

**Creating a Branding Image as an Effective Strategy
to Revitalize Downtown Commercial Streets**

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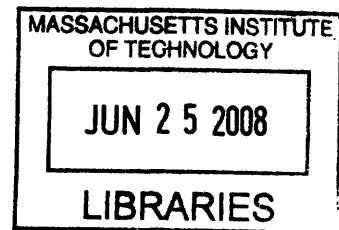
Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The branding image of commercial streets can be an important factor for inviting new shops and attracting customers and visitors to the area. It can also contribute to changing the image of declining downtown shopping streets and regain tenants and customers. The images of commercial streets affect people's decision-making process about where to shop and meet, which can reinforce the reality of the places, creating the momentum for the places' growth or decline.

This research demonstrates effective branding strategies for downtown commercial streets based on the theories of corporate branding and place marketing. The economic improvement initiatives of Downtown Crossing in Boston are analyzed from the perspective of branding strategies, and as case studies, Newbury Street in Boston as well as Ginza District and Omotesando Street in Tokyo, are explored to show the elements of branding images.

Successful places build high expectations through their forums and events as well as the retail structures, using the local resources effectively. The people's perceptions of a place can be enhanced by consistent physical images with sequential experience, visual communication and participation. The relationships of the reality of a place, and people's expectations and perceptions of the place create the economic dynamics of the streets.

This research recommends that the branding strategy of Downtown Crossing should more focus on the structure of the district, creating the frameworks to enhance people's expectations and perceptions through events and education based on a bottom-up style branding strategy.

Thesis Supervisor: Frank Levy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The branding image of commercial streets can be an important factor for inviting new shops and attracting customers and visitors to the area. It can also contribute to changing the image of declining downtown shopping streets and regain many tenants and customers. Who made the branding image of streets, when and how? How do streets change from the usual residential streets to upscale ones? How does branding affect the community and the city?

For example, the Downtown Crossing area in Boston suffers from a lack of local attractions for visitors. According to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, 44% of visitors get a negative image from the Downtown Crossing area even though there are 100,000 visitors in a day.¹ On the other hand, the shopping mall development of Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace, which is a ten-minute walk from Downtown Crossing, is famous for its festival marketplace and attracts 50,000 people a day for a single site. Additionally, Newbury Street in the Back Bay sub-center has become successful since the 1970's. Many brand name fashion shops are located on Newbury Street, not in Downtown Boston. Many newspapers and guidebooks highlight Newbury Street for its picturesque atmosphere, nice restaurants and fashionable boutique shops. Copley Place and Prudential Center also attract high-income customers and strengthen the commercial attractiveness of Back Bay as a whole. As a result of these new areas, Boston's

¹ City of Boston & Boston Redevelopment Authority (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding strategy*, p.46.

commercial center has gradually moved to Back Bay from Downtown. Faced with this commercial trend, stakeholders of Downtown Crossing initiated the area's revitalization strategy, Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative, in 2004, and the stakeholders are still crafting the branding strategy of the area.

On the other hand, some Downtown streets have successfully changed the negative image into a positive one. For example, Washington Gateway Main Street in Boston has had the unique opportunity of rebuilding a commercial/residential district. The street has been transformed from a desolate and deteriorated street into a vibrant retail/residential boulevard. Renovated historic buildings, 100-year-old businesses and trendy new shops make the district one of the most attractive streets in the Boston area.² Times Square in New York has successfully changed its image from the deserted image of a "sewer" (so called by the former State Governor Cuomo) into the positive image of "a whole new era" through efforts to keep the area safe and clean through a Business Improvement District.³

Additionally, the branding image of commercial streets can be found in different cultural settings. For example, Ginza District and Omotesando Street in Tokyo, Japan, are known as high-end areas with many brand name boutiques, cafes, and restaurants. These areas attract many shoppers and visitors based on their histories and cultures. The features and branding strategies of these areas can suggest the key elements that are important for creating and preserving the branding images of commercial streets.

² Washington Gateway Main Street from http://www.gatewaymainstreet.org/district_history.htm

³ Madsen P. & Plunz, R. (2002). *The Urban Lifeworld: Formation, Perception, Representation*. Routledge, p. 245.

The image of commercial streets can be changed by mobilizing retailers and working through partnerships with neighborhood organizations, real estate developers, government and businesses, based on analysis of areas' features and geographical and socio-economic structures. However, in spite of the importance of the branding strategy for commercial streets, little research has been done on measures for preserving and changing the image of streets to attract tenants and customers. Only a few books have been published about the branding image of streets.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the background, the research question of this study is two-fold:

- 1. Is creating a branding image an effective strategy to revitalize downtown commercial streets? What elements create the branding image of streets?**

In order to understand the branding strategy of commercial streets, the following questions will be answered:

- What is a branding strategy?
- Is the concept of branding strategy applicable to changing the image of commercial streets?
- What elements create the image of an area? -- Case Studies of Downtown Crossing, Newbury Street, Ginza District, and Omotesando Street
- What type of communities and commercial streets are successful in using branding

strategies?

2. How can the elements of street images be created and managed to revitalize downtown commercial streets through a branding strategy?

To answer the question above, this study find answers for the following questions in order to understand the establishment and spread of a branding strategy:

- How do people perceive and expect the elements of a place?
- What are relationships among people's expectations, perceptions, and reality?
- How can a place be improved through managing expectations, perceptions, and reality?
- How can people's images of a place be managed through a branding strategy?
- What are the effective branding strategies for revitalizing Downtown Crossing?

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study methodology consists of three components: a review of existing literature, interviews with people, and case studies. The persons whom the author interviewed include the staff of NPOs in Boston and Tokyo, the Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo, and city governments in both cities.

In order to answer the first set of questions that is related to branding strategy, this study reviews literature and research published by Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and scholars. As a case study, the on-going branding strategy of Downtown Crossing (Boston) is examined as the attempt to change its image. Additionally, three commercial streets or districts

which successfully preserve or change their image are described to demonstrate the branding strategy of the streets: Newbury Street (Boston), Ginza District (Tokyo), and Omotesando Street (Tokyo). Among the questions related to issues facing the four commercial streets or districts, questions about the economic conditions and urban policy environments are answered drawing upon existing research in the political science fields. In addition, this research entailed an interview with a BRA official, Chamber of Commerce officials in Tokyo, and activists in the four targeted areas. The interview asked some organizations such as the Downtown Crossing Association and the Newbury Street League questions about the current management situations, accomplishments, remaining issues to be solved and community responses.

With respect to the second set of questions about how to revitalize the Downtown Crossing area, interviews were conducted with Randi Luthrop, the Deputy Director of Community Planning of BRA, and Rosemarie E. Sansone, President of Downtown Crossing Association. Their responses in the interviews show the social environment in which branding strategies were conducted in the Downtown Crossing area. Finally, a realistic way of applying branding strategies to the area is investigated in the study.

1.4 OUTLINE

The introductory chapter provides an overview of the study, demonstrating the background, the research questions, and methodology. Chapter 2 gives the theoretical framework for the branding strategies based on the corporate branding theories, and the place marketing

frameworks of cities and regions. The branding strategies for downtown commercial streets are discussed.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 provide case studies of Downtown Crossing (Chapter 3), Newbury Street, Ginza District, and Omotesando Street (Chapter 4). Current branding efforts as well as the problems of Downtown Crossing are explored based on shoppers' surveys and interviews. From these four case studies, the elements of a place's images are analyzed through the perspectives of economic, physical, and institutional structures.

Chapter 5 discusses the elements and structures of images and shows the relationships of expectation, perception, and reality of places, which create the economic dynamics of the streets. The new type of branding strategy, a bottom-up style branding strategy, is deduced from the features of downtown streets.

Chapter 6 gives a summary, conclusions, and recommendations. Based on the findings in the previous chapters, three effective steps of a branding strategy are introduced and recommendations for revitalizing Downtown Crossing are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

BRANDING STRATEGY

What is a branding strategy? Is a branding strategy effective to revitalize a city center?

Kotler et al. (1993) state that places can reverse their decline, and can experience revitalizations through a process of strategic market planning.⁴ Places are not only geographical areas but also have their own history, cultures, built environments, atmosphere and opportunities. Places face the competition of attracting people, and of being the hub of goods, investments, and information. People like to have many options of where to locate a business, where to go shopping, where to eat or drink, or where to spend weekends. Most of their decisions are made based on the images or expectations of places, and their decisions make the reality of places, which would eventually create and reinforce the images of places.

This chapter discusses a branding strategy for places such as cities and streets. There are many theses and publications about the branding effort of cities such as “*Marketing Places (1993)*”⁵ and “*Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition (2004)*”⁶, but few for commercial streets. Commercial streets such as Fifth Avenue in New York, Rodeo Drive in Los Angeles, and Newbury Street in Boston share an image as being positive, high-end, and vibrant streets. What makes these streets conspicuous and vibrant in the city and nation? Are there any differences between the fashionable, high-end streets and other numerous streets in the

⁴ Kotler, P., Haider, D. H. & Rein, I. (1993). *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry and Tourism to Cities, States and Nations*. Free Press, p.3.

⁵ Kotler et al. (1993).

⁶ Morgan, N.J., Pritchard, A., & Pride, R. (2004). *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Elsevier Ltd.

city? This chapter discusses branding strategies to revitalize commercial streets.

2.1 DEFINITION OF BRANDING STRATEGY

A branding strategy is a strategy that creates positive values for customers by evoking positive images and perceptions of products or service. Brand strategies have been used to create positive images of products, companies, industries, and most recently, cities and places. Branding strategy can be used for revitalizing declining cities and commercial streets by mobilizing people and creating positive values.

A brand is the aggregation of associations linked to a name, mark, or symbol associated with a product or service. The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition.”⁷ According to Tim Calkins (2005), a name is different from a brand in that a name doesn’t have associations. A brand creates many rich associations with a product or service. A brand is similar to a reputation.⁸

Brands have strong impacts on people’s decision-making processes when they purchase a product or service. Brands differentiate products or services and add value to them. Brands evoke emotions and beliefs, and create loyalties. Brands affect and shape the way people view products and services. People see products or services together with the brand’s associations. As a result,

⁷ American Marketing Association. Retrieved Feb 23, 2008, from <http://www.marketingpower.com/mg-dictionary-view329.php>

⁸ Tybout, A. M., & Calkins, T. (2005). *Kellogg on branding*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc, p.1.

people's perceptions of products and services depend on brand images and strongly affect the decision of purchasing products or services.

Since brands are the aggregation of associations, the associations can be positive or negative. In particular, if a product or service has negative associations, the probability of people's purchasing behavior would decrease, which has negative economic impacts on the company's sales. Therefore, many companies invest large amounts of money for creating their own branding image and try to create positive associations of their products.

Creating a branding image is not just making a name, logo, or slogan. According to Tim Calkins (2005), three challenges exist for creating brand images: cash, consistency, and clutter.⁹

Challenge 1: Cash

The challenge of cash is the biggest concern for brand managers. Brand managers need to show the positive result in a short-term period, but creating brands takes long-term effort.

Challenge 2: Consistency

The second greatest challenge facing a brand management is consistency. If people cannot perceive consistent images from a product or service, the branding image would blur and the quality of brand promise would deteriorate. If all employees do not understand, and believe in their brand, it is difficult to maintain the brand image and keep people's loyalty toward brands.

Challenge 3: Clutter

⁹ Calkins T. (2005). p.4-8.

The third greatest challenge is clutter. People face a huge amount of information which blurs the brand image of a product or service. Brands need clear positioning, conspicuous features, and creativity to differentiate from other clutter information.

Brand managers must understand these challenges of cash, consistency, and clutter to establish their own branding image. At the same time, these challenges are exactly what city managers have to overcome to create a positive image of places.

2.2 MARKETING PLACES

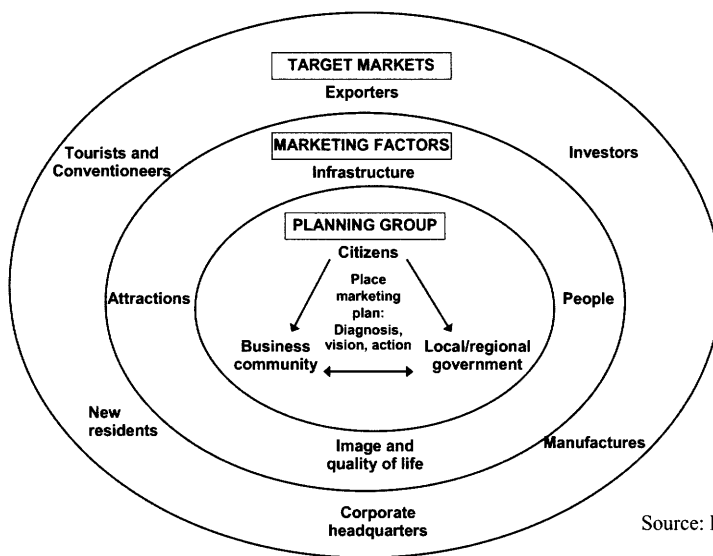
Cities and streets can also be branded by creating strong relationships between the places and customers. Cities and streets are a platform on which people spend their lives through work, consumption, and leisure activities. People express themselves by visiting places and developing relationships with the places. Many cities such as Boston, San Francisco, and New York try to create positive association with the places through place marketing.

According to Kotler et al. (1993), “Strategic marketing calls for designing a community to satisfy the needs of its key constituencies. Place Marketing succeeds when stakeholders such as citizens, workers, and business firms derive satisfaction from their community, and when visitors, new businesses, and inventors find their expectations met.”¹⁰ They also argue that place marketing should embrace four activities: designing the right mix of community features and services; setting attractive incentives for the current and potential buyers and users of its goods

¹⁰ Kotler et al. (1993). p.18.

and services; delivering a place's products and services in an efficient, accessible way; and promoting the place's values and image so that potential users are fully aware of the place's distinctive advantages.¹¹

To realize the above four features, it is important to understand the structures and elements of strategic place marketing (see figure 2-1).



Source: Kotler et al (1993) *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry and Tourism to Cities, States and Nations*, p.19.

Figure 2-1: Levels of Place Marketing

As a planning group, citizens, business communities, and local/regional government should make a platform to analyze and diagnose the current conditions and problems of their community, construct visions and develop an action plan for changing their community. The action plan should be based on the long-term perspectives of four major marketing factors: the state of infrastructure; attractions and magnets for people, business, and investment; communication tools to communicate the image of the places; and support from citizens, organizational leaders

¹¹ Kotler et al. (1993). p.18.

and institutions to make the place attractive. Kotler et al. (1993) emphasize the importance of collaborations of public and private sectors and managing many place-unique complex factors; not only business factors but also legal, political, cultural, societal, and historical factors. The framework of strategic place marketing is also applied to the branding strategies for commercial streets (see section 2-3).

Strategic Image Management (SIM)

In the process of marketing places, one of the most important tasks is designing the place's image or brand and creating strong relationships between the places and customers. The branding image of a place enhances the people's loyalty by inciting stakeholders' emotions, which would let people see more of the positive rather than the negative side of the place consciously or unconsciously. According to Kotler and Gertner (2004), people "disregard information that challenges their knowledge structures, in a process known as confirmation bias. They avoid the effort necessary to reconstruct their cognitions, unless misrepresentations have a cost for them or they find utility in the revision of their schemata."¹² Once emotional preferences are established, they promote people's participation in the brand activities in unifying their individual interests with area's branding strategy. Through the process of win-win relationships between brand managers and stakeholders, more powerful brand equity would be created and strengthen the brand image of the place.

As a way to create a strong emotional tie between people and places, Kotler et al. (1993)

¹² Morgan, N.J., Pritchard, A., and Pride, R. (2004). *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Elsevier Ltd, p.43.

define Strategic Image Management (SIM) as the ongoing process of: researching a place's image among its audiences; segmenting and targeting its specific image and its demographic audiences; positioning the place's benefits to support an existing image or create a new image; and communicating those benefits to the target audiences.¹³ The SIM is an effective tool for managing branding images.

Additionally, to manage the brand image of a place, it is important for brand managers to establish and coordinate various messages with stakeholders outside the planning group for them to be strong and comprehensive visions of brand strategy (external-communication). Additionally, through the process of establishing the brand image, it is important for stakeholders in a planning group to share the brand image and become advocates who actively support and establish the image (inner-communication). Though a planning group is under less pressure than a firm to show short-term results, brand managers in a planning group face another difficulty of coordinating many stakeholders who have various interests. The planning group faces the same challenges of cash, consistency, and clutter as a firm faces to establish a branding image. The brand managers need a consistency in their branding strategy and need to motivate people through overcoming clutter and securing the long-term perspectives of funding sources. Logos and slogans by themselves cannot motivate people; residents and companies need to be satisfied with the quality of the place, and feel proud of and have confidence in the brand.

¹³ Kotler et al. (1993). p.143.

2.3 BRAND STRATEGY OF COMMERCIAL STREETS

The process of place marketing in previous sections can be applied to the branding strategies for commercial streets. Image building is important for downtown commercial streets because many people believe crime and physical decline is widespread, and at the same time, downtown commercial streets need to differentiate themselves from other commercial districts in the city. According to Karl Seidman (2004), the problems of inner-city neighborhoods in the context of the Urban Main Street Program include perceptions of public safety, concerns related to ethnic and racial diversity, and the loss of historic community gathering places, while the dense nearby population provides large promising markets.¹⁴ The brand managers of commercial streets need to deal with these problems as well as take advantage of the strengths of the districts.

There are four basic ways to analyze the branding strategy of commercial streets.

Core Values: Effective brands for commercial streets are built on the core values in a targeted community. As the process of deciding a core value, Kotler's SIM can be applied. At first, brand managers need to select the target segments and measure the image held by these segments. In terms of selecting the target segments, four audiences might be interested in living, visiting or working in a place and they may hold different images of it: residents, visitors, firms (offices), and retailers. Then, brand managers need to determine the advantages of the place and position them to strengthen the benefits of the place. Based on the core values of the streets, a brand promise can be created. The brand promise can be symbolized by slogans and logos.

¹⁴ Seidman, F. K. (2004). *Revitalizing Commercial for American Cities*. Fannie Mae Foundation, p.23.

Comprehensive Brand Strategy: After core values have been developed, the next step is to make them ubiquitous among the stakeholders of the street. Logos and slogans must appear on all media and brand strategy must be implemented at all phases. The collaborations of public and private sectors are important to make the core values ubiquitous in the target area.

Internal Communication: Besides the resources such as history, culture, and built environments, the relationships of stakeholders and the consensus building process are important. Internal education would help stakeholders to understand the branding concept and make it ubiquitous in the group and street.

External Communication: Most of the shoppers are visitors from outside the community. Visitors' perception toward the place might be different from that of community members. The strategy to attract potential visitors who have poor information about the place is also important. Through media, and meetings and events, re-educating the public is important to enhance people's expectations and perceptions or evoke emotional loyalty with the street.

2.4 FOUR TARGET STREETS

This study focuses on four commercial streets: Downtown Crossing (Boston), Newbury Street (Boston), Ginza Street (Tokyo), and Omotesando Street (Tokyo). These four streets have their own branding image, or associations, with the streets. Downtown Crossing has a relatively negative image even though it is located at the center of the city. Newbury Street, which was constructed in 1787, has a high-end, positive branding image. Ginza Street has a high-end,

positive image and has associations with the fashionable shopping district for relatively senior generations. Omotesando-Street was newly created in the 20th century as a main gateway to the Meiji Shinto-Shrine. This street is seen as a fashionable shopping street by the younger generations of Japanese and other Asians. From the next chapter, these streets will be analyzed and what elements are important for making brand images of commercial streets will be deduced.

CHAPTER 3

DOWNTOWN CROSSING

Downtown Crossing is called “the last frontier” of downtown Boston after the series of redevelopment projects of other areas such as Government Center (1950s), Quincy Market (1970s), South Station (1980s), and the waterfront area (1990s).¹⁵ The district is located at the heart of Boston and attracts more than 100,000 people in a day¹⁶ but the area needs reinvestment. Many people have a negative image of the area such as absence of vibrancy and the lack of safety at night. Faced with this negative image, in 2004 the City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) initiated the revitalization strategy, the Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative, and are now crafting the branding strategy for the district. This chapter demonstrates why people have the negative image of the area and how the area can be improved through a branding strategy.

3.1 DOWNTOWN CROSSING PROFILE

Downtown Crossing is located at the heart of Boston, and is known as a pedestrian-friendly shopping district with department stores and various retail stores. This area includes the Midtown Cultural District with many theatres and the Restricted Parking District for pedestrians, and also is adjacent to the Financial District, a major office space of the city, and the Boston Common, a major tourist destination and recreation site, and Chinatown, a place of ethnic restaurants and

¹⁵ Interview with Rosemarie E. Sanson, President of Downtown Crossing Association, 2008.

¹⁶ Boston Redevelopment Authority (2005). *Insight: Downtown Crossing: Vital Heart of Downtown Boston July 2005*, p.1.

retailers (see figure 3-1). The area is the hub of public transportation: six MBTA subway stations within the Downtown Crossing area have close to 86,000 passengers daily¹⁷. This area has many workers during weekdays and also many visitors; approximately 100,000 people visit the area in a day.¹⁸

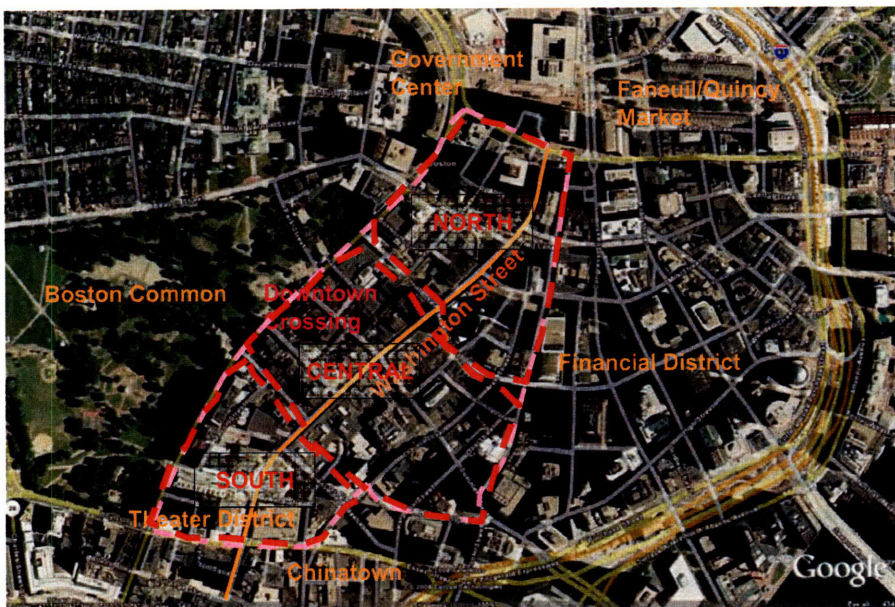


Figure 3-1: Map of Downtown Crossing

Source: Created by Author from Google Earth

History: Washington Street in the downtown shopping district was originally a residential area and most of the street network was constructed in the 17th century, which looks similar to the street networks in old European cities. By the mid-19th century, the residential area around Washington Street began to change into a commercial street. The Great Fire in 1872 destroyed more than 500 buildings in a 65-acre area. Property owners reconstructed the district in the Victorian style, using

¹⁷ BRA (2005). *Insight: Downtown Crossing*. July 2005, p.1.

¹⁸ BRA (2005). *Insight: Downtown Crossing*. July 2005, p.1.

brick and fire-proof materials.¹⁹ By the late 19th century, major department stores and financial institutions appeared in Downtown Crossing and the Financial District.

After the WWII, suburban malls and retailers emerged as visible competitors to the area. With the success of the festival marketplace concept of the Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market redevelopment in 1976, the City initiated plans to redevelop the downtown retail area into a car-free zone in 1977. The Downtown Crossing image and logo were created in 1979 and in 1983, 75 free-standing vendor carts were installed. The Downtown Crossing Association (DCA) was formed in 1980 to oversee the revitalization project, develop a logo, promote the area through events and advertising, manage the pushcart program, and advance a unified image of downtown retailers.²⁰

In the 1980's and 1990's, about 3.5 million square feet of urban retail space was constructed in the Boston region, including Copley Place and the expanded Prudential Center in Back Bay, and Cambridgeside Galleria, and construction of over 25 million square feet of strips center and retail malls in the suburbs. As a result, the position of Downtown Crossing as a retail center has greatly diminished. In 1985, Lafayette Place Mall, a 1,000-car garage, a 300-room hotel and 200-store mall, were built to attract customers to Downtown Crossing and compete with Back Bay and suburban retail centers, which never succeeded. The reason for the failure was thought to be an uninviting design, and Lafayette Place Mall closed in the mid 1990's. In the late 1990's, Millennium/Ritz Carlton towers with 300 condominiums were constructed and a 16

¹⁹ City of Boston & BRA. (2007). Downtown Crossing Strategy: History.

²⁰ City of Boston & BRA. (2007). Downtown Crossing Strategy: History.

screen cinema-complex opened, which is one of the biggest cinemas on the East Coast. In addition to these developments, the Opera House, Emerson College, and the Paramount Theatre have become key anchors of the area.

In 2005, Filene's department building, which was designed by Daniel Burnham, was sold to a partnership of Gale International and Vornado Realty Trust. This redevelopment will transform the atmosphere of the building block and have a significant impact on the area with a new 38-story tower that includes a 200-room hotel, a health club and spa, office space and 140 condominiums. Downtown Crossing now faces both a decline and opportunity: losing local key anchor stores and seeing large scale redevelopment.

3.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In many US cities, automobiles have escalated the outflow of population and industry from downtown to the suburban area since the 1950's. Boston' downtown has been relatively successful in staying vibrant and healthy,²¹ but the development of suburban retail centers has affected the sales and vitality of downtown retailers. The population of Boston decreased from 801,444 (1950) to 575,670 (2005) and retail trade from 82,457 (1970) to 59,807 (2002) (see figure 3-2 and figure 3-3). Since the 1980's, Boston has experienced the relatively stable growth

²¹ According to O'Sullivan (2004), central cities in the Northeast Region of the United State lost their population by 2.2% from 1990 to 1999, while the outside central cities of the Metropolitan area gained their population by 4.2% (in the U. S. nationwide, 4.1% increased in Central cities and 14.2% increased in their suburban areas). The City of Boston gained its population by 2.59% and the rest of its metropolitan area gained by 6.82%, showing the relatively good performance of both the core city and its suburban area compared with the average of the Northeast Region.

of population and retail trade.

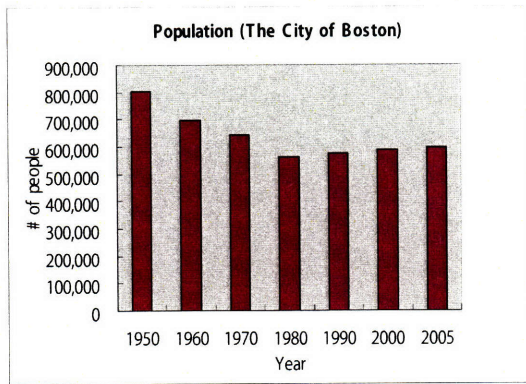


Figure 3-2: Population of Boston

Source: Created by Author from BRA:
History of Boston's Economy

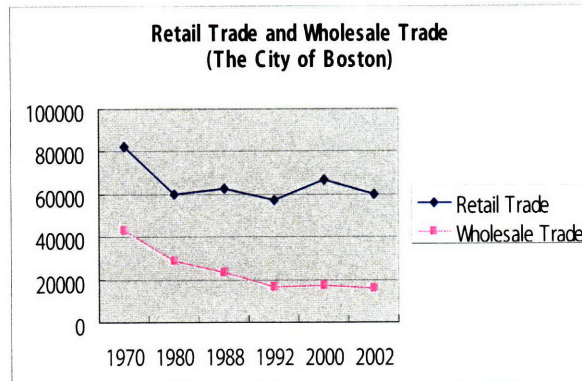


Figure 3-3: Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade

Source: Created by Author from BRA:
History of Boston's Economy

In terms of the lifecycle process of cities based on Klaassen's City Life Cycle Model of 1981,²² Boston is still slightly in the stage of suburbanization based on the population growth during 2000-2004. Notably, figure 3-4 shows that Boston is one of the most stable areas (lowest in terms of absolute growth rates) of both the core city and its metropolitan area out of the 54 areas,²³ which can mean that the Boston area is ready to step into another stage, from suburbanization into de-urbanization or re-urbanization.²⁴

²² Klaassen, L. H., Molle, W. T. M., & Paelinck, J. H. P. (1981). *Dynamics of Urban Development*. St. Martin's Press, Inc., p.15.

²³ DEMOGRAPHIA. *USA Major Metropolitan Areas: Suburban and Core City Growth: 2000 to 2004*.

²⁴ The largest municipality in each metropolitan area is defined as a core city, and additional cities qualify as the core cities if they meet criteria concerning size and commuting patterns. The rest of the metropolitan area is defined as a suburban area. According to Klaassen et al. (1981), metropolitan areas develop through life stages of growth, decline, and rejuvenation. The first stage is when population inflows into the core city from the suburban area while the total population in the metropolitan area is increasing (urbanization). The second step is when the growth rate of the suburban area exceeds that of the core city while the total population of the metropolitan area is increasing (suburbanization). The third step is when the population of the core city outflows into the suburban area while the total population of the metropolitan area is decreasing (de-urbanization). The fourth step occurs when the growth rate of the core city exceeds that of its suburban area while the total population of the metropolitan area is decreasing (re-urbanization).

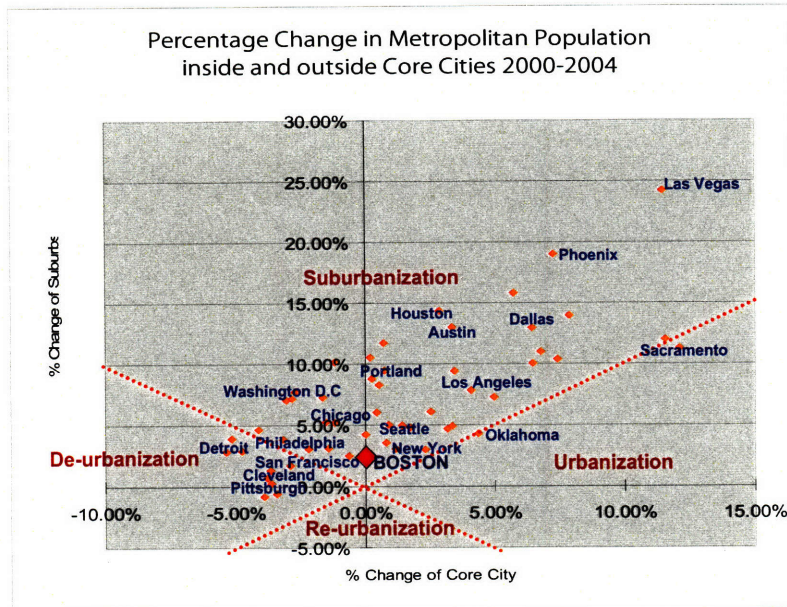


Figure 3-4: Klaassen’s Urban Cycle Model

Source: Created by Author from USA Major Metropolitan Areas:
Suburban and Core City Growth: 2000 to 2004, DEMOGRAPHIA

Downtown Crossing is now experiencing the new residential developments. Recent zoning modifications are helping the Downtown double its residential population to 60,000 residents in the next ten years. Currently, the population of the Central Planning District²⁵ is 25,602 and the median household income of the area is \$46,841 which is larger than that of the city (\$39,629).²⁶ At the same time, according to the DCA, the population of Downtown Crossing is 11,217.²⁷ This population swells every day of the week to approximately 171,100, as suburbanites commute into the city for work and play. According to a survey done by the BRA in 2007, 70% of shoppers used public transport, while 20% of shoppers were from nearby neighborhoods and walked to the area. Downtown Crossing station is the busiest in the MBTA system with 25,500 passengers per day. Table 3-1 shows the basic data about Downtown Crossing.

²⁵ The area is based on the BRA’s Planning Districts, which defines 16 districts in the City of Boston.

²⁶ BRA (2004). *Census 2000: Key Neighborhood Characteristics*.

²⁷ Downtown Crossing Association. Retrieved from <http://www.downtowncrossing.org/>

Table 3-1: Central Boston data 2004 (Downtown Crossing)

Population	25,602 (11,217)
Total Daytime Employment	183,650 (171,181)
Total Business Establishments	5,037 (13,618)
Households	13,474 (5,732)
Race breakdown	White: 72.2%, Asian, Pac.is: 20.6%, Black or African American: 4.3% Hispanic or Latino: 4.1%
Median Age	35.2 (35.95)
Median Household Income	\$46,841 (Average Household Income: \$75,515)

Source: Created by Author from BRA: *Census 2000: Key Neighborhood Characteristics* and the website of Downtown Crossing Association

As area anchors, Macy's, H&M, Borders Books & Music, Loews Cinemas, Staples, Starbucks, and many shoe stores such as Foot Locker and DSW are located in the area. Filenes Basement Department store, which used to be located in the district, is supposed to return to the project site. Rosemarie Sansone, President of the DCA, states that the corner of Washington and Summer/Winter Streets used to be occupied by local department stores, but the close of these local anchors has changed the district's identity, even though there still exists Macy's, a nationwide department store.²⁸ Some flag shops such as Barnes & Noble book store and HMV music stores were recently closed. On the other hand, there have been many fast food chain retailers in the area since the 1980's. As the feature of the area, about 300 jewelers are located in the district. One large department store and many national chain shoes and fast food retailers as well as local jewelers create the character of the area. The area's retail vacancy rate is about 7 percent, compared with about 5 percent for Newbury Street.²⁹

²⁸ Interview with Rosemarie E. Sansone, President of the Downtown Crossing Association, 2008.

²⁹ Abelson, J. (2005). *Downtown Crossing plans to revise its look*. Boston Globe July 11, 2005.

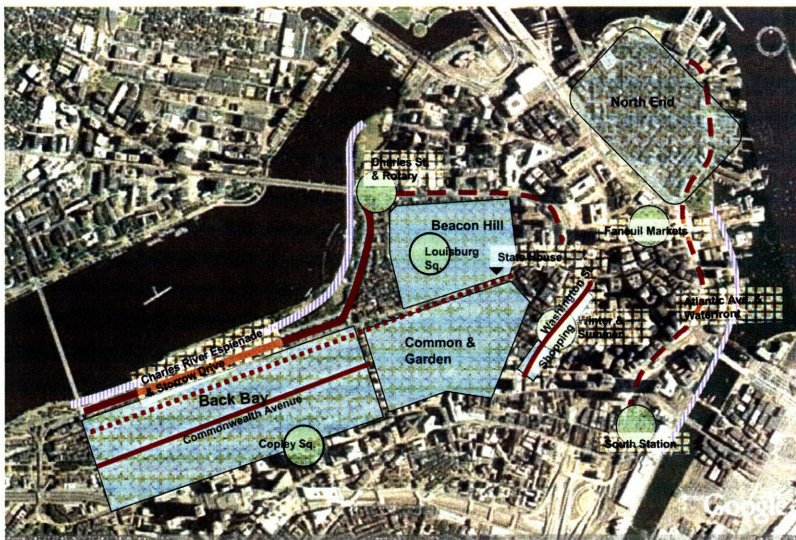
3.3 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

Aside from the socio-economic conditions such as income distribution and employment, what makes the image of Downtown Crossing? What elements are important to let people have a positive image and how do people perceive the image of built environments?

Kevin Lynch (1960) suggests that people understand their surroundings by forming a mental map based on “place legibility” which provides people a way to understand the layout of a place.³⁰ Mental maps of a city are representations of what the city has according to an individual’s mind. These mental representations contain many unique elements, which are defined as a network of five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. First, paths are channels by which people move along in their travels. Examples of paths are roads, trails, and sidewalks. The second element, edges, is all other lines not included in the paths. Examples of edges include walls, and seashores. The third, districts, are sections of the city having relatively substantial size and a specific character. Neighborhoods such as Beacon Hill and Chinatown are such examples. The fourth element, nodes, refers to points or strategic spots where there is an extra focus, or added concentration of city features. Examples of nodes include a busy intersection or a city center. Finally, landmarks are physical objects that act as reference points. Landmarks can be stones, mountains, or any other objects that provide impact on people when way-finding.

³⁰ Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. The MIT Press, p.46-47.

Lynch took the areas that people found vivid, and regarded these areas as a high imageability ranking. Imageability is the quality of a physical object, which gives an observer a strong, vivid image. He concluded that a highly imageable city is well formed, contains very distinct paths, and is instantly recognizable to the common inhabitant. Edges, districts, nodes and landmarks would be also important constituencies of imageability if they are meaningful, distinct, and not confusing.



Source: Created by Author from *The image of the city*, p75

Figure 3-5: Mental Map of Boston



Lynch (1960) demonstrates that Downtown Crossing had a centric image with his description that “The Jordan-Filene corner acts secondarily as a junction between Washington Street and Summer Street, and it is associated with a subway stop, but primarily it was recognized as being the very center of the center of the city.”

In addition, Lynch (1960) observes that “it is the ‘100 per cent’ commercial corner, epitomized to a degree rarely seen on large American cities, but culturally very familiar to

Americans. It is a core: the focus and symbol of an important region” and also categorized as “downtown shopping district.”³¹ Downtown Crossing had a strong image of nodes, paths, and a district while Newbury Street had the image of being merely the part of a district rather than a clear distinctive path in 1960 (see figure 3-5). The following sections are the analysis of current elements of Downtown Crossing based on Lynch’s five elements in real physical environment.

Physical Analysis of Downtown Crossing

Downtown Crossing has a centric image. The area is a transportation hub, adjacent to the Financial District, Government Center, Chinatown, and the Boston Common. These surroundings and the elements of the district create the district’s character as a central crossing with a relatively chaotic image.

Paths:

- There is a concentration of retail, food and drink stores along Washington Street and Winter/Summer Street, attracting the majority of pedestrians in the area. A majority of streets have sufficient sidewalk width (22 feet) and capacity to support much higher levels of pedestrian activity.
- Currently, the landscape and appearance of street façade do not completely match the strategy of making a meeting place, destroying the consistent image of the area (see figure 3-6).³²

³¹ Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. The MIT Press, p75-76.

³² According to BRA, the core value of Downtown Crossing is a “meeting place.”



Figure 3-6: Irregular Storefronts of Downtown Crossing

Source: Author

Districts:

- Downtown Crossing has the image of shopping district adjacent to the Boston Common, the district with the strong image of amenities and rich history. There is also the Midtown Cultural District with many theatres in the southern part of Washington Street.

Nodes:

- The intersection of Washington Street, Winter Street, and Summer Street has a department store and creates the centric image of the city.³³ Lynch (1960) points out that node as “being the very center of the center of the city.”³⁴
- The intersection of Washington Street and School Street has a public open space in front of Borders Book Store and historical Old Corner Book Store, and the Freedom Trail leads visitors from the Boston Common and Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace to the area.

Landmarks:

- The eight-story Filene’s Department building designed by Daniel Burnham is the landmark

³³ One more major department store, Filene’s Basement Department Store, has temporary moved to the Back Bay area due to a redevelopment project at the intersection.

³⁴ Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. The MIT Press, p.75-76.

of the centric corner of Downtown Crossing. The development of a new signature 38-story tower can become a new landmark, but it may destroy the historic image of the area.

3.4 DOWNTOWN CROSSING BRANDING STRATEGY

Though the area is at the heart of Boston with many retailers, 44 percent of the shoppers have negative perceptions of the area according to the recent research by BRA.³⁵ The major negative factors are general environments such as littering and graffiti, and safety issues. These issues have been problems since the 1970's as can be seen in a 1979 survey by BRA.

Marketing Strategy in Downtown Boston in 1979: According to *The impact of Downtown Crossing on Commercial Activity in Downtown Boston* (1980),³⁶ downtown revitalization efforts have been implemented since 1978. General auto traffic was removed from Downtown Crossing, freeing up street space for deliveries, buses, taxis, entertainers and special events, and pedestrians to create outdoor malls in shopping areas. Additionally, sidewalks were resurfaced, distinctive lighting fixtures and banners were installed, and Christmas lights and decorations were displayed on the streets. BRA established a merchants' advisory group and a project office for the purpose of promoting the place's image and liaising with city departments. As a result, BRA reported several positive impacts such as sales increase of merchants in 1980 and stated:

Through provision of a name, a logo, a full-time promotion person, and a merchant advisory group, Downtown Crossing has created a more unified image for the

³⁵ City of Boston & BRA (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding strategy*, p.46.

³⁶ Algin J. (1980). *The impact of Downtown Crossing on Commercial Activity in Downtown Boston*. City of Boston & BRA.

downtown stores. In addition, it has increased organization and cooperation among the merchants for such items as Christmas lights and joint advertising. Over the first year and a half, the concept “Downtown Crossing” is beginning to mean something to the people of Boston; it is showing up in ads and the news media now use it.³⁷

The BRA’s brand strategy at that time was based on the concept of “downtown as a department store,” by taking advantage of “aggregate convenience,” that is, enhancing the convenience of one-stop shopping for a variety of goods, and the competitive compatibility, which enables customers to shop for the same product or a complementary product at retailers located close enough on the same trip. Additionally, the shoppers’ data of Downtown Crossing, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and Newbury/Boylston Street in 1980 shows the features of the Downtown Crossing at that time.³⁸ The data indicates that in Downtown Crossing, many office workers walked to the area at lunch time for food, and most of the shoppers came from within the metropolitan area, using public transportation (see APPENDIX).

In spite of the branding strategy from 1978, the pedestrian-friendly shopping strip did not succeed for a long time because the retail district did not have enough alleys, forcing delivery vehicles and garbage trucks to share walkways with pedestrians.³⁹ New bus stops have exacerbated congestion. Jerold Kayden, a professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, states that “There was a movement decades ago toward pedestrianizing, but ultimately,

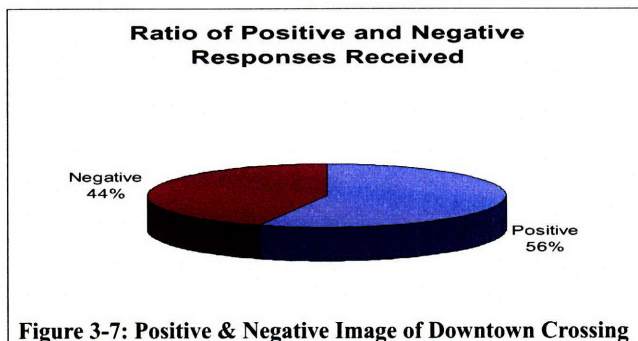
³⁷ Algin J. (1980). *The impact of Downtown Crossing on Commercial Activity in Downtown Boston*.

³⁸ Algin, J. (1980). Table 2

³⁹ Abelson, J. (2005). *Downtown Crossing plans to revise its look*. Boston Globe July 11, 2005.

the consensus is that these outdoor shopping malls do not always work. The tension now is figuring out what Downtown Crossing should be.”⁴⁰

Shoppers in Downtown Crossing in 2007: the City of Boston and BRA did a survey about what Downtown Crossing shoppers thought about the area in 2007.⁴¹ In terms of shoppers’ residence, 43% of shoppers were from City of Boston, and approximately 45% were from the rest of Massachusetts, while 12% were from outside the state. Compared with the survey in 1980, more people came from outside the state. Additionally, in terms of the purpose of visiting the area, 43% of respondents were for work, 29% were for shopping, and only 4% were eating and drinking.⁴² Notably, 87% of workers did not spend any money and just walked through the area.



Created by Author from *BRA: Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing (2007)*

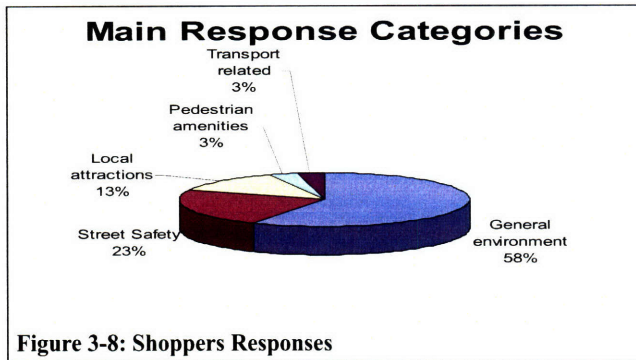
In terms of the image of the area, figure 3-7 shows that 44% of shoppers felt negative response about the existing Downtown Crossing facilities and environment. At the same time, the majority of the responses can be categorized into several main themes as shown in figure 3-8, including both positive responses and negative responses. The largest concern about the area was the state of the general environment, followed by issues regarding the local street safety and also

⁴⁰ Abelson, J. (2005). *Downtown Crossing plans to revise its look*. Boston Globe July 11, 2005.

⁴¹ City of Boston & BRA. (2007). *Downtown Crossing Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing: User’s Suggestions*.

⁴² Additionally, 9% were for passing through, 7% were for meeting friends, 5% were for education and 2% were for tourism.

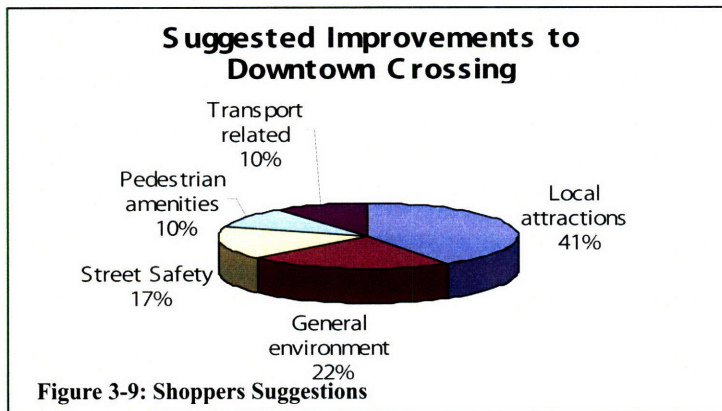
the quality and choice of local attractions. Most of the responses about the general environment and street safety were negative.



Created by Author from *BRA: Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing (2007)*

According to the same survey, nearly 90% of respondents had suggestions to offer; this means that Downtown shoppers believe that this area can change into a more attractive place.

Figure 3-9 shows that most of the suggested improvements were in regards to the local attractions, followed by general environment and public safety.



Created by Author from *BRA: Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing (2007)*

The survey shows that many pedestrians there did not use the Downtown Crossing facilities and just walked through the area. At the same time, most users suggested the improvement of the quality and variety of retail units in Downtown Crossing. The concept of “downtown as a department store” in 1980 has not been achieved. Users also demanded more

eating and drinking establishments and a general improvement to the night time activities in the area, which was also seen in the 1980 survey. Among the issues of general environment, overall cleanliness created the greatest concern. In terms of street safety, the public felt that there was a need for increased police presence to help reduce the unsafe feelings about the Downtown Crossing environment. The most desired improvement to pedestrian amenities is to walking surfaces. Users suggested repaving and fixing damaged sidewalks as well as more cohesion between the surfaces, for example between brick and concrete. The respondents also wanted better management of the “pedestrianized” shopping zone to keep the area a vehicle-free zone, and therefore provide a better pedestrian experience.

Based on these results, it can be said that many users are concerned about the bad condition of the general environment in the area, and the positive effects of the 1980 strategy have not continued. At the same time, the number of suggestions about general conditions is much smaller compared with that of negative responses from shoppers, which suggests that shoppers feel the bad condition of the general environment as the nature of the downtown area. On the other hand, they think the area has potential to get better by improving the quality and variety of retail units in the area, locating more eating and drinking establishments. The downtown area attracts people of various income levels and ethnic groups because it is a public transportation hub. How to keep the area clean and safe while attracting people of various backgrounds is the biggest issue for the downtown area. At the same time, the variety of retail shops is not managed effectively because there is no manager of the area. In contrast, retail malls

are managed corporately by a limited number of managers and this enables malls to create a comprehensive strategy for marketing goods. The absence of a single manager creates the differences of marketing strategy in downtown commercial strips and retail malls.

Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative: Mayor Menino states that

“Downtown Crossing is one of Boston’s beloved shopping districts, but it is in need of revitalization.”⁴³ To vitalize the area and change the negative image, the BRA, in conjunction with the Downtown Crossing Identity and Branding Strategy Consultant Team, crafts a branding strategy in 2007. The goal of the Identity and Branding Strategy of Downtown Crossing is to remake the area into a vibrant urban retail district and entertainment destination center. The Team assists in formulating a redevelopment and branding strategy that is based on historic and location assets of the district, while establishing a new image that reflects the diversity and vitality of this district.⁴⁴

This strategy is an important step of the Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative (DCEII), which was started in 2004 by the Mayor to upgrade the area physically using a public/private partnership with the city agencies, retailers and property owners.⁴⁵ This strategy can be categorized as a model of collaborations of public and private sectors which Kotler et al. (1993) emphasizes, which needs leadership and active support from both private and public

⁴³ BRA (2006). *Insight: Downtown Crossing: Vital Heart of Downtown Boston. Winter 2006*, p.1.

⁴⁴ City of Boston & BRA (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding Strategy: Scope of Service*.

⁴⁵ City of Boston & BRA (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding Strategy: Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative*.

stakeholders to craft, implement and realize the strategy.⁴⁶ The initiative also studies the possibility of Downtown Crossing becoming a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID is a special district which allows merchants to tax themselves on assessments, and to use the budget to increase safety and sanitation. Boston is the only major city without BIDs.

Though the outcome of this brand strategy has not come out yet, this section examines the current branding strategy and situations of the area to suggest an effective strategy to create a positive branding image of the area. The following sections describe the current plan of the brand strategy for the Downtown Crossing area.

I. Core Values

The core values of Downtown Crossing were decided by the City of Boston and the BRA with a consultant team after several discussions with stakeholders. At first, the consultant team crafted interviews with many stakeholders such as retailers and shoppers, and then the team as well as the City of Boston and the BRA decided the tentative core message of the area based on the interviews. The message is “Downtown Crossing is Boston’s meeting place. It’s an urban neighborhood where commerce and leisure intersect and diverse people are encouraged to innovate, interact and explore.” This core message is based on the visions and opportunities of the area which are described by key words for the area: meeting place, diversity, neighborhood, unique areas, walkability, social spaces, history, forward-thinking, sustainability, and learning. In terms of slogan and logos, the core value lies in walkable meeting place, which is reasonable

⁴⁶ Kotler et al. (1993). p.20.

because Downtown Crossing is the hub of transportation with a pedestrian-friendly shopping district. The formal core message, slogans and logos are going to be decided in the summer 2008.

II. Comprehensive Brand Strategy

To realize the core values of brand strategy, stakeholders including visitors need to feel the sequent brand promises from the area. First, a pedestrian environment is the most important aspect to be a walkable meeting place. The consultant team emphasizes the need for “creating a physical framework to foster the most walkable place in the country.”⁴⁷

Three Districts: Based on the retail mix and shoppers activities, the consultant team divided the target area into three districts (see figure 3-1).⁴⁸

North District: this district is located at the northern gateway of the shopping district. There are several historic buildings and sightseeing places connected with the Freedom Trail, with “slower”-paced environment and high concentration of eating and drinking establishments.

Central District: the key feature of this district is that it is a transit hub and busy “crossing” area with anchor shopping tenants. This district has a major department store, high proportion of fashion stores, and low proportion of eating and drinking establishments on the street.

South District: this district is the southern gateway of the area with high residential uses and entertainment activities. As a part of the Theater District, there are many theaters.

Additionally, this district has Emerson College with many students. Home furnishings, small cafes and bistros, and ethnic restaurants are in the district.

⁴⁷ City of Boston & BRA (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding Strategy: Stakeholder Presentation.*

⁴⁸ City of Boston & BRA (2007). *Boston Downtown Crossing, identity and branding Strategy: Stakeholder Presentation.*

Streetscape Improvements: the consultant team encourages active and vibrant frontages of retailers with storefront design, cooperating with retailers and executing the design codes. The BRA provides grants up to \$7,500 per storefront to help neighborhood businesses and property owners complete storefront renovations. The BRA also has enforced the signage regulations based on Article 11 of Boston Zoning Code⁴⁹ to correct more than 30 offenses of violations since 2005 to make the consistent landscape of the area (see figure 3-10).⁵⁰



Figure 3-10: Design Code

Source: City of Boston & BRA: *Downtown Crossing*
Strategy: *Stakeholder Presentation 2.27.07*

Additionally, outdoor dining/sidewalk cafes, and interactive kiosks such as push carts increase the vibrancy of the streets and the nature of the area as a place to meet. Installing traditional designed benches, trees, planters, signs and wayfindings are also emphasized for the hospitality of the area. Sculptures and art-bold design, and landmarks enhance the quality of the meeting place (see figure 3-11).

⁴⁹ BRA from <http://www.cityofboston.gov/BRA/pdf/PlanningPublications/Downtown%20Crossing%20signage%20regulations.pdf>

⁵⁰ Abelson, J. (2005). *Downtown Crossing plans to revise its look*. Boston Globe July 11, 2005.



Figure 3-11: Meeting Place

Source: City of Boston & BRA: *Downtown Crossing*
 Strategy: *Stakeholder Presentation 2.27.07*

Sanitation: With various shoppers from all the neighborhoods in the area, trash removal, and graffiti removal are critical issues in the area. Cleaning crews clean the area five times a week, which is less often compared with suburban shopping malls such as Cambridgeside Galleria, but it enhances the quality of the meeting place. Many local involvement festivals and events contribute to cleaning up the area: Project Place’s Clean Corners...Bright Hopes, a public maintenance business employing homeless individuals to clean Boston neighborhoods, and Boston Shines 365, year-around citywide neighborhood clean up & community service volunteer program.

Public Safety: Even though many people have the perception that Downtown Crossing is unsafe area, this area remains one of the safest place in Area A-1 of the city,⁵¹ which demonstrates the gap between the reality and the people’s perception of the area. There are two full-time police officers assigned to the area during the day while two walking police officers patrol at night.

⁵¹ City of Boston & BRA (2006). *DTX tranews Winter 2006*. Area A-1 covers Beacon Hill, Bay Village, Theater District, Downtown Crossing and Downtown Boston, Charlestown, Chinatown, and the North End.

There are also some undercover officers that patrol the area.⁵²

Marketing: City and BRA have increased local involvement to spread the concept of the area to stakeholders: Holiday Windows (2005) for attracting customers by creating Christmas atmosphere, and Holiday Promotion Bags (2006) for using the bags with the Downtown Crossing logo, both of which created the comprehensive and unified image of the area. Banners with the logo are installed on light poles, which also create the comprehensive image penetrating three districts (see figure 3-12). Besides the logo and the slogan, newsletters, periodic meetings, and educations of design codes help stakeholders to learn the concept of the brand strategy.



Source: City of Boston & BRA:
Downtown Crossing Strategy:
Stakeholder Presentation 2.27.07

Figure 3-12: Logos and Other Image Creation

Other Opportunities: In addition to 100,000 day time visitors, recent zoning modifications in the area enable more residential developments and the conversion of office space on upper floors to residential condos, which will double the residential population to 60,000 residents in the next ten years, and enhance the safety and vibrancy of the area.

III. Internal-Communications

⁵² City of Boston & BRA (2006). *DTX tranews Winter 2006*.

The brand strategy of Downtown Crossing is led by three major actors: City of Boston, BRA, and DCA. The DCA is an umbrella non-profit organization created in 1980, including 21 NPOs, 3 schools, and 102 business entities, whose mission is enhancing the economic status of the area, improving physical look and feel, making the area sustainable as a valuable and historic place, and advocating on behalf of the stakeholders.⁵³ To implement the comprehensive brand strategy, these three major actors meet regularly and have periodic forums to keep stakeholders informed and increase communication among them. Their current strategy is “speaking the same language” among stakeholders and establishing stronger inner-communications.⁵⁴ Many special events such as Boston Shrine 365, are held together to encourage active involvements from the community. Additionally, City of Boston and BRA opens the homepage of the Downtown Crossing Initiative, named “Downtown Crossing Strategy-developing a new brand and identity,” which provides documents, data and presentations, and periodic newsletters, helping to spread the brand concept as well as the future visions to everyone who is interested in the strategy.

IV. External-Communication

External-communications are important to attract new visitors and locate new retailers into the area. Though the area is in the process of creating a district’s identity (Inner-communication), and it is reasonable at present, external-communications will soon become important to enhance the capacity of the area. Tourists have their own expectations of places through guidebooks, newspapers, and promotions of tourist bureaus. Retailers need similar research to know the

⁵³ DCA is funded by members’ due and the vendors program, \$500,000 in total.

⁵⁴ Interview with Rosemarie E. Sansone, President of Downtown Crossing Association DCA, 2008

viability of locating the business in the area. An effective external-communication provides a strong push on the decision-making of where they would locate.

Visitors: People who come to the area for shopping clearly spend more money of \$75 per trip compared with tourists (about \$53) and people who come there for eating (about \$49), while 56% of pedestrians spend less than \$20 in the area.⁵⁵ This suggests that attracting shoppers as well as tourists to the area is the key issue. However, shoppers do not enjoy the retail mix and complain about the lack of food and drink establishments, while tourists may not enjoy Boston's historical atmosphere and image because of the poor facades of buildings and unappealing and unintegrated billboards of chain stores. Many travel guides, magazines, and websites provide visitors with critical information and images of where they should go. In terms of websites, the DCA provides the comprehensive images of Downtown Crossing while other websites including the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau focus on specific retailers, restaurants and theaters, instead of the general atmosphere of Downtown Crossing. Through sending the image of a walkable meeting place to potential visitors, the area can attract some streams of visitors from one of the large tourist destinations such as Freedom Trail, Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace and the Boston Common.

Residents: Residents care about the safety issues, in particular in night time. Though it is convenient to the public transportation network, the area has not achieved a livable image. There are not enough grocery stores in the area. The City and BRA's rezoning efforts will double the

⁵⁵ City of Boston & BRA. (2007). *Downtown Crossing Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing: Who is using Downtown Crossing?*

residents in Downtown Crossing, which enhances developers' promotions of new residential developments. Taking advantage of developers' promotional opportunities would be a key strategy to spread the brand image to the audience.

Offices & Retailers: Downtown Workers spend less money per trip but come to the area frequently. They feel the general lack of cafes and restaurants in the area. They want more food and drink establishments which would also benefit to create a more vibrant and safe images of the street in night time. To promote new businesses and investments to Boston, BRA advertises in the newsletters of Downtown Crossing that the BRA's Retail Team assists the new business and Boston Local Development Corporation provides loans of up to \$150,000 for new business. The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce mainly works on networking, forums and events. The City, BRA and DCA provide vacant lease and property information, but still need to cooperate with the Greater Boston Chamber, emphasizing the advantage of Downtown Crossing such as 100,000 visitors in day time and new investment of \$900,000 in the area. More than 100,000 copies of Downtown Crossing Shoppers Maps (lists of restaurants and retailers in the area) are distributed annually to visitors, retail stores, and hotels. Table 3-3 summaries the branding strategy for Downtown Crossing.

Table 3-3: Downtown Crossing Branding Strategy

Key Message	Downtown Crossing is Boston's meeting place. It's an urban neighborhood where commerce and leisure intersect and diverse people are encouraged to innovate, interact and explore.
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Visions		Meeting Place, Diversity, Neighborhood, Unique areas, Walkability, Social spaces, History, Forward-Thinking, Sustainability, and Learning		
Core values		Walkable Meeting Place		
Members	Citizens	Volunteers, NPOs of DCA (21 entities)		
	Businesses	DCA (105 entities)		
	Governments	City of Boston and BRA with a consultant team		
Budget		\$900,000 (\$500,000 from city budget and \$400,000 from contributions of property owners and retailers)		
Services	Streetscape Improvements	Active frontages-no blank walls, Outdoor dining/sidewalk cafes, Benches, trees, signage and wayfinding, Interactive kiosks, Sculptures and art-bold design, landmarks, Store front design enforcing, Coordination with the MBTA		
	Sanitation	Trash removal, and graffiti removal (5 days/week), Working with a public maintenance business and volunteers		
	Public Safety	Working with precinct police (2 officers during the day and additional 2 officers at night)		
	Marketing (Internal & External Education)	Local Involvement Events	Holiday Windows (2005), Holiday Promotion Bags (2006), Boston Shines 365 (Citywide Neighborhood Clean Up & Community Volunteer Program)	
		Logos	yes (representing a meeting place)	
		Banners	yes	
		Slogans	yes (e.g. past Meet present, neighbor Meet neighbor)	
		Newsletters	yes (weekly & quarterly)	
		Periodic meetings	yes (DCA meets BRA and City of Boston periodically, and DCA's members' meeting once two months)	
		Educations	Storefront design code	
Other Opportunities		Will double the residents to 60,000 by the rezoning		

CHAPTER 4

SUGGESTIONS FROM OTHER COMMERCIAL STREETS

Some commercial streets have successfully created their brand images by preserving their architectural uniqueness, mobilizing merchants, and crafting their own design codes, taking advantage of its indigenous features. Newbury Street in Boston, the Ginza District and Omotesando Street suggest ways to preserve and create a brand image of streets based on the economic, physical, and institutional structures of the districts. This chapter discusses what elements create the brand image of the streets.

4-1 IMAGE OF NEWBURY STREET

1. Profile: Newbury Street is located in the Back Bay area of Boston (see figure 4-1). The area is surrounded by Boston Public Garden, the Back Bay office space, Massachusetts Avenue, and Charles River. There are historic 19th century brownstone buildings that contain shops and restaurants, making it a popular destination for visitors and neighbors. According to the Newbury Street League, Newbury Street ranks as one of the premier shopping streets in the entire country, holding its own district against the likes of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, Madison Avenue in New York, and Worth Avenue in Florida.⁵⁶ Copley Place and Prudential Center as well as retailers on Boylston Street provide the largest commercial concentration in Boston (Back Bay: 1,400,000+ sqft. and Downtown Crossing: 1,300,000 sqft.). Some see the commercial center has

⁵⁶ Newbury Street League *The History of Newbury Street*

now moved to Back Bay area including Newbury Street, while others suggest that the Back Bay area and Downtown Crossing complement the commercial functions of the city: the Back Bay area for high-end retailers and Downtown Crossing for more casual retailers.⁵⁷

This street has a mix of shops in renovated brownstone buildings, with a range of chic brand shops and relatively casual ones, and the physical feature of retail buildings includes small storefront and their structure (retailers on basement, street level and above). *The Back Bay: A Living Portrait* (1995) describes the features as:

The long rows of nearly identical houses have been individualized by storefronts. The old bay windows lend themselves nicely to being display windows, and the twenty-foot setbacks have been effectively adapted for kiosks, sidewalk cafes, or open-air displays. From end to end the street exhibits a lively commercial air that attracts shoppers and browsers year around.⁵⁸

This generally high-end and fashionable, but casual mixed shopping street attracts various kinds of customers. The Back Bay area has many workers during weekdays and also many visitors in weekends; approximately 100,000 people visit the area in a day.

⁵⁷ Interview with Meg Mainzer-Cohen, President and Executive Director, 2008.

⁵⁸ Moor, B. W. & Weesner, G. (1995). *Back Bay: A living portrait*. Centry Hill Press, p.66.

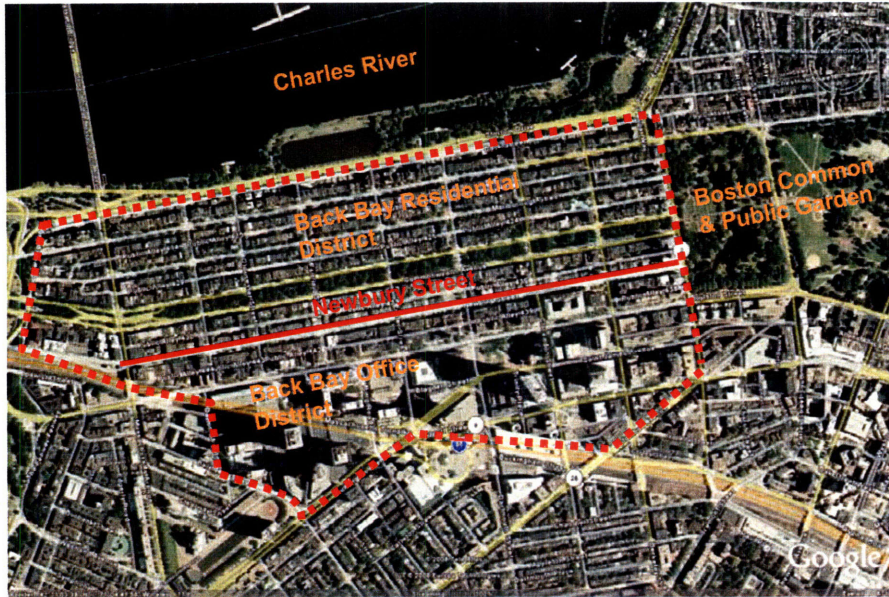


Figure 4-1: Map of Newbury Street and the Back Bay district

■ ■ ■ Boundary of the Back Bay District defined by Neighborhood Association of Back Bay

Source: Created by author from Google Earth

2. History: The Back Bay area including Newbury Street once was under the water of Boston Harbor. In 1857, the area of tidal flats and marshes started to be filled and became the Back Bay District of the city, completed by 1882. The grid system of roads is unusual in Boston as most of the city’s other streets are organically shaped, which have made the Back Bay area a special and decent atmosphere. All the buildings in the area were built around the same time with European design elements, including wide boulevards, grid patterns and parkways, which create the elegant atmosphere of the district.

The redevelopment of this area was based on the “high spine” concept by the City of Boston and BRA in 1960s, which would create the development line near Newbury Street to develop the unused rail road yard. The transformation into a trendy shopping district for young people began in the 1970s. Many schools, churches, dormitories, and fraternity houses have been

established in the northern part of the Back Bay. Newbury Street, located close to the Back Bay Office District, has become the main commercial street since the 1970's, attracting many office workers and visitors for shopping. The main reason that Newbury Street became a major shopping strip in the 1970's can be traced to the new development of the Back Bay Office District: the Prudential Building (1965) and the 60 story John Hancock Building (1976) with a series of hotels, mid-rise residential and office buildings, and two major shopping centers: Copley Place and the Prudential Center. Now cultural and retail uses have surpassed the original residential area, but still 19th century buildings are well preserved.

3. Retail-Mix: There are various retailers ranging from international brand shops to casual retailers. According to the Newbury Street League (NSL), a merchant association, "The shopping spectrum ranges from chic, upscale boutiques starting at Arlington Street to hip and trendy shops closer to Massachusetts Avenue, with a wide range to offer in between."⁵⁹ A study by Morales (1996) shows that rents on the block between Berkeley and Arlington Streets can easily be \$80 a month per square foot while the middle blocks of Newbury Street range between \$30 and \$40 a month per square foot.⁶⁰

As area anchors, many fashion brand shops such as Armani, Burberry, Cartier, Chanel, Fendi, Gucci, Hermes, Lacoste, Prada, and Valentino, cafés, restaurants, and boutiques are located in the area. Best Buy home appliance store was opened in 2007 at the western edge of the

⁵⁹ Interview with Susan Kelly, 2008.

⁶⁰ Morales, J. A. (1996). *Lessons to be learned from the apparent success of San Francisco's Union Street and Boston's Newbury Street commercial districts*. MIT theses, p.10.

street while Zara, Spanish fashion retailer, opened in the middle block of the street in 2008.

Jeltsen (2008) describes the recent trend of opening chain retailers on the street as “Newburied – the chain store-ization of Boston’s most luxurious strip.”⁶¹ The increase of chain stores threatens to change the feature of the district into a more homogeneous retail strip, a trend which can be seen nationwide.

4. Chic and High-end Image: Now many people know Newbury Street as a distinctive shopping street. Newbury Street is an eclectic mix of shops in brownstone buildings. The large show windows increase the transparency of the storefronts. Long buildings are identically individualized by their storefronts, which creates a rhythm when people are walking along and it gives shoppers a vibrant image. The old bay windows and twenty foot setbacks are used for kiosks, sidewalk cafes, or displays, which also increase the feeling of vibrancy (see figure 4-2).

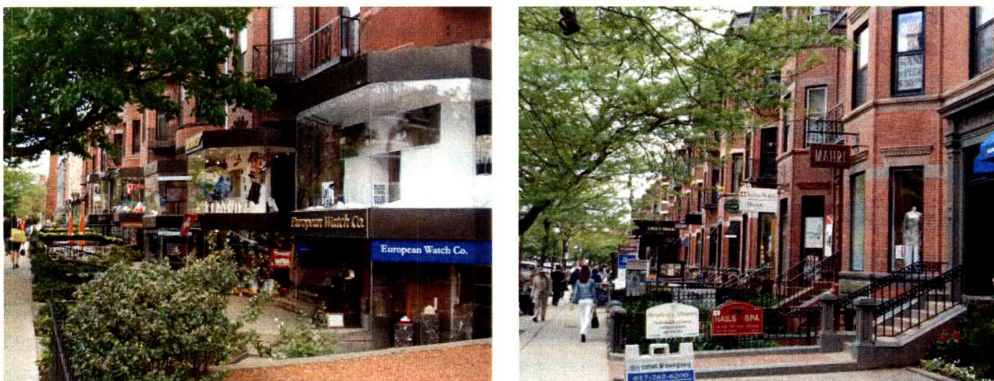


Figure 4-2: Organized Storefronts of Newbury Street

Sources: Author

The core values of Newbury Street lie in its status as a premier shopping street with the chic atmosphere of Victorian style brownstone buildings. Physical impacts from the façade,

⁶¹ Jeltsen, M. (2008) *The chain store-ization of Boston's most luxurious strip* Weekly Dig. P.6.

sidewalk, building design and cleanliness of the street are major strengths of the street.

According to NSL, the street is defined as “one of the premier shopping streets in the entire country. It is a community that encompasses fashion, museum quality of art, specialty boutiques, business services, fine dining, and so much more...all set in a historical district with an electric atmosphere.”⁶² This core message is based on the visions and opportunities which differentiate the street from other streets in the city in that this historical street has special features with an elegant and electric atmosphere.

Newbury Street possesses two distinct characteristics. The eastern blocks have high-end retailers, while the western blocks have retailers with more moderate price retailers. In spite of the difference of retailers, Newbury Street successfully keeps a high-end and chic image along the entire street. One of the reasons can be attributed to the consistent atmosphere with well-preserved brownstone buildings and vibrant sidewalk activities such as cafes and art galleries. This street shows that an image can be kept along a street by physical features which are sequential and comprehensive. The consistent physical features of a street help to overcome the differences in socio-economic characters and establish a branding image along the street.⁶³

5. Preservation and Historic Image: The 19th century brownstone buildings are preserved based on the design restriction of the city’s Locally Designated Historic District,⁶⁴ established in

⁶² Newbury Street League. *Welcome to the world on a street*. Retrieved March 8, 2008, from <http://www.newburystreetleague.org/>

⁶³ Along Newbury Street from east to west, the median household income goes down as \$70,147 (02199), \$64,942 (02116), \$30,334 (02115), and \$29,041 (zip code 02215) in the Back Bay area, according to City Data com from <http://www.city-data.com/zips/02215.html>

⁶⁴ The boundary of the Back Bay Architectural District is Back Street on the north, Arlington Street on the east, Boylston Street on the south and Charlesgate East on the west.

1966, and the area was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The Back Bay Architectural Commission reviews and approves exterior changes to buildings in the district based on Chapter 625 of the Acts of 1966. This includes all demolitions, new construction, alterations, and repairs. Signs and other features are also included in the jurisdiction. This strong restriction for historic preservation enables the district to enjoy the historical atmosphere, which has a strong impact on the brand strategy of the area. Notably, community groups, Back Bay Association (BBA) and Neighborhood Association of Back Bay (NABB), nominate commissioners of the Back Bay Architectural Commission to the Mayor.

6. Safe Image: the Back Bay district is thought to be relatively safe compared with Downtown Crossing, considering its high-income and mixed-use neighborhood. Although the Back Bay area leads the city in frequency of larceny incidents, including shoplifting, the area maintains a safe image. In terms of violent crime, the area has also one of the highest crime rates next to Bay Village and Chinatown.⁶⁵ There are five day-shift police officers assigned to the area and 4 to 5 officers for the night-shift.⁶⁶ Once a month representatives from the Back Bay (including NABB, NSL, BBA, mayor's office, local councilor's office and attorney's office), Fenway, South End, and Roxbury neighborhoods meet police officers to discuss crime preventions.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ National Association of Realtors, from <http://neighborhoods.realtor.com/MA/Boston/Back-bay/479805/Crime-stats>

⁶⁶ Interview to Boston Police Department. According to the officer, there are 5 Day shift officers (one-2 man car, one-1 man car, walking beat on Newbury Street, and walking beat at Copley), 5 First half shift officers (one-1 man car, one-2 man anti crime car (city wide), walking beat Newbury, and walking beat at Copley), and 4 Last half shift officers (one-1 man car, one-2 man anti crime car (city wide), and 1 man on Newbury Street).

⁶⁷ Neighborhood Association of Back Bay *Crime Committee* Retrieved March 9, 2008 from <http://www.nabbonline.com/crime.htm>

4.2 BRAND ANALYSIS OF NEWBURY STREET

Newbury Street is vibrant retail area with many visitors, and the general image of the area is positive compared with Downtown's negative image. Analyzing how to preserve and reinforce the image of this chic shopping street provides us insights into brand strategy. Based on the criteria of the branding strategy in section 2-3, the following features are found to support the district's high-end image.

- Stakeholders share the advantage of the well-preserved Victorian-style brownstone buildings with prominent storefronts and a wide sidewalk (as seen in figure 4-2), which is the core value of the area. The Architectural Commission as well as NABB makes efforts to enforce the architectural restriction and preserve the historical image. Mixed-use buildings on the street and residential area in Back Bay Residential District also contributes to keeping the safe image.
- Different characters of the eastern side of Newbury Street (high-end small-to-middle size retailers), western side of the Street (casual small-to-middle size retailers), as well as Boylston Street (chain stores and restaurants), and Copley Place and Prudential Center (high-end middle-to-large retailers) complement each other and enhance the retail potentials of the area. In general, the street has high-end image based on the high fashion stores on the eastern side and well-preserved and consistent storefronts. Many eating and drinking establishments open until mid-night, which create the vibrant and safe image of the area at night.

4.3 IMAGE OF GINZA DISTRICT

1. Profile: For more than 100 years, the Ginza district has stood for luxury, high society and the premier shopping area in Japan. Ginza is the symbol of shopping in Japan with many department stores, boutiques, restaurants and cafes. This area is adjacent to the Marunouchi, and Shiodome Office Districts, and Hibiya Theatre District (see figure 4-3). According to a survey done by the Ginza Town Management Committee, 89% of respondents used public transport to come into the area.⁶⁸ Shoppers had various backgrounds: 40% were Tokyo residents, 41% were Greater Tokyo residents, and 10% were visitors from another area: this variation is similar to that of Downtown Crossing in Boston. This area has many workers during weekdays and also many visitors in weekends; approximately 150,000 people visit the area in a day. Many workers have lunch in Ginza and they also stay in the district at night time for drink and food which benefit to create vibrant and safe image. On the other hand, there are many competitors for the Ginza district including the premier shopping area of Omotesando Street in Harajuku, the transportation hubs of Shinjuku, Shibuya, and Ikebukuro with large commercial concentrations. How to differentiate the area from other competitors is a key issue for the district.

⁶⁸ Brochure of Ginza Town Management Committee (1999).



Figure 4-3: Map of Ginza District

Source: Created by Author from Google Earth.

2. History: The district name “Ginza” is named after a silver-coin mint which was established in 1612 in the early Edo period (1603-1867). At the beginning of the Edo period, the district was under water. The area was reclaimed and planned as a grid road network system for expanding the city in 1612. The land was divided into several blocks (approximately 400foot*400foot by each) by the streets. Communities were created by merchants and residents based on these blocks.

In the Meiji-period (1868-1912), after a devastating fire in 1872, the district was rebuilt with two-and three-story Georgian brick buildings designed by the Irish born architect Thomas Waters, along with a shopping promenade on the street. This project aimed to protect the area from fire and at the same time, construct the symbol of a westernized town at the center of Tokyo to demonstrate the country’s advancement of westernization.

After the devastating Kanto Large Earthquake in 1923, many westernized brick buildings were destroyed, but the shape of the city blocks remained the same. Through the redevelopment from the earthquake, Ginza had become a prominent commercial district with department stores, theaters, and cafes. The area attracted many young people called “modern boys” and “modern girls” who enjoyed promenading along the streets and made “Gin-bura” culture, a kind of window shopping culture. Ginza has been the center of trendy modern cultures which has been largely influence on people’s shopping behaviors since the 1920’s. During World War II, Ginza was completely devastated by US air force attacks.

After WWII, for the Tokyo Olympic Games of 1964, highways, and subways, and other infrastructures were constructed and many rivers and canals were reclaimed to construct these roads and highways. Even though the largest shopping district in Tokyo has moved to Shinjuku sub-center area since the 1970’s, Ginza has been a popular destination for visitors. On weekends, the main Ginza Street is closed to traffic and becomes a pedestrian shopping mall. Most of the European-style buildings are destroyed by earthquakes and the war, but some old buildings are still there, the most famous one being Wako building with its clock tower.

In the bubble economy in the 1980’s, Ginza was renowned as Japan’s most expensive neighborhood. Its main street was lined with famous department stores and boutiques, art galleries, and high-end clubs and bars. But in the long recession from 1991, its land prices have continued to fall. Taking advantage of these affordable prices, international brand stores and boutiques, as well as domestic retail and restaurant chains, have moved to the area, with the

renovation of old buildings. This mixture of luxury and popular establishments gives Ginza a new trend, but it is slightly changing the brand image of the area— many highest brand stores and many casual stores exist side by side.

3. Ginza Filter and Town Management Committee: Since the Meiji period, Ginza has been regarded as the symbol of shopping, famous for its historical features, and establishing trends for the entire country. This unique feature is based on the fact that individual merchants have nurtured emotional ties with the place through the democratic process of decision-making with many local stakeholders about the local problems.⁶⁹ This uniqueness is maintained through the informal process so called “Ginza Filter” which selects the features of what Ginza should be and turns down the features of what Ginza should not be.⁷⁰

Ginza area has its own zoning rules, which decide FAR,⁷¹ maximum height, set backs, and parking lot rules, which are called “Ginza Rules.” However, faced with the pressure of rezoning to boost regional economy and the renovation rush of buildings constructed in the period of the rapid economic growth in 1960s and 1970s, the area needs more visible rules rather than invisible and informal rules. To deal with these problems, a merchant association of the district crafted the Town Management Vision of Ginza District in 1999 and proposed to create the Ginza Town Management Committee (GTMC). The GTMC was established in 2004 to: deal with various problems including new developments as the first contact place for residents and

⁶⁹ Interview from Eriko Takezawa, Ginza Town Management Committee, 2008.

⁷⁰ Interview from Eriko Takezawa, Ginza Town Management Committee, 2008.

⁷¹ Floor Area Ratio

developers; provide an open table to discuss the area plan with many stakeholders; envision the future of the area and craft guidelines and rules; suggest new measures and policies to make the place more attractive; and promote the advantages and events of the area.

Town Management of Ginza

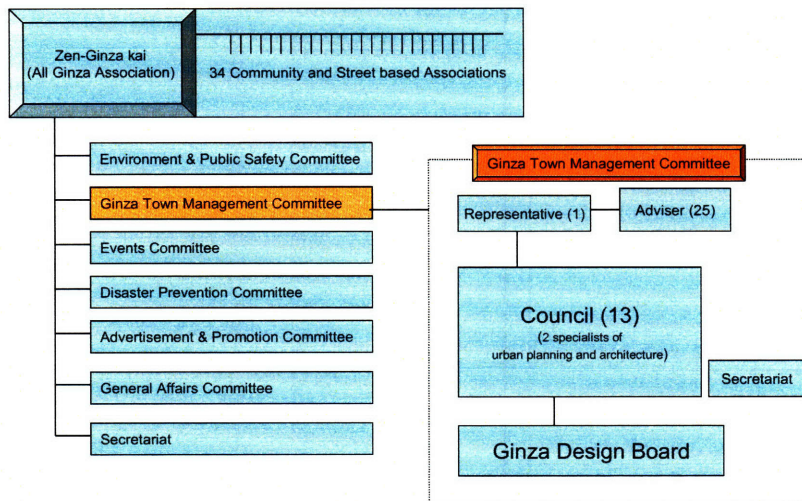


Figure 4-4: Town Management of Ginza

Source: Created by Author from the brochure of Ginza Town Management Committee (2007)

Figure 4-4 shows the structure of GTMC which represents the interests of merchants and retailers of the area, or business interests. Funding is from members, and the amount of individual funding is based on the length of the store front on streets. The total funding is from \$1 million to \$1.2 million. Many merchants, even the presidents or owners of department stores and shops, participate in the volunteer activities and make the area safe and clean.⁷² Additionally, GTMC holds many forums and meetings to discuss the design, public transport, historic preservation, and events (large scale forums for 4 times a year) with many participants such as

⁷² Interview from Eriko Takezawa, 2008.

retailers, planners, architects, essay writers, and audience from inside and outside the district to understand the uniqueness of the district.⁷³

Through the agreement of Chuo Ward and Ginza district, new zoning rules including maximum height, setbacks, and FAR were decided in 1999 and in 2006, new additional rules were crafted to deal with billboards, traffic congestions, and height limit exemption for a special purpose such as media and theatres to enhance the cultural value of the area.



Figure 4-5: Landscape of Ginza



Source: Author

The Ginza Design Board is established under the GTMC to consult and approve the design of new developments based on the Chuo Ward development ordinance. Developers are required to build a consensus with the Ginza Design Board. Then Chuo Ward makes a final decision about the approval of new developments based on the report from the Board.

These rules and management systems have been established based on the agreement of a local government and GTMC, incorporating informal local knowledge and rules into the formal zoning scheme. The design of buildings are difficult to restrict, but the GTMC acts as a “filter,”

⁷³ Brochure of Ginza Town Management Committee (2007).

doing a negative check to new developments based on the opinions of merchants, and planners and design specialists in the committee.

4. Use of Alleys and Historic Image: The Ginza area has vibrant retail space with many visitors and workers, and the general image of the area is a high-end shopping district for relatively senior generations. According to a survey done by Ginza-Dori Rengo-kai, more than 60 % of respondents felt the historical and cultural features to be as the attractiveness of the area.⁷⁴ Many users believed the area should make much of its history and tradition, along with its sophisticated feature of matured high-end image. While the road network is organized as a grid system like the Back Bay area in Boston, there are many narrow alleys, which connect local merchant communities behind the major broad streets such as Ginza Street. These narrow alleys come from the lot allocation patterns in the Edo-period, and still the network works as capillary vessels in the communities and enhances the attractiveness and historic features in the area. Figure 4-6 shows the transitions of lot patterns and alley networks from the Edo-period in the 18th century to the current situation.

Alleys have gone through the destruction pressures by earthquakes, fires, wars, and recent super-block redevelopments. Many of them have been extinct, but some of them still provide the unique features of the area, such as history and merchant cultures. These alleys provide the better pedestrian-network of the area, increase its vibrancy and the variety of retailers, and attract many visitors. Figure 4-7 demonstrates the current use of these narrow alleys.

⁷⁴ Brochure of Ginza Town Management Committee (2007).

Change of Lot Patterns (Model)

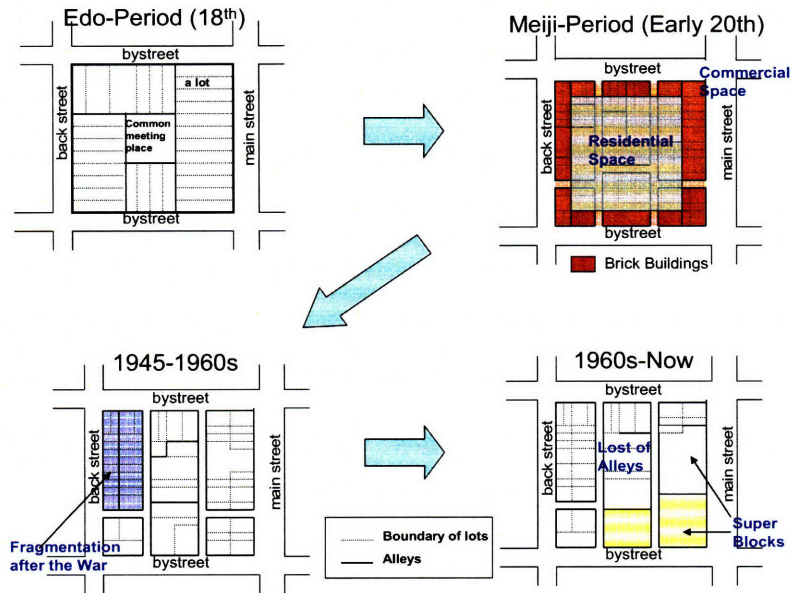


Figure 4-6: Lot Patterns of Ginza

Source: Created by Author from *History of Ginza: 400 years*



Figure 4-7: Alleys in Ginza

Source: Author

4.4 BRAND ANALYSIS OF GINZA DISTRICT

Ginza has been a major shopping center in Tokyo for more than 100 years. The image has changed through its history, but the general image of the area is positive. Though the uncoordinated façade of buildings and unappealing billboards of chain stores might be destroying a part of a traditional atmosphere, visitors can enjoy Ginza’s “high-end” atmosphere and image because of the well managed sidewalks and back alleys, and many prestigious

retailers such as international brand shops and fashionable or traditional-styled cafes and restaurants. Based on the criteria of the branding strategy in section 2-3, the following features are found which support the district's high-end and historical images.

- The Ginza area has preserved its high-end and historical image by incorporating its local rules into official zoning rules in cooperation with community groups and the local government. The Design Board of GTMC works as a filter to check new developments for preserving Ginza's atmosphere.
- GTMC raises funds from landlords and tenants to hold events, clean the littering, and keep the safety of the area. Many merchants participate in events and daily chores such as dealing with traffic congestions and keeping safety for the community.
- The Ginza area strengthens its historical image through the forums and events sponsored by GTMC and redefines the function of narrow back alleys to attract visitors (see figure 4-8). Through these efforts, the area successfully uses the historical resources to differentiate itself from other competitors, and reinforce the district's image of the silver mint in the Edo-period, the first westernized brick streets in the Meiji-period, and a commercial and cultural center, taking advantage of Ginza's being the first district in Japan to act as a place where Japanese and western culture could be exchanged.



Figure 4-8: Alleys in Ginza 2



Source: Author

4.5 IMAGE OF OMOTESANDO STREET

1. Profile: Omotesando Street is a main approach to the Meiji Shinto-Shrine, one of the largest shrines in Japan, and famous for its zelkova trees lining both sides of the street. It is located in the general Harajuku area⁷⁵ in the middle of Shinjuku and Shibuya which are major transportation and shopping hubs of Tokyo. The street is known as an upscale shopping area with several world brand shops, such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci, and is sometimes referred to as “Tokyo’s Champs Élysées.” The name “Omotesando” itself represents a main approach or road to a shrine. The Omotesando Street and the Harajuku area is adjacent to the Aoyama District, which is known as a fashionable commercial and high-income residential area, the Shibuya District, which is the major transportation hub of Tokyo and famous for being the mecca of young generations’ cultures, and the Meiji Shrine with large green area (see figure 4-9).

According to a survey in 1993, shoppers have various backgrounds: 47% were Tokyo 23 Wards

⁷⁵ The Harajuku area is defined as the area near the Harajuku Station of Japan Railway, usually includes all Omotesando Street. Harajuku area is not a formal address. Formal address is Jingumae, but people usually do not use this address.

residents, 7.4% were Greater Tokyo residents, and 45% were visitors from another area: this is much more various compared with Ginza. Additionally, most of the shoppers are young people.⁷⁶



Source: Created by Author from Google Earth.

Figure 4-9: Map of Omotesando Street and Harajuku District
■■■■■ Boundary of Harajuku based on people's image

This area has many shoppers from Asia such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China,⁷⁷ and there are many foreigners all over the world because many embassies are located near the area. Approximately 100,000 people visit the area in a day. About 60% of visitors have drink or food in the area. Many restaurants and cafes are closed before 8pm, but the district still keeps its safe image.⁷⁸

2. History: Omotesando-Street was constructed by City of Tokyo in 1920 as a major approach to the Meiji-Shrine. The street was laid in the direction that faces the sun at noon of the First Day of

⁷⁶ In 1993, below 18 year-old (34%) and 19-22 year-old (32%) and in 2006, targeted customers for retailers were 30s (32%), 20s (28%), 40s (19%), and 10s (8%).

⁷⁷ For some shops such as a famous toy and character store, 40 % of sales are brought by Asian travelers. Source: Interview with Akira Ketsuka, 2008.

⁷⁸ According to the retailers' survey in 2007, 38% of retailers felt the area safe and 16% felt unsafe. 41% had inbtween.

Summer, the sun being the symbol of the god in the Shinto religion. After the war, there used to be the Washington Heights, an apartment complex for US soldiers and their families. Many retailers ran businesses to sell products and services for American soldiers and their families, which enabled the area to get more opportunities to absorb trendy and fashionable American cultures.

After 1963, just before the Olympic Games, many young people started showing up in their latest fashion in the area and many fashion magazines focused on the area, which brought more young people into the area. In the 1980's, young fashion designers in the area, known as "Mansion Makers in Harajuku," established their branch shops in the area. They caught the attention of teenagers and younger generations through media and created their own fashion trends. After the 1990's, this area were able to provide various kinds of fashions from casual to high-end with many fashion designers, and many international brand shops such as Gucci and Prada opened their stores on the street, being attracted by the beautiful street with its zelkova trees in addition to the established fashion center.

3. High-end Image: Omotesando Street is known as a fashionable street with many brand-name boutiques and stores. According to the survey done by Keyaki-Kai, retailers thought the attractiveness of the district was attributed to sophisticated landscape with trees (34%), fashionable atmosphere (24%), and a vibrant street image (7%) in 2007.⁷⁹ Figure 4-10 shows the physical features of Omotesando Street. Many volunteers as well as the staff of the

⁷⁹ Keyaki-Kai (2007). Member retailer's survey.

Harajuku-Omotesando Keyaki-Kai (HOKK) clean the street everyday for three hours. Akira Ketsuka, Secretary General of HOKK, said that it is important for brand managers to let visitors see the effort of cleaning activities and send a message that littering on the street creates a bad image.⁸⁰ HOKK also started a campaign of “Eco-Avenue” which promotes the use of clean energy for lightings, and encourage the zero-emission effort by reducing trashes. The HOKK connects these activities with symbolic zelkova trees and the green of Meiji-Shrine to reinforce the purified clean image of the street. This is one of the attempts that potential customers are fully aware of regarding the place’s distinctive advantage to promote the place’s value and image.



Figure 4-10: Physical Features of Omotesando Street



Source: Author

The uniqueness of the area is attracting many shoppers even though it is not a traffic hub. According to the Kyojiro Hata, CEO of Louis Vuitton Japan, Louis Vuitton Japan established the first store on the street among all international brand shops in 1981 because 1) physical environments such as a wide street lined with beautiful zelkova trees was appropriate for the

⁸⁰ Interview with Akira Ketsuka, 2008.

company's luxurious brand image, 2) there were many young customers in the area, and 3) the district itself was also young and expected to grow into a premier shopping street faster than Ginza.⁸¹ He also mentioned the strengths of the area as the mixed features of the markets that the Harajuku-Station area is for younger generations and the Aoyama District for more senior generations, and also there are niche markets behind the main Omotesando Street, which are filled with casual retailers and residential space. Figure 4-11 shows the socio-economic hierarchical structure of the district.

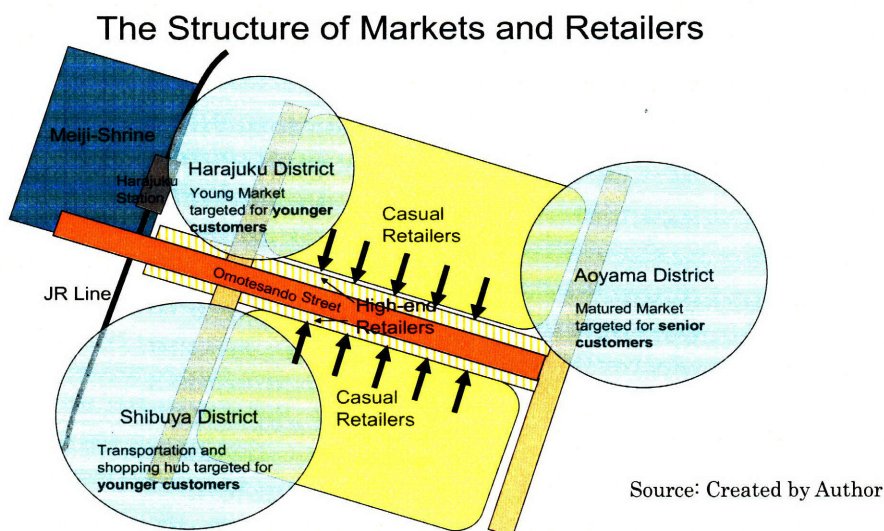


Figure 4-11: Structure of Harajuku District

Many managers of casual brands behind the main street dream to become a popular brand and open stores on the main street, which is the symbol of sophisticated premier brands in Japan. The rent of shops off of Omotesando Street is relatively reasonable and many young fashion designers are attracted to the area.⁸² In terms of the physical features, the main Omotesando Street has the absolute premier image as an organized and purified street because this straight

⁸¹ Omotesando-Keyaki-Kai (2004). *Harajuku-Omotesando*. Ei Publishing Co., Ltd, P.17.

⁸² The rent of buildings on Omotesando Street is about \$56 a month per square foot and that of the area behind the street is about \$30. Source: Interview with Akira Ketsuka, Keyaki-kai.

street was historically and intentionally constructed through the area of complex alley networks. That said, the Omotesando Street is the edge of a chaotic area and a sophisticated street. This physical hierarchy as well as economic turnover makes the dynamics of the retail-mix in the area and vitalizes its retail market. Additionally, there are no national chain department stores in the area; many small-medium size retailers compete with each other to get the premier position in the area, which also means the premier position in the nation and the Asian countries. But many world brand shops occupy the premier retail space on the main street, which could take away from the dynamics of the main street retailers and the retailers behind the street.

National & International: Meiji Shinto-Shrine was constructed for the purpose of commemorating the death and accomplishments of the Meiji Emperor, and promoting the national religion. Omotesando Street is still considered as a symbol of a traditional Japanese Shinto street. But at the same time, the area attracted many young customers and trendy western cultures and fashions after the war. At first, the merchant association of the area was named “Harajuku Champs Élysées Kai (Association)” because the street with lined trees looked like Champs Élysées in Paris and many people yearned for the western cultures. They celebrated Christmas Day by installing tree illuminations on the street.

But faced with the globalization and the economic collapse of the 90’s, many people felt it strange to decorate and celebrate the way of the western culture. The association changed its name into “Harajuku-Omotesando Keyaki (zelkova)-Kai (HOKK)” in 1999 to get its own identity as a Japanese religious street and installed national flags and traditional illuminations.

Masaaki Yamamoto, a head of HOKK, stated that since the association emphasized the Japanese traditional features on the street, many international brand retailers have come to open their stores on the street.⁸³ He also mentioned that according to these retailers, the reason for choosing the location is the existence of Meiji Shrine and the symbolic meaning of the street as well as the beautiful zelkova trees on the street.⁸⁴

At the same time, the association started the dancing festival “Super Yosakoi” to unify the communities in the area in 2001. The Meiji Shrine authorized the festival as the formal festival of the shrine, which means that the festival is the part of religious activities and celebrations of the Japanese traditional gods. This festival promotes the relationships between the neighborhood and the Shrine, and also enhances the relationship among the community members such as a neighborhood association and a merchant association, who used to have conflicts between them.⁸⁵ Many people participate in the festival, and a part of the reason is the authenticity of the festival from the Meiji Shrine. Approximately 1,000,000 people come to see or participate in the festival during the two-day long event.

National and traditional features can be an important element to attract international retailers and customers. Physical features which contain symbolic meanings in the context of its history and religion can create a branding image for high-end streets.

⁸³ Omotesando-Keyaki-Kai (2004). *Harajuku-Omotesando*. Ei Publishing Co., Ltd, P.27.

⁸⁴ Omotesando-Keyaki-Kai (2004). *Harajuku-Omotesando*. Ei Publishing Co., Ltd, P.27.

⁸⁵ Omotesando-Keyaki-Kai (2004). *Harajuku-Omotesando*. Ei Publishing Co., Ltd, P.28.

4.6 BRAND ANALYSIS OF OMOTESANDO STREET

Omotesando Street has established its image as the most fashionable street in Tokyo.

According to the survey done by a newspaper company, the most popular district for young females in Tokyo was Omotesando, much ahead of Ginza.⁸⁶ The following features are found to support the high-end image of the street.

- Strengthening the image as a main approach to Meiji Shinto-Shrine and maintaining the greenery and safety of the area, which attract visitors and retailers all over the world. Using festivals and events to promote the relationship between neighborhoods and retailers, thus keeping good relationship with the shrine.
- Taking advantage of the physical structure of the area, as one symbolic main street with chaotic network of back alleys, which creates the hierarchy and dynamics of the retail turnover and enhance trendy cultures. Making use of “the area behind the main street” as the center of new cultures is the key issue for enhancing the attractiveness of the area.
- Emphasizing the aspect of meeting place with the purified symbolic image and chaotic back alley image, and Japanese religious culture and the western cultures. At the same time, links between Shibuya, Aoyama, and Meiji-Shrine with its large green area are being improved to create a strong image which differentiates itself from the images of other competitive areas such as Shinjuku and Ginza, and the newly developed Roppongi area.

⁸⁶ Mitsuhashi, S. (2005). *Harajuku Omotesando Keyaki-kai Syotengai: Ikiiki Syotengai to Machidukuri*.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF STREET IMAGES

The images of streets have strong impacts on the reality of places, and on the people's expectations and perceptions of places. According to Morgan et al. (2003), the image of a place lasts longer in people's mind than the reality of places, which changes relatively quickly.⁸⁷ People's expectations affect their decision of where to live, work, shop and meet. People's selection of places based on their expectations can reinforce the reality of places and it creates the momentum of the city growth and decline, which again strengthens the image of places. Reality and image reinforce each other through this cycle. This chapter discusses the elements of the street image.

5.1 PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS AND ELEMENTS OF STREET IMAGES

Based on the four target streets in the previous chapters, the branding image of commercial streets is created by 1) the landscape of the street, 2) the accessibility to public transit, 3) neighborhood land use, 4) retail mix and structures, and 5) the history of the area. According to Kotler et al. (1993), the general place image can be divided into six categories: positive image, weak image, negative image, mixed image, contradictory image, and overly attractive image.⁸⁸ Downtown Crossing has a relatively negative, mixed, and contradictory

⁸⁷ Morgan et al. (2004). *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Elsevier Ltd, p.43.

⁸⁸ Kotler, P., Haider, D. H. and Rein, I. (1993). *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry and Tourism to Cities, States and Nations*. Free Press, p.35-36.

image while Newbury Street has a positive and overly attractive image. Ginza District has a positive, attractive, and mixed but not contradictory image, and Omotesando Street has a positive and overly attractive image. More precisely, street images can be segmented into more detailed categories based on the elements of the streets. The following are images based on people's expectation and perception of a street, which can be seen in the target four streets.

Historical Image: Since the branding image of places is the associations linked to the places, history has much impact on a district as the memory of places. For example, the renovation project of historical buildings at Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace attracts 50,000 people a day. Because the image of the marketplace is consistent with the historical image of Boston, the historical image of the marketplace gives potential shoppers the authenticity of the place and gives them the reason to visit while they are in Boston. This is the part of marketing strategy of places that requires comprehensiveness of image between city and marketplace. Historic preservation is also important to attract shoppers, though it sometimes conflicts with the interests of developers and retailers. John de Monchaux and J. Mark Schuster (1997) state that there are five tools of government action for the preservation of built heritage, which include 1) direct operation based on their ownership, 2) regulation such as zoning codes, 3) incentives such as tax deductions, 4) enforcing property rights, and 5) information tools to influence the actions of others.⁸⁹ Through strong architectural restrictions, Newbury Street and the Back Bay Architectural District have successfully retained an historic atmosphere with brownstone

⁸⁹ Shuster, J. M., et al. (1997). *Preserving the Built Heritage*. Salzburg Seminar, p.5.

buildings. These buildings match the image of Boston as a historical brick-building city. Even though the Back Bay area has a relatively shorter history than the downtown, the area attracts many visitors for sightseeing because the area preserves the “right” image of Boston. On the other hand, though Downtown Crossing is located in a downtown commercial district with a much richer and longer history and has a locational advantage of being near tourist attractions such as the Boston Common, the Old State House, and Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace, it does not make use of the historic potential enough to attract visitors to the area.

Additionally, as can be seen in Ginza and Omotesando’s cases, local history is the heritage people can share, and the historic image can unify the stakeholders in the communities, enabling them to share the comprehensive strategy of the area. This demonstrates that information tools are important for brand managers to manage the historical image.

Centric Image: Most centric images come from being the hub of mass transportation.

Downtowns usually have a centric image of the city, because of good access to public transportation. Since the 1950’s, as automobiles have escalated the outflow of population and industry from the downtown to the suburban area, the downtown does not always mean a commercial center. With littering, homeless people, drugs and gangs, many downtowns in the U.S. have become places of the poor and of anxieties. But since the 1980’s, with the success of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Main Street Programs, and other downtown management efforts, some downtowns have recovered a centric image and improved their images as vibrant and pedestrian-friendly shopping strips. On the other hand, because of the easy

access to reasonably priced mass transit, people of various income levels flock together into downtowns, which supports various kinds of retailers, from casual to high-end. But in terms of the image of the area as a whole, the image of centers can be far from the high-end shopping boulevards in many downtowns. Many retailers in downtowns are concerned about the frequency of purchasing rather than the prices that individual shoppers pay per trip. Because the mixture of various kinds of retailers and the wide range of income levels, shoppers tend to create a chaotic image, keeping the place clean and safe is essential to keep the centric image positive.

Downtown Crossing is located at the hub of public transportation, with littering and homeless people and an unsafe feeling at night, which creates a chaotic negative image rather than a vibrant exciting image for shoppers in general.

Vibrant Image: A vibrant image comes from the number of people who are shopping and the density of people and retailers in the area. A single crowded store cannot create the vibrant image of a commercial street. The number of people and clustered retailers is the key factor for the image. Physical features such as the width of the street and sidewalks, width and transparency of storefront of each shop, and the design of billboards also influence the vibrancy of the image.

Downtown Crossing attracts 100,000 people a day (with 1,300,000 sqft retail space), which is approximately the same size as Newbury Street. However, compared to the average retailer of Newbury Street, the storefronts are longer and less rhythmical and transparent, which creates a less vibrant image in the context of Downtown Boston. Like Newbury Street, the open cafés and restaurants outside the storefronts feel vibrant because many people stay there, which increases

the density of people on the streets. Closed shops destroy the vibrant image, and can be hotspots of crime. But one of the most important factors for a vibrant image is that people stay there until midnight for food and drink. In Downtown Crossing, most of the retailers, restaurants, and cafes close in the early evening and few people remain in the area, which creates a rather deserted and unsafe image. The interesting thing is that Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace and Omotesando Street stay vibrant even though few people are there at midnight. This is because both places, Faneuil/Quincy Marketplace and Omotesando Street, are free from a centric image, and specialize in a distinctive historical or high-end image. For a city center, people create their own city-center image or expectation, assuming a vibrant place, and the gap between the expectation and the perception evokes in them a vibrant or less vibrant image of the downtown area. The associations of “downtown as a vibrant place” set the bar high in people’s minds, and so downtowns are always facing challenges to maintain a vibrant and positive image. Ginza has successfully attracted restaurants, cafes, and pubs which stay open until midnight and attract many people, including office workers after office hours.

Clean Image: Cleanliness of streets is important for attracting shoppers, especially for high-end retailers and high-income people. Historically, the cleanliness of streets is maintained by the public sector (mainly the cleaning operations and regulations of a government), but most of the recent revitalization efforts are managed by Downtown Management Organizations such as BIDs, which focus on keeping the area clean and safe to enhance both the perception and the reality of

cleanliness and safety.⁹⁰ These efforts demonstrate that it is important to keep the area clean to attract customers and have them get a positive impression. For example, many shoppers in Downtown Crossing have a negative image of the area, and many of them pointed out that the negative image comes from littering and graffiti.⁹¹ On the other hand, Ginza keeps its clean image by cleaning the street and keeping the pavement in good repair, even though there are many ill-matched storefronts and billboards, as in other downtowns. Ginza's case suggests that street cleaning and diligent paving can keep a clean image when managing building facades is difficult to achieve. Related to a clean image, the presence of religious institutions gives the streets an image of authenticity and purity, and reason to believe that the street is special. The image requires of retailers a higher standard of cleanliness, in response to shoppers' high expectation of cleanliness, as in the case of Omotesando Street. Churches on Newbury Street also contribute to its clean and "pure" image.

Safe Image: A safe image is also important for retailers to attract many people during both days and nights. Like the cleanliness problem, safety had been maintained by the public sector before the arrival of the downtown revitalization streams. More policemen and rangers are distributed on the street, contracted to watch specific areas. Downtown Crossing does not have its safe image because there are few restaurants open and pedestrians after 9pm. This deserted image makes the area unsafe even though the crime rate there is lowest in the downtown area. Because

⁹⁰ Hoyt, L. (2004). *Collecting private funds for safer public spaces: an empirical examination of the business improvement district concept*. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 2004, volume 31, page 367-380.

⁹¹ City of Boston & Boston Redevelopment Authority (2007). *Downtown Crossing Retail Market Study and Pedestrian Activity in Downtown Crossing: User's Suggestions*

Downtown Crossing is the hub of public transportation of the area, attracting various income levels with various ethnicities, which creates chaotic image. This image reinforces the unsafe image, particularly when there are few pedestrians at night. On the other hand, Newbury Street and Ginza Street have many restaurants and cafes, which open till midnight. Mixed-use and residential area near the street also contributes to keeping the safe image in Newbury Street and Omotesando Street.

High-end Image: High-end image is created by the mixtures of income level of shoppers, retailers' characters, and surrounding locations. As retailers target higher income customers, the store features have a more high-end image. High-end brand shops attract higher income shoppers and vice versa. The access of public transportation is important for increasing shoppers on the street, but the existence of high-income neighbors around the area increases the probability of buying expensive goods, which is critical for high-end shops.⁹²

Cleanliness and safety are important factors for a high-end image. For example, dirty littering on a street destroys the high-end image. Authenticity and symbols work critically that famous churches, temples and shrines add the special meaning to the location for brand retailers and customers. People see the street special because there is a reason to believe. Authenticity and symbol, the part of place's history, provides people a reason to believe for the brand image of the street.

⁹² DiPasquale, D. & Wheaton W. C. (1996). *Urban Economics and Real Estate Markets*. Prentice-Hall, Inc, p.138.

5.2 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF IMAGES

The elements of general brand for commercial streets, which consists of historical, centric, safe, clean, vibrant, and high-end images, can be integrated into a geographical structure for downtown commercial strips and malls.

Since the success of festival marketplaces such as Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and amusement parks such as Disneyland and Disney World, many developers believe that places can be invented. Sircus (2001) argues that an invented place may be themed as an authentic or symbolic recreation of a past time and place; its sights and sounds, its color and texture.⁹³ He links sense of place to a brand that connotes certain expectation of quality, consistency and reliability. He states that the principles of a successful place are concerned with structure and theme (organization of ideas, and people's flow), sequential experience (telling of story or purpose), visual communication (details, symbols, and attractions), and participation (through the senses, action, and memory). He also argues that all places are to some degree invented, but the successful ones are characterized by planning, building design and a program that is clearly integrated with a story.⁹⁴ Story makes places more meaningful and more accessible.

Structure and Theme: At first, each district has its own expectation according to the function of a city and agglomeration of specific retailers. For example, the Financial District has much office space and functions as the headquarters of the businesses, followed by the expectation of taller buildings and busy business people in formal suites. Ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown

⁹³ Sircus, J. (2007). *Invented Places: Urban Design Reader*. Architectural Press, p.126.

⁹⁴ Sircus, J. (2007). p.129.

and the North End are the agglomerations of ethnic retailers and restaurants, followed by the expectation of the relatively unorganized storefronts on a complex structure of streets. High-end shopping districts such as Newbury Street have brand boutiques and fancy cafes, followed by the expectation of clean and chic storefronts on a sophisticated street. Successful places fit people's expectations with the reality and perception, strengthen their theme of the places, and differentiate themselves from the other competitors.

Spatial Sequence: Second, spatial sequence, gradual transitions, sudden changes, or new perspectives make the narrative of a street and area.⁹⁵ Each creates a different emotional response and those responses depend on the theme and expectations of the district. The targeted customers of retailers on Newbury Street vary with a gradual transition along the street. The key point is that consistent storefronts enable the street to keep a high-end image as a whole while its target customers vary along the street. The high-end brand image of Newbury Street penetrates the retail agglomeration of both high-end and casual ones. Additionally, Copley Square provides a sudden change and new perspective, without destroying the image of the Back Bay Architectural District due to the existence of Boylston Street, which divides the Back Bay Architectural District and office space, and Trinity Church which gives the area the authenticity of its history. On the other hand, the hub image of Downtown Crossing along Washington Street has been deteriorated by the sudden change from department stores to fast food chain stores along the street. Super blocks of department stores destroy the rhythms of the street. The Boston

⁹⁵ Sircus (2007). p.127.

Common provides a new perspective in the area, but Downtown Crossing has not fully benefited by the Common because of no sequential experiences between the areas.

Visual Communication: As the third point of creating successful place, visual communication is important. The full meaning or story of a place is only apparent if it is legible to the audience.

Sircus (2001) states:

In older places, the meanings of symbols often change or are forgotten and stories are constantly evolving, or being reinterpreted. The original legibility may be lost on today's audience. Cities move with the times, creating their story in part from the fabric of today. In some cases, new architecture preserves the original narrative, interpreting the past in contemporary ways, or by being a bold statement that adds a new twist to an old city.⁹⁶

Like the New England Insurance Building on Newbury Street and the new development of One Franklin/Filene's Redevelopment at Downtown Crossing, a large development evokes both positive and negative potentials of the place. But in terms of legibility, successful places can be either rich on detail and authentic, or boldly abstracted and theatrical, providing they have clear visual communication that is easily understood and is congruent with the story.

Participation: Participation in a story gives participants a significant unified sense of the place.

For example, the Freedom Trail provides participants with sights, smells and sounds of the places with the rich history of Boston. The red line of the trail is visual symbol of consistency of the

⁹⁶ Sircus (2007). p.128.

story. On the other hand, large developments tend to separate their own development site from neighborhood and try to create a new image of the area, which can be called the development of “closed participation.”⁹⁷ Story is not unified with the rest of the neighborhoods. Residents’ participation in a planning process is important because it helps the new developments to be consistent with the story and gives an emotional tie between people and the area. Most developers do not know the story or want to make a new story from scratch, which is not congruent with the existing story.

Though each district has its own character (theme) with a sequential experience, visual communication and participation, and these characters create the city’s diverse image, a lack of “story” which penetrates into these themes can make people feel a chaotic and negative image of the place. If an individual district may fail to add an integrated city image, the attractiveness of the city in total can be weakened.

5.3 EXPECTATION AND NATURE OF A PLACE

The origin of people’s general expectation for the place can be analyzed from the perspective of urban economics. Centric images or expectations come from the accessibility of transportation, which usually means highest rents. The amount of accessibility is based on the number of people who can shop in a place within moderate shopping hours of average shoppers (see figure 5-1).

⁹⁷ New redevelopment projects such as Roppongi Hills in Tokyo separate themselves and provide a different image from the image of the surrounding area.

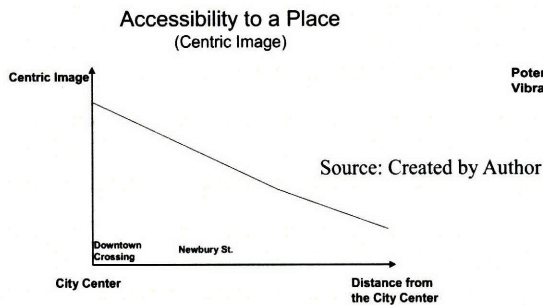


Figure 5-1: Centric Image

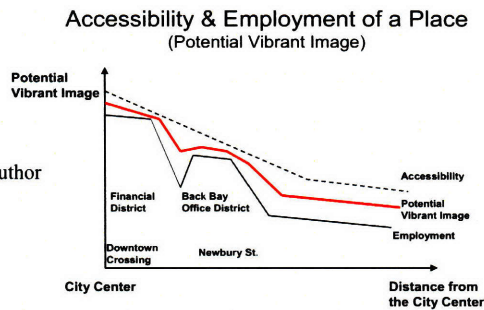


Figure 5-2: Potential Vibrant image

A centric and vibrant image depends on the number of employment and accessibility (number of visitors) in a citywide level. Figure 5-2 demonstrates the potential (gross) vibrancy. Both Downtown Crossing and Newbury Street are located near the office district and office workers can be one of the major sources of shoppers in both areas. A vibrant image can be deteriorated by a high crime rate (safety) and dirty littering (cleanliness) images. Figure 5-3 shows the negative externality of economics in the area such as congestions and variety of income levels. A net vibrant image can be described as the subtraction of the negative externality of economics from the potential (gross) vibrancy. Figure 5-4 shows the net vibrant image and high-end image.

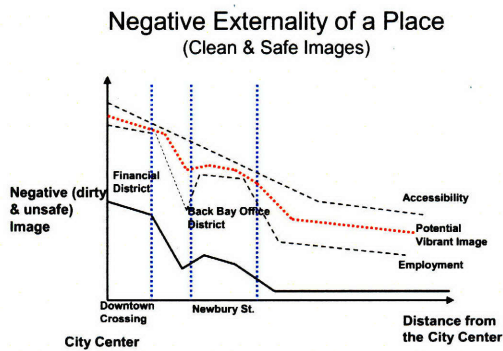


Figure 5-3: Negative Image

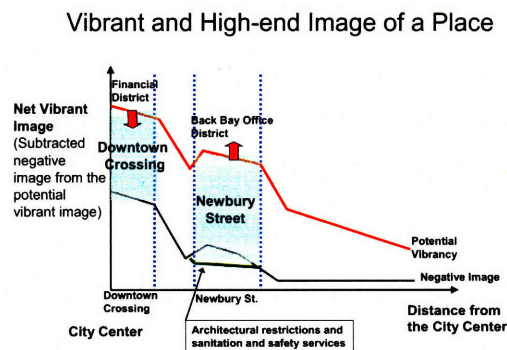


Figure 5-4: Vibrant and High-end Image

Source: Created by Author

Architectural restrictions and place marketing including cleaning the area and keeping safety can decrease the negative impacts and increase the net vibrancy. High-end shopping streets control the negative externality below a certain level while the gross vibrancy from the agglomeration of retailers is above the critical mass to be a premier street.

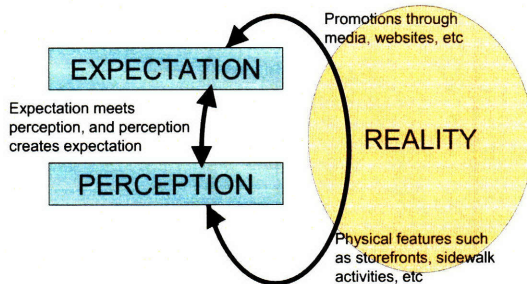
At the same time, people's expectations may vary based on their purpose, experience, and knowledge of the place. Frequent shoppers and workers know the area well and based their expectations on their experience, while tourists may come to the area without knowledge may have unrealistic expectations, perhaps based on the media. Faced with the negative appearances of Downtown Crossing, the expectations of workers and frequent shoppers may go down while those of tourists may stay high. On the other hand, well-managed brownstone buildings as well as vibrant sidewalk activities of Newbury Street enhance the expectations of workers and frequent shoppers of the area. Expectations may change based on the relationships of current situations of a place and people's experience and knowledge.

In terms of historic images, people expect a historic atmosphere in a place through its historical knowledge and the information through media, hearsay, guidebooks and websites. To create a high historical expectation, an image strategy is important such as sending the message of the historic marketplace of Faneuil Hall/Quincy Marketplace and the Victorian brownstone buildings of Newbury Street, in the context of rich history of the city (information tools).

5.4 PEOPLE'S EXPECTATION, PERCEPTION, AND REALITY

The image of a street is a series of associations with the street, including its history, retailers, and physical environment. A street image is created when people actually walk along the street, and hear and read the information from other people, guidebooks and websites. The process of people's image creation is divided into two stages: expectation and perception, and both of them are strongly related to the reality. Many people expect something with a street or district according to the function of the place such as city centers, ethnic neighborhoods, or high-end shopping streets, based on the information they get about the streets or districts. When they come to the street or district, they perceive specific information about the street such as vibrancy, cleanliness, safety, and high-ended-ness.

Expectation, Perception, and Reality



Source: Created by Author

Figure 5-5: Expectation, Perception and Reality

People's expectations are important because people decide where they go and shop based on their expectations, which affects the real economy, and then which will affect people's perception and expectations again. When people actually go to the place, expectations meet perception, and perception recreates expectations (see figure 5-5). The cycle of expectation and perception changes the reality of the place into better or worse situations: the reality will merge

into the state of people's expectation, and people's expectation will merge into the state of people's perception according to the times they visit the place. People's perception may also change based on how far they know the reality of the place. But in general, people's perception is an important factor for creating the positive image of a street.

When people's perception is below their expectation, they have a negative image of the area. Figure 5-6 shows that Downtown Crossing is expected to be a city center with various retailers and vibrant streets, but people's perceptions from the place are below their expectations, which is demonstrated by the fact that many people feel a negative image of the area. The expectation of workers and frequent shoppers may be degraded to the level of perception, and as a result, they just walk through the area or stop coming to the area. The perception from the area is even below the level of the reality, which is shown by the fact that many people believe the place unsafe though it is one of the safest places in statistically in Downtown Boston including the Back Bay area. Figure 5-7 shows that people's perception from Newbury Street is above or even of the expectation because many people feel somewhat positive image from the street. Many people feel safe in the area even though the area is one of the highest crime rates in the district. The reality of the place might be below the perception and expectation.

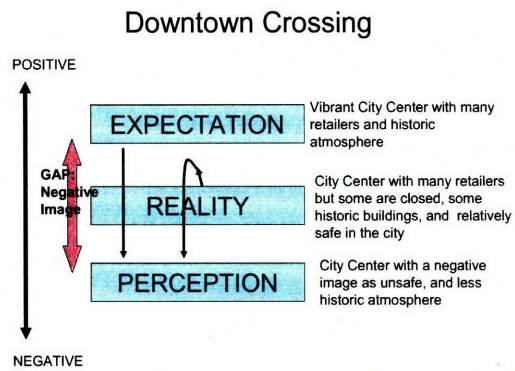


Figure 5-6: Expectation, Perception and Reality: Downtown Crossing

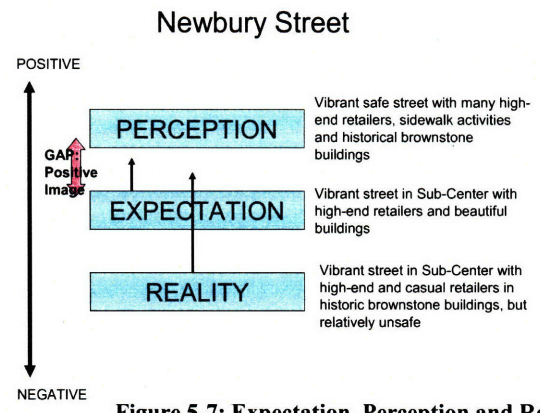


Figure 5-7: Expectation, Perception and Reality: Newbury Street

Source: Created by Author

Basically, a real economic condition (reality) follows the expectation, but when the expectation goes down into the perception like the case of Downtown Crossing, the reality or real economic situation of the area might go down because economic activity is affected by people’s expectation and perception. On the other hand, when the perception and expectation are above the reality like Newbury Street or the Back Bay area, the economic situation of the area might go up.

The gap of expectations and perception is created by facts such as existing closed key-anchor retailers in downtowns, which are expected to be vibrant city centers, and unorganized storefronts in historical areas, whose buildings are expected to have somewhat coordinated facades. The efforts by BIDs and Main Street Programs can be considered as the efforts of enhancing the perception of the area above the expectation. The gap between the reality and perception is caused by a bias and lack of information: visitors do not know the effort of keeping the area safe by police and NPOs, or do not realize the historic richness of buildings. Brand managers need to make more effort to inform visitors of the positive reality of the area and

change their perception and expectation. The gap of reality and expectation is created by biased information through media such as TV programs, magazines, and websites as well as the gap between the real functions of the district and the expected function of the district in a city. For example, if Newbury Street were located at the heart of Boston, which means the current location of Downtown Crossing, many people would feel Newbury Street to be less vibrant, because it may be below the level of expected vibrancy as the city center of Boston.

Since the shoppers of downtown areas have various expectations of the area compared with the shoppers of festival marketplaces and suburban shopping malls, and moreover, there are too many stakeholders to coordinate with, it is difficult for brand managers to decide clear core values and implement branding strategies completely. Instead of corporately managed top-down style branding strategies, bottom-up style branding strategies in which every stakeholder shares the potentials of districts through inner and external-education can be effective, as can be seen in Ginza district (chapter 4). Stakeholders need to merge their interests and behaviors into the shared values (see figure 5-8).

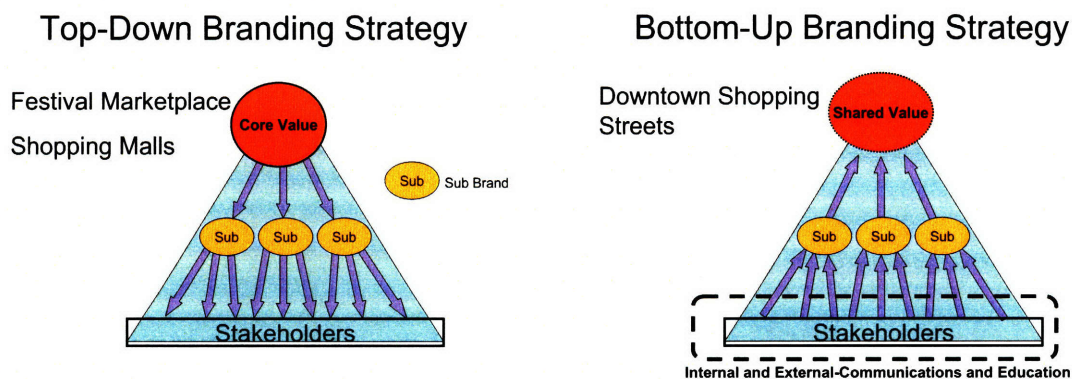


Figure 5-8: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Style Branding Strategy

Source: Created by Author

Therefore, it is important for brand managers to control the perception of a place by storefront regulations and sidewalk activities to be above the expectation of the place and fill the gap of reality and perception by informing people of the rich history and safety efforts of the area. A bottom-up branding strategy through sharing the potentials of the area implicates an alternative strategy for downtowns.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The previous chapters have analyzed the images of commercial streets, focusing on people's expectations, perceptions, and reality in the context of branding strategies. The images of a place are created through on-going relationships among people's expectation and perception, and reality. Based on the chapters so far, the following sections describe effective branding strategies to revitalize downtown commercial streets as well as recommendations for revitalizing Downtown Crossing.

6.1 THREE EFFECTIVE STEPS OF A BRANDING STRATEGY

A branding strategy cannot solve all the problems faced by commercial streets, but a branding strategy can enhance the potential ability of a place to compete with other parts of the city. Like the four target areas in the previous chapters, streets and districts have their own history and unique structures such as chaotic back alleys and symbolic main streets. However, many promising streets in downtowns are still struggling to revitalize because of the lack of attractiveness, part of which is because that these streets are performing below their potential ability as destination places. A branding strategy can be an effective measure to induce the potential ability and let stakeholders know the attractiveness of the streets.

Based on the arguments in previous chapters, the new type of branding strategy, the bottom-up style branding strategy, is necessary for downtown commercial streets. Kotler's SIM

as well as the phases of branding strategy in section 2-3 (analyzing tools as core value, comprehensive brand strategy, internal-communications, and external-communications) are applicable to the branding strategy of commercial streets. However, a core value should be deduced through internal and external-communications, instead of spreading the brand concept from the top of a planning group, since a top-down corporate style branding strategy cannot deal with the prominent clutter of commercial streets and there are many stakeholders who must be coordinated. The core value can be blurred compared with that of the top-down style branding strategy, but the shared value should be managed through the on-going process of selecting what features they should make much of and what features they should turn down, which can be seen in the Ginza district (chapter 4).

To implement a bottom-up branding strategy, the following three steps are effective for creating positive images and revitalizing downtown commercial streets.

1. Attracting customers based on their expectations and the structure of a place
2. Shaping the expectations and perceptions of a place to create a positive but attainable images
3. Filling the gap between people's perceptions and reality

1. Attracting customers based on their expectations and structure of a place

As Kotler's SIM emphasizes the segmentation of a target market, it is important for brand managers to define a target market and customers to provide the comprehensive brand image of a

place. The expectations of workers, shoppers, and tourists are basically different and they belong to different markets. At the same time, a worker in weekdays can be a shopper and tourist in weekends. Lunch-time discounts in weekdays for downtown workers and students as well as local cultural events in weekends for visitors and shoppers increase the attractiveness of the area, by taking different strategies for different markets and expectations. Additionally, based on the image analysis of the previous chapters, understanding the structures of the area such as the gradual transition from high-end to casual retailers along street is important to craft a branding strategy for target customers. Since retail-mix and economic uses are one of the major factors which decide the image of a place, it is important for brand managers to support and enhance the turnover of retailers to match the strategy and structure of the area. Through strategic retail recruiting efforts which reinforce the area's characteristics, clutter can be reduced and the safe and vibrant image of the area can be increased. For example, support for restaurants, grocery stores and mixed-use developments can increase the safety and vibrancy of the area. Back alleys can be used efficiently to enhance the vibrancy and historical features as well as public safety by improving façade of buildings and sidewalks, which can be seen in Ginza district (chapter 5). The alleys can be no longer sources of potential danger. Additionally, Newbury Street and Omotesando Street highly depend on the physical features such as managed storefronts, active sidewalks and a straight symbolic street (chapter 4 and 6). Both streets have structural features as the boundary of a residential area, commercial area, and office area while the boundary of a purified and chaotic image creates retail dynamics in the district (Omotesando Street. chapter 6).

2. Shaping the expectations and perceptions of a place to create positive but attainable images

First, the people's expectation of a place can be enhanced through internal and external-communications. Newspapers, TV programs, magazines and website can promote the positive features of the place. If downtown workers and shoppers stop coming to an area because of the current negative image of the place, events as well as strategic bargains and discounts can provide potential visitors with different opportunities and incentives. In Ginza District and Omotesando Street, lunch-time discounts attract many visitors to the area and successfully create the tie between the areas and visitors, while these districts keep their high-end image. Shopping campaigns in front of stores can also enhance the vibrancy of the streets. On the other hand, creating too high expectation may increase the gap between expectation and perception, but as long as the expectation is based on the reality (reason to believe) such as real history and even the features which have been destroyed but surely existed at an earlier time, high expectation can change their perception into better ways if people can feel the consistent experience from the past.

Second, better perception can be created by consistent experiences of the area through storefront regulations and sidewalk activities. Changing the physical features of the district could be expensive for brand managers, but enforcing design codes and cleaning facades and sidewalks could be done at less cost. As mentioned in chapter 5, integrating a local structure and themes by planning, building design and programs creates a sequence experience and visual communication

in a consistent story.⁹⁸ This consistent experience and visitors' participation in the story of the district can enhance their perceptions. The Freedom Trail in Boston is one of the best examples of providing visitors' participation in a consistent story.

In terms of a visual coherence, zoning codes play an important role. Strict and stable codes sometimes restrict the new developments which could enhance the place's potentials for improving the environment and economic situation. One of the best ways to ensure predictability while enhancing place's potentials in downtown neighborhoods is to adopt an urban code.⁹⁹ Urban codes should ensure that all building types are pedestrian-friendly and create a consistent streetscape to lessen district's chaotic image and clutter through a democratic decision-making process which decides which design is appropriate and inappropriate case by case. This code would be especially important in downtown areas, because it would enable street to create a consistent streetscape while keep the vibrancy of the place.

3. Filling the gap between people's perceptions and reality

People sometimes have a negative perception based on the physical environments regardless of the reality. The gap of the people's perception and reality of a place can be filled through internal and external-communications including the education of the place. For example, the Ginza Town Management Committee holds many forum and events to let people know the history and uniqueness of the district. They invite many planners, architects, historians, and managers of companies as lecturers, and also post the notes of these lectures on their website.

⁹⁸ Sircus, J. (2007). p.129.

⁹⁹ Duany, A. et al. (2007). *The Inner City: Urban Design Reader*. Architectural Press, p.357.

Many inner-community members become proud of being a member of the district, and shoppers outside the district also feel proud of shopping in this district, enhancing their emotional tie with the place and filling the gap between reality and perceptions.

As is mentioned in chapter 3, many people feel unsafe in Downtown Crossing even though the district is statistically the safest place in Downtown Boston. Downtowns with transit hub tend to have unsafe image because of the existence of various income levels and ethnic shoppers. The center of downtown also could have chaotic image because of various surrounding features such as ethnic neighborhoods, office buildings, and public facilities. These features of various shoppers and surroundings are one of the uniqueness of a downtown area. On the other hand, according to Kotler and Gertner (2002), creating new positive associations may be easier than trying to refute old negative image.¹⁰⁰ Brand managers need to make much of this “clutter” in a different way such as emphasizing its diversity and vibrancy of the place since it is difficult to change these features. For example, the first floor of buildings and sidewalks are utilized for food and drink establishments and centers to exchange information. The effort to let visitors know the reality of the area as well as expose the patrols of police and security staff through media and brochures is important to filling the gap. Promoting restaurants and cafes as well as mixed use developments to keep more people in an area can be one of the most effective ways to change the perception, which also changes the reality in a positive way.

Table 6-1 summarizes the platform of branding strategies for commercial streets.

¹⁰⁰ Morgan N.J., Pritchard, A., Pride. R. (2004) *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Elsevier Ltd, p47.

Table 6-1: Branding Strategies for Commercial Streets

Phases of Branding Strategy (Author, 2-3)		Strategic Image Management (Kotler, 2-2)	Three Effective Steps of Branding Strategy (Author, 6-1)
Core Values (through Internal & External Communications)	Select the target segments: residents, visitors, firms, & retailers, and measure their images.	Researching a place's image among its audiences.	1. Attracting customers based on their expectations and structure of a place.
	Determine the advantages of the place and position them to strengthen the benefits of the place: using slogans & logos.	Segmenting and targeting its specific image and its demographic audiences.	
		Positioning the place's benefits to support an existing image or create a new image.	
Comprehensive Brand Strategy	Using the resources such as history, culture and built environments.	Communicating the advantages to target audiences.	2. Shaping the expectations and perceptions of a place to create a positive but attainable image
	Integrating themes and structures, spatial sequence, visual communication, & participation into a story (Sircus, 5-2).		
	Dealing with the challenges of cash, consistency, & clutter (Kotler, 2-1).		
Internal-Communications	Enhancing the relationships of stakeholders and promoting consensus buildings.		3. Filling the gap between people's perceptions and reality.
External-Communications	Informing visitors of the place's benefits to improve expectations & perceptions through media and events.		

Source: Created by Author

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOWNTOWN CROSSING

Since the 1970's many post-industrial cities have experienced revitalization efforts through BIDs and Main Street Programs. Boston has not implemented BIDs because of the disagreement with stakeholders and relatively successful economic performances in downtown. But as can be seen in chapter 3, Downtown Crossing has been struggling to regain its vibrancy and energy through creating a pedestrian-friendly shopping mall and installing banners and logos, competing with other commercial districts and suburban malls. This section suggests how to improve the branding efforts of Downtown Crossing based on a bottom-up branding strategy.

1. Creating “the Downtown Cultural Necklace” and utilizing open space and historical resources

To enhance the potential of an area and let people perceive the area's potential, it is important to analyze the surrounding environments and the unique structures of the area. At first, the most important feature is that Downtown Crossing is the heart of the city. This area cannot get rid of somewhat chaotic image since various income visitors come: Downtown Crossing is not Newbury Street. Core values lie in the high accessibility to downtown resources such as commercial agglomerations and historic heritage for the Greater Boston residents and visitors. Since many people with various backgrounds walk through the area and their expectations need to be enhanced by creating new positive associations, the brand promise (new core values) should be “the Boston's New Common with something new and different.” A basic strategy is

connecting the “crossing” with open space and visitor’s destinations, and establishing “the Downtown Cultural Necklace” to symbolize the new values in the context of Boston’s rich history. The Downtown Cultural Necklace includes the open space of the Boston Common, Reader’s Park, Shopper’s Park and the Central Crossing area¹⁰¹ and historical resources such as Park Street Church, Old Corner Bookstore, Old South Meeting House, and Old Filene’s Building (see figure 6-1). The strategy includes supporting events, food and drink establishments, and sidewalk activities such as art performance in the open space to attract tourists as well as enhance the expectations and perceptions of visitors and workers.

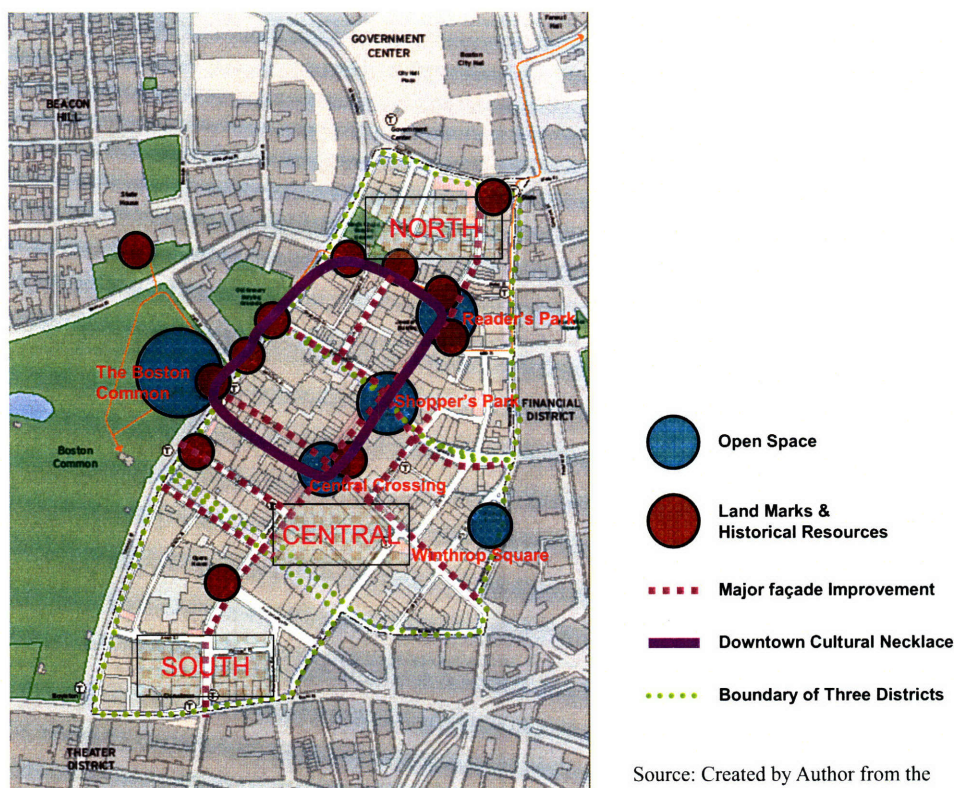


Figure 6-1: Downtown Cultural Necklace

Source: Created by Author from the map of BRA: Base Map

¹⁰¹ The intersection of Washington Street and Winter/Summer Street

2. Establishing BID as the platform of implementing the bottom-up branding strategy

Boston is on the verge of the de-urbanization or re-urbanization, the next step of suburbanization state, based on the Klaassen's urban cycle theory (chapter 3). Now Boston needs redevelopment efforts to avoid the urban decay process which can be seen in many American cities. Since Downtown Crossing does not have the symbolic physical features such as symbolic streets or managed facades of buildings that make strong mental connections among inner stakeholders; strong leadership to manage the area is necessary. But at the same time, as is stated in the previous section (6-1), top-down style branding strategies with clear concepts of festival marketplaces and suburban shopping malls are inappropriate for this area since there are too many stakeholders to be coordinated with. A "bottom-up" style branding strategy is necessary for Downtown Crossing such that every stakeholder understands and shares the value of the district through inner and external-communications and acts to merge his/her interests into the shared value to induce the potentials of the area. The City, the BRA and the DCA should establish a framework to get stable budget to reorganize the facades and change the district into a livable mixed-use area. BID is one of the best options that enable this area to revitalize and send strong messages for improving the area.

3. Utilizing the Downtown Crossing facilities for events and lunch-time discounts to enhance people's expectations

Downtown Crossing attracts customers with various incomes. Tourists spend more money than the average of the downtown users. To bring more visitors from major tourist destinations

such as Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market and the Old State House, the facades of the north node and access to the central node as well as Shopper's Park need to be improved as a first priority. The sequential visitors' experience from Boston Common to Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market through the Downtown Cultural Necklace should be established by emphasizing a historic image, using the back alleys and enforcing design codes. Moreover, only 4% of people who enter the area eat there. Workers in the office district have low expectations of the area but they come to this district almost every day. Encouraging lunch-time discounts, and supporting events as well as new eating and drinking establishments would let workers come to this area more often and spend time in the area once they are there. Promoting weekend cultural events as well as the retail agglomeration such as clothes and shoe stores would attract weekend-visitors from inner-neighborhoods and suburbs. Based on the different target customers and characters of the three districts in the area, different incentives and strategies can be created.

4. Improving façades through “the Downtown Crossing Filter” and enhancing people’s perceptions

Organized storefronts and landscape provide visitors with consistent experience of brand value. A chaotic or unorganized image as well as few residents in the area remind people of an unsafe image, but rezoning efforts to increase mixed-use developments will change this situation into a more vibrant and safe image. To remove clutter and create a consistent image of the district, BRA should enforce design codes more often and promote storefront renovations, which decrease the negative impact of visual communications. At the same time, many obstacles on the

sidewalk such as newspaper stands and sandwich boards can be removed to enhance a pedestrian-friendly image of the area. Since weekend shoppers include many families with baby carriages, the sidewalk curbs also need to be removed. An expanded pedestrian zone can be used for establishing sidewalk cafes and restaurants, and holding events in cooperation with BRA, DCA, retailers and theatres to attract weekend shoppers and visitors.

Each node and open space focuses target customers based on the retail environments and the other characteristics of the area to reduce the chaotic image (chapter 3). As the consultant team of Downtown Crossing suggested, the area can be divided into three districts: 1) North District for visitors and higher-end, 2) Central District for various income-levels with department stores, and 3) South District for students and the entrepreneurs of small businesses. Different design codes can be crafted for each district, and the whole area is managed by more qualitative restrictions such as urban codes or “filters” through a democratic decision-making system which approves designs, alterations and redevelopments of buildings in the area. Like the Ginza district (chapter 5), town management organizations such as the DCA can hold a committee to discuss design issues prior to the city’s design approvals. At the same time, as can be seen in the Ginza district (chapter 5), unused back alleys can be used for events, cafes and galleries to create a more vibrant and safe image. Figure 6-2 shows current back alleys in Downtown Crossing.



Figure 6-2: Back Alleys in Downtown Crossing



Source: Author

Additionally, the main streets of the Downtown Cultural Necklace such as Washington Street, Winter/Summer Street, Tremont Street, and School Streets can be symbolized as a “necklace” by streetscape improvements such as installing flower pots, which creates retail dynamics in symbolic streets and chaotic back alleys like Omotesando Street (chapter 4).

5. Sharing the values and images of the area with stakeholders through internal and external-communications

Every area has its strengths and weaknesses. Since Downtown Crossing is the heart of Boston, this area attracts many shoppers of various income-levels. Since the area cannot get rid of a somewhat chaotic image, it is important to let people know the unique advantages of the area such as rich historical resources from Colonial Boston through internal and external-communications. This area also can take advantage of representing the whole Boston area since the area is the heart of Boston, addressing the historic features which are unique in the whole Boston area. For example, the unique connections of the Boston area and Japanese art can be emphasized at the area since curators of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts such as Ernest

Fenollosa have made special efforts of collecting and preserving Japanese art since the 1890's. The Downtown Cultural Necklace can be the place for holding events and enhancing people's awareness of the whole Boston area.

On the other hand, inconsistent images or clutter can prevent the area from forming the brand image of a district.¹⁰² It is important for retailers, visitors, workers, and residents to share the image of Downtown Crossing to create the comprehensive branding image by having logos and slogans spread in the area and emphasizing the historic importance of Boston through internal and external education. Community-building events bring people together to create stronger community connections and overcome negative perceptions of the district and also provide fund-raising opportunities for the district.¹⁰³ If the three districts of Downtown Crossing have something that connects them with, such as design guidelines and banners, it can be used to strengthen the image of the cultural necklace. Organizing events based on sustainable funding sources and the cooperation with downtown retailers is critical to promote the place's values and the images of the Downtown Cultural Necklace.

¹⁰² Calkins T (2005). p.4-8.

¹⁰³ Seidman, F. K. (2004). p.28.

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APPENDIX

FANEUIL HALL MARKETPLACE VS. BOYLSTON/NEWBURY STREETS VS. DOWNTOWN CROSSING SHOPPERS IN 1979

	FANEUIL HALL MARKETPLACE	DOWNTOWN CROSSING	BOYLSTON/ NEWBURY ST.
Sex	58.7% Female	46.6% Female	63.8% Female
Age (Median)	34 Years	25-34 Years	31 Years
Household Income (Median)	\$19,480	\$15-25,000	\$19,525
<u>Place of Residence</u>			
City of Boston	23.9%	40.0%	43.2%
Remainder of Boston Metro. Area	38.9%	54.0%	34.8%
Remainder of Northeast	26.8%	6.0%	11.7%
Beyond Northeast	10.4%	0%	10.3%
<u>Mode of Transportation</u>			
Private Auto	50.9%	6.5%	31.2%
Walking	20.2%	55.2%	43.8%
Subway/MBTA Bus	20.3%	37.4%	20.4%
Taxi/Tour Bus	7.7%	0.8%	1.2%
Time Spent Shopping (Median)	90 Minutes	1-2 Hours	100 Minutes
<u>Point of Origin</u> (Non-tourists)			
Home	58.8%	41.5%	50.6%
Work	27.7%	42.3%	25.0%
Other shopping	7.5%	8.2%	6.0%
Hotel/Sightsee	0.7%/94.7%	2.4%	8.1%
Travel Time (Median)	20 Minutes	NA	12 Minutes
Shopping Expenditure (Mean)	\$14.45	NA	\$38.57

Source: Algin, J. (1980). *The Impact of Downtown Crossing on Commercial Activity in Downtown Boston*. BRA.