Assessing the Viability of Lifestyle Retail Development as a Traditional Town Center

By
Roger Torino
BA Geography
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, USA (2002)

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in City Planning
at the
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
June 2005
© 2005. All Rights Reserved

Author

Department of Urban Studies and Planning
19 May 2005

Certified by
Professor Dennis Frenchman
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by
Professor Dennis Frenchman
Chair, MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

ROTCH
Assessing the Viability of Lifestyle Retail Development as a Traditional Town Center

By

Roger Torino

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
On May 19, 2005 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in City Planning

ABSTRACT

The lifestyle center, a recently emerged real estate retail product, is the culmination of shifts in cultural attitudes, real estate economic trends, and changes in the role of local government on the development of built space in the suburban landscape. In the latter half of the 20th Century, the view of suburbia as the antithesis of urbanity, centerless sprawl devoid of the city’s redeeming civic and community features, gained currency. Built to resemble early 20th Century main streets or town squares, lifestyle centers offer a counterpoint to the disaggregating effects of suburbanization wrought over the past half century. But, do they represent a true return to small town ways of living? Are they a viable model for giving a physical focus to suburbia?

This thesis gauges the performance of lifestyle centers relative to standards set by traditional main streets or town squares. Issues of publicness, mix of use, physical configuration, and community perception are taken into account. Regarding these measures, lifestyle centers are partially successful in creating a physical center and community in the perceived disorder of suburbia. However, the lifestyle center does not fully achieve the goal in the sense that it remains relatively exclusive and narrowly focused. Although derided as Disney-esque environments that thinly disguise their goal of encouraging consumption, the lifestyle center represents a shift in thinking, one that begins to take into account the role of retail in the physical and social fabric of society. That shift, although incomplete, is a positive step towards improving the quality of the urban landscape in the United States.

Thesis Supervisor: Dennis Frenchman
Title: Professor of Urban Studies and Planning
# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgements** 7

**Introduction: The Emergence of the Lifestyle Center** 9
- What is a Traditional Town Center? 12
- Methodology: A Process to Understand Lifestyle Centers in the Role of Town Center 14

**Chapter 1: History: The Lifestyle Center in the Contemporary City** 17
- and as an Evolution of Retail Typologies 17
- The Urban Context 21
- The Retail Context 25
- Defining the Lifestyle Center 25

**Chapter 2: Criteria and Methodologies for the Evaluation of the Performance of Lifestyle Developments as Town Centers** 28
- PUBLIC 29
- Evaluating PUBLIC 32
- MIX 38
- Evaluating MIX 43
Chapter 3: The Case Studies

Santana Row
Paseo Colorado
Mashpee Commons

Chapter 4: Performance Assessment

Analyzing PUBLIC
Analyzing MIX
Analyzing PHYSICAL
Analyzing COMMUNITY

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Creating a Center
Providing a Venue for Community
Discussion of Assumptions
Recommendations
Future Research

Appendices and Bibliography

Table of Contents
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge, first and foremost, my thesis advisor, Dennis Frenchman. I don’t think of him merely as my thesis advisor, although he has given absolutely indispensable guidance and advice throughout the long writing process. He has been there for me throughout my two years at MIT and DUSP, two years which have been eventful, to say the least, both academically and personally. Dennis helped me get through these two years in one piece, so I will be eternally grateful for that.

I also want to thank Susan Silberberg, my thesis reader. Without her this piece of work would be a lot less coherent. For that matter, it wouldn’t make any sense at all.

My wonderful mother, Elizabeth Torino, and my equally awesome sister Marelle also deserve much thanks. Although they’re a good 3,000+ miles away and didn’t know the exact details of what I was doing out here, they gave me unconditional love and support. I couldn’t have gotten this far without them.

Much of my time writing this thesis was spent surrounded by the folks at 35 Brookline Street #5. Valentina Zuin, Monica Romis, and Matt Amengual kept me sane by filling me up with pasta and good times. Thanks!

There are tons of people who I want to acknowledge, but this isn’t exactly an awards show thank you speech, is it? You all know who you are, I love you all and hope you know it. Thank you.
In search of the future, I visited a lifestyle center on the edge of Phoenix called the Desert Ridge Marketplace. Parking my rented Chevy in front of a big-box emporium called Barbeques Galore, I walked through the arched portals that decorate the marketplace entrance. Inside, there were restaurants and stores lining a winding and narrow outdoor pedestrian street that opened up onto a series of little plazas. Padded wicker chairs were strewn about in a studied, casual way, and a huge fieldstone fireplace had benches built into it for those cool desert nights. This was a delightful place for a Frappucino.

Next, I drove only a dozen miles down the road to another lifestyle center, Kierland Commons, that has a more residential feel. It immediately felt like a real, bustling neighborhood. The sidewalks were shaded from the sun by flowered trellises, and the streets narrowed at the corners to give pedestrians an implied right of way. An urban plaza with a good café and a band shell provided a central gathering place. The promotional material for Kierland Commons boasts of a “unique urban village,” and a “pleasing vibrant place where community takes shape and public life happens.” Indeed, as I stand around watching, a jazz singer draws an audience, stooping to serenade a passing bichon frise. The crowd coos. And, wait, the Phoenix Suns girls are here! — Andrew Blum

Accounts such as this, ranging from serious to tongue-in cheek, by journalists like Andrew Blum are testaments to the increasing proliferation of lifestyle centers and have fallen within the radar of urban observers, academics, and the development community. Following on the now standard generation of retail centers developed on a model created in the late 1950s, lifestyle centers simultaneously invert the regional shopping center and attempt to reconstruct the traditional mixed-use North American town square or main street of the pre-World War II era. What are the forces which have stimulated the emergence of lifestyle centers? What implications do they have for community life?
Figure 1: Desert Ridge Marketplace, Phoenix, Arizona

Figure 2: Kierland Commons, Phoenix, Arizona
The lifestyle center itself is the culmination of a series of shifts in cultural attitudes, real estate economic trends, and changes in the role of local government on the development of built space in the suburban landscape. Particularly in the latter half of the 20th Century, as a backlash against modernism, the view of suburbia as the antithesis of urbanity, centerless sprawl devoid of the city’s redeeming civic and community features, gained currency. Lifestyle centers constitute part of an effort to offer a counterpoint to the disaggregating effects of suburbanization wrought over the past half century. But, do they represent a true return to small town ways of living? Are they a viable model for giving a physical focus to suburbia?

This thesis seeks to examine the emergence of the lifestyle center with a critical lens—to weigh the rhetoric vs. the reality in terms of their ability to function as traditional town centers. I will attempt to examine the lifestyle center in the context of ideas put forth by theorists such as Jurgen Habermas, Jane Jacobs, and Kevin Lynch. Their arguments, among others, encapsulate the debate over the role of the lifestyle center in the public sphere. Some critics eschew the lifestyle center because they are a retail product geared towards consumption, arguing that lifestyle centers simply represent a further erosion of public space in American life and environment. To the contrary, others argue that these mixed-use, quasi-public facilities provide the sense of place and community missing in suburban development. Following an intensive study of several prototypical lifestyle centers for this thesis, including spatial studies and interviews with local residents, I came to a conclusion reflective of the latter’s position. In this thesis, I find that lifestyle centers hold potential to sow the seeds of a
revitalized community condition outside of the traditional civic realm. To this end, I outline certain conditions which I believe are essential to successfully integrating lifestyle centers into the physical, cultural, and economic spheres of society. Those conditions are the result of my line of inquiry, consisting of four primary questions:

1. PUBLIC: How “public” are lifestyle centers?
2. MIX: What does the mixed-use nature of a lifestyle center do to augment its publicness and give it a sense of place?
3. PHYSICAL: What is the role of a lifestyle center’s physical configuration in giving a center to its community?
4. COMMUNITY: How do local residents perceive the lifestyle center’s role in the community?

**What Is a Traditional Town Center?**

The previous four questions outline a framework which will measure the ability of lifestyle centers to perform as traditional town centers. Following that framework, the traditional town center can be generally defined as a physical and programmatic condition in the city, namely, an urban typology which defines a spatial center and engenders a close sense of community. These two conditions are cultivated by a range of characteristics illustrated in Table 1. These characteristics are found in town centers coming in a diverse range of prototypical forms and contexts—from Main Streets to town squares. However, all town centers share some general characteristics, outlined in the following table.
Present in the center are finely intermixed uses, including retail, office, residential, and civic facilities, among others.

- **Integration**: As a mixed-use district, different components are distributed in close proximity, either adjacent to one another, or within the same multi-story structure.

- **Convenience Retail and Services**: Many of the retail and services are oriented toward the local population, rather than acting as a destination attraction.

- **Regional Connectivity**: Town centers often arise because of their strategic location within a region, on the intersection of regional road networks, and/or major public transport lines.

- **Local Connectivity**: A mixed-use district knits together the residential fabric of a community, acting as a transition between distinctly defined neighborhoods.

- **Density**: Structures in a town center are typically denser than those in the surrounding neighborhoods, providing larger floorplates for commerce and high-density homes.

- **Symbolism**: The spaces carved out between the buildings are expressive of the local population. Those spaces can be highly symbolic and formal, or informal, acting as a background for the people who occupy them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC Ground</th>
<th>A traditional town center is dominated by public space open to all and serves all members of the community. Entrance is not restricted.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses</strong></td>
<td>Present in the center are finely intermixed uses, including retail, office, residential, and civic facilities, among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Convenience Retail and Services</strong></td>
<td>Many of the retail and services are oriented toward the local population, rather than acting as a destination attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>As a mixed-use district, different components are distributed in close proximity, either adjacent to one another, or within the same multi-story structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Connectivity</strong></td>
<td>Town centers often arise because of their strategic location within a region, on the intersection of regional road networks, and/or major public transport lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Connectivity</strong></td>
<td>A mixed-use district knits together the residential fabric of a community, acting as a transition between distinctly defined neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>Structures in a town center are typically denser than those in the surrounding neighborhoods, providing larger floorplates for commerce and high-density homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbolism</strong></td>
<td>The spaces carved out between the buildings are expressive of the local population. Those spaces can be highly symbolic and formal, or informal, acting as a background for the people who occupy them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Characteristics of Traditional Town Centers
Methodology: A Process to View Lifestyle Centers in the Role of Town Center

In order to explore the potential lifestyle centers hold in serving as traditional town centers, in all of their manifestations, it is important to first have an understanding of the context in space and time leading to the emergence of lifestyle centers in contemporary developments. Chapter 1 presents lifestyle centers understood in terms of the history of urban and suburban spatial development patterns in the United States. Additionally, they can be understood as the latest step in the evolution of urban shopping, a process that has spanned centuries, as well as continents. Chapter 1 constitutes the majority of information gathered during the literature review. From that point, Chapter 2 moves into a categorical analysis, discussing the concepts behind the measure of performance of several case lifestyle centers in light of the four questions asked in earlier in this section. The parameters of analysis were constructed through a hybrid approach of literary precedents, personal idea synthesis, and interviews with community residents, developers, marketing professionals, architects, and municipal planners involved with the case studies. Chapter 3 introduces the three case studies, and Chapter 4 analyzes the case studies based on the discussions in Chapter 2. Finally, site visits, compiled with photographs and written observations, served as additional methods of inquiry for this project.
Chapter 1

The Urban Context

A Brief History of Suburbanization

The emergence of lifestyle centers poses an interesting question for urbanism in North America. Cities in the United States, and increasingly, all over the industrialized world, are characterized by a sprawling suburban periphery, a pattern of development commonly criticized as having no sense of place.

Post-World War II America exploded the traditional city, propelling its elements outward into the countryside and arranging them into segregated districts, based on use. The mass exodus towards the suburbs began with the invention of the streetcar, and then the automobile. After the war it was fed by the Baby Boom, which produced families that wished for larger, more spacious homes. These families took advantage of government-subsidized mortgages, which made those homes more affordable. Additionally, government-sponsored highway construction made it less troublesome to commute to and from the central city. Seemingly, the American Dream was within reach for increasing numbers of citizens. However, as the process of suburbanization accelerated, observers, critics, and academics began to point out that heavy costs, both environmental and social, were being incurred.
Critiques of Suburban Development

Suburbanization, according to its critics, transformed the social and urban fabric of the United States in several negative ways. Residential areas physically divorced themselves from commercial areas that served them, and work places were placed even further afield. What was once dense, vital urban fabric decanted into a gossamer-thin carpet of single family homes, shopping centers, and office parks. Lost in the process of spatial segregation were many of the physical and social elements that constituted the connective tissue of the city. The New Urbanists are the most outspoken critics of suburban sprawl, pointing out its deleterious effects on society. For example, in *Suburban Nation*, Andres Duany and other leaders of the New Urbanist movement make the claim that “it is difficult to identify a segment of population that does not suffer in some way from the lifestyle imposed by contemporary suburban development.”

According to *Suburban Nation*, the bulk of the argument lies in that suburbia, with its patchwork, disconnected street grid, isolates large groups of society--from children to the poor, the elderly, and the housebound wife. This physical segregation, in the eyes of the New Urbanists, prevents contact between the diverse members of society. The traditional town center, then, is a superior form of development in this regard, because by “sharing the public realm, these people have the opportunity to interact, and thus come to realize that they have little reason to fear each other.”

Suburban sprawl is also cited by environmentalists as a major concern in a time of increasing environmental awareness. Considering the physical makeup of a typical
suburban community, it becomes clear that the overconsumption of resources is a hallmark of contemporary American patterns of development. According to the Greenbelt Alliance, a San Francisco-based environmental advocacy group, “traditional development patterns have taken a massive toll on all three basic elements of the natural environment: land, air, and water.” Their report illustrates the loss of many of California’s natural ecosystems, threatening biodiversity, the supply of land, and the economically valuable aesthetic aspect of the dwindling open spaces. Air quality is also a concern, degraded by pollution emissions “exacerbated by longer commutes and higher auto use” that are products of sprawling cities. Finally, water inventories statewide are taxed by the unmanaged growth and subsequent population increases. As a result of these pressures, environmentalists have become part of the movement to re-evaluate and reform the paradigm of suburban development.

Attempts to Remedy the Modern City of Sprawl

The New England town center is perhaps the ideal embodiment of the traditional town center (not coincidentally, many lifestyle centers LOOK like New England), but community town centers could be found across America in the pre-auto era—from the “diamond” shaped centers developed by the Scotch-Irish in Western Pennsylvania—to the court house centers in Indiana and the Midwest—to rail-line focused centers in the Carolinas and the rest of the South.

All of these traditional forms were superceded by the forces of suburbanization after the Second World War, but not without reaction, beginning in the later 1950s with the
publication of Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* In the book, Jacobs observed the consequences of modernization, including suburbanization, on the urban landscape and identified the aspects of the city that was indeed worth preserving and fighting for.4

Another figure observing the transformation of the city was Victor Gruen, best known for being the architect of the first modern suburban shopping mall. Gruen also recognized the breakdown of traditional community bonds, propelled by suburban development. As an antidote, Gruen envisioned the suburban mall to serve as the new town center—dense, mixed-use environments that could take the place of traditional main streets and town squares. Gruen understood that the process of suburbanization was weakening the social bonds in a society that was nurtured mainly in close-knit rural communities and dense urban enclaves. Seen in retrospect, however, his vision was flawed.

The first enclosed mall in the United States, Southdale, designed by Gruen, was designed not as a stand-alone piece, but rather as a catalyst to planned mixed-use town centers. His plan was a reaction against what he characterized as “avenues of horror,” which were suburbia’s ubiquitous strip developments. However, his large-scale vision of urban oases that happened to be located in suburbia, failed. Gruen’s mall, if measured against the questions of PUBLIC, MIX, PHYSICAL, and COMMUNITY that were introduced in the introduction, would largely fall short. Today the shopping mall remains a potent symbol not of town centers in suburbia, but rather the breakdown of the traditional community.
More recently, the New Urbanist movement has picked up steam in its effort to return to a more traditional pattern of urban development. Promoting an agenda of higher-density, mixed-use developments as a strategy with social, economic, and environmental benefits, New Urbanism is often the inspiration behind the design and development of lifestyle centers, the subject of this thesis.

**The Retail Context**

The contemporary lifestyle center can be imagined as the latest evolution in retail typologies that date back to the 18th century, when the first formal structure devoted to modern retail activity was constructed in Paris, France. Retail developers have constantly altered the physical design of their projects as a response to changing trends in consumer taste, the manufacture of goods, and urban development. The following is a brief chronology of the progression of centralized retail development over the past three centuries.

**The Retail Arcade**

Defined as "a glass-covered passageway which connects two busy streets and is lined on both sides with shops." The first retail arcade was constructed in Paris in 1786, called the Gallery des Bois. This development, in particular, signalized the inception of mass consumer culture. According to Johann Friedrich Geist, the arcade was a physical response that came about due to a need for "a public space protected from traffic and weather and the search for new means of marketing the products of a blossoming luxury goods industry." The arcade emerged at
a time when capitalism developed to point where overproduction, caused by technological advances, required manufacturers to develop new manners of encouraging the consumption of the increasing inventory of goods. At the time, sidewalks were a rarity in the city, so the provision of an unimpeded space for pedestrians to browse and consume, reflecting the same qualities we find in shopping malls today.

**Department Stores**

The concept of the department store was first introduced with the 1852 opening of Au Bon Marche in Paris. Bringing the variety of goods found in shopping arcades in a singular building under single management, the Au Bon Marche displayed products in a series of departments. It offered the public fixed prices and flexible exchange and return policies.°

**Open Air Shopping Centers**

- **Unified Shopping Centers**

  The first unified shopping center was built in Kansas City in 1922. Dubbed Country Club Plaza, it was the centerpiece of a prototype community built by J.C. Nichols. Combining office uses above retail and surrounded by residential towers, corporate headquarters, and civic amenities, Country Club Plaza can be seen as the first direct
antecedent to the contemporary lifestyle center. Much attention was paid to the design of the public spaces tying together the project, serving to establish a strong presence in the civic fabric of Kansas City.

- Open-Air Malls

The open-air mall represents a further physical consolidation of the unified shopping center, bringing together all the components of the retail establishment into a singular structure. The first open-air mall, Northgate, built in Seattle in 1950, was the introduction of the typical mall arrangement of an anchor lying at the end of wide pedestrian promenade lined with smaller retail outlets. This configuration was the precedent for all future malls.

Strip Centers

Although the origins of the auto-oriented strip retail center are debatable, it is certain how much an effect they have had on the suburban landscape. Set off major roads, a strip center typically consists of a row of multiple storefronts lining a parking lot that separates it from the street. Easy to build and reliable sources of income, strip centers proliferated along roads all over the United States, provoking sharp criticism that they help eliminate any chance communities have for possessing physical continuity in the urban fabric.
Malls

The word “mall” typically denotes the type of superstructure pioneered by the construction of Southdale, in the suburbs of Minneapolis in 1956. The enclosed nature of Southdale allowed its management to maintain full control over its internal climate, a key attraction for customers, who would then spend more during their longer stays in the project.

Lifestyle Centers

The first shopping center christened with the designation “lifestyle center” was the Shops at Saddle Creek, in Germantown, Tennessee. Built in 1987, the Shops at Saddle Creek disposed of the typical mall formula of focusing on anchor stores that provided customers for the smaller retailers, all of which were enclosed under one roof. Instead, upscale goods, outdoor ambience, and table-service dining were utilized in order to attract customers. This typology gained ground throughout the 1990s, to the point where since 2002, 101 lifestyle centers have been built. In this same time period, only seven traditional malls have been built.10
Defining the Lifestyle Center

What constitutes a lifestyle center is often a point of contention among retail developers. The International Council of Shopping Centers, a retail trade association, put out a general definition. In their eyes, a lifestyle center is retail complex characterized by an open-air configuration, at least 50,000 square feet of upscale national retail chains, and one or more table-service restaurants. In addition to these criteria is special attention paid to the design ambience, often reflecting a main street motif. Furthermore, the role of the anchor store is diminished, if not eliminated. If a conventional department store chain is present, it is usually found in a smaller form than those in a typical shopping mall.

In addition to these basic criteria, many developers place other conditions on defining a shopping center as a lifestyle center. In a lifestyle center, developers often cite a large emphasis on food and entertainment, elements that further contribute to the atmosphere of the project. There is also a larger emphasis on seeking out local tenants rather than merchandise which can be purchased in any other center. The inclusion of local tenants, to developers, lends a greater authenticity and geographical specificity to a lifestyle center. Parking is also a major concern, seen as a potential threat to the experiential aspect of the development. For that reason, according to David Malmuth of RCLCo, a real estate consulting firm, parking is oftentimes obscured either in structures or placed underground. Finally, a quality found in most lifestyle centers is the inclusion of mixed uses. The inclusion of non-retail uses is what sets apart lifestyle centers from other retail developments, to the extent that certain developers, such
as Damian Soffer, will claim that “the word lifestyle (is meaningless) if you do not have a residential component. It’s just another mall without the roof and more trees.”

What factors, then, led to the development of lifestyle centers? The lifestyle center is the product of three motivating factors. The first is the maturation of the urban retail environment in the United States. The current market is oversaturated, with Americans served by the largest amount of retail per capita in the world. As a result, developers are in a constant race to re-formulate the packaging in which retail is presented. In addition, technological advances have rendered large, centralized stores less vital than in previous times. The advent of the internet and improvement in inventory management have diminished the need for retail outlet to have large building footprints, thereby creating a configurational flexibility. The New Urbanist movement has also had a strong influence, often cited by developers as the inspiration for their designs. With an emphasis on mixed use districts, enhanced pedestrian environments, and dense building patterns, the New Urbanism has been adapted as a template for retail environment design, in addition to its status as a growth policy strategy and community design motif. A final factor for the emergence of the lifestyle center is the recognition of the increasing importance of the shopping center in suburban life. Outside of urban centers, suburbia offers few public gathering places. Developers of lifestyle centers realized that improved environments can act as a forum for social activity and possibly raise revenue streams. The lifestyle center, then, is a physical manifestation of economic, political, and social movements in the last decades of the twentieth century in America.
Endnotes

2 Ibid, 47.
7 Ibid, 12.
Chapter 2

The arrival of the lifestyle center raises some important questions about the meaning of urbanity, and more precisely, sub-urbanity. Developers and other supporters claim that lifestyle centers fill in the vacuum now missing in the heart of the physical and social landscape of suburban North America. Detractors, on the other hand, argue that lifestyle centers are no more than a mere “bait and switch routine” utilizing the veneer of a vibrant, public-oriented main street in order to attract visitors to a commercially-minded venue for consumption. These arguments, among others, are the basis for the questions asked in this thesis:

1. PUBLIC: How “public” are lifestyle centers?
2. MIX: What does the mixed-use nature of a lifestyle center do to augment its publicness and give it a sense of place?
3. PHYSICAL: What is the role of a lifestyle center’s physical configuration in giving a center to its community?
4. COMMUNITY: How do local residents perceive the lifestyle center’s role in the community?
"In favoring the notion of multiple counterpublics endowed with diverse rationalities and modes of interaction and expression over a singular public sphere...the essential point is that we need to 'foster a conception of 'public which in principle excludes no persons, aspects of person's lives, or topic of discussion which encourages aesthetic as well as discursive expression. In such a public, consensus and sharing may not always be the goal, but the recognition and appreciation of differences, in the context of confrontation with the power.'" —Michael Gardiner

One of the primary purposes traditional town centers fulfill is their role as the primary spatial manifestation of society's public sphere. Touted by such urban theorists and observers as Jane Jacobs, public spaces found in a traditional town center provide a venue for residents and strangers alike to mix and interact. The range of interactions, from chance, fleeting encounters, to engaged debates, occurring in public streets and plazas are what many exclaim to be the essence of urbanity, what makes the city a community. Nevertheless, many authors point to the degeneration of the public sphere in contemporary society. Not only is the public sphere eviscerated in the physical sense by suburbanization, but also in terms of quality. As Craig Calhoun argues, "the public sphere was turned into a sham semblance of its former self. The key tendency was to replace the shared, critical activity of public discourse by a more passive culture consumption on the one hand and an apolitical sociability on the other." It is this degeneration that inspires an army of theorists, designers, planners, politicians, and philosophers to put forth ideas for the degeneration of the public realm.

The nature of the public realm and its role in the formation of community has
been a topic of debate and consideration for philosophers and sociologists for centuries. Jurgen Habermas, a 20th Century critical theorist introduced a theory that has become greatly influential in the discourse over the role of the “public” in contemporary society with his volume *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. In outlining the emergence of a truly “public” forum, Habermas described the role and importance of the public sphere, and the kinds of conditions that led to its formation. Essential to the American political foundation of democracy, Habermas stated that “a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality and quantity of participation.” A well-functioning democracy, then, bears the condition that all of citizenry had access to the public sphere and had the ability to participate in all discourse related to public affairs. The natural consequence of this interaction, then, according to Habermas was that it acted as a “mode of societal integration.” Furthermore, in his eyes, public discourse was seen as a higher order of the “coordination of human life,” among others that include “state power and market economies. But money and power are non-discursive modes of coordination.”

The applicability of Habermas’s idealized realm of the public drew much criticism by other theorists, characterized as postmodernists. Contrary to Habermas’s modernist interpretation, which viewed rational, critical discourse as the only valid vehicle for public organization, postmodernists such as Seyla Benhabib pointed out various weaknesses in the historical foundations of his theory. Benhabib, among other feminist theorists, claimed that Habermas’s references to bourgeois 18th and 19th Century Western European society was
exactly that— it was based on the exclusion of significant segments of its population, namely women and other minorities. Michael Gardiner, in his paper “Wild Publics and Grotesque Symposia,” argued that “Habermas’ stress on a relatively monolithic, overarching public sphere characterized by specific regulative mechanisms for rational debate and consensus-building, according to this view, actively ‘suppresses sociocultural diversity in constituting an arena inimical to difference.’” As an alternative approach, Gardiner proposed an alternative framework of reference, preferring a theory of “counterpublics,” such as the Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin. The Bakhtinian idea of multiple publics within society, in a sense, is more relevant for contemporary life in America. In a society characterized by identity politics and a fragmented, but not disunited culture, a theoretical framework which addresses and recognizes difference within a given population can help inform a better understanding of the needs of most, if not all, segments of society.

Where does this leave us, then, in understanding the role of lifestyle centers as venues for the public sphere? Although detractors may automatically claim that because lifestyle centers are privately owned and commercially-oriented, then it would not be valid to pursue an inquiry into the performance of lifestyle centers as public spaces. As a counterpoint, it is necessary to point out that the line dividing public and private in the United States has always been a blurry one. In recent years, the proliferation of lifestyle centers, business improvement districts (BIDs), common interest developments (CIDs), and other forms of privatized public space argues for recognizing these places as part of the public realm, with roles to play in the
social, political, and economic environment. Acknowledging this is the first step to ensure that these environments fall under the radar of those concerned about the public sphere, who can then take action to propose improvements or alternatives to the current state of affairs.

**Evaluating PUBLIC**

To answer the question of whether the case studies do serve community functions, I have chosen to focus on the issue of “publicness” as a surrogate for many aspects of traditional community that are found in traditional town centers. The idea of the “public” and its primacy among the priorities in the design of the built environment is rooted in the belief of democracy as the foundation of American society. Kevin Lynch declared that “the quality of a place is due to the joint effect of the place and the society which occupies it.” However, Lynch also recognized that, such as in the cases of colonial cities, the pattern of settlement and development often illustrates the relation of powers between different groups of people in a place. It is in this condition which we find lifestyle centers. From the very beginning, the definition of what constitutes the “public” and how “public” a place is is a slippery one. Lifestyle centers, although completely private developments, fall in the same vein as shopping malls, whose spaces are often adopted by a community as their own, thus becoming a site of public use. Therefore, it is still valuable to attempt to qualitatively measure the degree to which the lifestyle centers can be considered “public.” This measurement allows a comparison across the case studies and makes possible the identification of any deviation in practices that led to a particular success or failure of the lifestyle center in its engagement in the public realm.
Methodology

Peter Marcuse, an urban planning professor at Columbia University, wrote about the utility of public space for society and proposed a framework to understand the varying characteristics that they exhibit. His work provided a useful set of criteria for addressing the issues of community that I wish to address. Marcuse, in his article entitled “The Threats to Publicly Usable Space in a Time of Contradiction,” acknowledged, first of all, the tension in contemporary American society over the definition of public space, since the provision of “public” space is increasingly dependent not on the intervention of the public sector, but on the actions of private interests. Therefore, instead of constructing a relation of polar opposites between public and private, Marcuse reconciled this dynamic by defining a category of publicly usable space. He then continued to outline a set of general criteria to judge the “publicness” of publicly usable space. Lifestyle centers fall within the conceptual framework of publicly usable space by virtue of their design, and so I have adapted these criteria to assess the cases. They include:

1. Equity in distribution of resources

“The issue of equity raises the concern that such space be in practice equally attractive, equally usable in fact, by all groups in society, in proportion to their needs.”

Peter Marcuse sought to illustrate the concept of equity in distribution of resources through the imagery of a public park. In his illustration, the inclusion, or exclusion, of
amenities such as badminton courts, baseball fields, playgrounds, flower beds, picnic tables, etc. can have a large bearing on who will utilize the park. When viewing lifestyle centers through this lens, it must be recognized that most likely there will be definite limits placed on the kinds of activities that are accommodated through design because of the commercial nature of these developments. Nevertheless, the shift in development practice has been such that lifestyle centers are moving away from the single-purpose suburban shopping center towards more diverse, mixed-use town centers which function, at least in theory, more like traditional town centers.

The identification of the populations being served by the lifestyle centers will involve the analysis of the different vehicles which make manifest the intentions of the developers and designers. An inventory of the physical programmatic attributes of the lifestyle centers will reveal the types of everyday activities that are intended to take place. Furthermore, an analysis of different forms of promotional media will also speak to the “publics” which they seek to attract.

2. Accessibility

"Accessibility raises the question of location."

According to Marcuse’s interpretation of accessibility, public spaces are often rendered un-public by virtue of their inaccessibility. Falling under this category are spaces such as rooftop terraces with no clear entrance, fenced public gardens, and “public” ways obstructed
by barricades and manned gates, such as those found in Washington, D.C. With lifestyle centers, however, this approach is entirely counterproductive to the economic objectives sought by the developers, property managers, and tenants. Maximum exposure is key to the survival of the retail tenants, who form the primary component of all lifestyle centers. Despite this reality, this is not to say that there are finer, more nuanced aspects of accessibility which are controlled by the management of lifestyle centers. The issue of accessibility can be approached through an assessment of the varying scales on which the lifestyle centers operate within the metropolitan region. In terms of a city-wide scope, the geographic placement of the lifestyle center and which neighborhoods lie adjacent determines the degree of accessibility for residents or visitors whom the lifestyle centers was intended to serve. The location of the lifestyle center within the transportation infrastructural network also affects the ability of different groups to access the site. An imbalance in the range of modes on which users can access the site would most definitely affect the publicness of the center.

3. Non-Exclusionary Access

"Non-discriminatory control is vital. The exclusion from use of public space of any group reduces its character, its publicness."

In the most crude interpretation, discriminatory control of space is already outlawed in the United States. Peter Marcuse referred in his article to the most insidious form of discriminatory control, that of the American experience of segregation prior to the middle of
the 20th Century. That episode in American history, perhaps extreme, illustrates the deleterious effects that discriminatory control has on the construction of a spatial forum catering more to a Bakhtinian interpretation of multiple publics.

Despite a national predilection against discrimination, the sanctity of private property grants owners and managers of lifestyle centers the right to limit or restrict certain uses that fall outside some implied public rights of free speech. The determination of which uses the case projects restrict or do not restrict depends on a review of various environmental clues, in addition to consultation with relevant officials in the localities where the centers are located. Signage often illustrate explicitly the discretion that management exercises in terms of public use. Furthermore, unspoken rules are often verbalized during interviews with users and public officials.

4. Aesthetic Quality

“Aesthetic quality can influence the extent to which a space is attractive for public use, and can decide for whom it is attractive.”

In terms of the importance of the aesthetic style and appearance of the lifestyle center, it is useful to recognize that it brings into question the process behind its production, the idea it attempts to symbolize, and for whom were the symbols intended for. In his work The Theming of America: American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments, Mark Gottdiener describes the rapidly rising phenomenon of themed environments in the United
States, of which lifestyle centers can be considered an aspect. Gottdiener makes the point that themed environments, far from being contemporary occurrences, actually comprised the fundamental basis for built civilization since ancient times. He makes a distinction, however, between themed environments in history, which were mainly informed by religious or other cultural regimes, and the themed environments found today. Gottdiener puts forth the notion that themed environments, including lifestyle centers, reflect late capitalist society. According to his line of inquiry, the aesthetic quality of lifestyle centers would reflect a two-step strategy: 1) it constitutes a postmodern reaction to imbue meaning and symbolism in the built environment, counter to the austere aesthetic of mid 20th Century modernism, and 2) the meaning and symbolism are further utilized to mask the lifestyle center’s true economic function, making it more palatable for the everyday consumer.11

It would prove useful to construct a simple framework to analyze the relationship between the signs and symbols utilized in the lifestyle centers and the users who consume the space containing them. According to Gottdiener, the design of lifestyle centers can be understood to represent two aspects: the denotative and connotative. The denotative involves the environment’s explicit expression of its function: in Gottdiener’s example, he paints the image of a stately bank with columns lining the front façade as representative of its function as a storehouse of money. However, increasingly overshadowing the denotative aspect is the connotative function of space. The developers and designers of lifestyle centers depend on the connotative aspect of their projects to provoke certain associations in the minds of
their visitors. It is certain, though, that different groups and individuals will have differing associations related to a built space. This is what Marcuse expresses to be the aesthetic quality that determines how a space can be found attractive by certain publics. It is then interesting to note that the control of the aesthetic quality is inextricably bound to the reality that the American market is, in general, over-retailed. Developers, then, must resort to utilize increasingly sophisticated signs and symbols, in this case, architecture and urban design, in order to distinguish their goods in a crowded marketplace.

**MIX**

Another distinct characteristic exhibited by lifestyle centers is the manner in which they mix uses, such as residential, office, retail, and others, in a relatively dense morphology, unusual in suburban environments. Often touted as innovative approaches to deal with the reality of increasingly limited land resources and social dissatisfaction with suburbia, lifestyle centers are, in a sense, a return to traditional city-building practices rather than a pioneering departure. What differs, however, is the economic process by which the two urban phenomena are created. Lifestyle centers are large-scale, master-planned mixed-use environments, owned by a single entity; main streets developed in the late 10th and early 20th Centuries in an ad-hoc manner, responding to the market for goods and services at a particular location. To understand the history behind the decline of mixed-use town centers and the factors which are motivating their re-emergence onto the development landscape will serve to understand
how each of the lifestyle center case studies stand as appropriate (or inappropriate) strategies to restoring mixed-use environments in settings where none existed before.

According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the development of dense, mixed-use urban centers diminished in favor in the United States due to three primary reasons, all rooted in the early and mid-20th Century. First of all was the rise in prominence of the automobile in American life. Prior to the widespread use of the private automobile, transportation in urban America consisted of a balanced mix of street cars and pedestrian means. These modes were feasible in a built environment which fostered such activity. However, after World War II, automobiles grew to become the prevalent mode of transportation in much of the United States, especially outside of the established, dense urban centers. As a response to this shift, society transformed the way it constructed the built environment in order to accommodate the new reality of the automobile. The automobile revolutionized the way Americans lived, worked, and played. Commerce, in particular, was affected in such a manner that in order to cater to the physical requirements exacted by the automobile, commercial strip centers with ample parking proliferated across the country. These specialized shopping districts depended entirely on its customers’ vehicular mobility. As a result, the sheer span of distances created by this automobile-oriented landscape was such that walking became unfeasible. This unfeasibility rendered the convenience of adjacent, mixed-uses redundant, leading to their decline.

The second factor in the decline of mixed-use neighborhoods is cited by the ULI as the increasing affluence of American society over the course of the twentieth century. Always
in the American imagination is the American Dream made physically manifest, the ideal of the single-family home. Single family homes set in a suburban landscape date back earlier than the 20th Century. Rooted in the days of the streetcar, the new transportation innovation made it for increasing numbers of city dwellers to live outside the center city and commute for work. Despite the dispersal effect the streetcar had on urban development patterns, the effect was still limited because around the streetcar network, the built environment was constructed to be accessible by pedestrians, with uses mixed for convenience sake. As society became wealthier, even more numbers of citizens found homeownership attainable, moving into high gear after World War II. Suburbia expanded under the pressure from new families seeking their stake, with government-subsidized mortgages in hand and newly-constructed multilane highways helping lead the exodus away from the inner city. Main streets located in the dense hearts of cities lacked parking and were difficult to access from suburban locations. Furthermore, the falling overall urban density made it impossible to disperse retail and commercial uses evenly across the neighborhoods, as they required larger and larger catchment areas to survive.

The final factor in the decline of traditional mixed-use centers was the practice of zoning that became prevalent across the United States, beginning in the early 20th Century. Originally a protective measure meant to separate noxious industrial uses from residential neighborhoods, zoning resulted in a horizontal parceling of the city. This, in effect, made the practice of mixed use planning illegal.
The rationale for the re-introduction of mixed use environments cites both economic and social benefits. For many markets, the establishment of both vertically-integrated and horizontally-integrated mixed use environments is an issue of economic necessity. Throughout the United States, land prices in urban markets are rising, calling for a more efficient use of land resources. The complex management and development of these scarce lands into mixed-use districts is now made more possible by a transformation of the development industry. Development firms were once highly specialized, dedicated to construction of a single type of real estate product, be it residential development, office development, etc. However, with an increasing sophistication on the part of the developers in financing and expertise in putting together large, complex mixed-use projects, it is becoming not only economically feasible, but also lucrative to take part in such ventures.

Much of the argument by the New Urbanists and their supporters pertain to the social benefits brought forth by mixed-use environments embodied in such developments as lifestyle centers. In their opinion, the immediate adjacency of retail, residential, commercial, and civic uses brings together a wide spectrum of local society, bringing them in contact each other and creating a basis for community. In terms of describing what constitute a vibrant mixed-use center, it is important to understand the context in which the center is located. The appropriateness of a mixed-use center relies on its surrounding context and whether or not it supports a diverse mix of uses for those who reside and work in that local vicinity. The context itself differs from location to location, begging the question as to what constitutes a
“community.”

With regards to the management of a mixed-use center such as a lifestyle center, it then can become a fine balancing act, since they are centrally owned and managed. The central management holds absolute authority over the type of tenants and uses which can be housed on the property. The product of this authority, then, can reflect the biases of the management, and can be perceived as insensitive and inappropriate to local needs. This is a result of the criteria for tenancy is the maximization of consumption. In this kind of situation, certain types of marginal businesses that may fill niche needs or small groups would not be included. Lifestyle centers are owned by a single entity; therefore, the mix of uses responds to the interests of the entity, not the community. Lifestyle centers generally standardize the quality and sizes of spaces available for tenants, reducing the variation in rents, and consequently, the variation in tenants. On the contrary, traditional main streets and town centers consist of various types of space available at various rents, since each lot is usually owned separately. This ownership pattern means that invariably some buildings hold advantage over others, spreading the range of upkeep and location, thus leading to greater differences in rent. It is this diversity in rent structure which creates a diversity of uses catering to diverse income groups. The market eventually fills every niche on main street—with high end stores and low end shoe repair shops—it is an environment with depth.
Evaluating MIX

Methodology

In evaluating the appropriateness of mixes in the lifestyle centers to the local community, it is best to keep in mind that, according to the New Urbanists, the goal is to have a “relatively balanced mix of housing, workplace, shopping, recreation, and institutional uses.” An appropriate methodology would be to understand the lifestyle center in the context of its own community, thereby informing the degree to which the mixes they offer to the local neighborhood.

PHYSICAL

Perhaps the feature which most distinguishes lifestyle centers from their retail-driven predecessors is their physical configuration. The transformation in physical configuration can be understood through the lenses of MIT theorist William Mitchell. One of Mitchell’s theories is the idea of fragmentation and recombination as a characteristic of technological development throughout history. With advances in economy and technology, forms and functions which once depended on spatial concentration no longer are constrained by such issues, allowed to break down and re-accrete according to smaller, yet more efficient forms. Prime examples include the evolution of computing, which once occupied whole rooms, but now have been released from that constraint by increased computing efficiency and miniaturization, paving the way for laptop computers. The institution of the bank has
also followed this path, once housed in large, stately structures that integrated both front-office and back-office functions. However, with the advent of telecommunication and the increasingly global mobility of capital, banking readjusted, dispersing their back-office functions to suburban office parks and front-office functions to small branches and automatic teller machines.

Following this framework, one might argue that the superstructure of the large, enclosed shopping mall is breaking down, having served its economic purpose. In its place, the lifestyle center has arisen. The lifestyle center is Mitchell’s recombination, having taken apart the shopping mall and rearranging the components according to changes in public tastes, municipal regulation, and developer attitudes. In this stage of recombination, centralized retail seeks to emulate what it replaced: the retail street in pre-modern America.

**Evaluating PHYSICAL**

**Methodology**

To analyze the physical configuration of lifestyle centers, I have organized their layouts according to three typologies. The purpose of the typologies is to provide an analytical framework within which all potential cases may fall. Minor variations or overlaps may occur between the typologies, but each typology is largely independent, in terms of its characteristics. The typologies include:
1. Village typology

Of all lifestyle centers, those that fall under the village typology generally are the largest development projects. Most adhere to a New Urbanist-style grid, village lifestyle centers are usually focused on one or more central features, such as a landscaped park or public plaza. In keeping with the idea of a fully-functional urban district, village lifestyle centers also allow traffic to run throughout the roads in the project. The road network is often narrow, with on-street parallel parking to provide parking for short-term errands, as well as shielding pedestrians from traffic. Despite the provision of on-street parking, the reality in most regions of the United States is such that the majority of visitors come by private automobile, increasing demand for parking. Therefore, the village typology is fortunate in the sense that the interior of blocks allows for the management of automobile parking, as well as the creation of amenities for the residential component of the centers. The scale of lifestyle centers built in the village typology also gives the advantage to designer for creating an entirely immersive environment, with a grid of streets. Because of its singular ownership, designers are at liberty to take advantage of the breadth and scope of the site to create urban conditions, especially in areas where the only precedent for the built environment consists of suburban housing tracts and strip shopping centers. Village typology shopping centers can be found both in previously built urban areas, such as San Jose’s Santana Row, or in greenfield sites, like Rancho Cucamonga’s Victoria Gardens.
2. Main Street typology

Lifestyle centers that fall into this category include those which are focused along a single length of street, usually one that did not exist before and designed with the explicit purpose of hosting a retail/mixed-use environment. Those in the main street typology exploit the scale and morphology of traditional small-town main streets to create an enclosed, intimate atmosphere. In terms of parking, like the village typology, on-street parking is provided in order to animate the streetscape, as well as provide a place for short-term visitors. However, the majority of parking is usually handled off to the side of the development, either in a parking structure, or on surface lots. As a consequence of the primacy of the main street and the reluctance for retailers to want to face a large parking lot or structure, most, if not all, tenants are turned inward towards the street. Several examples of the Main Street typology include Mashpee Commons, in Mashpee, Massachusetts, and Birkdale Village, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

3. Internal Corridor typology

The last typology of lifestyle centers can be characterized as the *Internal Corridor* typology. This type of development includes an interior pedestrian passage, reminiscent of the classic mall configurations, albeit without the roof enclosure. In terms of its potential integration to the surrounding urban fabric, internal corridor lifestyle centers are often the most alien in their surroundings in the cases where they are ringed by parking lots. Internal
corridor lifestyle centers are usually the smallest in scale among the three typologies, and include projects such as Paseo Colorado in Pasadena, California, Desert Ridge Marketplace in Phoenix, Arizona, and Bay Street in Emeryville, California.

Consistent qualities

In addition to the differences outlined in the typologies above, there are also certain qualities that are shared among all the different types of lifestyle centers. Firstly, most lifestyle centers are separated from their context by parking. One of the most important features is how the development interfaces with the surrounding neighborhoods, often a function of how parking is handled in the design. In some cases, parking is handled discretely, either underground or in the interior of blocks. In other cases, parking is housed in large surface lots or adjacent parking structures, which can sever any meaningful connection with adjacent properties. Secondly, in all lifestyle centers, the design is built around the pedestrian experience. In accordance with principles expounded by experts in urban design, buildings are built with the appearance of narrow, varied facades to keep the casual walker in a consistently stimulating environment. Furthermore, buildings are usually built all the way to the sidewalk, with the exception of important central structure. Those structures usually are set back from the sidewalk. Among all the cases, buildings, or at least the different segments of the larger building, vary from single to multiple levels.
COMMUNITY

The issue whether a traditional town center can serve as a space for all those who inhabit the town or community is a central question this thesis. For this reason, I attempted to discover the opinions of the everyday citizens of these communities, for they are the users of these spaces. Their thoughts and concerns revealed the diverse, or unified, nature of the community and their attitudes toward the lifestyle centers. The diverse forms in which lifestyle centers appear and their offerings may appeal to certain groups, but not to others. In order to gauge the difference in opinions, then, it is important to get direct information from the residents themselves. Although it is possible for a lifestyle centers to be economically successful without directly serving the local community, they will persist in ignoring the potential for civic vitality present in its neighborhood. Therefore, community perception is an important measure of the role a lifestyle center has in providing a social focus to its surrounding vicinity.

Evaluating COMMUNITY

Methodology

The methodology of gauging community sentiment towards local lifestyle centers involved the evaluation of several techniques and assumptions in order to properly gather a body of data from which several generalizations could be extrapolated. Considering this particular situation, interviews were the most appropriate approach because they offer access
to a body of knowledge, observations, and opinions held by the local citizenry not readily available through other avenues, such as print and digital media. A series of steps were taken in preparation for the interviews:

1. Identification of the category of potential respondents

   The collection of the observations of residents in a specified geographic area, namely in San Jose, Pasadena, and Mashpee, involved what Weiss terms a *sample of representatives*. Because the sample consisted of a group of respondents who share a commonality, residence in the same town or neighborhood, it was hoped that this sample group was able to represent the entire population in question.

   The qualitative nature of this study also required certain assumptions. In analyzing the responses of those interviewed, it was assumed that if there was variation among the observations of the respondents, then it was likely that there was variation in the entire population. On the other hand, if there were consistencies within the group, especially within a heterogeneous group, then there may have been a similar uniformity within the larger community.

2. Sampling

   The objective of this study was to reveal the general sentiment of the community. Therefore, the most appropriate method was sampling to maximize the range of opinion.
A probability sample would have, at least mathematically, produced a group similar in composition to the town’s or neighborhood’s population. In all likelihood, the probability sample would have produced many duplicate responses, requiring a larger sample size in order to capture a more diverse range of opinions. Under the time and resource constraints of this study, a probability sample was not possible.

The variation-maximizing sample was chosen in order to ensure that, under such circumstances, it was possible to have access to a wide portion of the local population. In order to maximize the range of variation, three filters were chosen: occupation, gender, and place of residence. The choice of occupation as a filter corresponded to a preconceived assumption that one’s income level was a major determinant of their opinion towards the lifestyle center. Gender as a filter spoke to the notion that space itself is gendered, and one’s gender played a role in how one perceived and consumed a space. Because this thesis dealt with the role of a lifestyle center in its local community, it was imperative to ensure that respondents resided within the neighborhood in which the development was located. In the cases of the two California projects, Santana Row and Paseo Colorado, it was recognized that especially in Western U.S. cities, neighborhoods are often ill-defined and whose boundaries are open for debate. Therefore, for simplification’s sake, a shed area was defined, incorporating all areas within a ten-minute drive from the case study.

The number of interviewees was dependent on the time and resource constraints. Because the three case studies were located quite a distance from Boston, multiple visits
were not financially feasible. A maximum amount of interviews possible were carried out, and then certain samples were thrown out due to their appropriateness vis à vis the filter characteristics.

One of the key factors in finding a variation-maximizing sample was the location in which to find respondents. Finding interviewees in the lifestyle center itself was ruled out because they would constitute a self-selecting group who obviously choose to visit the development. What was sought after was a sample group that included not only those who visited the lifestyle center, but also those who did not find the center to their liking and had no reason to visit. The diversity of most of urban America posed a challenge, for there are few, if any locations where members from all walks of society gather for a common purpose. However, it is fairly safe to assume that in everyday life, the U.S. Postal Service remains an institution utilized by a majority of the citizenry. In each of the three case studies, the nearest United States post office was chosen as both a respondent recruiting and interviewing site.

3. Interviews

The focus of interviews was the gathering and analysis of opinions and facts. After potential respondents were approached and agreed to participate, the interview was initiated. Because hard facts and numbers for statistical analysis were not required, a conversational interview was best-suited for the situation. A questionnaire-type form was avoided to aid the free flow of the interview and allow for the appearance of any unexpected, but perhaps useful,
information. Interviews were conducted during the lunch hour to ensure that the working population was also included in the sample population. Although a questionnaire was absent, a question-guide served to focus the conversation on relevant topics and to guarantee that the most crucial issues were discussed. Interviews ranged from five to fifteen minutes long. Short notes were taken during the course of the interview, with elaboration of the notes taking place after the end of each interview. Finally, all interview notes were coded, excerpted, and arranged according to theme.
**Endnotes**

<www.slate.com>


5 Ibid, 6.


10 Ibid.


16 See appendix

17 See appendix
Chapter 3

This chapter introduces the three case studies that will be used to explore the viability of lifestyle centers in functioning as contemporary town centers. Following the assumption that traditional town centers, such as those found in New England towns and main streets all over the United States, are becoming more and more difficult to create due to current development patterns and economics, lifestyle centers harbor the possibility to stand in as close substitutes. The preceding chapter included a detailed discussion of the various aspects which may help contribute to the success or failure of the lifestyle centers. Therefore, the following case studies will aid us in illustrating how those very aspects manifest themselves differently from project to project.

The three case studies are all considered lifestyle centers according to the definitions put forth by the International Council of Shopping Centers and others; nevertheless, they are distinctly different in some major ways. First of all, the three projects span varying geographic realms: Northern California, Southern California, and the Cape Cod region of Massachusetts. Furthermore, the lifestyle centers in question are located in three different contexts, with one built in the middle of what may be characterized as suburbia, another located in a revitalized downtown, and the last in a small-town environment. Finally, they have distinctly different
forms, ranging from a low-rise village configuration to a mid-rise urban complex.

What unites every case study is that they were all constructed on their own sites from the ground up. By contract, many lifestyle centers are, in fact, extensions of existing suburban malls. I have not studied these in detail because the objective of this thesis is to analyze the possibility of creating town centers in locations where there were none. My intention is to compare and contrast the three cases through qualitative measures to understand their similarities and differences and how they each perform. It will then be possible to identify key factors that help lifestyle centers succeed in possibly serving as traditional town centers.
**Santana Row | San Jose, California**

**Figure 29:** San Francisco Bay Area

**Figure 30:** San Jose

**Figure 31:** Urban Context

**Figure 32:** Arcades in luxury boutique area

**Figure 33:** Characteristic mid-rise heights

**Figure 34:** Plaza de Valencia, one of the several public spaces in Santana Row

---

56 | **Chapter 3** Case Study: Santana Row
Santana Row is an upscale "residential, shopping, dining, and entertainment district."  Santana Row was built on a former upscale strip shopping mall by Federal Realty Investment Trust and was envisioned to help fill unfulfilled demand for luxury housing and retail in an underserved market, the South Bay area of the San Francisco metropolitan region. At its completed stage, scheduled to occur in mid-2006, Santana Row will contain more than half a million square feet of retail space and restaurants. In addition to that space, the 18-block project will have seven parks, two hotels, and 1,201 residential units.2
Figure 36: Los Angeles Metro Area

Figure 37: Pasadena

Figure 38: Urban Context

Figure 39: Open Paths Connect to Street

Figure 40: Central Promenade and Plaza

Figure 41: The central Plaza acts as a focal point for the project and the downtown

58 | Chapter 3 Case Study: Paseo Colorado
Paseo Colorado is a product of TrizecHahn Development, who redeveloped a 1970s-era indoor shopping center. Located on Colorado Boulevard, the primary thoroughfare through Pasadena, Paseo Colorado was an effort to re-engage the urban fabric that the previous mall, Plaza Pasadena, rejected. With a large proportion of restaurant space, Paseo Colorado inhabits three blocks with retail stores, a large multi-screen cinema, and 387 housing units. Although it contains a similar amount of retail space as Santana Row, the high degree of vertical integration and narrow pedestrian corridors permit Paseo Colorado to occupy a smaller footprint.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Information</th>
<th>Use Area (Square Feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Area</td>
<td>10.9 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Building Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>422,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant/ Food Service</td>
<td>68,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>66,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>387 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programming</th>
<th>Food &amp; Entertainment</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-retail Tenants</td>
<td>Sam Goody</td>
<td>Gelson’s Grocery</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Post Office</td>
<td>Pacific Theaters 14</td>
<td>AT&amp;T Wireless</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California Crisp</td>
<td>Dry Cleaning &amp; Shoe Repair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese Gourmet</td>
<td>Lenscrafters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.F. Chang’s</td>
<td>Equinox Fitness Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starbucks Coffee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tokyo Wako</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubio’s Mexican</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Island’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mashpee Commons | Mashpee, Massachusetts

Figure 43: Upper Cape Cod area

Figure 44: Mashpee

Figure 45: Urban Context

Figure 46: New England village theme

Figure 47: Mashpee Commons Post Office

Figure 48: A small number of housing is available above the shops on the main street
Mashpee Commons, the last of the case studies, is marketed as the downtown for Mashpee, Massachusetts, a town near the Atlantic shore of Upper Cape Cod. Laid out to resemble a traditional New England town, Mashpee Commons contains housing, upscale retail, offices, entertainment facilities, and civic facilities. In keeping with its theme, the buildings in Mashpee Commons are no higher than three stories, lending the project a less urban, more small-town feel. Mashpee Commons is the completed centerpiece of what developers Arnold Chace and Douglass Storrs envision to be a walkable, New Urbanist mixed-use town centered on the intersection of two local highways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programming</th>
<th>Non-retail Tenants</th>
<th>Food &amp; Entertainment</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashpee Public Library</td>
<td>Blockbuster Video</td>
<td>Banknorth</td>
<td>Alberico Altering &amp; Tailoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Post Office</td>
<td>Regal Cinemas</td>
<td>Citizens Bank</td>
<td>Banker’s Life and Casualty Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christ the King Church</td>
<td>Bleu French Bistro</td>
<td>CVS Pharmacy</td>
<td>Bayview Optometrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bobby Byrne’s Pub</td>
<td>Liberty Liquors</td>
<td>Capeway Cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fountain of Juice</td>
<td>Star Market</td>
<td>Fizie’s Barbershop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jade Chinese</td>
<td>Stop ‘N Shop</td>
<td>Medical Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inside Scoop Ice Cream</td>
<td>Mashpee Florist</td>
<td>Mashpee Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Starbucks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Real Estate Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoe’s Pizza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Data</th>
<th>Land Use Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Area</td>
<td>40 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Building Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Area (Square Feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>97,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant/ Food Service</td>
<td>24,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>13,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>36,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>13 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Figure 49: Mashpee Commons site plan
Endnotes


2 Ibid.
Chapter 4

This chapter is an application of the criteria and methodologies discussed in Chapter 2 to the case studies introduced in Chapter 3. The overarching questions of this thesis pertain to the possibility of lifestyle centers giving a physical center and focus in a way that early 20th Century towns did, as well as providing a social venue for community. The multiple sets of criteria approach the questions from different directions in order to address the numerous issues involved in the answering to such questions. Subsequent to this discussion, we will draw conclusions from the analysis and summarize the findings in Chapter 5.

Analyzing PUBLIC

Equity in Distribution of Resources

Much of the ambiguity in terms of the public function of lifestyle centers lies in the debate over whom they serve. First and foremost, it must be recognized that lifestyle centers are privately-owned entities governed not only by the policies and regulations established by the state, but also by their own codes set in place in order to best facilitate the function determined by the management: namely, commerce. This must not be construed as a carte blanche for the management to create rules inimical to public life; issues along this vein have found
their way to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled that certain publicly-used private properties, such as shopping centers and casinos, have become part of the multi-dimensional fabric of public space in the United States. Therefore, it is to be expected that these spaces be accommodating to non-commercial public activities and groups. Following this rationale, case studies differ according to the degree to which they cater to various groups.

The publicity surrounding Mashpee Commons most strongly argues the importance of community in the design and programming of the development. First of all, the relatively diverse mix of amenities including rental apartments, a library, church, post office, professional offices, and shops is utilized to demonstrate the ability to accommodate a more urbane lifestyle. Secondly, according to Mashpee Commons developer Arnold “Buff” Chace, Jr. the project will “improve- not weaken- the quality of community life by creating a place where pedestrians rule and citizens can gather,” achieved by “creating the public spaces that are designed so people have interactions where they speak... It is about thinking about the public realm, designing the public realm. That is the room in which community takes place.”

The rhetoric regarding the other two case studies are slightly more vague about the dynamics of community, or do not mention them at all. Paseo Colorado's publicity materials state that it is “an urban village...that (restores) vital links to the historic core of Pasadena's Civic Center and Old Pasadena.” In addition, it engenders a “village experience” that is engineered by the management, hoping to create a “marriage between retailers and residents...not unlike the friendly first-name-basis lifestyle of a traditional village.” In contrast, little is made to
officially promote the idea that Santana Row is a diverse, vital community. Instead, Santana Row is seen to cater to a fairly defined demographic group, thought to be an “urban-oriented renter… (who) would already be living and working in the South Bay area, preferring an urban lifestyle, be 50 or younger, and have a combined or individual annual income exceeding five figures.”

Some of the most visible efforts of the lifestyle center’s attempts to attract local residents are their formally planned events. Again, each lifestyle center takes a different approach. Rather surprisingly, but perhaps a byproduct of its relative size and prominence, Santana Row offered the most extensive and diverse lineup of events. Analyzing the types and characters of the planned attractions, it is easy to see the majority of them are oriented towards female customers and their children. In addition to this bias, reflecting the nature of Santana Row itself, the events are geared towards certain tastes and habits found more frequently among those of higher income status. Events related to cosmetics, book signings, day spas, and wine and cheese tastings populated the list, which even included an event geared to a meeting introducing technological innovations in the world of cosmetic plastic surgery.

Despite these extremes, Santana Row managed to offer events that would attract a broader spectrum of the local population. A weekly farmer’s market was mentioned by many interviewees as one of the only redeeming aspects of the lifestyle center. This is most likely because the farmer’s market is the most convenient one in the area, and it provides everyday goods at roughly the same price as the local grocery store. In addition, a fall music series,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mar</td>
<td>Kaitlyn Langstaff Benefit Concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sep</td>
<td>Art in the Garden Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dec</td>
<td>Fall Music Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dec</td>
<td>Rachel Ray Comes to Santana Row for a Cooking Demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Dec</td>
<td>Hollywood Makeup Artist Jimmy Todd is coming to Kase Cosmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Dec</td>
<td>Victoria Noel Dinner Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Dec</td>
<td>Carmen Richardson Rutten, author of Dancing Naked, will appear at Borders Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Feb</td>
<td>Sunday Farmers Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Feb</td>
<td>A Special Valentine’s Day Event! Five Couples Renew Their Vows at Santana Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Apr</td>
<td>Celebrate Earth Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Apr</td>
<td>Pet Awareness Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Apr</td>
<td>An Evening with Dr. Weil, Plastic Surgeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Apr</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Cheese Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May</td>
<td>Celebrate Mother’s Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8
SPCA adoption events, and school-sponsored competitions all contributed to diversify Santana Row’s offerings, and subsequently, the types of groups that would visit the development.

In direct contrast with Santana Row’s offerings are those by Mashpee Commons and Paseo Colorado. Although Mashpee Commons appears to be the lifestyle center with the most conscious attempt to paint itself as community-oriented, there are few officially programmed events that are not commercial in nature. Most of the non-commercial events, which exclude any store-sponsored sales, take place in the summer, most likely to coincide with the weather and the swelling vacation population from outside Mashpee. These include outdoor movie nights and an annual concert with fireworks, the culmination of local scholarship fundraising efforts. Paseo Colorado also offered few events, but this may be related to its relatively small size and its self-perceived role within the community. Recognizing its status and location along Pasadena’s main Colorado Boulevard corridor, Paseo Colorado views itself as a link in the chain of public spaces, rather than the primary gathering place. In its immediate surroundings are public venues such as the city’s convention center, civic auditorium, and city hall. In this sense, Paseo Colorado can be viewed as the most inwardly-focused of all the lifestyle centers.

From the point of view of equity, it seems from the initial discussion that Mashpee Commons pays most attention to catering to the widest range of visitors, despite some shortcomings with regard to its public events. Santana Row represents the other end of the spectrum, as it clearly states its targeted demographic. Despite this finding, we may see that with under other criteria, the cases perform quite differently.
Accessibility

The ways in which the three case lifestyle centers make themselves physically accessible to their neighborhoods vary widely. Mashpee Commons is the most disconnected of the three developments. Surrounded by several large parking lots lining the neighboring highways, Mashpee Commons, in terms of its accessibility, does not differ from the traditional image of a shopping mall separated from its surroundings, allowing limited connections onto the property. Because of its location in a relatively rural setting, Mashpee Commons does not have the advantage of allowing for access by public transportation. Therefore, the property was developed purely in mind for automobile access. The center itself, then, remains a pedestrian haven surrounded by a sea of parking, lining the perimeter so that it is readily visible to passing motorists.

Santana Row, on the other hand, fares slightly better. The development sits near the intersection of two major regional highways, like the two other centers. Santana Row itself sits at the intersection of two 6-lane roads, somewhat setting it apart from the neighborhoods on the other side. The designers attempted to configure the project on a fine-grained New Urbanist grid, with much of the parking (of which there is a large amount) hidden in the interior of the blocks behind a layer of retail and residential buildings. However, the grid often does not connect with the pre-existing street network facing the western portion of the site. It is also in these precise locations where the surface parking lots are located, further accentuating the island effect. Santana Row’s location in San Jose allows it to interact with the...
region’s sparse, but efficient public transportation network. Buses operated by the Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority operate on routes running along the project’s northern and western edges. The VTA is also planning in the future to extend its light rail lines to the center, further linking it into the transportation infrastructure.

Paseo Colorado performs best in terms of accessibility. Much of the success is due to its location in an already well-established downtown district whose roots date back to the early 20th Century. Occupying three city blocks along the main commercial thoroughfare of Pasadena, Paseo Colorado offers multiple modes of access onto the site. In a deal undertaken by the city of Pasadena in the 1970s, the developer of the shopping mall which formerly occupied the site of Paseo Colorado enjoyed the benefit of having the municipality finance the construction and manage an underground parking structure. This provided the added design benefit of allowing construction all the way to the sidewalk, providing maximum exposure and access. Paseo Colorado continued this precedent, but retrofitted the mall structure in a manner in which stores were turned outward to face the street as well as the interior courtyards. In accordance with a 1923 beaux-arts plan for downtown Pasadena, an axis was restored by opening a passage through the property, extending the Garfield Street corridor southward. This pedestrian plaza further enhances the open nature of the property, as well as providing direct access between Colorado Boulevard and the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. The center is also well-served by public transit running along Colorado Boulevard, and will eventually be linked to an MTA light rail line, eventually connecting Pasadena to downtown L.A.
Design

The three case studies attest to the strategy that is fulfilled by the aesthetic quality of lifestyle centers. The forms and motifs exhibited throughout the case studies are utilized to establish legitimacy in their communities by conforming to aesthetic tradition. Or, conversely, the design of the project can be used to set the project apart from the surrounding neighborhoods, making a declaration of aesthetic and functional superiority over outdated models of architecture and urbanism. Whatever the case, the primary motive underlying all of the lifestyle centers is to evoke emotion towards the built environment, which is done in hopes of attracting increasing numbers of visitors.

Among the three case studies, Santana Row is undoubtedly the most aggressive attempt to break away from the established aesthetic norms in its San Jose neighborhood, comprised mainly of post-World War II single-story tract housing. In what can be understood as a postmodern, American take on traditional Mediterranean European urbanism, Santana Row utilizes a variety of aesthetic and functional devices to construct an atmosphere designed to appeal to visitor’s tastes and emotions. The inclusion of arcades, small courtyards, plazas, narrow streets, balcony-lined facades, grand gateways, decorative fountains, and the illusion of numerous, narrow-fronted buildings paint a portrait of idealize European-style living, an island surrounded by the reality of American sprawl. The advantages of this approach are two-fold for the developers. First of all, and more straightforward, are the economic benefits provided by dense development. The stacked, multi-story form allows for a mix of uses,
diversifying and adding stability to the income stream.

The other factor is also a prime factor in raising revenue, but in a less explicit manner. Within the context of culture in the United States, the physical manifestation of European urbanism is often understood to be the symbol of upscale development, and consequently, of exclusivity. This sense of exclusivity then continues further on a chain of consequences, by attracting tenants who seek to cultivate an air of sophistication, demonstrated by the presence of retailers such as Escada, Gucci, and Burberry. This, then, bears a large influence on the demographic diversity of the visitors to the center.

In the case of Paseo Colorado, the design strategy was more focused toward a restoration of historic form and aesthetics found throughout Southern California. Throughout the center, one finds an abundance of stucco finishes, Mediterranean color palettes, flat roofs, terra cotta tiles, palm trees, and a bell tower built to resemble those found in missions built by the Spanish throughout California. These are tools used as part of a concept that seeks to approximate local heritage. First, the architecture is based on a popular motif in Southern California, that of Spanish colonial architecture, which can be understood to have undergone two resurrections. The first resurrection occurred in the late 19th Century, well after the ejection of the Spanish colonizers from the colony then called Alta California. In that time, civic boosters who relocated from the eastern United States sought to build an identity for the region. They borrowed visual vocabulary from the past colonizers, but painting it as the symbol for what they envisioned as a new Mediterranean civilization built on the shores of the Pacific.
This aesthetic was adopted throughout the region, further reinforcing a romanticization of a muddled past that was not entirely accurate, evoking connotations of a slow-paced, democratic society not unlike ancient Greece. Paseo Colorado, then, represents an example of the second resurrection of the Spanish Colonial motif, increasingly employed after America’s experiment with Modernism died down. Like before, Paseo Colorado’s Spanish Colonial motif is being utilized to attract investment in the form of higher-income residents and visitors.

Like Paseo Colorado, Mashpee Commons was also built with the past in mind. The developers sought to recreate the aesthetic of traditional New England towns in a region known for them, but succumbing to the pressures of modern development and sprawl. The project utilizes such motifs as church steeples, a faux town hall, peaked roofs, antique street lamps, and brick-accented street paving. This project reinvigorates the mental imagery connected with those devices, bringing about connotations of small-town democracy and sociability. In a sense, this approach would work most effectively because the rhetoric expounded by the developers and designers is one of inclusivity and community spirit. However appealing the project may be, it still fails because of the disconnection between the connotations expressed by the built environment and the actual function and retail programming, which effectively excludes large groups of the public.
Analyzing MIX

When taking into account the idealized notion of a mixed-use center which serves the needs of its local community, Mashpee Commons appears to best fit that image, with some caveats. A balance sheet of the project reveals that it offers the most diverse range of uses among the three case studies. In addition to the qualities that are present in all three case studies, which are retail and housing, Mashpee Commons also goes a step farther and houses several civic uses, including a library, post office, and church. In addition, there are numerous professional offices located on the site, including realtors, optometrists, and a dialysis clinic. The presence of these establishments can preclude the assumption that the center attracts a broad range of citizens, each coming for different reasons. Considering the character of Mashpee itself, which appears to be mainly split between the local working class and wealthy summer residents, one would assume that much of the retail located in Mashpee Commons is oriented towards a more affluent customer base. Despite this shortcoming, the presence of certain uses such as the post office, library, and convenience-oriented retail, including Star Market and CVS, assist in eroding the center’s status as an elite project only catering to wealthy customers. In addition, in future phases of development, 25% of the rental units are slated to be offered below market rate, giving further potential to serve as housing for local workers, who are currently unable to afford the rents on site.

Santana Row and Paseo Colorado do not fare as well as Mashpee Commons in terms of providing a mix appropriate to the local community. However, these projects do not
purport to serve the local community at large to the extent that Mashpee Commons does. In contrast, both Santana Row and Paseo Colorado have a more specific target in mind, that of the wealthy, professional urban dweller. In terms of serving their target markets, however, they perform decently. But, like Mashpee Commons, there is a lack of convenience retail for more day-to-day activities. Paseo Colorado functions particularly well because of its position in Downtown Pasadena. The mix found on-site, including a grocery store, housing, offices, and a large number of restaurants, complements what can be found immediately adjacent to the project. These uses include large office buildings, a civic auditorium, a municipal exhibition hall, and postal facilities. Santana Row, on the other hand, is a bastion of elite uses meant for an elite group of users, removed from the immediate middle-class neighborhood. Consisting of primarily comparison-good retail, this development does not provide any civic uses whatsoever, aside from its physical open space infrastructure.

**Analyzing PHYSICAL**

The three case studies exhibit the three different qualities outlined in Chapter 2's grid of typologies. The natures of their physical configuration are related to their economic purpose, local context, local regulatory requirements, and the wishes of the developer to create a unique urban space. According to such, Santana Row, Paseo Colorado, and Mashpee Commons offer themselves as three distinct examples of the lifestyle center. The success to which the lifestyle centers are designed in such a sense so as to resemble and function a traditional community
center varies from case to case. In the following section we seek to analyze the numerous types of physical dimensions implemented by the designers in forming a pattern of development meant to house the increasingly complex functions of contemporary retail-oriented centers.

Santana Row

Santana Row exemplifies, on the grand scale, the village typology of lifestyle center developments. Beginning at one of the most fundamental units to understand urban design, the block structure at Santana Row merits some mention. Linked to the original plan of a New Urbanist grid, the blocks at Santana Row are not subject to the regularity of a grid set at equal intervals. Instead, each block is quite distinct, designed in such a manner to meet the varying foot requirements of each tenant. Considering the potential for change, this strategy of having a great variety in the size of building footprints can help increase the center’s flexibility in the future. The size of the blocks and buildings vary from the dimensions typical of suburban big-box retail, to businesses occupying the space similar to a small corner store.

One aspect in which Santana Row is clearly set apart from the two other cases studies is its density. Put forth as one of the goals of the developers, Santana Row was built at a much higher density than the surrounding suburban sprawl, cited as an environment unable to foster any sense of urban sociality or place. As a product of the density and careful design of the streetscape, the proportions throughout the site, with regard to street widths and façade heights, establish an environment with a feeling of enclosure. This phenomenon, often called
the “outdoor room,” is often cited as a prime characteristic of ideal urban space.

With regard to the physical configuration of the lifestyle center’s allowing for cohesive physical connection with the surrounding neighborhood, Santana Row makes only a feeble attempt for integration. The main road leading into and through the site, also named Santana Row, does not connect to any meaningful thoroughfare. Beginning in the north at Stevens Creek Boulevard, it makes its way four blocks across the property, only to terminate in a parking lot and a minor surface street. If anything, Santana Row serves no purpose more than an elaborately landscaped driveway. As for the entire road network, it performs well at connecting with itself, but there is no clear connection to the vicinity of Santana Row, especially to the neighborhoods immediately to the east and south. At those locations, large surface parking lots isolate the project from its nearest neighbors, precluding any potential access. Even at the scale of the pedestrian, foot access appears to be strictly limited to the formal inlets determined by the developers. At the same parking lots, entrance on foot is prohibited. Although the parking lots border on perimeter streets, they are not accessible, as no entrance paths have been established. In their place lies a 5-foot deep barrier of dense landscaping, accentuating the closed, exclusive nature of the property.

Santana Row’s attention to the pedestrian environment, at least within the property, is a positive addition, especially when contrasted with its connections to the outside. Throughout Santana Row, road crossing are clearly marked for high visibility, utilizing special paving treatments and sidewalks that extend into the street, narrowing the effective width of the road
for the pedestrian. Furthermore, in several sections of the project one finds arcades set into the facades of buildings in addition to the wide sidewalks, providing a comfortable walking environment. This sense is only further enhanced by the provision of on-street parking, creating a barrier between those on foot and moving traffic. The presence and encouragement of street cafes animates the sidewalk, which is generally seen by most practitioners of urban design as a desirable quality. Finally, an attention to street furniture and landscaping on a variety of scales, from the large plaza to small pockets behind buildings help create a sense of intimacy.

In terms of providing a venue for social activity, Santana Row contains a diverse and varied sequence of public spaces. In the vein of classically-designed public squares, there is a half-acre space named Plaza de Valencia set one street away from the main drag, occupying a zone surrounded by restaurants, a gym, hotel, apartments, and several stores. This space is the venue for several community events, including a winter ice rink, humane society adoption drives, and school-sponsored concerts. In addition to the Plaza de Valencia, Santana Row itself consists of two narrow lanes split by a wide median. In reality, this median functions as a linear park, incorporating mature landscaping, fountains, a playground, and tables scattered throughout. Despite the relative success in carving out these spaces from the urban fabric, the designers of Santana Row appear to have made one major flaw: the failure to link the project’s namesake park to the network of public spaces and the overall civic structure of the site. Santana Park lies to the southeast of the development, divorced from the mixed-use project.
by the large surface parking lots. The only access to this park is via small side streets which completely bypass Santana Row and have no connection to the interior streets. This is most likely intentional, but represents a lost opportunity to incorporate true public space into the development.

**Paseo Colorado**

Paseo Colorado is the case study which falls under the category of *internal corridor*, rooted in its past life as an enclosed shopping center. In terms of its density, Paseo Colorado was constructed in order to complement its surroundings, the downtown district of the city of Pasadena. This area is populated with several 5-10 story high buildings. However, because of the tight nature of its interior spaces, the designers sought to follow a strategy that prevents visitors and residents from becoming overwhelmed by a potential canyon effect created by the project’s morphology. Throughout the entire development, retail and other uses are housed in a two-story podium, built from the remnants of the 1970s mall on the site. In addition to the two-story podium, other large buildings such as the cinema and residential towers are set back from the front facades of the podium, lessening their effect on the pedestrian environments below.

In many ways, Paseo Colorado exemplifies the best case in terms of how it connects to its surroundings. Throughout the property, there are numerous wide, open-air entrances leading visitors and residents from the public sidewalk onto the property. Furthermore,
designers made it a priority, and successfully so, to restore an axis originally proposed in a 1923 urban design plan for downtown Pasadena. The consequences of opening the axis, previously blocked by the shopping mall, helps to restore and maintain continuity in the local urban fabric. With regard to the previously mentioned entrances onto the property, be they vehicular or pedestrian, they all correspond to previously existing trajectories. Finally, perhaps one of the most key factors in Paseo Colorado’s success in connecting with its urban context is its treatment of parking. Having retained the underground parking lot from its previous life, the parking does not act as a barrier between the property and its community.

Considering the experience for users who live in, work in, and visit Paseo Colorado, it’s a purely pedestrian environment. This fact is enhanced by a conscious decision by the designers to not only reform the interior of the property, but to also turn it outwards by having businesses face Colorado Boulevard, thereby enhancing the public realm without, as well as within. The interior pathway follows a slightly curved plan, along with a variation in dimensions along its length. These devices serve to break down the monotony and predictability in the walking environment, serving to link larger spaces and functions. In this case, more than in the two others, the idea of pedestrian flows following a layered network is the most relevant. Another remnant of the center’s past as a traditional mall, paths make their way along two levels, creating another element of surprise by giving users a non-linear, self-guided approach to navigating the property.

Finally, Paseo Colorado can be understood as a series of public spaces and corridors in
a linear sequence, as well as on top of each other. The primary public space can be understood as the seventy-two foot wide public promenade that extends north to south from Colorado Boulevard to Green Street. This promenade is an extension of the Garfield Avenue corridor, creating a terminal vista of the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, located across the street. This space is the town square for Paseo Colorado, connecting an intense web of activity and use not only within the project itself, but also in the immediate surroundings. Ringing the promenade are retail stores, restaurants, a grocery store, office space, and a residential tower. On the south side of the promenade across the street are the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and Exhibition Hall, while on the north are residences, a large office building, and the Pasadena Public Library. Considering the significance of these uses, Paseo Colorado succeeds in creating a network of small public spaces that nevertheless link it to the community.

Mashpee Commons

With regard to physical configuration, Mashpee Commons performs poorer than the two other case studies. Constituting a hybrid typology of both main street with an interior corridor component, Mashpee Commons represents a failed attempt by the developer to create a unifying space within the community. First, taking into account the growth pressures facing the south Cape Cod area, Mashpee Commons can be seen as a nominal improvement over the previous suburban-style development precedents in its vicinity. However, the project does not succeed in the sense that it does not fulfill its potential in terms of density, even in the
main commercial core of the master plan. In that location, there are few vertically-integrated mixed use buildings, comprising only a few dozen rental units. Apart from those buildings, the project consists primarily of one-story structures. This is not to say, however, that the one-story buildings do not work in tandem to create an ideal environment. Quite the opposite, there is high legibility in the relationship they have both with each other and with the street. Nevertheless, they stand as a symbol of potential unfulfilled.

Of the three case studies, Mashpee Commons stands as the development most alienated from its surrounding context. The project is located and centered adjacent to the intersection of two local highways. In this sense, Mashpee Commons essentially follows the model of the suburban shopping mall that is positioned to capture as much of the automobile-driving public as possible. The centerpiece of a larger master-planned New Urbanist community, Mashpee Commons, which refers to the commercial-oriented mixed use heart of the project, is still planned in a manner such that it will be separated from the future adjacent neighborhoods by a ring of large surface parking lots. This separation serves as a visible reminder of not only the area’s complete dependence on the automobile, but also the failure of the design to integrate the center in a more meaningful and functional way with its surroundings. In another point relating to the design integrating the local road network and connections, the volume of traffic on the local two-lane highways is such that they could have been incorporated into the lifestyle center. However, in reality, they were left as peripheral access roads, only serving to bifurcate the entire master-planned community. With the possibility of full build out, one positive note
is that the planned street networks radiating from the center of Mashpee Commons will have a sense of logic and connectivity with the future neighborhoods.

Mashpee Commons tends to tout superlatives relating to its physical configuration. Regarding the pedestrian quality and streetscape, it also excels (or fails, depending on your perspective) in these aspects. Of the three cases, the roads in Mashpee Commons are designed to the widest standards. Part of this is the fact that all truck deliveries do not occur at designated loading bays, but on the main street itself. This is a double-edged sword, for it animates the community with a true sense of urban activity. On the other hand, this activity has been the source of many complaints by visitors to the project, attributing the truck activity to increased pedestrian danger and traffic congestion. Throughout the development, the pedestrian environment is the least attractive of the three cases. There are few benches, minimal landscaping, and poorly maintained paving. But, on the contrary, there are small design interventions that help mediate the built environment and the scale requirements of the human user, including simple wooden arcades lining shop fronts. In addition, the physical qualities of the buildings themselves help create a more pleasing pedestrian environment. Characteristic of most vibrant urban centers, the building facades in Mashpee Commons are fairly varied, giving a constant stream of visual stimuli for those walking throughout the site. Also varied are the setbacks of the buildings, moving back and forth from the sidewalk.

Finally, upon observing the attention to public spaces designed within the project, Mashpee Commons also fared the poorest. For the scope and scale of the development,
there are few, if any, prominent public spaces aside from the street environment. Throughout the development, much of the atmosphere is barren, dominated by a surplus of concrete and a shortage of landscaping. The interior corridor constitutes a space which exhibits a fair amount of social activity, especially when compared to the sidewalks around the site. One can see visitors sitting along the linear space, socializing amongst themselves, or enjoying the sun. This appears to be the most intense site of public activity in the entire project. Located behind the Banana Republic building is a small public square fronted by a retail and residential building. Perhaps due to its rear location and lack of neighbors, it appears to be used only occasionally.

**Analyzing COMMUNITY**

To assess the option of lifestyle centers among the residents of communities, I utilized interviews to obtain direct information. In viewing the standings of Santana Row, Paseo Colorado, and Mashpee Commons, these lifestyle centers were consistently viewed poorly by the residents of the communities in which they are located. Negative aspects ran the gamut from exclusivity to increased traffic congestion. Nevertheless, there were various positive remarks about the lifestyle center and their effect on the livelihood of the neighborhood. In terms of community input, their remarks may point to a clear definition of what must be done by lifestyle centers to earn local acceptance.

Despite the geographic distance between the case studies and variations in urban
setting, there were striking similarities among the remarks of the respondents in the local communities. The interviews followed certain themes, such as perceived benefits of the lifestyle center to the community, convenience, and compatibility with neighborhood. Within each theme, there was an extraordinary consistency, with few dissenting comments.

**Frequency of Visits**

Upon initiation of the interview, I asked respondents how frequently did they visit the lifestyle center in question. It is said that consumers often vote with their feet, and in this case, the community is very vocal in their opinions of their local lifestyle centers. In all three cases, the majority of interviewees stated that they rarely visited, with their trips to the lifestyle centering in the single digits per year. Additionally, of that group, many stated that they had never stepped foot inside the development and had no future plans to do so. Several reasons explain the lack of interest in visiting, and they are enumerated in the following paragraphs.

**Convenience**

For the few respondents who considered themselves regular visitors, convenience was often cited as a primary reason for visiting. A worker in a human resources office in Mashpee chose to live in Mashpee Commons for the very reason that it was located across the street from her place of employment. She also stated that many of her neighbors in the residential component of Mashpee Commons decided to live there because of its central location. Another interviewee, Rachel, of San Jose, happened to be employed as a waitress in a Santana Row restaurant. As an on-site employee, Rachel appeared to be very familiar with the mix of
tenants in the development, and was enthusiastic in describing what was on offer.

"I work there, but even when I'm not working, I go there. There are expensive places to eat, inexpensive places... I see it as a sort of bubble, a community within itself. If I lived in one of those lofts and worked downstairs, I wouldn't see the need to leave. There's a Safeway across the street and in Santana Row there's a workout gym."

Rachel's comments reflect a statement put out by Shawna Freitas, the marketing director for Santana Row. In outlining future plans for the development, Shawna put forth the notion of Santana Row as "a city within the city." In other words, one of the major selling points for Santana Row would be its convenience. Proximity of uses would be an asset, and only more so in the near future, when additional amenities are to be introduced, including a major grocery store, several parks, and office space.

Community Benefit

It was common in all the respondent pools that there was at least some general acknowledgement and recognition of several benefits provided by the lifestyle centers to the local community. These benefits were tied to the quality of the spatial environment or non-retail programmatic events. In San Jose, Santana Row was cited several times as a destination because of its uniqueness in the region. Respondents mentioned that because of a paucity of pedestrian-oriented environments in the Silicon Valley region, the spatial character of Santana Row and the sociability it was perceived to engender proved to be highly attractive and a value to the community. Ben, a San Jose retiree, said that retired life tended to physically and socially
isolate people. Santana Row, then, provided a venue “to reconnect” to the social fabric of the city, if just by mere proximity to other visitors.

The role of events also was mentioned several times as an example of the lifestyle center’s positive impact on the community. In both Paseo Colorado and Mashpee Commons, a summer concert series was mentioned to have drawn a wide cross-section of society. Children’s events also proved to be popular in attracting families to the development.

In terms of economic benefits, many respondents claimed that the development brought additional prosperity. However, in many of the statements was embedded a caveat that the benefit was distributed disproportionately. A retiree residing in Mashpee, Olga, exclaimed that Mashpee Commons was well-accepted by the community for the reason that it had become their “downtown.” As a counterpoint, another respondent stated that community sentiment towards Mashpee Commons was “split 50-50. It’s depends on which part of town you’re from. There’s Sagamore Beach, you know, the summer people. They like the shops here.” On the other side of the country, Darryl also recognized the success of Paseo Colorado as “good for the community, they bring outside money in.” Nevertheless, the success is limited in terms of scope, for he elaborated that because they made it “a nice place, people will spend money and it will never fail. Upper class white people have the money and will keep it a success.”
Unaffordability

Across the board, the statement most prevalent regarding people’s opinions of lifestyle centers was their unaffordability. This perhaps reflects a fundamental schism between the centers and their surrounding communities, one that is central to the very philosophy of the lifestyle center. At its very core an upscale shopping center, the lifestyle center excludes that portion of the local community that is not upscale. Respondent after respondent declared the prices too high for their budgets. Several mentioned that because of the high prices, if townspeople did visit, it was only to visit outlets such as “the Gap, the CVS, and the post office. But they don’t go to the other stores. They’re too expensive.” Whether true or not, such perceptions erode at the possibility of the lifestyle centers acting as town center.

Incompatibility with local lifestyles or community

Another chief complaint about lifestyle centers was their inability to relate to the lives of the local community. Ben, of San Jose, simply stated that “if you live in the fast lane, then it’s ok, but it doesn’t suit my kind of lifestyle.” In all the communities where the lifestyle centers were located, diversity appeared to be a rule, but the retail programming of the lifestyle centers did not necessarily correspond to that diversity. Several factors were attributed as incompatible with the “lifestyle” promoted by the marketers of the developments, including income, culture, age, ethnicity, and local architectural heritage.

As mentioned in the previous section, unaffordability ruled out the participation of a large number of respondents. Despite claims that the lifestyle center is a center for the town,
residents of Mashpee often complained that certain businesses common in many towns, including hardware stores and beauty parlors, were not to be found in the development. This was perceived as a conscious act on part of the management, who deemed that “they weren’t classy enough… (nor) appropriate for Mashpee Commons.”

Several respondents in Paseo Colorado explained that much of their shopping and recreation took place elsewhere, such as in the neighboring city of Arcadia, which caters to the region’s large Chinese community. Particularly in Pasadena, the local minority population does not enjoy any overt efforts to cater to their unique needs.

In locations such as Mashpee, the relatively small nature of the town resulted in residents having a facile knowledge of the history and developmental process of their local lifestyle center. It seems that in this case, the knowledge has helped breed suspicion and disdain for it. The management of Mashpee Commons was even perceived to interfere with local politics, as there were accusations that the management convinced the local planning agency, the Cape Cod Commission, to prevent other developments from receiving approval in an attempt to retain its economic primacy. Furthermore, resentment stemmed from the apparent deviation from plans previously announced by the developer. Although many appreciated the gestures toward local New England town architecture, some felt that particular structures in the project were completely out of place and did not respect the local character.
Traffic

A final theme recurrent among respondents’ comments was the issue of traffic congestion. This issue plays into a larger, regional picture, as the effects of these developments tend to encompass a wide area. Most of these developments are located in expanding or redeveloping neighborhoods, exacerbating the demands on the local infrastructure. The complaints about traffic also highlight a key aspect of lifestyle centers: they are by and large car-dependent. Lifestyle centers typically raise density above local levels and consequently place extra strain on area streets.

The interviews revealed striking similarities among all the case studies regarding community perception toward lifestyle centers. Although there were small variations among the case studies which would suggest that certain characteristics make a lifestyle center more community-oriented than another, overall, the three case studies are universally problematic in their relationships with local residents. This points to a weakness in arguing for the viability of lifestyle centers as social centers for the community, but can ultimately be useful in making improvements in the future.
Endnotes

Chapter 5

This thesis sought out to identify key aspects of a lifestyle center’s design, management, and programming that differentiated it from typical retail centers, moving it into the realm of a multi-functional, traditional town center. Lifestyle centers indeed can succeed in creating a physical center, giving focus to communities where previously there was none. However, lifestyle centers fail in fostering a sense of community within their boundaries. The previous chapter was an analysis of three case studies representing lifestyle centers as a whole. From that analysis, several conclusions will be made to support the argument that although lifestyle centers can successfully recreate the physical characteristics of a traditional town center, there are several reasons why they do not recreate the social dynamic found in that very same urban typology.

Creating a Center

Lifestyle centers can succeed in creating a physical center, as was seen in the case studies. There are several reasons why they are successful, and they include:

Treatment of Parking

One important aspect was the treatment of parking in a discrete manner which
diminished the isolating quality of large surface lots. Although underground or structured parking may not be economically feasible in all locations, such a design intervention can help tie the lifestyle center closer to its surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, parking placed in the interior of blocks and on roadside parallel parking helps take advantage of space otherwise unattractive for other use. Mashpee Common failed in this respect, whereas the relationship that Paseo Colorado and Santana Row have with the street is more apparent and intimate.

**Flexibility of Public Space**

The flexibility of public space to accommodate activity is also vital. In Santana Row the contrast is clear. The linear park running down the center of the main road, although attractive, is highly defined in terms of program. As such, it is inflexible and accommodates only a narrow scope of activity, although it occupies such a prominent space. The Plaza de Valencia, on the other hand, plays host to most events and activities in the project thanks to the flexibility in its design.

**Increased Density + Physical Integration of Mixed Uses**

Developers in all three cases, but especially in Paseo Colorado and Santana Row, took advantage of increased density to create multiple benefits. The increased density meant that it was possible to make more efficient use of the limited land, since the site was located within a built-up urban neighborhood. Furthermore, the horizontal and vertical integration of the uses created a vital environment where it was possible to carry out a variety of activities within a relatively small area.
Regional Connectivity

In all the case studies, the lifestyle centers are located at the intersection of major thoroughfares connecting them to other neighborhoods and towns. Similar to the strategic location of regional malls, lifestyle centers are placed in those exact locations because it exposes them to the maximum number of potential customers. In this manner, lifestyle centers already function like traditional town centers.

Caveats

Despite these successes, there are some notable failures which illustrate the vulnerability lifestyle centers face in performing as centers. In the case of Mashpee Commons, the configuration of the parking lots caused the center to fail in having any physical continuity with the surrounding area. In the case of Santana Row, this also was the case on one side of the project. Additionally, there was a conscious decision made not to make connections with the adjacent neighborhood. These cases, in terms of creating a center, represent lost opportunities on the part of the designers and developers.

Providing a Venue for Community

Lifestyle centers, based on the performance of the three case studies, fail in providing a sense of community in the manner of traditional town centers. The causes include:

Publicness

Perhaps the largest obstacle preventing lifestyle centers from moving outside their
narrow scope is the issue of their “publicness.” The tension between the public and private sphere is not exclusive to lifestyle centers, by any means. However, with respect to this particular type of development, the public/private debate takes a new dimension because the center is a physical form which historically has been understood as a public space. The traditional town center in the popular imagination would lead the casual user to expect that because the lifestyle center has taken the role of the town center, than it would perform as such. However, that is not the case.

As the development of space undergoes a metamorphosis in our late capitalist society, there appears to be a blurring of the line between conventional definitions of public and private—lifestyle centers reflect this trend, to some extent. Yet, there were differences in the three cases that reveal there is a latent potential for publicness that could be developed. The key seems to be the approach adopted by management in order to accommodate (or reject) public activity.

Overemphasis on Retail

The lack of non-retail uses stands as strong argument why malls never were true town centers. That argument largely rings true for lifestyle centers, as well. The strength of traditional town centers are that they offer a wide range of services and activities asides from retail outlets. In both Paseo Colorado and Mashpee Commons, this is not the case.
Lack of Convenience-Oriented Retail

The inclusion of convenience-oriented retail is also a key component in broadening the reach of a lifestyle center into its community. In contrast to comparison goods, which are often set aside by consumers as destination purchases, conveniences goods are purchased wherever most convenient. Most retail in lifestyle centers, however, are comparison goods, as they provide higher profit margins than day-to-day goods. But it is those same day-to-day goods which are found in traditional town centers and increase the likelihood that a person would visit the center more often.

Exceptions

Despite failing overall, there are some exceptions which point to the possibility that lifestyle centers can indeed provide a social venue and sense of community akin to traditional town centers

Programmed Events

One of the strongest factors in encouraging broad public participation was the occurrence of programmed events. These events hold the potential to continuously bridge between public and private interests, drawing various segments of the population, many of whom may not visit the lifestyle center on a regular basis. The events, including concerts, farmers markets, and festivals appeal to a broad range of tastes and interests. In addition, because most of these events are either free or affordable, they pose a very low barrier to entry for most of the community, enabling widespread participation.
Row and Mashpee Commons, there were sentiments prevalent among the local communities that those developments were very exclusive and served only certain segments of society. However, most of those residents also conceded that there were some redeeming qualities for those centers, with events at the top of the list.

**Mix of Uses**

The mix of uses found in the lifestyle center also plays a large role in the degree of success achieved by a development. One of the primary reasons for a community center’s economic and social vitality is that it offers a broad range of use and activity to broad groups of residents within the community. Typical shopping centers were successful only as shopping centers because of their single-use nature. Lifestyle centers have demonstrated that they can transcend that obstacle. Developers are increasingly showing interest and energy in creating mixed-use environments, all with the hopes of infusing a more vital atmosphere to their projects. In Mashpee Commons, the presence of civic amenities like a church, post office, and library help lend a greater credibility to the project’s claims that it is the center for the community. Furthermore, in all three case studies, housing is included. The degree to which and the way in which they have included housing varies, however. Santana Row has the greatest ratio of housing to retail, while Mashpee Commons has the least. Having residents located on-site has proven to be a major contributor to sustained activity in a neighborhood over the span of the day. In Mashpee Commons, it is clear that the small amount of residents has little influence on the overall atmosphere of the development, while the interviews revealed
that with the presence of residents, Santana Row takes on the appearance of a self-contained neighborhood.

**Discussion of Assumptions**

The objective of this thesis was to assess the viability of lifestyle centers functioning as traditional town centers, with the fundamental assumption that there was a unfulfilled need in suburban communities across the United States for a unifying force amid social and physical disaggregation. The reality, however, is a bit more complicated. The physical and social landscape in America has changed over time, adapting to the needs of the economy and of citizens. Some of these adaptations are highly successful, but bear no resemblance to the traditional town center. A more nuanced approach is necessary in order to fully explore the possibilities of improving the physical and social environment. However, considering the limited scope of a masters thesis, I chose to focus on a particular viewpoint towards the contemporary urban condition and to inquire whether or not that viewpoint had any possible resolution through the development of lifestyle centers.

**Recommendations**

As lifestyle centers multiply across the country, municipal planners must grapple with a range of issues related to their development. Lifestyle centers can prove to be both an asset and a liability. Planners should ensure that the development of a lifestyle center does not repeat the same mistakes made by malls. Requirements should be made in order to ensure
that the physical fabric of the lifestyle center integrates with its surroundings and creates meaningful connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Furthermore, the developers of lifestyle centers should be encouraged to include civic uses in their project. In addition, density bonuses are generally beneficial and help increase vitality in the development, but only if there are mitigations for the possible negative effects.

Developers have enthusiastically pursued the construction of lifestyle centers as a lucrative investment opportunity. Already proven to be economically successful, developers who seek to create a lasting impression in the community through their product can follow several strategies. The question of tenant diversity can perhaps be approached through design. A willingness to step away from standardization and the creation of diverse spaces, in terms of cost and quality, can help foster various levels of establishments. Regarding the restrictions on public use, a careful loosening of those prohibitions may increase the credibility of the lifestyle center’s importance to the public sphere. Taking note from the case of Mashpee Commons, the inclusion of non-retail uses not only expands the range of uses within the project, but also can increase exposure to groups who would not necessarily take advantage of the project. If one of the major objectives is to create atmosphere, which is stated by many developers, than the importance of convenience-oriented retail should not be overlooked. The everyday is a crucial component in urbanism, and its inclusion can help overcome the stigma of artifice which is often applied to lifestyle centers today.

The lifestyle center represents a partial redemption of Victor Gruen’s vision to
recreate a center and community in the perceived disorder of suburbia. The lifestyle center succeeded in one manner where Gruen’s mall failed: providing a physical sense of place and centeredness. However, the lifestyle center does not fully achieve the goal in the sense that it remains relatively exclusive and narrowly focused. Although derided as Disney-esque environments that thinly disguise their goal to encourage consumption, the lifestyle center represents a shift in thinking, one that begins to take into account the role of retail in the physical and social fabric of society. That shift, although incomplete, is a positive step towards improving the quality of the urban landscape in the United States.

**Future Research**

The limited scope of a masters thesis prevents a full discussion of many of the issues related to this research. Therefore, future research can study questions that arose in the thesis. Through this study, it will be possible to create formal strategies that implement the generalizations found in the conclusion. Possible topics include:

1. Innovations in rent income streams to accommodate low-revenue, but socially valuable establishments.
2. Legal rationale for the appropriation and use of private space for public use.
3. Publicly-initiated development utilizing retail as anchor for community space.
Appendix I

Interview Guide for Community Residents

I. Degree of acquaintance
   a. Have you ever heard of (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?
   b. Would you consider yourself a resident of the community in which it is located?
   c. How often would you say you visit (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons) in one week?

II. Personal data
    a. Name
    b. Occupation

III. Experience with using the lifestyle center
    a. What do you like about (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?
    b. What are your primary reasons for visiting (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?
       c. How does the location factor into your decision to visit?
       d. Does the proximity of various types of establishments make it more likely that you come here?
       e. Do you come to use the public spaces provided in (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?

IV. Reasons for not using it
    a. How does the location factor into your decision to not visit?
    b. How do you feel about the general range of prices you find in the establishments at (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?

V. Opinions on role of lifestyle center in the community
    a. In your opinion, how do you feel the local community has accepted (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons)?
    b. Would you consider Mashpee Commons in the same league as a mall? Would you say there are any differences?
    c. Are there any things you feel the management of (Santana Row/Paseo Colorado/Mashpee Commons) does to attract the local community?
Appendix II

Coded Transcript Quotes from Interviews with Community Residents

Key:
SR= Santana Row
PC= Paseo Colorado
MC=Mashpee Commons

1= Ben, semi-retired
2= Kim, accountant
3= Richard, unemployed
4= Margie, clinical researcher
5= Rachel, waitress
6= Dysa, student
7= Shawna, marketing

1= Nivys, sales representative
2= Samuel, engineer
3= Merijule, receptionist
4= Jaime, maintenance
5= Darryl, unemployed
6= Anthony, automobile repair
7= Karen, jeweler

Unaffordability
“Even if I lived closer, I wouldn’t go there often. It’s too pricey.” SR1

“Most of the people around here are middle or lower income. They can’t afford anything there.” SR2

“It’s always been a place for people with money. Town and country were the same way.” SR3

“I don’t shop there. It’s outrageous.” SR4

“I stay away from the high-end retail.” SR5

“It’s too expensive” PC5,6

“I usually go shopping at the mall or outlets.” PC7

“There used to be a True Value over her, but they moved up the road.” MC1

“I don’t come here. It’s too expensive.” MC2

“People come here to go to the Gap, the CVS, and the post office. But they don’t go to the
other stores. They’re too expensive.” MC3

**Good for Community**

“Older people tend to live solitary lives, so they go to places like that to reconnect.” SR1

“My friend lives there, so I go there to get together, have coffee, chat.” SR4

“Yeah... I guess because there aren’t a lot of places to get together, it’s a good place to go.” SR4

“In San Jose, other than Los Gatos, there’s nowhere else to go (and walk around).” SR5

“It’s not very community-oriented, except for maybe the farmers market on the weekend.” SR5

“Yes, it’s a great place.” PC1

“During the summer they have jazz concerts.” PC3

“It’s nice to walk around and look.” PC5,6

“There’s a jazz band you can go listen to.” PC5,6

“Things like that are good for the community, they bring outside money in.” PC5,6

“You know why it’s called Paseo Colorado? Because Plaza Pasadena was going down. Ain’t nobody was stepping in there. You would see maybe 5 or 6 people like us in the food court, and that was it. They turned it inside out and made it part of Old Town (Pasadena).” PC5,6

“It’s split 50-50. It depends on which part of town you’re from. There’s Sagamore Beach. You know, the summer people. They like the shops here.” MC3

“I guess they do a good job attracting the community in the summer. They do a lot of things for the kids.” MC3

“I think the community has accepted it. It’s our downtown.” MC4

“I don’t really spend time outside that often. There’s the pop concert out here once a year, but that’s that.” MC4

**Incompatibility with “lifestyle”/ Out of character of local community**

“If you live in the fast lane, then it’s ok, but it doesn’t suit my kind of lifestyle.” SR1

“I’m not financially ready to go there.” SR3

“It’s a place for people with money to burn.” SR3

“Most of the products I want are across the street (in the Westfield Shopping Mall).” SR6
"I usually go to Arcadia for grocery shopping, it's next to all the Chinese restaurants." PC2
"If I do go there, it's usually to go to the movies." PC2
"Lower-income people don't go there. They go to the swap meet." PC5,6
"It doesn't cater to the people in the local community." PC5,6
"I mean, it's a nice place to walk around, if you have money. But if me and him were to walk into one of those stores right now, mall security will be all over us." PC5,6
"It doesn't help the local neighborhood, but if they make it a nice place, people will spend money and it will never fail. Upper class white people have the money and will keep it a success." PC5,6

"It's probably third on people's list. There's Old Town and there's Lake." PC7
"Look at this place. I can't shop here. This wasn't made for the normal working people of Mashpee. They're catering to the richer people who live out on the water." MC1
"I feel there's no added value. It was a community center even before it was built...It was a waste of money" SR2
"They said they've wanted to make this like Faneuil Hall. Look at it. It's pretty close." MC1
"A lot of people come down to the Cape on the weekend, they use this." MC1
"If you want to talk to local people, you should go across the street to Stop and Shop." MC1
"I don't really hang out here, for my age group we go to Bobby Byrne's (pub), but that's about it." MC3

"But everyone else can't afford it. They go to the mall in Hyannis or to the outlets." MC3
"The concept was good. They had a good idea but they did not stick to the concept." MC5
"They're not catering to the local community. They're catering to the people from Sagamore Beach, the golfers." MC5

"It's very political. The Cape Cod Commission has been keeping back all the developments. I think it's because the people here won't let it happen." MC5
"There used to be a hardware store here, but they got kicked out. They weren't classy enough for this development. There used to be a beauty parlor, but it wasn't seen as appropriate for Mashpee Commons." MC5

"They've overlooked local needs for economic gain." MC5
"You see that right there? That's very reflective of modern New England. But the Gap and CVS just don't fit." MC5
"We hate it. If you ask anyone here, they'll tell you they hate it."
“I’ve been here for a long time and it’s changed a lot.” It wasn’t even a strip mall, just a
group of little shops along the road.” MC5

Convenience
“I work there, but even I’m not working, I go there. There are expensive places to eat,
inexpensive places” SR5
“I see it as a sort of bubble, a community within itself.” SR5
“If I lived in one of those lofts and worked downstairs, I wouldn’t see the need to leave. There’s a Safeway across the street and in Santana Row there’s a workout gym.” SR5
“We like to see it as a city within the city.” SR7
“I go there for everything, eating, shopping, socializing.” PC1
“I live right down the street.” PC1
“I go there all the time for everything.” PC1
“I live here in Mashpee Commons. I basically work across the street, so that’s why I chose
to live here.” MC3
“I come here because basically there’s nothing else. Before they built this there was
nothing.” MC4
“It’s convenient for me because everything is close by to each other.” MC4

Traffic
“If anything, it’s worse, with all the traffic congestion.” SR2
“For us, it doesn’t do anything. Except for maybe bring extra traffic.” PC5,6
“The traffic is horrible. I think this is the most dangerous place in Mashpee. When these
restaurants have these huge trucks come in, where do they go? They park right there (on the
interior road). So you can’t even see if another car is coming in your direction.” MC6
“The entrance road up there used to come straight, but they bent it to put in the Gap. Now
people stop there to drop people off to go shopping, and then they usually have baby seats,
too, so you have to wait there.”
Frequency of visits

“Never go to Santana Row.” SR6
“I seldom go there. The last time I went there was half a year ago.” PC2
“I go there about twice a month, to eat and shop.” PC3
“I don’t have time to go there often.” PC3
“A lot of people go there.” PC7
“I come here to use the post office maybe twice a month. Nothing else.” MC1
“I sometimes come here to eat at the Chinese restaurant, Jade, but rarely.” MC1
“Well, I have a post office box here, so I’m here all the time. I’m here about 3 times a week.” MC4
“I come to the shops and the restaurants.” MC4
Bibliography


Benhabib, Seyla. “Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and


Calhoun, Craig, ed. Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1992


