





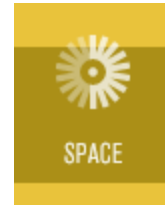
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CREATING PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY SHOPPING AREAS

Author's Title: Synergy and Movement Within Suburban Mixed-Use Centers: The Toronto Experience

Author(s) Name: Pierre Filion, Kathleen McSpurren, and Nancy Huether

Year of Publication: 2000

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Design Issue

This study examined pedestrian [accessibility](#) and activities in suburban mixed-use centers (a shopping mall, office space, and other services clustered together) in Toronto, Canada.

- Mixed-use centers are valuable assets to suburbs, but are criticized for their lack of pedestrian accessibility, connectedness, automobile dependence, and monotonous physical environments.
- Understanding pedestrians' perceptions and use of suburban mixed-use centers can help designers create retail areas that promote walking and are pleasing to pedestrians.

Design Criteria

Author Identified:

- Use and adhere to a pedestrian-friendly planning concept when designing shopping areas.
- Communicate the economic rewards of pedestrian-oriented shopping areas to clients to increase their awareness and build consensus towards the concept.
- Provide attractive, landscaped walking areas to increase pedestrian sense of security in shopping areas.
- Provide activities, shopping, and businesses close together in suburban shopping areas to strengthen pedestrian accessibility.
- Reduce automobile dependence (roadways and parking lots) and increase pedestrian accessibility to create a more cohesive and pleasing environment for pedestrians.

InformeDesign Identified:

- Work with planners and land use specialists to ensure that the planning process takes into consideration all available resources to ensure that a pedestrian-oriented shopping area is created.
- Select [architectural features](#) that enhance, beautify, and connect building facades to maintain an appealing environment for pedestrians, facilitating ease of movement.

Key Concepts

- The suburban, mixed-use center concept is to resemble urban design, mimicking a compact environment with convenient pedestrian travel, excluding automobiles.
- The suburban, mixed-use centers in the study were planned for vehicular accessibility (typically used in suburban mixed-use centers) rather than inner synergy (interaction in a shopping area beneficial to all, involving activities including pedestrians and automobile [traffic](#)). Resulting land use planning and urban design did not meet pedestrians' needs.
- The immediate rewards of economic development and reliance on traditional suburban norms by municipal administrators and private developers may have overshadowed the long term benefits of pedestrian-accessible and attractive, suburban mixed-use centers in Toronto.
- The three suburban mixed-use centers studied provided an average level of pedestrian accessibility and moderate inner synergy.

Research Method

- [Questionnaires](#) were completed by [subjects](#) (530; employees from [randomly selected](#) firms within the mixed-use centers) from three Greater Toronto Area (GTA) suburban mixed-use centers: North York Centre (five concourses of street-level shops and office buildings); Scarborough Centre (office space, housing units, and a mall); and Mississauga Centre (office space, housing units, and a regional mall). The mixed-use centers were all located near expressways and bus service.
- Subjects were asked to rate personal use within centers including: 1) use of restaurants, retail outlets, and [convenience](#) shops; 2) quality of intra-center journeys (from office to other areas in the center); and 3) mode of travel within the centers to measure the degree of inner synergy in the mixed-use centers.
- [Data](#) were analyzed using [regression](#) and [descriptive statistics](#).

Limitations

- Subjects may have adapted to the mixed-use centers, which could have elevated positive attitudes toward intra-center journeys.
- A high percentage of restaurant use within a shopping area may be the result of offices and shopping areas located in the same concourse and reported as "in own building" restaurant use.

Commentary

The study only considered mixed-used centers in one city, limiting generalizability to other locations and cultures. A review of land use concepts and perspectives on mixed-use centers was included. The findings may be of interest to land use planners, policy makers, and neighborhood organizations considering the development of a mixed-use center.

Adapted From

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