. The site has plenty of potential, as it is currently thriving, yet, underutilized at the same time. The conceptual ideation behind this process maintained a set of goals for what is best for this particular site. The conceptual proposal can be broken down into five main categories: Land Use, Circulation, Public Space, Urban Design, and Sustainability.

Objectives

- To provide adequate outdoor recreation and amenities that promotes a healthy, active lifestyle for visitors.
- To improve the development opportunities within Concord which creates a vibrant economic base with a variety of choices for community members.
- To manage growth in a way that maintains existing community design guidelines and development restrictions.
- To offer additional types of housing, including high quality housing that provides opportunities for all social and economic groups.
- To offset vehicular congestion by enhancing and encouraging alternative mobility within the site through an improved pedestrian infrastructure.
- To develop gateways and a system of signage that eases wayfinding within the site and the rest of the community and creates a sense of place.
Land Use

The current land use in the site is a mixture of commercial retail, commercial service, office space, and public facilities (church and vocational schools). The existing building footprint is typical of a traditional 1950’s shopping center layout. The proposed conceptual development will utilize the existing footprint and add additional buildings by re-locating the parking into parking structures. In doing this, the site gains extra space to locate additional land uses. The concept diagram proposes to match the existing building footprint and mirror it creating a boulevard running between the structures. The buildings will then be proposed to be changed into mixed-use while keeping commercial use along the first floor, and adding high density residential above, which private parking sandwiched in between the two uses.

The existing anchor stores are proposed to be located to the east of the site along Market Street. The existing Fry’s Electronic is proposed to be converted into mixed-use with commercial on the first floor and a luxury hotel on the remaining top floors. An affordable housing development is proposed to be located at the west end of the site, where Willow Pass Road and Market Street intersect.

Two main plazas are proposed to be located in the center of the site, flanked by an indoor recreation center, restaurant establishments, as well as a variety of office uses. The plazas can act as the central entertainment hub to host an array of activities. The idea is to compliment the surrounding uses, and provide an opportunity for users to relax and take advantage of the Lifestyle Center concept.

The parking would be intended for use by the residents only. Two main public parking structures are proposed to be located at opposite ends of the site. One structure is proposed to be located along Salvio Street, and the other along Market Street.

Circulation

The concept plan focuses the attention less on the automobile, and more on pedestrians. The chaotic parking layout of the existing site is proposed to be transformed into a series of avenues and boulevards. The sidewalks are proposed to range from a minimum width of fifteen (15) feet up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) feet. Traffic calming measures are proposed to slow down the speed of traffic and make the area more pedestrian friendly. Large crosswalks at the midpoint of every block is proposed, which double as speed humps with crosswalk strobe lighting inlaid into the asphalt. Bulb-outs are also proposed to effectively slow down the speed of traffic, which doubles as plenty of landscaping opportunities.

Public Space

The main emphasis on this whole conceptual diagram is built around the idea of a public space and the concept of a lifestyle center. The concept is built around European influence with a sense of community, through effectively incorporating public space into the plan. This includes providing options for the users to accommodate foot and bike pedestrians. This is planned out with space for outdoor seating, plazas, bike paths, and areas for eating and entertainment venues. The two large plazas were created keeping in mind that a variety of uses are proposed to intersect at the public spaces. They can be an area where outdoor dining can occur, small and large concerts, festivals, and simply a space to enjoy the outdoor environment.
Urban Design

The overall urban design concept tries to embrace the current residing culture in the community. Many of the cultures have a strong sense of community and pride. The existing establishments are of international influence, which often coincides with the importance of family. The proposed buildings can contain Spanish/European influence while keeping the simplicity of everyday life. Outdoor wall murals and fountains can add the littlest touch to an area, while making a big impact. Art would have a strong influence in the urban design.

Sustainability

The site would be layered with drought tolerant landscaping and water retention basins such as bio-swales. The idea of placing parking structures on either end of the site indirectly promotes a walkable environment. The paseos and crosswalks are proposed to be outlined in water permeable pavers and a variety of walkways paved in grass pavers. This allows the water to efficiently travel back into the water table. The pavers also add aesthetic beauty by creating soft-scape amidst the hard-scapes being proposed. The site incorporate bike paths that are to be shared with the proposed path of vehicular travel. Various bike racks are proposed to be places in various locations of the site. In addition, the site will be outfitted in solar photo-voltaic panels on the rooftops as well as complete green roof systems.
Proposed Land Use Designations

- Commercial Retail
- Office Space
- Mixed-Use: Commercial/Residential
- Public Space/Plazas
- Public Parking Garage
- High-Density Housing
- Vehicular Circulation

ILLUSTRATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
Introduction

The overall design proposal follows a lifestyle center development approach. The final proposal is modeled after the Santana Row project in San Jose, California, as well as the Grove in Los Angeles, California. The main objective was to maximize the amount of developable space in an efficient manner, while maintaining a cohesive and logical layout. The proposal utilizes the existing structures in addition to adding additional buildings. The objective in this proposal is to create a development where users can immerse themselves in an environment full of boutiques, an array of dining options, public plazas for recreation, as well as uses for living and working. By locating all of these amenities in a centralized development, the proposal also creates a work-live environment.

The proposal is offered as a development model that can be used for an array of traditional shopping centers. The main concept behind the urban form is to relocate the parking, which encompasses most of the valuable land for other development opportunities, and place them at parking structures located at opposite ends of the site. This frees up plenty of space for the location of additional activities. By following the mixed-use development style, traditional European character becomes prominent throughout. Adding the touch of public plazas and corridors leading to semi-private courtyards creates an environment that allows the user linger and enjoy the space, as opposed to the traditional strip mall development model.
Phasing

The project, since the existing building footprints are maintained, can be completed in phases. The parking structures must be completed before any new construction begins in order to accommodate for the loss of existing parking spaces. The recommendation for phasing is to start from the roadway infrastructure, move to parking facilities, and then development where the need exists.
Building Design

The façade shall be reminiscent of Spanish/Mediterranean style accented by stucco, stone, tile, and wood materials. Arcades are proposed to provide a quality shopping experience for the pedestrians while providing shade and weather protection. This also allows façade differentiation to create a stronger sense of place. Arcades may open up into gathering areas that lead into courtyards, provide display opportunities for merchandise, space for outdoor seating, or simply to add architectural detail.
Landscaping

The landscaping shall include lush plantings with vines growing up the side of facades, hanging flowerpots, window boxes, and decorative pottery throughout. The plazas are to be grand in size with a large open space intended for an expansive lawn. This provides an opportunity to allow the users to recreate in a variety of ways. The boulevards shall have tree-lined streets and pedestrian walkways. The central plaza is proposed to house an outdoor life-size chessboard amidst dining kiosks.
# Existing Statistics

## Existing Land Use Statistics

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<th>Ground Floor Use</th>
<th>Upper Floor (s) Use(s)</th>
<th>Footprint Square Footage</th>
<th>Total Square Footage</th>
<th>Parking Space Provided for the Building (enclosed)</th>
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The parking calculations are based off of the City of Concord’s Parking Requirements per the City of Concord Municipal Code. According to the calculations, a majority of the parking is to be located in three main parking structures located at both ends of the site. There is an allotted amount of parallel parking located along the access drives throughout the site. The land that was made available by placing the parking in structures allowed for an increase in 469,664 square feet of buildable area (building footprint). The model proposes increasing the total square footage from 475,691 to 4,167,601 square feet.
Central Plaza West
Central Plaza East
AERIAL IMAGE OF THE SITE MASSING LOOKING WEST
RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED COURTYARD PLAZA
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