Boxed In: the place of the public good in the retail landscape

by

Pamela Jean Shaw
BA University of Alberta 1987
MA University of Alberta 1992

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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in the Department of Geography

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ABSTRACT

The retail landscape has changed significantly since the mid 20th century, evolving from a city centre focus through strip malls, shopping centres, shopping malls, mega-malls, big box stores, and to the newest form of retailing – the lifestyle commercial centres. One constant through this evolution has been the permissive role of land use regulations in shaping the form and location of retailing. At issue is whether local governments, and in particular land use planners, have abandoned a holistic approach to evaluating the public good and instead focused solely on the economic benefits gained from new development.

This study offers a new approach to understanding the “boxed in” relationship between the retail landscape and the public good: that is, boxed in by the form of available retailing, by the paradoxical lack of choice brought on by an obsessive belief in “larger is better”, and by permissive decision-making that focuses too strongly on the economic benefits of more and larger retail stores. A case study of the retail landscape of Nanaimo, British Columbia is included to illustrate a practical example of this relationship. Drawing on primary research on the impact of shopping locations on individuals combined with in-depth interviews and archival research, the retail landscape is examined. The intended outcome of this research is to challenge local governments, and in particular land use planners, to more fully consider the question of the public good when evaluating land use proposals.

Key Words:

Big box, commercial, consumption, land use regulations, planning, public good, retail, suburban, and sustainability.
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And to my Supervisor, Dr. Larry McCann, thank you for your guidance, wisdom, and expectations. You have caused me to be a better researcher, writer, teacher, and student, and changed my life journey. I am forever grateful.
Prologue

This dissertation examines the relationship between retailing, urban land use planning, and the place of the public good in shaping the retail landscape of smaller Canadian cities as exemplified by Nanaimo, the leading commercial centre of mid-Vancouver Island. To establish context, this Prologue offers a visual gallery of historical photos and a description of the spatial and temporal evolution of retailing in this city of some 80,000 people. The photos are chiefly of retail shops and shopping malls; the commentary focuses on trends in retailing. The first part of the Prologue focuses on Nanaimo’s changing retail landscape from the late-nineteenth century through to the 1970s. Attention then turns to a more in-depth consideration of the development of Woodgrove Town Centre, the largest shopping mall on Vancouver Island. Woodgrove has had a profound impact on Nanaimo’s retail landscape, redirecting people to the suburbs and away from shopping in the downtown core, challenging the place of land use planning within the public realm, and ultimately creating a socio-political divide within the residential structure of the city. Because of Woodgrove’s all-important and formative role in Nanaimo’s retail landscape, the empirical research base that explores theoretical issues raised in the dissertation uses Woodgrove as an exemplar for considering the relationships between retailing, planning, and the public good.

Nanaimo’s Evolving Retail Landscape, c.1860-1970

From a site and situation perspective, the layout of streets, shops, and residences of Nanaimo was well-established by the late-1800s (Photo 1 and Photo 2).1 2 Two- and three-
Photo 1. George Deverill's plan for Nanaimo, British Columbia, c. 1864 (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives)

Photo 2. Downtown Nanaimo, c. 1891 (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives)
storey wood-frame structures used by hotels, restaurants, and shops fronted key streets in the central area of the community. Residential dwellings, some containing retail uses or offering room and board, were mixed within the downtown core. Major commercial and public buildings were located near the waterfront, some on land created from mine tailings, for Nanaimo’s fortunes were built on coal mining. Befitting resource prosperity, several substantial buildings, including the first federal Post Office (*Photo 3*), were constructed of brick and stone. Nanaimo had several notable hotels, including the Globe, the Queen’s, and the Terminal, their buildings still in existence (*Photo 4*). With increased growth and prosperity, more elaborate buildings – such as the Dominion Realty Building (*Photo 5*) – revealed the importance of the downtown. Rudimentary building bylaws, foreshadowing later zoning and land use planning, were put in place to protect property values. For example, a 1901 regulation prohibited wash houses and laundries from locating in specified areas of the downtown, in effect segregating Chinese businesses and ghettoizing the Chinese people.

By 1921, Nanaimo housed more than 6,000 residents (*Figure 1*). While the downtown remained the focus of retailing and service industries, the city’s footprint expanded away from the waterfront and the historic ‘bowl’ of the central core. Manufacturing and wholesaling industries, as well as new automobile-related and tourist businesses, spearheaded the expansion (*Photo 6*). As in other Canadian communities, the automobile facilitated the migration of residential and commercial land uses to outlying areas, the beginning of the relative decline of Nanaimo’s central business area. The process was spurred further by a fire in 1930 which engulfed a large area of downtown Nanaimo. But this outward movement, a suburbanization of sorts, was halted by economic depression, war, and the collapse of the
Photo 3. Post Office, constructed in 1884, photo c.1891 (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives)

Photo 4. Queen’s Hotel, Victoria Crescent, c.1908 (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives)
Photo 5. Dominion Realty Building, c.1982 (historic photo not available) (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).

Photo 6. Outside of the historic bowl of Downtown, c.1920 (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).
coal mining industry. In fact, the city lost population between 1931 and 1941 (Figure 1). In an attempt to bolster the commercial function of the downtown, but also to legitimize retailing in newly forming neighbourhoods, City Council adopted its first zoning bylaw in 1933, clearly an early example of local government becoming involved in the interplay between land use planning and the public good.

![Figure 1: Population & Shopping Complex Growth in Nanaimo](image)

Prosperity returned following World War II as Nanaimo's economy became buoyed by Vancouver Island's expanding forest economy and related commercial activity. The city's population doubled between 1951 and 1961, from almost 7,200 to just over 14,000 people.
(Photo 7). Some of this growth was the result of Nanaimo incorporating outlying areas. To service this population and spatial expansion, and recognizing that automobile ownership and use would increase in the future, developers invested in ‘modern’ commercial facilities.\footnote{3} As would be expected, the floor space of new commercial centres increased along with Nanaimo’s growing population. As shown in Figure 1, at the start of the time period under consideration, floor space in these new commercial centres was closely aligned with population growth, with approximately a square metre of floor space per Nanaimo resident.\footnote{4} With new construction and a change to larger format retailing, the ratio of persons to square metres of floor area changed. The shift to large-scale enclosed shopping malls and big box stores gained momentum over time as these retailing formats are substantially larger than those of strip malls or neighbourhood shopping districts. Anecdotally, Nanaimo has long been viewed as “over-retailed” by residents, but whether or not this label is accurate requires further investigation. It is also noted that Nanaimo serves as a regional trade centre, and the reach of certain retail facilities and land uses extends well past the borders of the city.

The city’s first so-called strip mall was built in 1963 on the edge of the downtown. It was a two-unit development containing a Simpson-Sears store and a Safeway (Photo 8). This commercial space was expanded in 1967 by connecting the two large units of these stores with a new indoor shopping mall. The new complex was renamed Harbour Park Shopping Centre. This facility has had a checkered business history. Times of prosperity have been interspersed with high vacancy rates due to the expansion of retail developments at four commercial centres located well north of the downtown business core. The fate of Harbour Park has been

Photo 8. Harbour Park Mall (now known as Port Place Centre), located adjacent to Downtown to the south-east. The harbour is visible in the lower right of the photo. c.1972. (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).
intertwined, as well, with the decline of shops and services in the urban core. Harbour Park has undergone a series of renovations and expansions over the years, including the doubling of retail space in the 1980s and the addition of a casino in the mid-1990s. In 2003, the mall was renamed Port Place Centre to emphasize a major renovation and its proximity to the waterfront. In 2007, City Council agreed to a zoning amendment that doubled the size of the casino to 45,000 square feet of gaming area and allowed for an additional 225 slot machines (for a total of 650). To date, given the continued difficulties in gaining new commercial and professional uses downtown as well as in retaining existing uses, casino management has yet to act on the expanded zoning.

Approximately a kilometre to the north of Port Place on the opposite side of the downtown core is the city’s second shopping centre, Terminal Park (Photo 9). This strip mall, anchored by a Safeway, with its easily identifiable architecture, opened in 1966. A second strip mall was added in the mid-1970s at a right angle to the first. A third strip mall development approximately half a kilometre north of Terminal Park also opened in 1966. Originally named Northbrook Centre but now renamed Brooks Landing, this strip mall was the first double-fronted strip development in the city, with shops and service outlets accessible from both sides of the structure (Photo 10). New shops have been added to both façades of the building in the last decade, along with a mid-sized Staples store. A fourth centre developed in 1969-1970 illustrates advances in shopping centre design typical of the time. The Harewood Mall opened as Nanaimo’s first enclosed shopping mall along with an attached strip mall, both accessed from a shared parking area (Photo 11). This mall is currently undergoing a large-scale redevelopment project, rebranded as University Village. The intention is to improve the range of shops and services and add a lifestyle retail component to the development. The new name
Photo 9.
Terminal Park Mall, c.1969. The familiar architecture of the Safeway store is visible in the photo. (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).

Photo 10.
Northbrook Mall, now known as Brooks Landing, c.1972. (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).
Photo 11.
Harewood Mall, now known as University Village, c. 1972.
(Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).

Photo 12.
(Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).
reflects the mall’s location near Vancouver Island University approximately 1 kilometre to the southwest.

The last of the hybrid shopping centres built in Nanaimo, Country Club Centre, also originated as a strip mall in 1970 and later added an enclosed shopping area (*Photo 12*). This extended the mall to the south into the undeveloped parcel of land adjacent to the mall. Originally, this expansion site was proposed to contain a significant residential component with two 12-storey residential towers in the centre of the development. However, given the propensity at that time to single-use zoning and uncertainty in the residential development market, this component was never constructed. Renovations to this mall from 2004 to 2006 (prompted by the loss of Wal-Mart to the Woodgrove Town Centre) has added several new structures, including two mid-sized restaurants and a freestanding box store, as well as a major renovation of spaces physically attached to and within the enclosed mall. The Country Club Centre has benefited from its location in the geographic centre of Nanaimo (6 km north of Downtown) and from the intersection of major roadways. It has reinvented itself, adding new stand-alone establishments adjacent to the primary access route, re-designing the mall’s interior spaces, and attracting larger tenants which are accessed either solely from outside the mall or with outdoor and interior mall access. A strip of outside-access small shops has also been added, along with a redesigned façade with lifestyle commercial centre characteristics.

Even in the 1970s, the “place to shop” in Nanaimo was still the downtown business district. Here were still found the major Canadian department stores (Eaton’s and Simpson Sears) and the widest variety of goods and services offered by Nanaimo retailers and businesses. The outlying strip malls and shopping centres soon began to add more commercial services to their repertoire, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants.
More ominous for change was a headline in the *Nanaimo Daily News* that appeared in January, 1974 (*Photo 13*). It signaled a profound change – a huge shopping complex, Woodgrove – was planned for north of the city.

*Figure 2: Nanaimo Daily News, 30 January 1974*
Photo 13. Photos from an advertisement for the refurbished Eaton's store in *The Nanaimo Free Press*, showing the renovation of the Eaton's store in Downtown Nanaimo in 1974 where the façade was replaced with new cladding to modernize the building. (Source: Vancouver Island Regional Library Newspaper file).
Woodgrove: Where Retailing, Land Use Planning, and the Public Good Intersect

In many North American cities from the 1970s to the 1990s, growth followed a predictable pattern. Greenfield sites on the edge of serviced lands in the city were acquired, servicing was extended, and land was subdivided into residential lots to create “master planned” neighbourhoods. Commercial services followed, developing as a hierarchy of local service centres, strip commercial developments, and enclosed shopping malls. In other centres during this time period, commercial services, generally in an enclosed shopping mall format, were established first and residential development followed. For both growth patterns, commercial establishments were sized to serve several neighbourhoods and to satisfy a complete spectrum of shopping needs in a self-contained, climate controlled, generically pleasant retail environment. While private investment financed this urban expansion, significant involvement of local governments was required to approve new developments and provide community servicing.

At issue, then, is the relationship between local government land use planning, the development of essential retail services, and the balancing of private and public interests in satisfying the public good, that is, of government doing what is thought best for the public at large, whether for economic, social, environmental, or some other reason. To explore the many questions that surround this relationship, the dissertation focuses on the process of locating and Woodgrove Town Centre, Woodgrove’s impact on the urban form of Nanaimo and retailing in the city, and most importantly, Woodgrove’s role in shaping the public good in the formation of Nanaimo’s retail landscape.

When Woodgrove was first proposed, the development site was located at a point two kilometers from the City’s boundary. An example of a growth-inducing development,
what some would call of catalytic development for its ability to stimulate wide-ranging change, Woodgrove as first proposed was designed to contain “numerous shops, a department store, a medical centre, (150 room) hotel and parking space for 300 cars... apartment blocks (all developed in) a parklike setting.” The initial proposal of the Woodgrove Town Centre on 29 January 1974 was met with a mixed response from the Regional District of Nanaimo Board of Directors (comprised of elected officials from the City of Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum Beach, and the surrounding electoral areas). When questioned on the location, the developer indicated that this was the only site which met the essential criteria for a regional mall: the site was located on Vancouver Island’s major highway and at a crossroad with a major traffic collector roadway; it provided sufficient area for a major development as well as for expansion; and the site was easily accessible to potential shoppers from the west and north of the Island. Not all the elected officials concurred with this analysis, but they did agree to allow the proposal to continue through the review process. The Board also required that the proposal be reviewed within the context of NanPlan, the City of Nanaimo’s Official Community Plan at the time, which of course did not reflect the proposal, as the community plan had been adopted some years prior.

Contemporary reports indicate that this proposal was not without controversy among elected officials, staff and the public. Supporters focused on the creation of employment in construction and eventually in the retail establishments, the increased tax base, and the prestige associated with a regional shopping mall. Detractors cited concerns with the impact on traffic volumes and patterns, the loss of farmland, the largely rural location of the mall, and the likely impact such a development would have on existing
commercial establishments in Nanaimo. The City of Nanaimo’s response to the proposal was swift: it made application to the province to incorporate the lands, citing the benefits of tax revenues available should the proposal proceed. The reaction from the business community was also immediate. While merchants from Downtown businesses expressed some concern, the development unleashed an explosion of interest in retail growth. Four rival development groups hastily proposed shopping centres at sites on lands included within the City of Nanaimo’s proposed boundary expansion area. With the completion of the incorporation initiative in 1975, the City then held jurisdiction over the five sites.

Soon five zoning and community plan amendment applications were submitted to Council. Council determined that the five applications should be heard as a group instead of individually, as would normally be the process. Council’s reasons were: it was not in the

**Figure 3: Development Sites - Regional Malls**

Five proposed sites:

1. Woodgrove Town Centre
2. Hammond Bay Road
3. Rutherford Road
4. Country Club Plaza - existing strip commercial
5. Townsite Road

*Note: the municipal boundary shown is the present day boundary, largely unchanged since the 1975 expansion*
best interests of downtown businesses to permit rampant suburban commercial expansion, and maintaining the city’s core as the focal point for retailing and civic activities remained important; the cumulative total of new retailing under consideration was viewed as “too much” for Nanaimo, therefore making it necessary to carefully consider the combined impact of the proposals; and finally, concerns were expressed with the location of three of the developments in existing neighbourhoods. The elected officials made it known that only one of the proposed sites would be approved.¹⁰

After reviewing all five proposals, Council selected Woodgrove as the preferred regional shopping centre location. Council also allowed Country Club’s application to expand existing commercial facilities on their site (Photo 14). Three reasons were cited in support of the Woodgrove application: the overall concept of a regional centre was preferred to smaller shopping centres; local developers were favoured over non-Nanaimo based developers; and the Woodgrove project was most distant from Nanaimo’s central business district and therefore perceived as having the least impact on existing downtown retailers. Again, the taxation and revenue benefits to be accrued from the site were noted as a major issue in Council’s support for the development. The project would be good for Nanaimo because it would bring in needed tax dollars, and would add to the range of services locally available. It would also raise the prestige of the City among Vancouver Island communities. The Director of Planning, Mr. W. MacKay, did not recommend approval of Woodgrove, citing concerns with “leapfrog” development, the required extension of community servicing, negative impacts on downtown, and traffic congestion. His perceptive comments would later prove accurate for their understanding of the impact of expanded suburban retail developments on the municipality.
Photo 14. Photo Mosaic from the 1974 original proposal for the Woodgrove Town Centre illustrating the relative location of competitor sites: 1) Downtown Nanaimo; 2) Harbour Park Mall; 3) Terminal Park (smaller circle) and Northbrook Malls; 4) Harewood Mall; and 5) Country Club Centre. The proposed site for Woodgrove is not shown on the map. It would be approximately 4 kilometres to the northwest from Site 5: Country Club Centre. Photo dated 1972. (Source: 1974 Woodgrove Town Centre Proposal, obtained from private files).
To enable the construction of the regional shopping mall, community infrastructure was extended. This in turn facilitated the infilling of the largely vacant lands between Woodgrove and the former municipal boundary. Zoning and official community plan land use designations were amended to allow the development of Woodgrove, residential development on the lands sandwiched between the regional mall and the former municipal boundary, and finally the concentration of large format retailing on the parcels immediately surrounding the regional mall.

While the Woodgrove application was proceeding through the municipal review process, the Province was grappling with its own planning concerns. Given the topography and soil conditions in much of British Columbia, less than five percent of the province’s land was considered arable land. Much of this land was located, as would be expected, in river valleys and flood plains and adjacent to existing developed areas because municipalities

Figure 4: 1974- Original Proposal for the Woodgrove Town Centre

Note the hotel/recreation centre complex proposed for the site (in addition, the developer anticipated constructing mid-to high density residential development on the surrounding lands, within a “park-like” setting. (at the City’s direction, all but the commercial components were removed from later versions of the proposal as a single use site was deemed more attractive than a mixed use development)
develop where productive lands are available. The best agricultural land was concentrated in
the Lower Mainland and in pockets on the east coast of Vancouver Island. These were the
same locations where population growth and subdivision development was rapidly converting
arable land into vast tracts of predominantly single-unit housing. In the early 1970s, it was
estimated that nearly 6,000 hectares of prime agricultural land were being lost each year to
urban development. Government officials feared the loss of lands for agricultural production
as well as the decline of agriculture as a viable sector of the BC economy. To stop or at least
slow the development of arable lands, in 1973 British Columbia established the Agricultural
Land Commission Act.11 The Woodgrove site, as a former working farm and still assessed as
agricultural land, was designated to be within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), much to
the developer's dismay. From the province's perspective, the designation of the Woodgrove
site within the ALR was defendable, given the parcel's 100-year history as a working farm. It
appears that the inclusion of this parcel in the ALR was based solely on soil classifications
and existing zoning. It is possible that provincial officials were unaware of the regional mall
proposal, although given the extensive media coverage and high level of local interest this
seems unlikely. Months of negotiations between the Agricultural Land Commission and the
developer followed, resulting in little progress and a series of refused applications. However,
in the spring of 1976, an appeal to the provincial Environmental Land Use Committee
overruled the Agricultural Land Commission's refusal to remove the lands from the Land
Reserve. The lands were summarily excluded, and the developer was free to negotiate with
the City.12 The question, then, circles back to the public interest, and whether in retrospect it
would have been reasonable to maintain this parcel within the Agricultural Land Reserve for
food production or release it for the development of the regional mall.
Negotiations with the Agricultural Land Commission added to the approval time span as did the city’s request for numerous amendments to the original proposal. However, on 1 May 1978 the city accepted a Land Use Contract for the site. While infrequently used today, a land use contract is similar to a comprehensive development zone written specifically for a single development. This extended time period resulted in three new issues for Woodgrove’s developers: first, although downtown merchants had expressed some concerns with the original proposal, this concern had advanced to direct opposition against the development of such a large scale facility so distant from the city’s centre. The decision by Eaton’s to commit to Woodgrove early in its development phase was seen as the first of many losses that would be suffered by the Downtown. Eaton’s was still a thriving Canadian icon in the late 1970s. Located in Nanaimo’s urban core in an increasingly cramped and dingy building, the company readily committed to relocating to Woodgrove. Second, changes to City Council had occurred, and while support had been widespread on previous Councils, this base was weakening. One Council member, in particular, challenged the Woodgrove Centre proposal at every opportunity by requesting new information with the intent of delaying the approval process. Third, the extended time frame allowed for the rejuvenation of a rival application. In June 1978, a representative from the Hudson’s Bay Company appeared before Council to outline a plan for a $15 million development at the Rutherford site, where the City had earlier turned down an application for a regional mall. The new proposal came after Woodgrove had completed more than four years of preparation, negotiation, and consultation with the City and Province. Widespread concern was expressed. Woodgrove’s developers, downtown merchants, two members of Council, and citizen factions opposed this new proposal and even the local paper cited concerns in an
editorial on the over-retailing of Nanaimo and the likely damage to Nanaimo’s downtown core. City staff were vehemently opposed: the City Planning Department Director’s Report to Council recommended that “…this proposal (the Rutherford site) be rejected for the reason that the ‘market place’ is not acting as previously foreseen and that any additional commercial facilities would negate efforts by the community to revitalize and strengthen the city’s downtown business district.” The Planning Director added, “I strongly recognize the need for additional commercial facilities, but cannot justify another shopping centre at the possible expense of destroying one of the most unique downtown areas in Western Canada.” In a final pitch against the rival centre, the developers of Woodgrove offered an invitation to the Hudson’s Bay Company to join in the development at Woodgrove. Representatives from the Bay refused the offer, and Council, in a 5 to 4 vote, approved the Rutherford proposal. Both Woodgrove and the Rutherford Centre began construction in 1979. Rutherford Mall was the first to open in 1980, followed by Woodgrove in 1981 (Photos 15 and 16). Woodgrove opened with 53 percent of the retail spaced leased. At the time of opening, neither Eaton’s nor Woodward’s paid rent or common area maintenance to
Photo 15. Rutherford Mall, now known as Nanaimo North Towne Centre. See key map, below, for location relative to Woodgrove. (Source: City of Nanaimo, Google Earth link, 2009).
Photo 16: Woodgrove Town Centre fringed to the north, east, and south by large format stores constructed between 1980 to 1993 (excluding grocery stores) including Save On (1), Wal-Mart (2), Chapters (3), Home Depot (4), Staples (5), Costco (6), Michael’s and Petcetera (7), Canadian Tire (8), a government office tower (9), as well as smaller retail establishments. To the west, the Town Centre is bordered by the Inland Island Parkway and rural-residential lands (as the official community plan does not support commercial development west of the Parkway). Source: City of Nanaimo, c.2009.
Woodgrove and did not commence paying these charges until 1983 when Woodgrove achieved a lease rate of 75 percent on gross leasable commercial rental units. At the same time, interest rates rose substantially and this, along with difficulties in fully leasing mall space, caused the owners of Woodgrove to search for a buyer for the Centre. Cambridge Holdings (now Ivanhoe Cambridge Ltd.) assumed ownership of the Woodgrove Shopping Centre in 1983. Since opening, the lease rate at Rutherford Mall has remained consistently below that of the Woodgrove Shopping Centre, and Rutherford Mall has had difficulty in maintaining major tenants. The Hudson’s Bay Company left the mall in the mid-1980s, ironically for Woodgrove (assuming the vacant space left by the closure of Eaton’s stores across Canada). Large portions of Rutherford are now vacant, although the Mall did commence a major renovation in 2006, followed by a rebranding as the Nanaimo North Towne Centre in 2007.

Through the late 1970s and 1980s, Downtown Nanaimo suffered the downturns characteristic of many North American cities, unable to compete with the new shopping malls. New retailing focused on suburban venues, neglecting the downtown core. Consumers believed that franchise and chain operations offered superior cost-savings over owner-occupied establishments. Consumers also perceived that the suburban stores offered a wider array of products. The malls delivered acres of free and readily available parking. Chain stores and the malls themselves coordinated marketing efforts and offered the promise of new and modern goods. By contrast, downtown independent retailers suffered from inertia and uncoordination. By the early 1980s, the decline of downtown Nanaimo was well entrenched (Photo 17).16
Woodgrove retains the advantage of location over other shopping centres in Nanaimo, as well as higher lease and tenant rates. In addition, the City’s previous official community plan, *Plan Nanaimo 1996* (recently replaced by *Plan Nanaimo 2008*) fully supported the ongoing focus of large format retailing at Woodgrove. All major commercial development from the mid-1980s to the late-1990s focused on the lands around Woodgrove, and a major mall expansion in 1999 solidified Woodgrove’s position as the regional shopping centre for the mid-Island area. The area around Woodgrove grew as well with the expansion campaigns of the major big box retailers. Wal-Mart entered the Canadian market in 1994 by acquiring the 122 store Woolco Canada chain, increasing in number to 278 by 2008, and established a Nanaimo storefront in 1995. Home Depot also entered Canada in 1994 (and Nanaimo in 1998), growing to 165 stores in 2008 with more than 28,000 employees. Other major retailers joining in the big box expansion in Canada included Costco, the Real Canadian Superstore, Future Shop, Canadian Tire, Zellers, Home Outfitters, Staples, and Pier One, as well as retailers who shifted to a big box format, including Shoppers Drug Mart and numerous clothing retailers. Nanaimo was the recipient of a number of these retailers, either as stand-alone structures or located in powercentres (refer to Photo 16). By 2002, the Woodgrove Town Centre (the mall and the surrounding commercial-zoned lands) contained approximately 800,000 square feet of retail space. Twenty-five years after opening, Woodgrove stands at the northerly edge of the city and remains the largest shopping mall on Vancouver Island, surrounded by the largest concentration of big box stores and stand-alone retail units found north of Duncan and south of Courtenay.
Photo 17:
Downtown Nanaimo, c.1983.
Note the distinctive columns of the Dominion Realty Building in the centre of the photo. The large structure toward the waterfront is the Dorchester Hotel. (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).

Photo 18: The proposed Sandstone development at the southerly boundary of Nanaimo, c.2008 (Source: Northwest Properties Ltd.).
A future development is Sandstone, a master planned community on the southerly incorporated boundary of the City (Photo 18). The retail space intended for this development is similar in area to the Woodgrove Town Centre, with mall space and the surrounding retail development totaling nearly 800,000 sq ft. Big box stores will be surrounded by concentrations of mid-box and small format retailers. The latter will largely be in place in late-2009 and construction of the big box establishments will follow.

For Downtown Nanaimo, the future remains uncertain. Investment by specialty retailers with a vision of a better downtown, coupled with support from a revitalized Downtown Business Association, has brought new life to the area in the late-1990s. Controversial proposals for residential towers along the waterfront were approved by Council in 2007. Opposition to these towers focused on the proposal’s non-compliance with the height regulations established in the City’s official community plan, Plan Nanaimo 1996, although the City chose to amend the Plan instead of requiring agreement. A City-funded Conference Centre opened in 2008. There is new hope for the downtown area, with renewed emphasis on specialty retailing, small shops, cultural activities, and exclusive residences. Meanwhile, the outlying shopping centres and malls continue to provide space for franchise and chain developments. The impact of the Sandstone Development on both Downtown and the outlying retailers remains to be seen (Photos 19 and 20).

The retail establishments that characterize our urban environments are often the focal points of human activity, and the positioning of these establishments within the retail landscapes shapes our everyday experiences. Searching for the place of the public good in the retail landscape is the key task of this research, requiring the investigation of several research areas: the evolution of the built form of the landscape; theoretical approaches to
retailing geography; and an in-depth review on the questions of the public good from a variety of philosophical and disciplinary perspectives. Developing from this, land use planning as a profession and practice is integrated into the study, both to gain an understanding of the role of regulations in shaping the landscape and to gain insight into the planner's responsibility of integrating the public good into plans and bylaws. The following chapters venture into a new area of study that seeks to understand all these issues through an examination of the interrelationships retailing geography, land use planning, and the public good.

Figure 6: Relationship among the existing Woodgrove Town Centre, the proposed Sandstone Town Centre, and Downtown Nanaimo
Photos 19 and 20: A comparison of Commercial Street in Downtown Nanaimo, with the same view in c.1940 and c.2003. Note the retention of the “art deco” style on the building to the left of the photo. The three buildings visible on the right have since been removed to allow for the new Vancouver Island Conference Centre. (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives).
Key Map A- Historic Downtown Nanaimo (Source: Nanaimo Community Archives)
Number references refer to locations of photos
Key Map B - Downtown Nanaimo - 1928 (Source: City of Nanaimo)
Number references refer to locations of photos
Key Map C- Expansion of Nanaimo- 1972 (Source: original Woodgrove proposal, private files)
Number references refer to locations of photos
Endnotes

1 While this place name for the centre that later became Nanaimo is often ascribed to coal, it was a reference to a governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

2 The central bowl originated with a plan developed in 1864 by British architect George Deverill. His plan was influenced by the harbour’s shape, with streets radiating out from a central point and following the contours of the land. The town plan was an initial step towards Nanaimo’s incorporation in 1874 (as the third municipality in British Columbia, following New Westminster and Victoria).

Kevin Lynch (1960, 4) notes that city form provides a skeleton upon which urban residents create their social important myths, the legends and stories that shape their experience in the city. These edifices remain important in our cities and we continue to build monuments to greatness although the structures constructed today are more likely in tribute to business than to religion.

3 Dawson (1983, 6) adopts the Urban Land Institute’s definition of a shopping centre as “A group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site which is planned, developed, owned, and managed as an operating unit related to its size, location and types of shops to the trade area that the unit will serve.” The unit usually provides onsite or associated car parking in definite relationship to the types and total size of the stores. This definition is also applicable to strip malls, although the form of ownership in strip malls can sometimes be more fractional (strata units vs. a single corporate owner). The unified architecture of the strip mall and shopping centre makes them an obvious feature of the urban landscape. To differentiate the two, the strip mall is generally a series of separate retail establishments located along a single tangent, facing a shared parking lot. A shopping centre is more complex, with multiple buildings comprised of single retail functions, offering a wider range of shopping opportunities.

4 This graph details population change from 1951 to 2006. It is noted that the substantial increase in population between 1971 and 1981 is a result of a major boundary expansion that encapsulated several small unincorporated areas in Electoral Areas A, C, and D surrounding the City of Nanaimo. Population information for these unincorporated settlements (Harewood, Wellington, lands within the Jinglepot area, and lands within Cedar) is not available. Data is available for the Electoral Areas in total, but as the incorporation involved only partial areas of each of the Electoral Areas an accurate population figure for the incorporated lands cannot be determined.

The data on shopping complexes represents the addition of major shopping centres as detailed in the Prologue to this study. The figures do not include square metres of retailing in Downtown Nanaimo or small-scale retailing (for example, neighbourhood level shopping centres or stand-alone convenience stores, gas stations, or stand-alone restaurants) that would have been constructed in this time period.

The ratio table represents the square metres of shopping complex floor area per person for the time period under consideration. It is noted that ratio has remained fairly consistent from 1986 forward, illustrating a relationship between population growth and retail growth, as would be expected. Further research on the issue of retail are per capita is required to determine if the figure for Nanaimo is similar to other mid-sized urban centres and if the population figure should consider the wider trade area for Nanaimo instead of the population of only the incorporated area. This research area is noted as a key topic for future investigation, as discussed in Chapter 6.

5 In some locations (for example, Portland Oregon) this pattern of growth was halted sooner than the 1990s due to the early adoption of strategies to control urban growth such as urban containment boundaries, cessation of servicing expansions, and moratoriums on development of greenfield sites. In British Columbia, while some municipalities expressed an interest in growth management in the early 1990s, the legislation enabling local government bylaws was not adopted until 1995.
The shopping mall is one establishment that is often sweepingly categorized as ‘all the same’. Baudrillard depicted the mall as a consumer machine producing homogenized consumers. For him: "We have reached a point where ‘consumption’ has grasped the whole of life, where all activities are squeezed in the same combinatorial mode; where the schedule of gratification is outlined in advance, one hour at a time; and where the ‘environment’ is complete, completely climatized, finished and culturalized… work, leisure, nature, and culture all previously dispersed, separate, and more or less irreducible entities that produced anxiety and complexity in our real life, and in our ‘anarchic and archaic’ cities, have finally become mixed, massaged, climate controlled, and domesticated into the single activity of perpetual shopping.” (1988, 33-4)

Lunt and Livingstone (1992, 21) refer to the shopping mall “as a public forum – the site of participation in late capitalist society as formulated through commoditization.

Bauman notes that the word ‘mall’ in its original meaning meant a tract of land for strolling (1996, 27). He notes that the meaning of the word has been replaced – from a place for strolling to a place for shopping. Goss (1993, 41) takes this further and uses a language of plots, lures, and decoys to describe the strategic effect of malls on consumers. The mall is an instrument to bend the consumer, “concealed by the mask of the carnival, the patina of nostalgia, and the ironic essences of elsewhere.” (Goss 1993, 40).

Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Holbrook, and Rowlands take a less extreme view, interpreting shopping malls as “part of the process by which goods communicate, and are communicated as, social relationships.” (1997, 26. Italics in original).


The developer purchased the seven parcels of land (totaling 62 acres) for just over $500,000 in 1971.

It is noted that the proposal would not have had direct revenue implications for the Regional District: tax revenues are collected by the province in regional districts and the districts request a requisition from the province to fund their operations. Therefore, the Regional District of Nanaimo did not oppose the City’s application to incorporate the lands (and further, it is noted that the City of Nanaimo at that time had the majority of seats on the Regional District Board of Directors).

On March 11, 1976, five shopping centre proposals were presented at a six hour marathon dinner and business session meeting of Nanaimo City Council where each developer had an hour to pitch their development. After some deliberation, Council made its decision on May 3, 1976.

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As indicated on the Agricultural Land Commission’s website: www.alc.gov.bc.ca and through archival research on the formation of the Commission, the provincial government passed Order-in-Council 4483 on December 21, 1972 under the Environment and Land Use Act, imposing a land freeze that prohibited
further subdivision or use change of lands assessed as farmland for taxation purposes and deemed to be suitable for the cultivation of agricultural crops. A clarifying OIC passed in January, 1973 further defined the 'freeze' as affecting all lands 2 acres or more that were assessed as farmland, zoned agricultural by a local government or rated CLI Class 1-4 agricultural capability.

The website indicates, "The Provincial government responded to the serious erosion of our agricultural land base by introducing BC's Land Commission Act on April 18, 1973. A Commission, appointed by the Provincial government, established a special land use zone to protect BC's dwindling supply of agricultural land. This zone was called the "Agricultural Land Reserve". The ALR was established between 1974 to 1976 through cooperative efforts with regional districts and member municipalities. Initially the ALR comprised 4.7 million hectares (5% of the province). Despite boundary changes over the decades, its area remains approximately the same."

12 The Environmental Land Use Committee was established in 1977 to allow the Minister of Environment and a select group of Cabinet Ministers to hear appeals on the application decisions of the Agricultural Land Commission; in effect, the Committee allowed applicants to appeal directly to a select (and highly political) body following a refusal from the Agricultural Land Commission. Four members of Cabinet were given the authority to make decisions on land use irrespective of the opinion of the Commission or the researched conclusions of Commission staff. The relationship between the Environmental Land Use Committee and the Agricultural Land Commission deteriorated in the late 1980s with the approval of a series of golf course applications on agricultural land. In 1992 the right of applicants to appeal to the Environmental Land Use Committee was rescinded by the provincial government.

13 This was not without precedent in other municipalities: Eaton's had adopted a Canada-wide strategy of relocating to suburban shopping centres, following their client base who favoured new residential areas. A Woodward's Store and Food Floor followed Eaton's to the Woodgrove Town Centre. Attracting a Woodward's store to Nanaimo was difficult, and was only achieved when the developer met personally with Chunky Woodward to gain approval (with many provided incentives including a rent-free period and substantially lowered mall maintenance fees).

14 Deane Findlayson and supporters of the Woodgrove Shopping Centre eventually filed a libel suit against Councilor Nelson Allen and were successful in achieving a court settlement.


16 Speaking to retail change in general, Beuka credits the post 1950 shift to suburban focused retailing to the expansion of the middle class, the valorization of the nuclear family, and a trend "both utopian and exclusionary in nature" toward cultural homogenization (2004, 2). A rise in per capita income and new reliance on mass marketing techniques Gillette, H. (1985) can also be credited with facilitating the later 20th century retail landscape.

17 Policy 36, Goal #1 (Build Complete Viable Communities) of Plan Nanaimo reads "New zoning for free standing retail warehouses or "large box" retailers will only be permitted in the Woodgrove Regional Shopping Town Centre. "Large box" retailers are defined as retail stores that have a gross floor area of approximately 50,000 sq.ft. or more, that generate high volumes of shopping traffic, require extensive parking, and service a regional market.

18 According to Michelle Lalonde, Woodgrove's Marketing Director, more than 8.7 million people visited the mall in 2006, compared to 4.7 million in 2001, with sales increasing by 6.6% each year since 2002.

19 Wal-Mart Canada Inc. information obtained online at walmart.ca, the Canadian corporate website. It is noted that the website reports that Wal-Mart Canada has almost 78,000 sales associates (March 2008).
20 The Nanaimo Wal-Mart was originally located at Country Club Centre as an attached but externally access establishment. In 2002, Wal-Mart relocated to Woodgrove in a newly constructed and attached modified Super Centre format (with retail food supplies, but smaller in size than the largest Super Centres).

21 Data obtained from homedepotcorporate.com and through conversation with Sarah Aulds at the Home Depot Museum (opened in 1999) in Atlanta, Georgia.

22 Since that time, no new big box formats have been added to the Town Centre, both due to trends in retail formats and the lack of available land area.

23 The development site, named the Sandstone Community, is intended to be “a master planned fully integrated community in South Nanaimo” (from the developer’s website www.nwproperties.ca). Sandstone is co-owned by Northwest Properties and the Snuneymuxw First Nation, and consists of approximately 726 acres of vacant freehold land that straddles the Island Highway and Duke Point Highway. The overall project will include residential, retail, recreational, commercial, educational and industrial uses. The development is expected to be phased over a 10 to 15 year period relative to market demand. This application required an amendment to the City’s Urban Containment Boundary, which was approved by Council.

24 As noted by one anonymous wit at a public consultation event on the official community plan, “This will create a dumbbell shape of retailing in Nanaimo… which is curiously apt.”
Chapter 1 The Study Defined

Retailing is an integral part of our urban experience. As Jones and Simmons observe, “many of the colours, the smells, the noises that make up the atmosphere of a community, the stimuli of different people, new styles and innovative technology – are contributed by stores, restaurants, shopping districts and their customers. Inevitably, the quality of our lives partly reflects the quality of this sector.”

While the inclusion of retail spaces in urban environments is as ancient as cities themselves, the study of retailing is much more recent. Beginning almost a century ago, geographers became interested in the study of retailing on the urban landscape. From early taxonomies that classified retail establishments to later studies on the manipulation of space to alter consumer behaviour, geographers have developed a detailed understanding of the form of the retail landscape. Exemplary are the early studies of Hoyt, Proudfoot, Christaller, and Burgess, through Berry and Huff, to today’s research by Simmons, Bourne, Dawson, Hernandez, Jones, and Doucet. In short, geographers have found that retailing is part of our social system and a key element shaping urban environments. The wide variety of available shops and services satisfies consumer needs and shapes our travel patterns impacts the ways in which we choose to congregate, recreate, and conduct business. Because stores and shopping are essential to urban environments, the geography of retailing remains a relevant field of study.

For much of retailing geography’s growth, studies have focused on the distribution of shops and services. While in pre-automobile days the retail landscape was scaled to the pedestrian, over the twentieth century retailing has shifted progressively outward, even
shops attracted to outlying neighbourhoods, then came the strip malls, shopping centres, enclosed malls, powercentres, and more recently, the lifestyle commercial centres. A number of factors have caused this shift to greenfield sites on the fringes of the urban landscape: population decentralization; increased use of the automobile; government investment in freeways; the proliferation of chain establishments with specific building requirements; and the concentration of retail activities among fewer retailers. The more quantitative aspects of changes to the retail landscape have been well explored in the literature, with a multitude of excellent empirical studies and detailed databases available on questions of quantity, placement and form.

However, less attention has been given to more qualitative aspects of retailing geography. In particular, three areas of inquiry are worthy of further consideration:

Area #1: The link between retailing and quality of life

The connection between the quality of life of citizens and the form of retailing within urban centres warrants further study. Attention has focused on the built form of retail structures, the hierarchical distribution of establishments, square footage relative to population densities, and even to issues of greater global concern, such as product importation laws and the environmental impacts of consumption. Yet the critically important question of the impact of retail form on the quality of life of citizens appears to have been of only marginal interest to researchers.

To understand this link between retail form (understood as both the individual establishment and the aggregate retail landscape) and the quality of urban life, this study traces the evolution of thought in retailing geography, followed by a survey of changes in retailing formats post-1950. With this foundation established, the study then searches for
evidence of the connection between the quality of urban life and the current form of the retail landscape. A case study approach tests this link, detailing the process leading to the siting of the Woodgrove Town Centre, the largest shopping mall on Vancouver Island (hereafter referred to as Woodgrove). At the time of opening in 1981, Woodgrove was a model of the enclosed shopping mall variety, anchored by Woodward’s and Eaton’s, with 500,000 square feet of retail space and a water-powered clock dominating the centre court.

While the retail landscape in many mid- to large-sized municipalities in North America changed with the introduction of shopping malls,\textsuperscript{33} the impact of this addition to Nanaimo warrants specific study. When the site for the regional shopping mall was first announced, the subject lands were almost two kilometres outside of the incorporated city boundary, forcing a large-scale amalgamation initiative by the City to ensure the inclusion of this site (and the four other potential regional shopping centre sites that were quickly proposed on the coat-tails of Woodgrove) to within the city’s incorporated boundary. This massive expansion of the city boundary had the secondary impact of opening new lands for serviced residential development, shifting the focus of new housing construction from “midtown” and the South End to the North End of the City for the next twenty years. A renewed interest in south and central Nanaimo has only recently been initiated, prompted largely by the build-out of vacant lands in the northerly neighbourhoods. From a land use planning perspective, the rapid expansion of single-unit residential housing has been problematic for Nanaimo, creating a homogenized landscape that offers few choices to residents interested in housing alternatives. It is only in the last few years that scattered infill sites have been considered for higher-density residential and mixed-use developments,
although the city’s long range plans (Plan Nanaimo 2008 and the previous two versions of the official community plan) have long supported their inclusion.\textsuperscript{34}

From a retailing perspective, the development of Woodgrove on the perimeter of the city and the opening of a second and smaller enclosed shopping mall (Rutherford Mall, now known as Nanaimo North Town Centre) located approximately 1 kilometre from Woodgrove\textsuperscript{35} have had devastating consequences for Downtown Nanaimo. The loss of the Eaton’s store to Woodgrove and of Sears to Rutherford Mall were two major strikes against the retail vibrancy of Downtown, coupled with many smaller hits from the closure of locally-owned and operated businesses. With the concentration of chain stores, franchises, and big box developments at Woodgrove, and given the linear form of the city, residents in central and south Nanaimo found themselves well-removed from the goods and services deemed desirable to the modern consumer.

From a quality of life perspective, the location of Woodgrove and the concentration of retailing activities around the mall have created a schism in Nanaimo. North Nanaimo is perceived by residents in central and south Nanaimo to be better serviced and favoured by civic decision-makers. The North End-South End split in the city has created long standing animosities and continues to shape discussions on the provision of civic services. It is not possible to know what the situation would be today had the regional mall had been sited in a more central location and whether the city permitted the scattered development of retailing throughout Nanaimo. One can only speculate that it would have made a difference. This study examines the connections between decisions made thirty years ago and the place of the public good in today’s retail landscape.
Area #2: The link between the retail landscape and land use planning

The association between the retail landscape and the role of land use planning in shaping this landscape has also not been fully explored in previous research. Jones and Doucet contend that a structural understanding (which encompasses the role of land use planning and local government) of the retail landscape is absent from the literature, and additional study is required. The absence of literature on this connection is curious, indeed. In professional practice, land use planners are charged with the task of proactively determining the location, density, floor area, and types of permitted retail uses within incorporated urban boundaries through zoning bylaws, official community plans, and growth strategies. Through the adoption of land use planning regulations, elected municipal officials (Mayor and Council, sometimes with the input of design review panels and citizen advisory committees) are ultimately the decision-makers on the shape and form of the retail landscape. It would seem that there should be a well-developed body of knowledge on how to best “do retail,” yet this is one feature on the landscape that appears to have been left more to private interests. That is, it would appear that the role of land use planning has been more passive than proactive, as planners submit to the developer-driven applications to amend planning bylaws and profoundly change the shape of the retail landscape.

A question arises about the degree to which local governments exert control over the form and distribution of retail uses on city lands; that is, the ease by which long range plans are amended in response to new proposals, and the extent to which local government considers the impact of new uses on the existing form and distribution of retail establishments. While it would be convenient to focus only on the role of local elected officials in shaping the retail landscape through a superficial analysis focusing on hindsight
accusations of poor decision-making, land use planning as a profession must be held to a higher level of accountability.

**Area #3: The link between land use planning and the public good**

Friedmann describes the profession of land use planning as “a science working in the service of humanity.” His statement is supported by Hodge, who sees planning as a profession serving two purposes: “...one pragmatic (the need to deal with problems occasioned by development) and one ideal (the need to strive for a better environment).” Both definitions speak to the dual roles of the planner, the first technical and rational, the second focused on the ideals of the public good. It is this latter role, of “working in the service of humanity,” that is of interest in this study.

At a local government level, the role of planners is clear. Citizens, elected officials, and planners themselves see the planner’s task as balancing technical land use decisions against agreed-to definitions of the public good. This balance is an attempt to harmonize the needs of citizens and create a city that is better for having been planned. The planner must balance the quantifiable, technical aspects of land use, that is, where and how much, with the qualitative aspects, that is, how will this decision impact the quality of life for residents? The responsibilities surrounding the former role are clear. Planners attempt to separate incompatible land uses, mitigate negative impacts from traffic or noise, achieve the standards set out in provincial legislations, and ensure that buildings and structures are safe for their inhabitants. Less certain is the latter role, and the means by which planners integrate the search for the public good into land use decision-making.

Again, a case study approach assists in understanding the role of the planner in shaping the retail landscape. For Nanaimo, the decision to site a regional mall in its chosen
location would, at first glance, appear easy to deride. However, in the context of land use planning policies and practices of the time, deciphering the past is no easy task. The Agricultural Land Commission opposed the location of Woodgrove, but its decision-making authority was usurped by the province. The Director of Planning at the time opposed both the regional mall concept and the extension of the city's boundary, but both of these options were supported by Council. Planning staff also recommended against the inclusion of recreational and residential components as outlined in the regional mall developer's first amendment proposal, although trends in land use planning some thirty years later would be unequivocal in supporting mixed-use development. There was opposition from the public to both the site and its proposed use, but there was also widespread support for the original proposal from the business community. The siren call of the largest regional mall on Vancouver Island proved irresistible to Council, given the accompanying prestige and seemingly obvious economic benefits (increased employment, an expanded tax base, and the attraction of new retail uses to serve a larger market area). As well, the elongation of the city due to the boundary expansion and North End development and the paucity of retailing in central and south Nanaimo are a result of implemented planning goals and policies as outlined in the city's long range plans. If one accepts that one of the key roles of the land use planner is to seek out and implement the public good, then Woodgrove presents an interesting opportunity for finding the place of the public good in the retail landscape.
The three-way intersection outlined above between the retail landscape, land use planning, and the concept of the public good is the focus of this dissertation. Layered on this are the links between each of these three areas of study: 1) between the retail landscape and the public good; 2) between the role of land use planners and the shape of the retail landscape; and 3) between land use planning as a profession and the public good. To better understand the links between the retail landscape, planning, and the public good, the line of inquiry traced in this dissertation is presented as three questions:

1. **How has retailing geography and the retail landscape evolved since the 1950s?**

An appreciation of retailing geography is important to set a foundation for the investigation of the role of planning in shaping the retail landscape, as well as for understanding how the landscape is altered by decisions made in the public good. In response to this first question, this study builds upon the work of previous researchers in
retailing geography. To understand the connection between urban life and retailing, this dissertation first examines six decades of empirical and theoretical contributions in retailing geography to establish the epistemological underpinnings of this area of inquiry. Second, the evolution of the built form of the retail landscape from the mid-century forward is detailed to better understand change in a North American context. A third level of analysis tests the first two by focusing on change in a defined case study area. As academics, citizens, and travelers, we often characterize urban centres largely on their commercial and retail environments. From West Edmonton Mall to the agglomeration of big box stores along McLeod Trail in Calgary, from Whistler’s exclusive shops to the wide array of global products on Vancouver’s Main Street, the form of retailing helps shape the urban environment, our opinions of cities, and our life experiences. Understanding retail form is critical as a foundation of this study.

This question is sited at the intersection between retailing geography and land use planning. The superficial relationship between these two areas of study is obvious. Both are concerned with the form and distribution of land uses in the urban environment. Where retailing geography and land use planning differ becomes apparent through a deeper examination. Retailing geography specifically concerns the “the study of the interrelationship between the spatial patterns of retail location and organization, on the one hand, and the geography of retail consumer behaviour on the other.”45 Land use planning focuses first on the process (ideas and procedures) by which planners understand and seek to resolve urban problems and secondly on the resulting form of the landscape.46 While both are concerned with urban morphology, the lens of retailing geography is closely focused on one aspect within the urban environment, while land use planning is defined as processed-based and
more holistic. Given the overlap between these two areas of study, one would anticipate that the relationship between retailing geography and land use planning must be well examined in the literature. To the contrary, this is not the case, as revealed in Chapter 2.

2. *What is the role of land use planning as a profession that shapes the retail landscape, and how do planners balance their pragmatic role with the search for an ideal?*

Philosophical discussions on the public good predate by far the establishment of land use planning as a profession, but the question of the public good is deeply entwined with both planning theory and practice. The *theoretical* relationship between land use planning and the public good has been well-studied in the literature (illustrated as the second relationship in Figure 1). Most practicing land use planners would agree that planners *should* be concerned with the public good, and that planners are charged with implementing plans, bylaws, and policies that work toward a better quality of life for urban residents. However, what has received little attention in the literature is the *practical* relationship between land use planning and the public good. That is, there is a paucity of research that illustrates how the urban environment, and in particular the retail landscape, has been shaped by a detailed and thoughtful examination of what constitutes the public good. Local governments (that is, elected officials, based on recommendations from planning staff) are responsible for approving retail and commercial development applications that shape the built environment and affect the quality of life of urban residents. Policies are written, bylaws are introduced and amended, and incorporated boundaries are extended to achieve the suburban-focused, large format retail landscape found in many North American cities. Generally, approvals focus on the economic benefits of the application, that is, how the new development will generate tax revenue, create employment, and draw customers from a larger trade area.
How the concept of the public good is integrated into the work of land use planners is a key focus of this research.

This study contends that as a profession, land use planners have lost concern over the question of the public good. The reasons surrounding the abandoning of a key role of the planner are two-fold and pragmatic. The first is an issue of definition. To the question "What is the public good?" the planner must provide a defensible response, one that will hold up to scrutiny by elected officials and myriad special interest groups. The likelihood of achieving consensus within Raymond Geuss's "real world... criss-crossed with divisions and swarming with tribes, corporations, states, social movements, alliances, nations, oppressing and oppressed populations who have radically different resources, power, institutional structures and conceptions of the public good" seems farfetched. From budgetary and work-load perspectives, if the public good cannot be determined definitively, and if no amount of effort will answer this question, then why bother asking it? The second reason for planners abandoning the search for the public good is one of process. The question, "What is the public good?" is deemed important but too complex. As noted by Hodge, "it is coming to be seen more and more that 'the public interest' is not monolithic and neutral. Our cities and towns are made up of multiple publics, each with a potentially different view of the public good." The contingency for planners is to equate the public good with the opinions of the minority of citizens who participate in public consultation processes by attending public meetings, speaking at hearings, filling out surveys, or otherwise commenting on planning proposals. Whether or not this group is representative of the larger public cannot be at issue for the planner, as the process of finding the public good is too time consuming and multifarious. The determination of the public good is provided by
a transcript of expressed interests and possibly by a statistical reconciliation of opinions, whether informed or otherwise. In sum, the complexity of the question precludes its full exploration. Far too often, the response from a partial public is used as a proxy measure for the whole. This study examines the changing role of the planner from 1950 forward and searches for the link between planning and the public good at key points in the time frame under review. A survey that investigates the views of citizens on the question of the public good was deemed essential and the results are detailed in this dissertation. In addition, depth interviews with planners, developers, and elected officials were conducted to fully understand the rationale used by decision-makers in shaping the current retail landscape. Finally, extensive archival research was conducted to document the development process and to help verify the results of the survey and interviews.

3. How is the public good reflected in the retail landscape?

From strip malls to shopping centres, enclosed malls to lifestyle commercial centres, this dissertation seeks concrete evidence that the public good can be found in the retail landscape. The detailed case study of a specific landscape informs this discussion, and potentially facilitates the transference of findings to cities with similar retail topographies and histories. Jones and Doucet (2001) assert that the public good has never been an important consideration in retailing geography. They indicate that it would appear to be an obvious area of investigation, given that the retail environment is shaped by the regulations of public bodies, and the intent of these regulations is to either protect or enhance the public good. Jones and Doucet speculate that the control of the retail landscape by regulations has done little to protect the public good. Instead, permissive retail land use bylaws and policies have allowed the proliferation of retailing (emphasized in their study are
the big box stores) with little consideration about the impact of adding so many square feet of retailing to the landscape. These researchers conclude that there has been an absence of geographical analysis of the Canadian retail landscape from a structural perspective, and additional study is needed.

This research builds on the findings of Jones and Doucet, and further contends that the public good is only visible in the post-1950s retail landscape when the criterion used to define the public good is purely economic. Local governments insist the public good has been realized through increased tax revenues, new employment, and negotiated amenities. Consumers cite lower prices as evidence that the public good has been achieved, without consideration of the local or global impacts of cheap consumer goods. Retailers invent formats that increase profit margins (certainly a measure of “good” for retailers) but they also dehumanize shopping environments. Planning departments seek approvals that give little weight to the social or environmental consequences wrought by actions obsessively focused on economic good. The result of this single-issue thinking is the landscape of aging shopping malls and powercentres that now characterize the fringe of many North American cities. Any response to the third question — (How is the public good reflected in the retail landscape?) — appears to be definition-dependent. If the public good is equated with increased taxes and individualized and corporate cost savings, then the public good has been achieved. If, however, the public good is something more than low prices and large-format retailing, then finding the public good in the retail landscape is more difficult.
Organization

To respond to these three questions, this dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter Two examines the link between retailing geography and land use planning from the mid-twentieth century forward, and highlights the absence of strong connections between these two related fields. Chapter Three considers the association between the public good and land use planning, delving first into definitions of the public good and then into the place of the public good in planning. Chapter Four completes the triad by investigating the relationship between the public good and the retail landscape. In a shift from the previous three chapters, Chapter Five presents a research strategy that responds to the lack of academic review as established in Chapters Two, Three and Four. This is followed by a detailed presentation of the survey results, depth interviews, and archival evidence, shifting the discussion from the purely theoretical to the pragmatic expression of the place of the public good in the retail landscape. Chapter Six revisits the key questions of this study. In this chapter, the title of the dissertation, “Boxed In,” is emphasized. The chapter concludes by evaluating the contribution of the present study to knowledge on the links between the retail landscape, land use planning, and the public good.

Endnotes

25 Agglomerations of commercial activities can be found in the earliest human settlements, spanning across civilizations. The Greek had their agoras, and ancient master planned cities in the Roman Empire contained areas designated for commercial uses. Other ancient civilizations in Turkey, Mesopotamia, and China appear to have had distinct shopping districts and market areas.

26 Jones and Simmons (1990, 7). The authors also provide a definition of “retail landscape” which will be adopted in this paper, defining the retail landscape as the “spatial distribution of consumers and retail facilities... shaped by the decisions of participants- consumers, retailers, developers, combined to produce the patterns we observe: the stores, retail clusters, and the settlement system.” (1990, 417). Their definition speaks to the relationship between the distribution of retail locations and the social systems within which
they are embedded, creating the overall pattern and distribution of retail facilities within a defined geographic area.

27 Christaller, Berry, Hoyt and Ullman, Burgess, among others.

28 Miller (1998); Appadurai (1986); Underhill (2002) again among others.

29 As discussed by Dawson (1980, 13).

30 Dawson (1983) defines a shopping centre as “a group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site which is planned, developed, owned, and managed as an operating unit related to its size, location and types of shops to the trade area that the unit will serve. The unit usually provides onsite or associated car parking in definite relationship to the types and total size of the stores.” Big box stores are defined by their size (generally over 50,000 square feet, although some formats such as bookstores may be smaller). Power centres are groupings of big box stores, sharing common parking and often an architectural theme. The newest format is lifestyle commercial centres, with a mixture of store formats contained in a village-like atmosphere, where shoppers are separated from traffic and there is a unified architectural theme.

31 Relph (1996, 153) adds a more esoteric perspective to the definition of “landscape” in a geographic sense as follows: “Landscapes are many sided phenomena. In their most obvious sense they are visible environments which not only have aesthetic and symbolic properties but also serve many purposes, some of which are immediately apparent, like car parks and tree houses, while others are more subtle, such as property speculation. Considerable expenditures of time, effort and money are required to make and modify built environments, so it is unlikely that their appearances are mere accidents.” The term “retail landscape” will be used in this paper to reference the pattern and form of retail development in an urban setting.


33 The Canadian Directory of Shopping Centres lists 84 regional shopping malls in 1986 (defined as those having at least 500,000 sq ft of gross leasable area, a definition of regional shopping malls adopted from Jim Simmon’s article titled: The Regional Mall in Canada, Canadian Geographer 1991: 35(3), 232-240.

It is noted that the Park Royal Shopping Centre in West Vancouver, BC cites itself as the first enclosed shopping mall in Canada (opening in 1950), although Nortgate Shopping Centre in Saint-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec also cites itself as the first, opening in 1949 (although the latter was a strip shopping centre and not an enclosed mall).

34 Although planners and the city’s long range plan have supported higher densities, citizens in the north of the city have been much less accepting. The plan to site two-15 story residential towers and a townhouse development (with a strip mall commercial component) on the last large greenfield site in the Dover Bay neighbourhood (proximate to the Woodgrove Town Centre) was met with a great deal of community resistance, although it was ultimately approved by Council and is currently under development. It is interesting to note that the original plan for Woodgrove included one or two residential towers along with a recreation facility. It may be that changing market conditions and the value of the land make residential development at the mall site a possibility in the future.

35 The Rutherford Mall is approximately 1 kilometer to the south of Woodgrove (closer to Downtown) on the portion of the Island Highway that runs through the City.
36 In a comprehensive article, Jones and Doucet (2001) conclude that there has been an absence of geographical analysis of the Canadian retail landscape from a structural perspective (including the role of local government), and additional work is needed.

37 It is noted that the term “official community plan” is used in British Columbia (and defined in the Local Government Act) while long range plans in other provinces and states are referred to as general plans, general municipal plans, or growth strategies. The term “official community plan” will be used in this dissertation to reference a long range general plan for a local government.

38 With the lure of new business (and tax dollars) being the siren’s call for many municipalities.


40 Hodge (2008, 13).

41 This relationship between the role of the planner and the public good is fully explored in this dissertation.

42 That is, better than what would have resulted from purely market driven decisions or ones based solely on advancing individual interests.

43 A wide range of different techniques have been used by local governments to either prohibit or limit the expansion of large format retailers, ranging from full moratoriums on development, prohibiting signs and lighting, to even limiting the amount of permeable surface permitted on any parcel to a low percentage of the parcel’s total area (therefore effectively controlling the amount of parking).

The degree to which local governments exercise this control varies widely. For example, the Town of Qualicum Beach, considered among local governments to have highly restrictive zoning bylaws and a strong adherence to adopted long range plans, has developed zoning bylaws that prohibit the sale of wrapped foods for take out, effectively making it impossible to site a fast-food restaurant within its incorporated boundaries: the lack of franchised fast-food outlets on the landscape is the intended result of this bylaw, and several challenges have been defeated by Council and planning staff intent on protecting existing owner-operated businesses and the visual integrity of the Town. The zoning bylaw also does not allow for automobile sales (considered by some to be an unsightly land use) and tightly controls the form and character of shops in the downtown core. The City of Nanaimo has long been considered to be much more permissive in its approvals.

44 Soja (1980) coined the term the “socio-spatial dialectic” to describe the continuous two-way process in which citizens shape the structure of cities yet at the same time are affected by the structure of those cities. Retail spaces are created and modified, a product of the values and beliefs of the people who build them, approve them, and patronize them. At the same time, this built environment influences the values and beliefs of the builders, approvers, and residents in the urban environment.


46 Hall (1996, 7).

47 The second role of the planner is rational decision-making (see Hodge, 2008).

48 Jones and Doucet (2001, 233). The writers contend that the role of local government is an area requiring further research as a full evaluation is missing from the literature on retailing geography.


50 Hodge (2005, 7).

51 Hodge promotes that the public interest is something that “becomes known” through collaborative processes of consensus building, in which the planner’s task is to ensure that these processes are as inclusive as possible (2005, 7). This idea will be further discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 2  Retailing Geography and Land Use Planning

Far from being the most "boring of fields," retailing geography remains a central topic in Human Geography. Two theoretical streams mark the discipline. The first focuses on the identification and classification of elements within the retail landscape; and the second emphasizes human behaviour and the role of the individual within the retail landscape. Of the two streams, research in retailing geography was initially (for the first half of the twentieth century) firmly sited within the former. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the latter stream, the role of human agency, became a focus of study. The following chronicles the evolution of thought in retailing geography from 1950 to the present. As with any such chronicle, the breakdown by decades is less concrete than convenient, and is intended only to provide logical order to the review. This classification scheme roughly corresponds to the taxonomy developed by Jones and Doucet (2001) in their analysis of the big box retail landscape in the Toronto area. At key points in this review, links to land use planning are highlighted, noting commonalities and key differences between these two areas of research.

Discourses in Retailing Geography and Land Use Planning

Positivistic discussions dominated mid-century discussions in retailing geography. The search for laws and models to explain both the internal pattern of retailing in cities and the relationships among urban centres within a retail hierarchy was the focus of much of the research conducted in the decade or so post-World War II. This work was built on a strong foundation, owing much to Christaller (1933) and Losch (1939), who separately undertook a
Researchers in the 1950s and 1960s produced a number of key studies which sought to empirically understand the spatial structures of the retail landscape (two representative examples include Berry’s (1967) research on the interrelationships among shopping centres, and Yeates’ (1968) study on retailing and wholesaling activities within urban centres). The goal of such studies was to understand the structure of retailing within cities and regional retail hierarchies and to reveal the laws that governed the retail landscape. Models of retailing could be developed that illustrated the predictability of the retail landscape. The certainty provided by these models was viewed as incontrovertible and applicable to any urban environment. Harris and Ullman’s comments are typical of discourse at that time, “each city is unique in detail but resembles others in function and pattern. What is learned about one helps in studying another. Location types and internal structures are repeated so often that broad and suggestive generalizations are valid.”58 Brown (2001) adds that in their earliest, non-complex formats, the empirical theories of the 1950s and 1960s presuppose “that there is an identifiable order in the material world, that people are rational, utility-maximizing decision makers, and that economic activity takes place in freely competitive, equilibrium-seeking contexts or settings.”59

Retailing geography, along with other sub-disciplines in the social sciences,60 expanded to include more qualitative, human-focused research in the 1960s as researchers increasingly found people were perhaps less rational than expected and that intervening factors added unpredictability to the retail landscape. Dickinson and Clark (1972) suggest that the shifting away from positivism was precipitated by a need to integrate socially relevant issues into theory, to expand the scope of geographic investigation to international issues, and to find new ways to influence policy. For retailing geography, these approaches
opened the door for researchers to find new meaning in the patterns of human activities and the location of services on the retail landscape. At the same time, quantitative and systems-based approaches remain relevant in retailing geography and still inform research in this discipline.\footnote{61} Many later-twentieth century examples can be identified: Craig (1984) detailed a new approach on the application of central place theory; Jones and Simmons’ 1993 text discussed a wide variety of issues relating to store location and assessment within retail systems; Parr (1995)\footnote{62} modified the standard central place system structure with two additional frameworks (the economic law of market areas and the law of retail gravitation); Kondo and Kitamura (1987) added the dimension of multi purpose shopping trips to improving the understanding of the range of goods and services; and finally, Cromley and Hanick (2008) tested the structures of Loschian and Christallerian landscapes and found both held validity.\footnote{63}

Other research shifted in focus from mapping the static elements within retail hierarchies to understanding the dynamics of retail change within systems. Simmons (1964) was among the first to map this change, noting that bigger stores, new businesses, and changing formats (such as the new master-planned shopping centres) would alter the purchasing patterns of consumers. Current research continues from a “change within systems” perspective (see Graff, 1998; Jones and Doucet, 2001; Millward and Winsor, 1997). While the use of GIS and statistical analysis has added greater complexity to current research, the principles of systems, hierarchies, and retail locations remain a consistent focus of retailing geography. It is anticipated that a positivistic, model-seeking, systems-based approach will continue to hold a place in theoretical research on the retail landscape because it remains relevant to retailers interested in maximizing store placement, consumers
concerned with shopping patterns, and land use planners involved in shaping the retail landscape.

Several commonalities in the literature on retailing geography and land use planning can be identified in the 1950s and 1960s. Much of the planning literature in these two decades focused on rational-comprehensive theory, which referenced the orderly and scientific development of cities. The planner was seen as an analytical, authoritarian, and rational decision-maker, capable of determining a correct course of action through the application of standardized methods of investigation and review processes. Wolfe writes that in its original formation, the rational planning model is viewed as being value neutral, internally consistent, self-evident in the public good, and because of the supposedly dispassionate nature of the analysis and projections, providing the right answer to problems (1989, 71; see also Branch, 1983, Chadwick 1971, and Chapin 1965 for discussions on how rationality can be equated with the public good). Additionally, retailing geography and land use planning held in common the “unpeopling” of research during this time period, with minimal consideration given to the human actor within urban systems and retail landscapes. Little credence was given to public consultation or the significance of discourse in shaping policy. In planning, plans and policies focused on the practicalities of producing well-run cities, not on the competing interests of urban citizens. As to siting shops and services, rapid population growth after World War II meant that much of the focus in planning as a practice was on new development, with particular interest in new suburbs that were planned to include strip malls, shopping centres, and later enclosed shopping malls. Infrastructure development was also a key interest, focusing on investments in roadways to ensure ease of travel for automobile users. As with retailing geography, urban land use modeling retained
an important role in planning at mid-century: multiple nuclei theory, sector models, concentric zone theories, theories of urban hierarchies, laws of retail gravitation, distance decay models, and of course central place theory were used to site new retail locations, to understand hierarchies of urban centres, and to plan for new urban development.\textsuperscript{65}

Shifting into the 1970s, urban modeling fell out of favour as a theoretical focus for planning, largely attributable to the general disenchantment with decades of adherence to the rational comprehensive model (although it is recognized that new normative models have been developed that shape current theory and practice, best illustrated in the writings espousing the highly prescriptive neo-traditional land use movement).\textsuperscript{66} Both planning and retailing geography became increasingly influenced by a behaviouristic approach which sought to improve academic and practical understandings of the role of the individual actor within the urban landscape, that is, how the individual shaped or was shaped by the multi-dimensional spatial distributions and patterns in the landscape. While behaviourism could be viewed as a counter to the positivism of earlier research, behaviourists in the 1970s did not wholly abandon their roots.\textsuperscript{67} Human will was recognized, but it was also hypothesized that humans would be both rational and optimizing in their spatial behaviour. Theorists supposed that the human actor would attempt to find the lowest-cost, least-effort, maximum-reward option when moving about a spatial system or making social-economic choices.\textsuperscript{68} Goldman (1976), Dardin and Reynolds (1971), and Tauber (1972) all relied on the rationality of the actors in their studies on shopping motivations and destination choice. However, as the behavioural approach to the urban landscape evolved, researchers were increasingly open to the possibility that human actors would not always make logical choices, and human behaviour could not always be predicted with a theoretical model’s precision. A behavioural approach remains relevant in
current research on shopper behaviour assessments. Recent examples include Underhill's *Why We Buy: the Science of Shopping* (1999) and his subsequent text, *The Call of the Mall* (2004), both of which detail his long career in mapping the behaviour patterns of consumers in mall environments.

At the same time, in reaction to the growing capitalist influences on economic and political structures in society, a body of work embracing a more Marxist approach began to colour the literature on retailing geography. For example, Buroway (1979) considered the role of the shop floor worker, and spoke to the issue of class structures and the treatment of workers. Bland, Elliott, and Bechofer examined the autonomy of shopkeepers (the petite bourgeoisie) in creating new entrepreneurial opportunities for themselves within the structural confines of urban society.69 Also of note is David Harvey's 1975 essay on the “Geography of Capitalist Accumulation,” in which he cites geography's disregard for understanding the structural conditions that shape human existence. For Harvey, Marx supplies the “theoretical and material understanding which will allow us to understand the reciprocal relationships between geography and history.”70 While not dealing specifically with the retail landscape, Harvey nonetheless dramatically described how capitalism strives to tear down every spatial barrier to the exchange of commodities and to conquer the earth for its markets. He also ties the uneven expansion of capitalism to Marxist theories of imperialism. On a broader scale, later Marxist analyses related to retailing geography have included global perspectives on plant locations and the impact of transnational organizations on the world's citizens (Massey 1987). This approach is well represented in land use planning, with arguments that mirror those found in retailing geography. Marxist theorists were highly critical of traditional planning practices and theoretical approaches.71 In planning, the
structure of society was represented in the physical landscape. It was argued that those with power (the elites) systematically promoted their own interests over the good of the collective. The state also created and maintained the approval processes that were necessary and conducive to the accumulation of capital by the elite. The state was not viewed as neutral, and did not act in accordance with the public interest. Planners were seen as agents of the state, able only to advance sanctioned approvals. Examples of a Marxist approach in land use planning abound, including Manuel Castell’s *The Urban Question: a Marxist Approach* (1977), Norman Fainstein and Susan Fainstein’s article, “New Debates in Urban Planning: the impact of Marxist theory within the United States” (1979), as well as David Harvey’s chapter, “On Planning the Ideology of Planning” (1978). This approach or critique of land use planning has not been sustained, largely as it identifies no mechanism of reform other than the radical restructuring of capitalistic societies. However, as noted by Harvey, even those less attuned to Marxist analysis cannot dispute that the world is an unfair place for some people. In planning and in retailing geography, the roots of today’s theories on feminism, post-colonialism, and structuralism can be traced back to these Marxist ideals of justice.  

Although behaviourism and Marxism hold few philosophical commonalities, the methodologies employed by the researchers in both epistemologies consider the crucial role of structure in shaping retail systems. Researchers in both behaviourism and Marxism examine the placement of retail establishments and their hierarchical interactions. Behaviourists have considered the accessibility of shopping places for individuals and individual choice models (see Golledge, R. and H. Timmermans, 1990; Gregson and Crewe, 1997), while Marxists have considered the role of regulation in shaping this landscape (see
Roemer, 1981; Callinicos, 1990). As well, both approaches consider the role of the individual actor, with a greater emphasis by behaviourism on the individual *shaping* the landscape, offering faith in human choice; and in Marxism on the individual *being shaped by* the landscape, constrained by economic and social processes (see Baker, 2002). In both retailing geography and land use planning, the evolution of theory and the mixing of epistemologies has allowed for a deeper understanding of how and where we shop. This is most evident in today’s New Urbanist theories, which prescribe that one’s experience within an urban space can be improved by carefully planning the location and form of retailing, creating focal points and gathering spaces for community life. From the 1970s forward, both disciplines benefitted from a new layered approach to understanding the retail landscape.

The introduction of humanist theories in the later 1970s also contributed to new understandings in both retailing geography and land use planning. Humanistic research focused on human agency, that is, on the way that the complexities of responses along with the subjectivities of the individual actor are impacted by spatial distributions or structures. In their classic 1978 text, *Humanistic Geography*, David Ley and Marwyn Samuels defined the humanistic perspective as a way to “…make explicit the relations between knowledge and human interests. All social constructions, be they cities or geographic knowledge, reflect the values of a society and an epoch, so that humanistic philosophies reject out of hand any false claim to objectivity and pure theory in the study of man.” The humanistic label covers a broad scope of research positions, some of which are not so compatible. Generally, however, humanistic geographers reject the strictures of positivism and replace it with subjectivity: there cannot be general laws or models; instead the dispositions of the human
actor, their feelings, emotions, and sense of place are the geography. Individual choice is the primary variable, with a lessened emphasis on the behaviourist’s focus on rationality. A humanistic approach lends itself well as a research methodology in retailing geography, because one of the central themes of humanistic geography is the spatial experience of the human—in Tuan's words—“how the human person, who is animal, fantasist, and computer combined, experiences and understands the world.” The study of landscapes and the human’s experience within them is an obvious fit with this research area. As such, humanistic studies on retailing are many, and include a wide range of subject matters, from Hopkin’s examination of placelessness at West Edmonton Mall to Zepp’s view of the mall as the new cathedrals, containing our objects of worship. Humanists have also turned to phenomenology to understand the human’s place in the world, best illustrated in Tuan (1971) and Buttmer (1976).

The later 1970s also saw the influence of the new writings in feminist geography on retailing geography. Though there is a great deal of theoretical heterogeneity in feminist geography, three dominant themes emerge when linked to retailing geography: first, “the geography of women” examines the means by which gender inequality is created by spatial constraints (for example, the ability of women to travel to work or shopping); second, “social feminist geography” brings a more economic focus to discussions, focusing on gender relationships and capitalist inequalities; and third, “feminist geographies of difference” bring in a wider world-view, examining issues such as the status of women in developing nations, gender and nature, and masculinism. A wide range of studies in retailing geography incorporate a feminist perspective. These include Blomley's (1996) research on the relationship between masculinity, power and retail spaces; Gregson and Crew's (1997)
study on consumption differences at carboot sales; and Jones' (1984) observations on women at the mall, both in maintaining mall culture and in being manipulated by the built and socio-economic environments. Feminist theory has allowed researchers to consider a host of issues beyond the confines of the mall. Gender does not have to bifurcated between male/female. Multiple roles are possible depending on relationships; and spatial patterns can be rethought to create "beyond sexist" environments. The structures of societies have also undergone examination, with twin foci on understanding how gender relationships become entrenched as well as on the psychology of identity formation. In addition, as researched by Nelson and Seager, "contemporary globalization processes and neoliberal discourses, including but not limited to distinct political, economic, and cultural connections that are transnational and translocal" are at the forefront of feminist research in retailing geography. Given the ongoing decline of the traditional household structure, changing demographics, and the increased blurring of gender roles, the context of feminist geography remains important both as its own theory and methodology and as a foundational underpinning for retailing geography.

A feminist perspective also colours planning as a practice. Questions surrounding "...the economic status of women, the location and movement of women through the built environment, the connections between capitalist production and patriarchal relationships and between public and domestic life, how women know about the world and about what is good, and the forms of communication with which women are most comfortable or by which they are most threatened" began to appear in the literature in the late-1970s. Hayden (1980) addressed feminist planning practice in her article, "What would a nonexist city be like?" and discussed concerns such as the separation of home and work, market and
public institutions, and from a structuralist perspective, the opportunities and constraints created through public policy for women. Other works examine power structures, and contend that urban environments have been planned, implemented, and designed for those holding power. Sandercock (1992) added that there is no accepted feminist planning theory; instead, there are aspects of feminist theory that can inform planning theory, and a much more in-depth understanding of gender issues in theory and process remains an important research area. The lack of an established school of feminist planning theory and clear recognition in planning practice have been criticized: Christopherson (1989) notes that other recent work has appeared in fields as diverse as jurisprudence, history, philosophy and aesthetics, and much work can be done in urban geography to better understand the relationships among gender and place. This criticism is best understood in a wider context for land use planning. Since the 1970s, the profession has struggled with a rational-ideological schism, sometimes referred to as the efficiency vs. people debate, although this is a simplistic representation of a complex discussion. Both rationalists and ideologists attempt to plan communities through defined planning processes that borrow heavily from the sciences (that is, setting goals, choosing course of action, implementation of programs, and review of results) and codifying the results into regulations. Spragge (1975) contends that borrowing processes from the sciences adds legitimacy to the profession. Jill Grant (2008) agrees, but contends that planning is more than defining a rational process; it is also concerned with the achievement of an aesthetic ideal, as well as responding to issues of health, safety, and community. Through the 1970s, this debate continued and for the first time brought to the forefront the place of the public good in land use planning. Grant adds that the use of planning models is an attempt to employ a rationalist philosophy to prove
that planning is conducted for the public good (2008, 69). It is interesting to note that while the “what is planning?” debate has continued for almost forty years, questions around the public good and the planner’s role in achieving some defined good have not received the same level of attention.

The links between retailing geography and land use planning are clearly recognizable through the 1970s, when both areas of study shifted in focus from *systems to people*. For Lash (1976), “effective planning will come to depend more on human relations in the process of arriving at decisions than it will on the planner’s science and art of preparing plans.” The public’s demand to be involved in decisions on land use and development created a new sub-field of study—public consultation—with the role of the planner shifting from *telling* the public to *asking* the public. This led to the rapid expansion of methods of consultation, including but definitely not limited to: Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space Learning, Deliberative Democracy, Idea Catchers, and World Café (all trademarked consultation methods). From a theoretical perspective, the profession attempted to expand understanding of the planning process, turning to business and management sciences for complex models that incorporated citizen involvement within the planning equation. Equating planning processes with business processes added elements such as feedback loops and multiple points for input, encouraging public consultation at many steps in the planning process instead of the rationalist’s approach that might entail only one opportunity for public involvement (usually at the end of the planning process). This merging with a business perspective allowed multiple choices to be added to the planning equation, which now recognized that “... analysis typically must identify a series of alternatives, not a single option. And those alternatives must be evaluated before a choice is made.” Again, many
of the substantive theories developed in the 1970s were prescriptive in nature, specifying how planning should be done to achieve a desired outcome. However, Friedmann (1997) and Faludi (1973), among others, have written extensively on the process of planning and the critical importance of retaining humanistic approaches, balancing these against theoretical ideals of efficiency, redistribution, neutrality, and rationalism (see Spragge 1975).

Moving into the 1980s, retailing geography evolved again to incorporate a new (or perhaps returning, if one considers the foundational works cited at the beginning of this chapter) focus on the structures underlying the retail landscape – the regulations, institutions, and corporations – and how these structures impacted the shape and form of retailing. Most closely aligned to the framework of structuration theory, research in this area examined the link between individuals and the social and physical supports within which the individual functions. In brief, this research examined a wide range of elements, including: the structures which provide the 'rules' that both limit and enable human behaviour; the political and regulator structures that shape the outcomes of human actions; economic configurations that enable or impede the individual; and the social arrangements that create or limit opportunities. The focus on structure for retailing geography holds a certain logic. Retailing is obviously enacted within clearly identifiable frameworks and governed by external authorities. Regulatory structures allow for the entrenchment of capitalism and commodification, as well as practices such as property rights and price competition. State intervention through regulation is a means of protecting and encouraging the growth of elements within the retail landscape. A structural approach also allows for the analysis of the role of the individual actor (i.e., planners, developers, shopkeepers, shoppers, and elected officials) who shape and are shaped by entrenched frameworks. It could be said, in fact, that
the modern market system is an accomplishment of regulation. Given land use planning's interest in structures (buildings, blocks, neighbourhoods and districts) and frameworks (regulatory bylaws, legislated practices, local government policies) one would expect at this juncture to find a fully developed sub-body of literature on the link between retailing geography and land use planning. However, research papers in this overlap area are limited in number: three of note consider the role of planning legislation on the development of the retail landscape (Hallsworth, Allan, and Clarke, 1995); the role of the planner within planning structures (Guy 1996); and Friedmann's (1987) analysis of the planner within political structures. The lack of development of a significant body of work at the intersection of land use planning and retailing geography from a structural perspective may be due to the perceived complication of applying structuration theory to research areas or to the identification of the individual as a passive actor in a larger process. What is notable, however, is the identification of this significant gap in the literature as an impetus for the present study.

Moving forward through the 1980s, there was a new interest in critical realism in retailing geography, with researchers pointing out the failure of a positivist approach for determining the laws governing human behaviour. Critical realists noted that much of human interaction occurs in open systems. Chouinard et al. (1984) among others observed the futility of attempting to predict human behaviour within an open system. He predicted that laws could only be developed for systems where the conditions that produced the action could be maintained as constant, and this was certainly not the case for much of human life and interpersonal interactions. In addition, critical realists called for a new focus on the causal chains that allowed specific events to happen within mechanisms and structures,
rather than taking a positivistic approach that focused only on the event itself. Andrew Sayer, one of the primary contributors to this field of study, argued that "generative contingent relations" could be mobilized within a particular setting to cause subsequent actions. That is, there can be no laws that govern human behaviour that can guarantee a particular outcome; instead, patterns of behaviour occur because certain contingencies are in place that allows them to occur. They will not ensue all the time or in every instance, even when contingencies are in place that might lead to a particular behaviour. Sayer indicated that geography, in error, drew boundaries around discrete spatial units (i.e., global, national, regional, and neighbourhood level units) that are not relevant to the processes under investigation, and drew parallels to the error of a positivist's approach in focusing on the outcome rather than the process. He called for theorists to rethink the relevancy of boundaries and to focus on localities — those spaces where the relationships among actors have meaning, and where the presence of contingently-related conditions enables the desired effect. Much of the work in store location theory is the practical representation of Sayer's latter comment. Retailers attempt to understand shopping behaviours, shaped by contingencies and emotions, in maximizing the location of retail establishments. Land use planning has attempted, as well, to incorporate better understandings of the causal connections among the objects, structures, and mechanisms shaping the urban environment. As a theoretical approach, critical realism has not advanced substantially in either discipline since the late-1980s. The level of abstraction called for and the difficulty in determining the causal factors likely contributed to this lack of progress. It remains, however, a sub-theme as retailing geographers and urban planners attempt to understand the patterns of interactions that mark the urban landscape.
Research in retailing geography in the 1990s expanded into a wide variety of points of view. The individual and the individual’s relationships to the larger society became the focus; human experience was the causal factor shaping the retail landscape. Examples include Blomley’s 1996 study on gender and retail spaces; semiotic research that examined the images invoked by retail capital (Shields 1992); Lucas’ (2004) analysis of consumer experiences at the Southdale Mall in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Bloch’s (1989) study of the mall as a “consumer nesting place” that attracts individuals interested in “a setting offering a favourable climate, a high potential for social interaction, a perceived freedom from safety concerns, and a large selection of consumable goods and experiences.”

Placelessness was also been an important topic linking human experience and retailing geography, referencing the state of homogenous and standardized landscapes that diminish local character and variety. Referred to by George Ritzler as the “McDonaldization” of space, Longstreth (1999), Jacobs (1984), and Kuntzler (1993), among others, bemoaned the increasing “anywhereness” of retail structures in the literature of the 1990s. Building on Relph (who argued that the loss of place is symptomatic of a larger loss of meaning, and that the authentic attitude which characterized pre-industrial cultures has been lost and replaced with an “inauthentic attitude”), James Kuntzler in particular disparaged the increase in the number of chainstores and franchises on the retail landscape. Along with Jane Jacobs, he derided local governments that allowed these chainstores and franchises to construct the same building regardless of local conditions (from a semiotic perspective, the building then becomes a sign or signal to the consumer), furthering the trend toward the “blandscaping” of the landscape.
Analyses also integrated the individual equally along with social and political theory into the discipline’s assessments of the retail environment (Hopkins, 1991; Jackson, 1991; Wrigley and Lowe, 1996). Subjectivity was accepted and expected in the analyses and the bias of the researcher often became part of the study; qualitative methodologies intent on understanding the individual became the norm in much of the published research. Product acquisition was the ‘mission’ of the consumer, and the success of the shopping trip depended entirely on the completion of the assignment (Babin, Darden and Griffen, 1994). Other researchers suggested that the shopping experience might be about more than the attainment of a retail goal; entertainment and emotionalism might also figure into an evaluation of consumption behaviour (Langrehr 1991; Roy 1994). Sherry added that the “seeking of such experiences is often far more significant than the mere acquisition of products.”

The field of consumption research developed in part from efforts to understand why people buy the things they do, and the factors that motivate shopping behaviour. In sum (and as might be expected from a commonsense perspective), research in the 1990s concluded that there appear to be many individualistic reasons for shopping, and individuals match shopping choices to their own motivations (Bloch, 1989; Roy 1994).

The 1990s could also be characterized as the “decade of reworked theories” in retailing geography and in land use planning. The close of the century was characterized by writings that often revisited and amended earlier theories, creating a landscape of ‘post-isms’ and ‘neo-theories’ that included, but were not limited to, postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, postindustrialism, post-materialism, neo-Marxism, and, from an urban planning perspective, New Urbanism (a not so subtle reworking of Garden City principles) and neo-traditionalism. Among the most frustrating of the reworked theories was
postmodernism. While there are few points of agreement among those calling themselves postmodernists, generally researchers would concur that the term is tantalizingly difficult to define, and the "celebration of difference and disavowal of grand or totalizing theory makes it a particularly diffuse conceptual notion with many varied meanings and emphases." Postmodernism encourages researchers to employ deconstructionist measures to demonstrate how their own positions and biases (by academic background, class, and ethnicity) influence their outlook, approach to research, and findings. It forces researchers to consider alternative views of reality, to reject the nomothetic, and to focus on the contested, hidden meanings behind constituted findings. Subjectivity is accepted and expected in an analysis and the bias of the researcher is part of the study: the role of the individual decision-maker is paramount. Qualitative methodologies intent on understanding the individual (including the researcher, not just the research subjects) are the norm. The individual and the individual's relationships to the larger society are the focus of research. Several contemporary analyses in retailing geography and land use planning have attempted a postmodern approach, integrating the individual equally along with social and political theory into the discipline's assessment of complexities of the urban environment (Hannigan, 1998; Ratneshwar, Mick, and Huffman, 2000). This field of study, however, is not without detractors. Critics have characterized postmodernism as 'anti-theoretical' and without the ability to contribute to a greater understanding of social phenomena or spatiality. Guelke wrote that researchers "need to retain a commitment to the foundational value of science, recognize human agency in the form of the conscious, thinking individual, and continue to affirm the empirical nature of human geographical research." Mitchell (2004) finds postmodernism lacking in areas of justice, rights, and truth (in a study that interestingly
crosses into the overlap between retailing geography and the problems of the public good). Callinicos (1990) critiqued postmodernism from a Marxist perspective and charged it with abandoning past theoretical innovation. Symanski was harsher in his criticism, characterizing postmodernism as "a raging fad" and "unenlightened when it characterizes or subsumes what has always been the case." In summary, it would appear that a postmodernist approach has little to add to retailing geography or land use planning beyond generating some interesting discussion on the researcher’s role in influencing academic analyses.

Land use planning in the twenty-first century is in a state of reconstruction. Planning has traveled the path of neo-isms and post-isms, with neo-traditionalism and post-industrialism having the greatest influence on the urban landscape. The former attempts to reshape cities into grid patterned neighbourhoods with common areas and localized shopping districts. The latter recognizes that "big industry" as employer, land shaper, and tax provider is having a diminished impact on the shape and function of cities. Questions on growth are part of new discussions (as in whether growth remains an imperative for urban locales), as are changes in the substance of plans and the process of planning. Environmental protection, sustainability, climate change, retrofiting the suburbs to allow for increased density, and new social issues (increasing dichotomies between "haves and have-nots", densification, redevelopment, and changing demographics) are also redirecting planning thought. As a profession, there are renewed questions about the role of the planner. Hodge writes that we have yet to live up to "the promises of planning's early advocates, as long as a century ago, to deal with such basic problems as providing affordable housing, dealing with traffic congestion, and disposing of human and industrial wastes," although it is recognized that the nature of these basic problems is different from a century
ago. Land use planning is moving into a future with increased complexity and less certainty. It is anticipated that planning will remain fragmented by various approaches to process and practice for the foreseeable future.

Retailing geography has also evolved in the early years of the twenty-first century, with new approaches for cross-disciplinary studies and merging methodologies. Current research calls for a wider theoretical lens that considers environmental, economic, political, and social issues as equally important and relevant; broadening in scope to consider spaces, places and practices. The new geographies of retailing (as discussed by Wrigley and Lowe, 2002) bring a host of different issues into the discussion, including retail restructuring, the examination of reconfigured corporate retail structures and retailer-supplier chain interfaces, technological transformations in retail distribution, new labour practices, world flows in retail capital, and regulation on the retail landscape. Crewe, in a recent review of trends in retailing geography, agrees that the field of research has been reconstructed, transforming from the old “boring” geography which misrepresented both the wider structure of the commodity channel and the status of consumption in shaping retail change, to a new multidimensional approach. Crewe (2000, 2001, and 2003) also notes with trepidation that retail activity is redefining the economic and cultural horizons of Britain, replacing industry as the former defining sector.

Among the newer areas receiving academic attention in both retailing geography and land use planning are theories of globalization, with specific interest in international flows of people, goods, and labour (Shakleton, 1996). These go beyond the usual focus of elements within a retail system, taking a larger world view of hierarchies in trade and the global distribution of goods and services. Soja describes globalization as “a major force
contributing to the development of postmodern urbanism” with significant impact on the shape and form of urban environments. Massey expands with a call to researchers to not only consider supply and demand flows, but also to delve into the social and political impacts created by transnational corporations. Wilbert and Hoskyns (2004) add that researchers must give greater attention to transnational, national and local policy initiated by governments and institutions, stepping back to a structuralist’s approach to understanding the relationships among diverse factors. Pacione (1999), chides geographers for not using their influence in international policy formation. With particular attention to trade patterns and transnational organizations producing consumer goods for European markets, Dorling and Shaw suggest that academic research should expand in focus to “...make its deliberations more consequential for the poorer eighty per cent of the population of the world.” For retailing geography and land use planning, this opens new questions about the ethics of shopping, the distribution of retail establishments, and the impact of retailing on individuals far beyond the retailer and consumer. A world view on retailing requires a substantial rethinking by researchers on the impact of the North American landscape on the world. From the reorienting of consumer production to developing countries to ever-increasing levels of consumption in the world’s richest nations, researchers are in a position to take a unique view on retailing’s impact on the planet, and academic research on the globalization of retailing crosses many research disciplines.
Conclusion

Today, no dominant paradigm defines either retailing geography or land use planning. The complexity of the urban landscape and the role of the individual are recognized, but empiricist roots in both disciplines remain important. The onset of the twenty-first century has brought about a newly reconstructed retailing geography, one that is a more “theoretically informed interrogation” instead of a method for simply describing and mapping retail locations.\textsuperscript{121} For land use planning, the new century has been characterized by perspectives constructed from combinations of existing theories and methodologies. While some researchers have suggested that there is a need for an overall theory within a discipline (see Bartels, 1981; Etgar, 1984 for discussions specific to retailing geography), the persistence of a widespread, multi-faceted dialogue suggests that there is no agreement about a particular dominant theory for either retailing geography or land use planning, and a diversity of concepts will persist into the future.\textsuperscript{122}

Endnotes

\textsuperscript{52} Blomley (1996) characterizes the study of Retailing Geography in the 1980s as “boring” in that he feels it had not appreciably progressed from the 1950s musings on store location theories. Later in the same article, Blomley suggests that the 1990s had brought about a reconstructed geography of retailing and a newly “vital and relevant” area of study.

\textsuperscript{53} Dictionary of Human Geography (2000, 713).

\textsuperscript{54} While not specific to retailing geography, it is noted that the rise of the quantitative revolution had in part been a response to all sub-discipline’s in human geography as researchers struggled to be defined as “science” along with the more traditional areas of study. The quantitative revolution is the fourth of as many historic turning points in Geography (the other three being environmental determinism, regional geography, and critical geography). The quantitative revolution is best known as the point in time when Geography shifted from being an ideographic to a nomothetic science.

\textsuperscript{55} It is noted that while this study considers 1950 forward, retailing geography has been an area of interest to researchers earlier in the 20th century. From Proudfoot’s 1937 seminal examination of urban retail systems, and the work of Christaller and Losch through the 1930s and 1940s, human geography has had a
long tradition of exploring change in the retail landscape. Early work in the field proceeded in a manner similar to other sub-disciplines in the social sciences: the focus on a regional approach to understanding the morphology of the retail landscape retained prominence for the first half of the century, to be replaced by a new focus on the quantification of studies and results. It is from this point, roughly coinciding with 1950 forward that this study considers.

The categories considered by Jones and Doucet (2001) are as follows (roughly corresponding to each decade from 1950 to 2000):

1. Identification and classification of elements within the retail landscape
2. Dynamics of spatial change
3. Development and operation of retail structures and the consumer
4. Institutional and corporate impacts
5. Examination of the human and societal impacts on retailing.

Holt-Jensen (1988) writes that the importance of Christaller’s work in 1933 was not of immediate impact on theoretical understandings of the retail landscape: the theory was not fully appreciated until more than 30 years after its publication.

Harris and Ullman (1945, 315). Their theory assumes that a city will have one main central business district along with several retail nodes scattered throughout the city (although the CBD will retain primacy).


It is noted that the term “Retailing Geography” which is sometimes referred to as “the geography of retailing” is used intentionally instead of “Retail Geography.” Retailing Geography is more commonly used in social theoretical discussions on the nature of this sub-set of Human Geography, while Retail Geography refers to the more conventional and orthodox practical examination of the retail structures and retail consumer behaviour. Topics in the latter would include such issues as spatial variations in the supply and demand of retail activity, or patterns of shopping within an identified study area.

Further, the focus of this dissertation is not purely on retail location theory, which is more closely aligned to retail geography than retailing geography: Stephen Brown (2001) notes that the four cornerstones of retail location theory are central place theory, spatial interaction theory, bid rent theory, and the principle of minimum differentiation. He adds “Although normative in ethos and unrealistic in assumptions...” retail location theory remains relevant as it attempts to portray what ought to occur, irrespective of the actual format of retail establishments or places on the landscape. While attempting to highlight the differences among retailing geography, retail geography, and retail location theory may at first appear to be painstakingly minuscule and unnecessarily fussy, the point is that retailing geography steps back to theoretical discussions while retail geography and retail location theory focus more on the elements within the landscape. The attempt is made in this dissertation to pull the discussion to a more theoretical discussion.

See Davies and Rogers, 1984 for an approach that seeks to meld academic theory with practical business perspectives on the siting of retail establishments.

Parr (1995, 1326) concludes that the refinement of the central place system structure with these two frameworks results in a more realistic pattern of market areas that still retains the hierarchical structure predicted by central place theory.

Their paper focuses on the change within a system as market conditions are altered due to population growth. They expand on central place theory with the use of a partial equilibrium optimization model.
They determine that the market changes with threshold demand (and that price remains an important variable).

64 The evolving role of local government is noted here: in the 1950s and 1960s, local governments were largely responsible for core services, such as the provision of water and sewer services. Economic development was also of interest to municipalities seeking to attract new employment for urban residents, but “soft” services like social planning were not a defined responsibility for local governments. By choice and by downloading, municipalities have become much more involved in addressing issues that were formerly the responsibility of federal and provincial governments, such as social housing, homelessness, and mental health, as was evident in the recent 2008 City of Vancouver local government elections (where the platform of both mayoral candidates was on solving homelessness).

65 While the focus of this dissertation is not on a review of these models and their founders, credit is given of course to Burgess, Hoyt, Harris, Ullman, Christaller, Von Thunen, Weber, and Berry, key theorists in urban land use modeling.

66 Hall (1997, 311). In his article, Hall calls for new models in Retailing Geography, no longer based on the traditional activities of retail service provision or manufacturing, but on position in the globalized informational economy.

67 Although not expressly relevant to this paper, a unique subfield in geography resulted from the attempts to understand an individual’s relationship to space: mental mapping resulted from the investigations in a behaviourist tradition and continues to generate interest today among geographers (see Gould and White, 1974).

68 Rational Choice Theory is a prescriptive theory that asserts that humans will use all information available to make least effort/maximum profit choices, with rationality assumed when the actor obtains the best result given limited means or constraints on goal achievement.

69 Bland, Elliott and Bechofer, 1978

70 Harvey, D. (1975, 601)


72 In more recent years, Marxist analyses applicable to Retailing Geography have broadened to global perspectives on plant locations and the impact of trans national organizations on the world’s citizens (see Massey, 1987). See also Walker (1985), Allen (1988) and Tickell (2000).

73 While not directly relating to retailing geography, unexpectedly, these two streams have combined into the sub discipline of Analytical Marxism. Roemer (1986) explains this theory as follows: a social system that contains rational members and divides wealth unequally will, as a logical consequence, create class systems and exploitation. Collective actions are then taken to maintain the class systems, and individuals make their best maximization choice possible given their class constraints.

74 See Buttmer (1974) for a discussion on bringing (western) values back into spatial analyses.

75 Ley, D. and M. Samuels (1978, 21).


77 Humanistic geography employs techniques more commonly used by other areas in the humanities (such as text analysis) to better understand the human’s role in shaping the environment. Much of the writing in humanistic geography attempts to understand the place of the human experience and how place, landscape, and space define and provide the context for this experience. In short, Humanistic Geography brings the human back to “centre stage” - to a place where values and subjectivity take precedence over models.

78 See Hopkin’s (1990) article on “Landscapes of myth and elsewhere ness” at Canada’s largest mall.

80 See Tuan, Y.F (1971) and Buttmer, A. (1976).

81 Early researchers in Feminist Geography include S. Mackenzie and D. Rose (1983) who wrote on economic change and home life; D. Massey (1984), who wrote from an economic geography/comparative perspective and brought a world view to understanding flows of capital; and J. Monk and S. Hanson (1982) who published a scathing article on the exclusion of women researchers from Human Geography. Researchers from other fields, such as economist Esther Boserup’s Women’s Role in Economic Development (1970) and Barbara Rogers’ The Domestication of Women (1979) also contributed to early scholarship in this field. Contributions from an urban geographical perspective were also made by Jane Jacobs in her now classic (1961) Death and Life of Great American Cities and Dolores Hayden’s (1984) Redesigning the American Dream.


84 See Eichler (1995) for an urban planning perspective on creating a non-sexist sustainable city.

85 Nelson and Seager (2004, 6). The authors contend that global issues are profoundly gendered, and reference other articles in this text on labor, markets, global health policy and risk, transnational politics and social movements, the globalization of low-wage service work, local/global performances of identity, regional and transnational migration flows, anti-terrorism discourses and uneven manifestations of state violence, and global sex trafficking.


87 Friedmann (1987, 413-415).


90 Lash (1976, 77). Noted here is the later backlash against the abandonment of the “art and science” of planning. Michael Seelig and Julie Seelig (1997) submitted a scathing review of Vancouver’s City Plan process, stating “When citizen participation becomes and end rather than a means, cities run the risk of losing all sense of purposefulness in their urban planning endeavors.” They called for “... some sense of proportion” in balancing the constructive work of planners against the public’s role in planning.

91 Grant (2008, 110).

92 For many practicing land use planners, Demings ‘Plan, Do, Check, Act’ cycle, developed in his writings on Japanese Management Theory, forms the foundation of practical planning processes.


94 The theoretical field of Structuralism is most closely identified with Anthony Giddens, whose Structuration Theory recognizes that structures within a society (for example, political systems, government funding, road patterns, retail hierarchies) both constrict human agency and at the same time enable human actions. His research examined the organizations that provide the rules that both limit and enable human behaviour; the political and societal structures shape the outcomes of human actions. Giddens introduced the concepts of reflexivity (the human’s ability create a social life), recursiveness (that social life occurs within structures that are neither “fully comprehended nor intended” by the actor), and regionalization (the ability of the actor and structures to maintain continuity across space and time). Gidden’s Structuration Theory has not maintained much interest in the discipline into the 21st century.

95 It is noted that Winkelman and Bieri (1984) predicted that highly regulated land use planning would constrain suburban retail development and force the redevelopment of city centres- a process which appears not to have occurred on the North American landscape.
Friedmann (1987, 29). Friedmann notes that when the planner opposes capital expansion, the planner can act with no more resolution than political support allows—that is, the actions of the planner are shaped by the political structure within which the planner must operate.

It may also be that investigators considered then rejected the pursuit of this research angle. Through the 1980s and 1990s, structuration theory was criticized on a number of fronts. Detractors noted that the theory differs little from classical Marxism (Wright 1989); that agency is little more than “doing” (Dallmayr 1982); and that its theoretical constructs are weak from a cultural geography viewpoint (Gregory 1994). A structuralist approach has received little academic attention from the mid-1990s forward.


As noted by Yeung (1997), positivistic methods record ‘events’ only—no consideration is given to the context of these events through an examination of social systems or the structure of relationships within the society.

Sayer (2000) has noted that he looked to the rapidly evolving literature on Critical Realism (for example, Bhaskar, 1975; Keat and Urry, 1975; and Harré, 1972) for insight into applying this theory to Human Geography. Sayer indicated that this philosophical framework provided him with a means of distancing himself from the apparent limitations of the grand theories that characterized discussions in Marxism in the early 1980s.

Other prominent researchers in Critical Realism include K. Archer, S. Duncan and E. Soja. Prominent critics include A. Pratt and D. Harvey.

See Friedmann (1996, 85-89) for a discussion on the shortcomings of critical realism from a planning perspective.

Established in 1956, this structure is generally recognized as the first shopping complex to take the shape of a modern mall


See Relph (1976).

Sherry (1990, 27).

Cloke, P., P. Crang and M. Goodwin (2000, 19). The term Postmodernism was first applied to a form or style (although some would say anti-style) in art and architecture. Examples would include Moshe Safdie’s Habitat, a prototype for the construction industry, suggesting that prefabrication would solve the crisis of the modern city. Other more recent examples are Frank Gehry’s Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Michael Graves’ Public Service Building in Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver’s Downtown Public Library (also by Safdie). In general terms, Postmodern architecture as a critique of Modernism in its revival of historicist detail, a style that breaks with convention and tradition, creating new, unique, site-specific forms that celebrate the unusual use of materials.

Postmodernism is also an attitude toward knowledge: At its core, Postmodernism challenges the assumption that there is order in the world, that humans are rational actors, and that laws can be determined to predict human behaviour. Grand theories are viewed with suspicion, and the interpretations of the observer are seen as socially constituted, contingent and partial (Lytard, 1984). Dear (1989) classifies Postmodernism as a cultural style, a method of analysis, and an epoch in history. Using Postmodernism as a method of analysis (the definition relevant to Human Geography), Dear views it as a theory that encompasses pluralism and a mixing of viewpoints, a realization that human experience is simulated (that nothing is real), and an intense self-conscious reflection on the researcher as situated within the research.

See Know, P and S. Pinch 2000 for discussions on the social-spatial dialectic, patterns of social-spatial differentiation, and modern urbanism with references to postmodernist perspectives.
Geulke (2003, 97).

Symanski, (1994, 1 and 2, respectively).

The 1990s were also characterized by discussions in geography that adopted an activist’s perspective. Mitchell (2004) considers a number of case studies relevant to retailing geography, including the public’s right to protest in private space (with a focus on the shopping mall and the public’s misunderstanding of the mall as public space) and the emergence of public space zoning, used to control the location/actions of protesters in spaces such as roadways and parks (for example, the exclusionary practices employed by civic officials in Seattle in 1999 to separate World Trade Organization participants from the protestors). Chouinard (1994) made a call to geographers to combine empirical research with activism, a message echoed by Maxey (1998) and Kitchin and Hubbard (1999), with the latter also urging geographers to develop an interest in participatory research (Fuller 1999, Kitchin 1999). As noted by Kitchin and Hubbard (1999), the call is not intended to elevate activist geography to a morally superior level, but to ensure that it is considered a useful research method and viewpoint by Human Geographers. Chouinard’s comments are similar, arguing “This is not taking the ‘moral high ground’ but simply saying that if you want to help in struggles with the opposition you have to connect with the trenches.” (1994, 5). While studies are too few in number to have made a significant impact on retailing geography, the question of private/public space and the form of retailing establishments is an area worthy of further study, particularly with the growth of the newest form of retailing, the lifestyle commercial centres, that give the appearance of public space in a highly controlled, privatized environment.

Hodge (2008, 383). The nature of these problems are different in that cities are now dealing with homelessness as well as affordable (and safe housing), gridlock, the failure of infrastructure, and a Canada that is home to a wide variety of immigrants from all around the world.

The ‘cultural turn’ is a shift in contemporary debates from previous intellectual foci to the concept of culture and cultural studies. It is a shorthand description for what appears to be a ‘geography wide’ interest in returning to the study of cultural processes across a variety of geography’s sub disciplines.


Globalization as a concept emerged in 1960 when the Canadian media scholar Marshall McLuhan coined the term “global village” to capture the impact of new communications technologies on social and cultural life. Time space compression has so transformed the structure and scale of human relationships that social, cultural, political and economic processes now operate at a global scale with a consequent reduction in the significance of other geographical scales (national, local). We live in a world in which nation states no longer are significant actors or meaningful economic units; in which consumer tastes and cultures are homogenized and satisfied through the provision of standardized global products created by global corporations with no allegiance to place or community.

Soja (2000, 293).


Doring and Shaw (2000 3).

Crewe, L. (2000, 276). In this important paper, Crewe also discusses the concentration process of the 1980s that impacted food and clothing retailing businesses in the UK. Crewe notes that in the case of food, six retailers controlled 60% of the total market in the 1990s. The evolution of retail geography (the concentration of retailing to the hands of a few from a Canadian retailing perspective) will be fully explored in this dissertation.

An excellent source for data and research on retailing is the Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity (CSCA) at Ryerson University in Toronto. While it is noted that much of the work completed at the Centre
is practical in nature, focusing on improvement strategies for retail businesses, the Centre also includes a research component and publishes a series of reports annually that address a wide range of issues including trend analyses and detailed economic profiling. Data bases available at the CSCA include: Canada wide retail store indexes; power centres across Canada (with more than 6000 listings); and highly detailed information on retailing in the Greater Toronto area (including information broken out by retail formats and tenant mixes).
Chapter 3 The Public Good and Land Use Planning

Consideration of the public good through plans, policies, and bylaws is one of two key roles practiced by land use planners. In fact, the literature on planning theory clearly emphasizes the relationship between the public good and land use planning, with processes designed to work toward a preferred future. Less clear is the link between planning as a practice and the attainment of the public good. Thus, this chapter will first address the definition of the public good, tracing lines of thought across disciplines. The "problem" of the public good is next considered. This leads to a discussion of the role of land use planning as a profession and practice, with focus on the implementation of the public good.

A Definition of the Public Good

"The public interest is essentially the common good, or the common weal, or the community’s stake in a well-ordered society." So states Greg Lloyd in a recent address to his peers as part of the Sir Patrick Geddes Commemorative Lecture Series. His definition speaks to the two inseparable components of the public good: that it is "common" and therefore shared among all, and that the public good is achieved through agreed-upon moral codes, bylaws, and legislation in a "well ordered society." To the first component, the public good must be something that is available to all members within a society or social group: the term "the public" by definition means that it pertains to or affects a population or community as a whole. To the second component, Lloyd identifies a link between order and the public good. This link is critical to this dissertation. From a land use planning
Definitions of the public good have long been a point of theoretical inquiry, from Aristotle’s discussions of “the good life” for citizens, through Rousseau’s commentary on the “general will” of the populace, to Durkheim’s society of saints and sinners.\textsuperscript{127} Friedmann argues that the possibility of a definition of the public good requires “…first that we believe in the reality of common interests and thus, in the possibility of the common good.”\textsuperscript{128} Lynch concurs that for there to be a definition of the public good, there must be an element of common interest as well as acceptance that citizens within a society have a duty toward one another. “There are,” he argues, “a plurality of interests, all in conflict. While the clash of interest is only too apparent, I must confess to believing in that outworn heresy, the public interest. The ground for this outmoded belief is the thought that the human species has certain basic requirements for survival and well being, and that in any given culture there are important common values. This peculiar view can be supplemented by certain abstract notions about justice, the care for future generations, and an interest in the development of human potential.”\textsuperscript{129}

Other definitions are found across the social sciences. To Ver Eecke, the public good is “… an opportunity for gain if collective action is taken.”\textsuperscript{130} John Ralston Saul provides a succinct (if somewhat circular) definition of the public good, characterizing it as “the good of the whole.”\textsuperscript{131} From a Marxist perspective, Kent views the public good as “… the degree of equity in a society as well as its total wealth.”\textsuperscript{132} Meyer states that “the public good consists of those authoritative values that satisfactorily direct a society in its response to the problems of the public in such a way as to relieve the largest amount of doubts about the rightness of the public’s purposes. The public good is thus a fluid and dynamic historical phenomenon, perhaps the most fundamental phenomenon of man’s political history.”\textsuperscript{133}
Definitions also focus on the second component, the link between a well-ordered society and the public good. Jill Grant, with specific reference to the process of land use planning, writes that “the public interest means more than the sum of competing interests, or even some way of “balancing” competing interests. It provides the ultimate ethical justification for the demands of the state on the individual.” O’Neill notes, “the state (regulations) is not an alien force in our lives. Rather, the state is merely our own will to achieve together what we have no chance of accomplishing on our own.” He continues by arguing that “it is the exercise of wild market freedoms that destroys that reasonable realm of civility where we affirm ourselves without necessary loss and injury to one another.”

Gwyn concurs that any definition of the public good requires the implementation and acceptance of regulation, for it is the political and societal structures that legally determine those things that are within the public good. He adds that the need for and rise of regulation is prompted due to a loss of civitas, that is, the sense of responsibility to a larger society beyond the individual. Olds contributes that “law and the state demand what neither can supply – a proper motive and a sense of personal responsibility” and “…man’s hunger for freedom and justice make government possible; but man’s appetite for power and perversion make it necessary.”

John Ralston Saul voiced concern with the seeming decline in government’s sense of responsibility to implement regulations that could be justified by some understanding of the public good. He maintains that “when the public interest is reduced to self-interest, everyone’s attention span is gradually shrunk until it is narrowly focused on gaining powers. We live in a world of constitutions and laws. What was once the privilege of the king to bestow is now a matter of legal and back-room jockeying. Suddenly, powers are spoken of
as if they were sacred objects. The real question should be not who has what power, but in what administrative configuration is the citizen’s idea of her society best served. This can only be established through a debate. Not a debate about configurations, but about the public interest. Yet we act as if that sort of discussion were virtually impossible.\textsuperscript{140} Saul, somewhat sorrowfully, concludes “the whole idea of the public good recedes, as if it were an old-fashioned ideal rendered obsolete by the horizonless complexity of the new ways.”\textsuperscript{141}

While seemingly diverse, all these definitions either directly reference or allude to one or both of the two inseparable components of the public good identified by Lloyd: first, the definition of a “public,” and second, the requirement that decisions once made contribute to a well-ordered society, enforced through moral codes or by agreed-on regulations. Aspects of land use planning are highly regulatory. Regulations that control the form, character, location, and density of land uses (including retailing) are virtually ubiquitous across municipalities in North America and are intended to perform two functions: protect the public good (through measures that promote health, safety, and social welfare); and protect individual, corporate, and local government’s economic interests (through measures that promote property rights, encourage increasing land values, and offer assurances over the long term for investments). Given that land use regulations in Canada have been seen as essential by municipalities for more than eighty years (with the adoption of the first zoning bylaw in 1924 credited to Kitchener, Ontario), it is apparent that citizens accept that some limits on the individual use and enjoyment of property are necessary and reasonable.\textsuperscript{142} The ideal is the achievement of an acceptable balance between private interests and the public good.\textsuperscript{143} These regulations sort land uses into zoning categories with the intent of minimizing conflicts between incompatible uses as well as minimizing the unintended
externalities of existing and proposed uses. While land use regulations complicate the developer’s ability to site new land uses, ideally these regulations are adopted as representing the public good and the collective values of the society. Massam concludes that the protection of the public good through regulation is a worthy exercise that should proceed hand in hand with the defense of market economies to ensure stability in economic, social and environmental matters. “If citizens participate willingly, knowledgeably, and energetically in its promotion, and governments work closely with citizens through regulatory processes and community practices... the public good will be enhanced to the benefit of all citizens.” The definition of the public good in this study, then, most closely aligns with Lloyd’s two-part characterization which recognizes the public good must be equally available to all members within a community, and must contribute to a well-ordered and better society.

Not everyone agrees, however, that a definition of the public good is possible, or even necessary. Joseph Schumpeter argues unequivocally that “there is no such thing as a uniquely determined common good that all people could agree on or be made to agree on by the force of rational argument.” Arnolds and Reynolds allude to this inability to determine a common good in their analysis of hedonic shopping behaviours. They contend that individuals might share some commonalities within subgroups, connected in an infinitely complex Venn diagram of social, political, and commercial interactions, but it is more likely people will act solely for individual interests, according to personal needs and wants at a particular time. That is, individual interests will always trump any illusion of common interest. Geuss elaborates on this by arguing that “the real world... is criss-crossed with divisions and swarming with tribes, corporations, states, social movements, alliances, nations, oppressing and oppressed populations who have radically different
resources, power, institutional structures and conceptions of the public good. He believes that a definition of the public good would require society as a whole to think of itself as a single "self-conscious subject." He speculates that this is not possible in a society split into antagonistic classes with radically incompatible interests. Acerbically, Geuss concludes that the concept of the public good "...is a bit like saying of the three people clinging to the plank that the public good would require that they be in a lifeboat or that each of them have a flotation vest; true enough, and if each was a fish, they could all swim happily away."

For others, the lack of a clear, agreed-upon definition of the public good is problematic, but not critical. As Meyer remarks, the critical question is not a definition of the public good, but "what will happen if we are indifferent to it?" He writes, "the question 'who is to say what the public interest is?' is frequently answered by the claim that no one can or should say. The phrasing of the question presumes 'some one' should say or be able to say what the public interest is: but this is the key problem with the question. In a pluralistic society where people are encouraged and able to have differing opinions, to say 'no one' has the right is not the same as concluding 'then there is nothing to be said.'" He concludes that no one can be indifferent to the public good, for "...there are inevitable occasions in life when inaction is a kind of action, and when not to be for is to be practically against; and in all such cases strict and consistent neutrality is an unattainable thing."

The problem is in choosing which action is in, or at minimum not against, the public good. That is, although the direction the public should take might not be clear, it is imperative that decision-makers not be unconcerned with the question of public good. Massam agrees, adding that the lack of a clear, operational definition of the public good lies
not with each individual understanding the concept, but with the creation of a definition that fits our collective understanding of the concept. By virtue of being tentative and not *a priori*, the public good is “held only as a working hypothesis until results confirm its rightness.” The way to find the public good “is to see what works, to conjointly experiment with our values the same way we can conjointly experiment about the truth.” The endpoint of this iterative testing of the public good is finding those actions which best reflect the common purposes and shared goals among a society. Massam charges geographers “not to be intimidated and pass over in silence matters concerning the public good” simply on the basis of a lack of an agreed-upon definition. While he does not attempt said definition, he cautions that the dramatic progress of humans is often measured solely by economic growth. Other factors, such as environmental protection or social costs, should also be considered in evaluating societal success. Jill Grant adds, “the public interest is an essentially contested concept. People agree on its significance, but dispute its meaning and content.” She continues that the lack of an agreed-upon definition is less of an issue than agreeing on the importance of the ongoing discussion. Massam, Grant, and others contend that historical progress and human experience will contribute to knowledge of the public good. The definition of the public good will change over time, in the same way that legal systems evolve or cultural mores develops. What remains important is that the ideal of the public good remains an integral part of discussions on community, growth, and change in urban environments. As concluded by Hodge, “it is coming to be seen more and more that the public interest is not monolithic and neutral. Our cities and towns are made up of multiple publics, each with a potentially different view of the public good. The one-time scenario of a solid cornerstone of the public interest, with the planner tending and interpreting it in the
realm of physical development (as in the retail landscape), is shifting in the face of the increasing diversity of interests… The public interest is coming to be seen as something that becomes known through collaborative planning processes of consensus building.\textsuperscript{158}

The Problems of the Public Good

The search for a definition highlights the problems of the public good, twofold and intertwined: first, there exists no single defined public; and second, clear agreement on "good" is often not possible.

In an idealized, fictitious settlement, one could imagine a place where all members of a group were homogenized in their values, desires, and opinions, where reaching agreement on the public good was simple and straight-forward. This is far from the truth in today’s multi-faceted, hyphenated societies, populated by Geuss’ tribes, corporations, states, social movements, alliances, nations, oppressing and oppressed populations, all with different conceptions of what constitutes the public good.\textsuperscript{159} Individual and sub-group interests are so complex and entangled that the public good becomes much more difficult to understand or agree-to. Geuss adds that “it would be a mistake to think that the public literally acts as a unanimous and collective agent with the articulateness and singleness of a person. But if this is not the case, are we not confronted with the dangerous situation of different factions in society, each trying to present itself as the only authentic spokesman of the public?\textsuperscript{160} A new understanding of the public good is required for a world that is so multifarious and inter-connected.

The first problem of the public good is that it demands agreement on a public, a single and seamless collective that shares beliefs and acts according to what constitutes
acceptable behaviour. The root of this question is exposed by Meyer, who writes that "the problem of the public good is a result of the peculiar condition of the public – its formation."¹⁶¹ That is, one does not choose to be a member of the public (as one might self-select to join an interest group or affiliate with a sub-culture); instead we are automatically and irrevocably members of the public.¹⁶² The term "the public" implies unanimity, and actions by governments and the findings of survey firms are often justified because "the public" has spoken. In land use planning, planners often equate "the public" with the individuals who self-select to attend a meeting or otherwise offer input to elected officials by letter or by delegation. The planner is fully aware that citizens tend not to participate in consultation opportunities unless they deem themselves to be specifically and negatively affected by the proposal. That is, citizens generally only participate in land use planning discussions when they fear their private interests and individual rights may somehow be harmed by the decision at hand. Planners and politicians also use recommendations of citizens groups (such as advisory planning commissions) as representative of the public good. The recommendations of these unelected bodies often carry substantial weight with elected officials. However, the reality is that the entire public seldom acts as a single unified body. To assume unanimity among all members of the public based on the comments of a few is by definition an ecological fallacy, yet this approach is used to justify actions taken in the public good.

This leads to the second problem of the public good: the concept requires agreement on an ideology of "good" that is a shared definition of what is seen as right, fair, and just. This requires that all people within the group (or at least the majority, if one accepts majority rule as a basis for choice models and decision-making) share common values, beliefs, and
mores. These shared expressions are then developed into laws and regulations to codify the culture, and the population complies with this code from both moral and legal perspectives (the former because of a belief in the rightness of the rules or laws, and the latter due to a fear of prosecution should their deviance from the norm be discovered). The public good, then, becomes equated with the implementation of rules of law, a process of verifying entrenched regulations instead of responding to the question "what is the public good?" The reliance on legalities is easier, less open to scrutiny, and justifiable. However, it does not necessarily meet the test of public goodness. Geuss states that "it may be observed that the collection of principles that have been called the authority structure rest to a great extent on habitual well-socialized responses that do not reflect a real attentiveness to the public good. If this is true, then the issue of whether or not assent is conscious and well thought out does not affect the fact that beliefs are authoritative; what it may affect is the vigor and strength of commitment to authority, especially under pressure." To relate this to land use planning, the rule of law is regulated through zoning bylaws and official community plans, allegedly the best representation of the public good available at the time of drafting and adoption. That is, decisions on the location of land uses and future growth areas are enshrined in a bylaw and therefore should only be amended if the new bylaw will work to the betterment of the public good. In practice, applications that do not fit the bylaws may be rejected not due to the merits of the application, but because the proposal does not fit into the confined structure of the bylaws. Conversely, local governments may amend existing bylaws to recognize changing conditions or to allow for new forms of development not conceived of in the original drafting of the bylaws. Sections of the Local Government Act are written to allow elected officials the right to change a bylaw if defined procedures are
followed. Curiously, what is not included in the Act is a requirement for elected officials to consider if a proposed change is necessary to meet an evolved definition of the public good, if the change is “good” for only a small proportion of residents, or if the proposal would be contrary to some agreed-upon definition of the public good. Again, in practice, each proposal to amend a bylaw is generally considered in isolation, both in a physical sense (considering only the parcel under application) and in a context sense (considering only the obvious and immediate impacts to surrounding residents).

While the difficulty in determining “good” is obvious among myriad actors with innumerable variances in their response to the question “what is the public good?” a related problem is maintaining consistency in a definition over time. There is uncertainty inherent in knowing the correct course of action, and a choice that may seem rational and fair at one time may prove to be irresponsible or damaging in hindsight. Beliefs held to be true at one point in time are found to be questionable – examples in human geography would include environmental determinism or the actions taken at Africville in Halifax, Nova Scotia. For planning, the core problem of the public good circles back to the question of knowing what the public good is, and then maintaining the public good across a defined space and timeframe. What is good for the developer making the application on a new suburban retail establishment might not be good for the collective of downtown merchants, and bylaws that might make sense in 1950 may not hold true today. Both planning theory and practice continue with the struggle of arriving at an understanding of the public good.
The Public Good within Land Use Planning

While an agreed-upon definition of the public good is problematic (and, if following Meyer or Hodge, unnecessary), the idea that the processes and practices of planning lead toward the public good is at the very foundation of the profession. That is, within land use planning, a definition of the public good has been seemingly less important in the literature than establishing the profession’s claim to determining and responding to the public good. Alexander writes, “for planners and the planning profession, the public interest has always remained relevant as a legitimating principle and a norm for practice, even while philosophers and political theorists debated its existence.” A clear connection between planning and the public good developed early on from the profession’s roots in urban reform, with planners carving out a role in programming intended to create better urban environments. Chapin defines planning’s early urban reform measures as actions relating to sanitation, housing, and building codes. But Chapin viewed the public good as more than actions relating to health and safety. He also wrote about the connection between planning and the public good as relating to “mental and emotional well-being” and from an urban aesthetics perspective, establishing that the improvement of the “pleasantness of the urban environment” was an important responsibility of the planner. Chapin also added the issues of convenience and economy at the intersection of planning and the public good, defining these as:

- **Convenience.** Convenience includes the location of roads and access to necessary services, and is affected by the intensity of land development. “According to the reasons for movement in the urban areas, convenience is measured in miles or blocks of walking distance, or, more normally and in a modern-day sense, in minutes of transportation time.” to which Chapin adds: ‘It should be noted that while health
and safety criteria dictate an emphasis toward low order densities, convenience requirements favour an emphasis toward higher order densities. "In practice, a balance can be achieved in the land use planning process." (1965 p. 48-49).

- *Economy.* "...is a term associated with efficiency in the land use pattern and its public costs implications, whether in terms of municipal expenditures or cost to the urbanite in general. In a border sense the public economy may be coupled with the general vitality of the urban economy as a whole and its implications for the revenue structure of an urban centre." (1965 p. 50) The land use arrangement that is least costly to the municipality and to citizens is the basic concern.

Chapin concludes that achieving a balance among the public good, health, safety, convenience, and economy is foundational to the profession: "How the convergence of the public interest with the economic and social determinants of land use is accomplished, and how the synthesis is expressed in physical form in a land development plan constitute the very essence of the land use planning process." 169

Finding the public good in planning necessarily requires delving into planning practice, as the two are inseparably intertwined. The modern town planning movement gained impetus from urban problems – that is, from the difficulties created by density, lack of infrastructure, and incompatibilities among land uses – which brought about the idea of designating land uses to different parts of the city to protect residents from land use conflicts. 170 Popular interest in issues of urban reform raised the profile of planning. The application of a scientific approach to problem solving lent an air of legitimacy to the profession, and by the end of the first World War several Canadian provinces had adopted a rudimentary form of planning legislation, based on the United Kingdom experience. 171 From a public good perspective, Lewis Mumford notes that the public good was often equated with actions that were beneficial to the merchant class, with city plans and bylaws adopted to support the needs of landowners and capitalists. Even the morphology of cities
was designed to suit the needs of speculators, characterized by a gridiron pattern that lends itself well to the parceling up of land but paid no attention to topography "... or any other aspects of land development – including prevailing winds, location of industrial districts, salubrity of underlying soils, winter sunlight, or any other number of factors that determine the property utilization of an urban site." In the early years of land use planning, Mumford suggests that the public good was no more than an exercise in maximizing land values and business opportunities. However, at the same time, planning's roots in urban reform called planners to intervene in market processes. The intent of this intervention was to alter foreseen outcomes that would have resulted from a milieu driven solely by myopic self-centeredness of business owners to one that would create a desired outcome, a better city for urban residents, particularly those least likely to benefit from the results obtained from a purely market-driven economy.

Between the two World Wars, land use planning expanded in use. For example, in 1926 the City of Vancouver, represented by a select committee of comprised of the Mayor, the Town Planning Commission, and representatives from the school, harbour, park, and sewer boards hired Harland Bartholomew to prepare a comprehensive city plan, one that would reflect the importance of the city and establish patterns for growth well into the future (while never formally adopted, Bartholomew's Plan was referenced as a template for development in Vancouver until it was replaced by City Plan in 1995). Zoning bylaws became more common, and served as the primary tool of the planner to both add surety to existing land uses and to promote land speculation. At the same time, planning practice was increasingly informed by the rational planning model, a multi-step approach to identifying a problem, evaluating study criteria, creating alternatives, implementing alternatives, and
monitoring the progress of actions. Seen from the perspective of the public good, it was expected that good would be found if planners followed a technical and logical path of decision-making. Implicit in this is the assumption that rationality (and ultimately, the public good) is knowable through the application of an empirical process. Implicit as well is the belief that rationality can be applied to social processes. "In its original formation, the rational planning model is viewed as being value-neutral, internally consistent, self-evident in the public good, and because of the supposedly dispassionate nature of the analysis and projections, providing the right answer to problems." While other forms of knowledge may be recognized, such as intuitive or emotional knowledge, Friedmann notes that these were not considered rational or applicable to the scientific evaluation of options. He adds while market rationality (where the structures of a society become the means by which individuals achieve their private interests) was of paramount interest in the early years of planning, post-1950s planning added social rationality (where collectively the group defines a common interest and rational choice involves achieving this shared goal). Friedmann contends that today's practice is shaped by a hybrid of the two previous definitions. The rights of the individual are recognized but the vulgarities of a purely market driven society are tempered by the state to provide for the public good. That is, intervention is necessary to ensure that the public good is realized.

Within the profession, the pre-1950s ideal of a rational, single-minded public has largely been abandoned. Jill Grant writes that "in the early years of modern town planning, we enjoyed considerable consensus about the common good. We no longer find such certainty." Instead, it is widely recognized that the public is comprised of many fragmented groups and opinions, sometimes operating in isolation and often in competition. The
temporal subjectivity of the public good is also recognized, and for much of the profession’s history, the definition of the public good has looked to “… guideposts taken directly from the social currents of the times.”

Grant adds that “our conceptualization of the public good is inevitably framed by a particular space and time. It reflects cultural, professional and personal values. What one generation defines as “the common good” may disgust subsequent generations.” That is, the public good is recognized as evolving, of necessity subject to laws, but it also develops within a cultural context.

Today, the public good is most frequently equated with ideas of justice, rationality, and fairness (see Healy (2003); Innes (1998); and Harvey (2001) for examples). Current theorists suggest that planners best serve the public good by understanding that the public is multi-layered, ever-changing, and diverse, but that these parties share a common interest in finding solutions that balance the needs of all. Since the profession’s inception, it remains that achieving the public good is the normative objective of planning.

Planning looks to the ideal of the public good to legitimize the actions codified in bylaws and legislation. The public good is defined in many ways through the development of regulations: guiding the use of land toward appropriate uses is seen as good; encouraging advantageous development that benefits the community is viewed as one of the roles of regulation; and protecting the landbase and environmentally sensitive features from misuse is important to the profession. Abrams has observed, control is equated with the public good.

But is the profession achieving any measure of goodness? Lloyd would contend that planners have forsaken the search for betterment. He berates land use planners for abandoning a commitment to the public good through their decision-making and practice, charging that “the public interest is the forgotten dimension in the modernization of land
use planning." Amid fragmented publics, unpredictable political environments, and litigious citizens, planners have moved far from the utopian ideals focused on the public good that shaped early twentieth century land use planning. Instead of Ebenezer Howard’s garden cities, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre and Oak Park, and Le Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse, planning today focuses increasingly on the minutia of zoning bylaws, punctilious permitting processes, and new public consultation techniques that try to attract citizens who hold little interest in government or community involvement. The public good has become increasingly difficult to define or quantify, and Lloyd would contend that planners have given up the normative foundations to the profession.

In part, the difficulty of land use planning in arriving at either a definition of the public good or even coming to agreement on a process by which the public good can be determined lies in the history of planning theory and practice. Notwithstanding the question of the public good, planners have long struggled with a response to the question, “What is planning?” They have done so since the inception of planning as a profession in Canada (marked by the founding of Canada’s first professional planning association in 1919). While the idea that there should be a body of knowledge that constitutes planning theory is widely accepted, and further that the public good should be part of this body of knowledge, “...the subject is slippery and explanations are often frustratingly tautological or disappointingly pedestrian.” Yiftachel provides a useful typology of elements that should be included in planning theory, classified into three theoretical debates: the analytical debate (What is urban planning? What are society’s goals?); the urban form debate (What is good urban form? What are the physical effects of planning?); and the procedural debates (What is a good planning process? How do decision theories shape planning?). Alexander adds a second classification scheme,
again with triad of options: definitional (What is planning?); substantive (For whom are we planning?); and normative (How should we plan?).\textsuperscript{190} Alexander adds that it is the breadth and depth of ideas that inform the theoretical foundations of planning that make a definition of "planning theory" difficult.\textsuperscript{191}

From a planning-as-practice perspective, the reliance for much of planning’s history on the rational planning model has created difficulties for the profession. A technical, scientific approach to resolving urban problems once seemed logical. But problems associated with collecting necessary information for problem identification, the impossibility of value-neutral evaluations from the planner’s biased perspective, and the incrementality necessary in a rationalist’s approach which contrasts with the comprehensive approach that Ernest Alexander views as necessary to respond to the “wicked problems” of planning have all been cited as critiques of the model.\textsuperscript{192} From the late-1950s forward, practicing planners in Canada began to question the unrelenting reliance on the rational planning model, particularly its assumption that the public good could be defined and realized, and that there could be a societal consensus on goals among a wild diversity of stakeholders. Simon (1959) characterized planning as no more than a process of satisficing, not optimizing, and declared that no public good could be achieved in a system that did not work toward betterment. Lindholm (1963) suggested that planning was at best an incremental process of muddling through mutual adjustments, and it was not possible for any decision maker (planner or city official) to know all the facts, be unbiased, and truly find the public good. Davidoff (1965) wrote on the pluralistic nature of society with the disadvantaged in mind, and proposed a system of advocacy planning over rational planning, given the failure of the rational planning model to meet the needs of the more marginalized sectors of society.
Through the 1970s and 1980s, the search for the theory and practice of planning was documented in a series of articles in *Policy Science* beginning with Wildavsky’s 1973 article, “If Planning is Everything, Maybe it’s Nothing.” According to Wildavsky, planners are caught within a practice so immense and convoluted that the planner (either from theoretical or practical approaches) is unable to shape it. He writes “(the planner) may be an economist, political scientist, sociologist, architect, or scientist. Yet the essence of his calling – planning – escapes him. He finds it everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. Why is planning so elusive?”

Wildavsky also states that “where planning does not measure up to expectations, which is almost everywhere, planners are handy targets. They have been too ambitious or they have not been ambitious enough. They have perverted their calling by entering into politics or they have been insensitive to the political dimensions of their task. They ignore national cultural mores at their peril or they capitulate to blind forces of irrationality. They pay too much attention to the relationship between one sector of the economy and another while ignoring analysis of individual projects, or they spend so much time on specific matters that they are unable to deal with movements of the economy as a whole. Planners can no longer define a role for themselves. From old American cities to British new towns, from the richest countries to the poorest, planners have difficulty in explaining who they are and what they should be expected to do. If they are supposed to doctor sick societies, the patient never seems to get well. Why can’t the planners ever seem to do the right thing?”

Critical to Wildavsky’s question is how to achieve the public good, and how planners incorporate the profession’s theoretical foundations (including the concept of the public good) into the practitioner’s performance.
The rise of citizen participation and questioning of the use of scientific paradigms for social research across the social sciences and humanities also impacted the theories and practice of land use planning.\textsuperscript{195} While the rational planning model has not been abandoned by the profession, today’s processes focus on numerous feedback loops and greater public involvement. Generally, processes today allow for the recognition of multiple realities, better fitting the complexity of many planning issues.\textsuperscript{196} This has given rise to new techniques in citizen participation, mediation, and negotiation, processes which Susskind (1999) characterizes as a means of obtaining results “we all can live with.” A new focus on the environment, prompted by Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962) and the call to action from McHarg (1969) and others to “plan with nature” also impacted planning practices. Key writings by Friedmann (1969) on transactive planning and Lash’s foundational textbook, \textit{Planning in a Human Way} (1976), which promoted triangulated communication among planners, citizens, and politicians, also provided new theoretical and practical directions for the profession. Adding an additional new dimension was the application of Marxist models that established that the value systems of the state, social controls, and capitalist accumulation were the primary factors shaping the urban experience of citizens. By way of example, Wolfe (1980) considered the role of the state in distributing wealth through control of the modes of production, while Paris (1982) contended that decision-making in urban planning was not based on determining the public good but in implementing the values of the state at that particular time. Scott and Roweis (1978) also viewed planning through a Marxist lens, characterizing planners as “lackeys” and perpetuators of state-sponsored programs of inequity. Planning has also delved into natural resource management and the conservation of land and resources from exploitation.\textsuperscript{197} However, amid all the theoretical
posturings and writings on the foundations of planning, noticeably absent from discussions remains an agreed-upon definition of the public good or even consensus on processes that might achieve the public good. As observed in other disciplines within the social sciences in the latter half of the twentieth century, truth was becoming less certain and less believable. The concept of the public good was increasingly without definition or at minimum viewed subjectively. The question of whose values were being achieved was at the root of many planning discussions.

Today, planning theory and practice remained unfocused, favouring no particular method or ideology. Citizen engagement is seen as an ideal and the public good is measured by the number of persons participating in public events. The need for planners, elected officials, and citizens to work together to resolve the economic, social, and environmental problems of urban life is viewed as desirable, and a balanced approach is seen as the most sustainable practice for plans (and therefore representative of the public good). Research continues on how regulations, institutions and corporations impinge on cities and citizens, that is, on the link between individuals and the societal structures that both constrain and enable human actions (with reference to structuralism and post-structuralism).¹⁹⁸ ¹⁹⁹

The idea that “planning is everything” remains. As noted by Jill Grant: “Despite decades of change, many of the dominant assumptions underlying planning remain strong: planning promotes efficiency, health, and amenity.”²⁰⁰ She adds that “values related to privacy, family, domesticity, democracy, consumerism, and convenience shape the perceptions of players in the planning process, and thus influence the outcomes of planning decisions. Planning and zoning produce landscapes and townscapes that reflect those societal values.” That is, planning theory is shaped by the issues important to citizens, their
values, and the means to alter the urban landscape to meet the needs of citizens. After a century of legislated planning in Canada, the profession has in some ways advanced from its original theoretical perspectives and in other ways held fast. As evidenced by the current popularity of New Urbanist approaches, planning has retained some of the idealized notions of what the urban environment can be. There is an ongoing reliance on a rational planning model (the process of noting a problem, establishing an approach, creating alternatives, implementing these alternatives, and then monitoring progress toward an intended goal). Still unclear, however, are the outcomes of this century of planning and whether or not the profession has achieved any measure of the public good.

The Public Good and Land Use Plans

The primary tool of the community planner is the land use plan, a long range planning document intended to shape growth and development over an extensive time frame (usually a minimum of five years, although the City of Calgary has recently completed a one hundred-year plan). A land use plan generally includes the goals, values, and aspirations of its citizens for the type, form and density of development. Chapin's definition of long range plans (which he refers to as a "land use scheme") still rings true: "... a land use scheme (is) fitted to the needs and sensitive to the wants of the urbanite, both economic and social, but also harmonizes these in considerations with the public interest in a plan that maximizes the livability in the city and insures sound development for the community as a whole.\(^{201}\) (italics added).

While the required content of these plans is determined by various provincial acts across Canada, most legislation requires that long range plans document land uses, densities,
and establish agreed-on plans for future development. In British Columbia, common practice adds a requirement for documenting implementation actions, or those steps that must be taken to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. At this point, the problem of the public good becomes apparent – how do the designated land uses, densities, and the form of development represent the public good? Should technical criteria and fiscal restraint as shown in the efficient use of municipal services suffice as the definition of the public good? Will showing sensitivities to social issues, such as increasing the amount of affordable housing, serve as the definition? Stronger regulations to improve environmental protection are intended to be representative of the public good. Will citizens view stringent setback regulations and the designation of development-free areas as the practical realization of the public good? Which “good” should take precedence – economic, social, or environmental issues? The task for community planners, and ultimately for local government officials, is to find the balance among competing interests. The planner, then, must set out an array of land use or zones on a map as the practical representation of the planner’s best guess at balancing all interests and achieving some representation of the public good. As outlined by Chapin, “the task of the city planner, then, is not only to develop a land use scheme fitted to the needs and sensitive to the wants of the urbanite, both economic and social, but also to harmonize these in considerations with the public interest in a plan that maximizes the livability in the city and insures sound development for the community as a whole.”

As a practical example, most long range plans in North America have sought increases in the density of new development to achieve “Smart Growth” principles and improve servicing efficiencies. Higher densities are viewed as representative of the public
good, as they permit efficient use of existing community services, support higher transit use, may decrease the cost per unit of housing, and add to the range of housing types available within a municipality (instead of focusing only on the single dwelling unit, which remains the predominant land use in most North American cities). In addition, allowing for increased densities adds to the value of the land base, increasing the potential for greater profits in the sale of land. However, no matter if higher densities are justified from financial or servicing or even social perspectives, they are still often opposed by surrounding neighbours who perceive that higher densities will detract from the quality of the urban experience for existing residents. The goal of higher density, seemingly so clearly within the public good in a land use plan, appears less so when the high-density development is proposed nearby a disgruntled homeowner.

It is important to emphasize that determination of the public good in land use plans should not be viewed as a simple dichotomy between public and private interests. Private interests are part of the public realm. The success of individuals in a capitalistic society allows governments to collect taxes and take actions that benefit all citizens. The assumption that what is good for society cannot be good for the individual is short-sighted and ultimately wrong. However, land use plans develop from the premise that, irrespective of ownership, the public must have a say in the determination of permitted uses and the form and character of development of privately-held property. The public also has a role in limiting development: for example, a landowner with a waterfront property might desire to maximize the use and enjoyment of his property by building immediately adjacent to the foreshore, yet the protection of this area for public access may be viewed as being in the public interest and codified in legislation. Other areas of interest to a wider public include
heritage preservation, urban design and aesthetics, and the protection of the land base for specified uses such as park land or greenspace. Land ownership cannot equate with absolute control over a property, nor do the desires of the property owner always supersede those of the larger public. Leopold suggested that a full understanding of the interdependency between human and natural interests, between private good and the good of the widest possible public, will require nothing short of a change of conscience for land owners. The right to property must necessarily be constrained by the rights of the larger community to achieve some measure of the public good, and land use plans are the means of coming to agreement on constraints to individual autonomy in the use of land. Whose interests will prevail is a key question challenging community planners and elected officials.

The Public Good and Process

Lloyd notes that “there can be little doubt that the land use planning apparatus, processes, outcomes, and operation are criticized from all quarters – from within government, by government agencies, by the private sector, by the business community, by think tanks, by academics, by community groups, and by the public at large.” (2006, p. 2). He states that this criticism rests on the perceived under-performance of the land use planning process by several measures: “…efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and performance.” This difficulty in measuring the success of the planning process rests largely with who is making the measurement. The same project can be seen as a glowing success or a dismal failure, depending on the perspective. A developer might believe that a refused zoning application is indicative of the incompetence of the system, while the neighbour opposed to the development rejoices in democracy in action. However, for
planners, the responsibility ultimately is to follow through on a process that best enables the realization of the public good.

In 1965, Chapin proposed a new process model that would give equal weight and attention to public interest values, along with profit-making values and socially rooted values (it is interesting to note that environmental values were not widely considered at that time, but would be within a decade). Chapin conceptualized his three interrelated values as reaching a point of equilibrium, resulting in desired change in the land use pattern. That is, Chapin saw the planning process as the mechanism for achieving an agreeable future through understanding the profit-making, public interest, and socially rooted values of players within an urban system, moderated by their behaviours within this system. Missing in this "black box" approach is an explanation of how the values to the left of the diagram are derived. That is, Chapin does not decipher for the planner how one would arrive at "public interest values" or come to agreement with all stakeholders on "socially rooted values" or even "profit-making values".
Missing as well is an explanation of how the converging arrows to the right reach an agreed-upon outcome, or how, in fact, agreement about this outcome could ever be achieved. More than fifty years of discussion on planning processes since the publication of Chapin’s diagram have failed to reveal that magical process that will unequivocally reveal the public good. Planners continue to struggle with the evaluation of the public good as an outcome in a planning process.

It is true that balancing the interests of individuals with some sense of the public good is increasingly complex. Krugman sympathizes with the difficulties facing planners and lists “...stock market decline and business scandal, energy crises and environmental backsliding, budgets deficits and recession, terrorism, and troubled communities” as issues relevant to a discussion of the public good. He unhelpfully adds that no single issue is more important than any other. Lloyd offers his own additions to the list of issues that must be weighed in the planning process, including “climate change, sectarianism, racism, community violence, ill health, political complacency, personal greed, conspicuous consumption, collective myopia and the disenfranchisement of individuals and neighbourhoods.” The challenge to the land use planner, then, is to develop and implement processes that speak to this wide range of issues and produce measurable results that show an improved quality of life for citizens. The outcome must be shown to be fair, equitable, uplifting, and result in a better future for residents. Again, this is no small task.

In British Columbia, the Local Government Act defines the public as “all persons who believe that their interest in property is affected by the proposed bylaw” and sets out requirements for public hearings for amendments to zoning and official community plan bylaws. It is noted that only bylaws adopted under Part 26 (Planning and Land Use
Management) of the *Local Government Act* must meet these requirements for public involvement, and only in exceptional circumstances can a local government waive this requirement for public involvement. Ideally, no member of a community should have more say in determining the relationship among land uses than any other citizen, and all should have equal access to the planning process. Again, ideally, a planning process would be open to everyone, not just the vocal or organized.209 What is often unmentioned is the inability to ever achieve the lofty goal of “public consultation” with either a representative group of people or with the entire public. Public participation attracts only those who have the ability to participate, that is, those who have the time to attend meetings, the ability to provide written comments, and likely have property interests to protect. Many public consultation initiatives are directed only to those most like the planners themselves – professionals, land owners, educated, and with the time and ability to participate. The involvement of those that do not fit this mold can be discouraged (intentionally or unintentionally) by consultation methods that limit their involvement. The timing of meetings, selection of venues, and feedback mechanisms can all be used to manipulate participation. Those that do participate are deemed to be representative of the public, and their views become proxy for the public good.

What should planners do to ensure that the outcome of public consultation processes is representative of the public good? Campbell and Marshall appeal for a process of public consultation that adheres to inclusionary consultation procedures to maximize public access to discussions and decision making.210 Galbraith concurs and extends this ideal by calling for planners to seek out “a countervailing power” or a transparent and accountable public consultation process that actively seeks out those *not* participating and *not* speaking.
The planner would then represent their concerns within the planning process. The measure of the public good with respect to process design would be the inclusion of disparate groups and marginalized individuals. Hodge clarifies that the most effective planning processes involve collaborative consensus building, where the public good “...becomes known” through inclusionary methods that invite widespread involvement.\textsuperscript{211} Finding the public good becomes an iterative process where decisions are reached, tested, and then modified if they are found to be wanting. Interactively searching for the public good is the most likely method of achieving a desired outcome, where by virtue of being tentative and not \textit{a priori,} the public good is “held as a working hypothesis until results confirm its rightness.”\textsuperscript{212} The process of finding the public good, then, “is to see what works, to conjointly experiment with our values the same way we can conjointly experiment about the truth.”\textsuperscript{213} The charge to the planner is to design processes that allow this progression to unfold.

\textbf{The Public Good and Planning for Retail}

The interrelationship between the public good and planning takes on a special interest when the concept is considered within the context of the most individualized and corporatized aspect of modern life, the retail landscape. Jones and Simmons argue that the policies that most directly shape retail location decisions are those developed by local governments. Local government bylaws regulate land use, allow for the subdivision of property, establish the form and character of buildings, and control the minutia of numbers of parking spaces, the location of loading zones, types of lighting, and landscaping.\textsuperscript{214} That is, local governments create regulations that shape and form the retail landscape. This intervention is intended to create a better urban experience than what would naturally evolve
if left to the market or simply to chance. Stoker writes that the development of regulations serves two purposes: they protect the rights of the individual; and they serve the interests of the collective. For the former, the role of local government is to safeguard the freedoms of the individual but not to intervene on behalf of any particular interest. For the latter, regulations are intended not so much to protect self-interests but to protect the collective well-being of the community. For Lowndes, "equality between citizens, rather than the freedom of each individual, is the key goal." The public accepts such regulations because they can achieve a greater goodness: individual interests are subsumed in an attempt to address more holistic concerns. For Dewey, the notion of society is defined by regulation. The shared definition of appropriate human behaviours and consequences for actions are what defines a society, and without them the society could not be. Through the intervention of the public sector in private enterprise, ideally some level of the public good is achieved. That is, citizens (and business and the economy) are intended to be "better off" because of the interference of the public sector.

Specifically for retailing, Boddewyn and Hollander (1972) set out five reasons for the public sector to interfere in the free market: (1) to protect smaller retailers; (2) achieve price stability; (3) improve the efficiency of retailing; (4) ensure consumer protection; and (5) protect the environment. The bylaws and legislation, land use plans and zoning, urban design schemes and amenity provisions are all intended to create a better municipality which recognizes that free market conditions, acting unimpeded, may not always result in decisions that are best for the public. Intervention is justified because it is necessary to invoke the public good, and for the retail landscape, this intervention is tasked to land use planning. "The planning system seeks ... to provide a mechanism for overriding or modifying the
operation of the marketplace where it is seen to be against the public interest.\textsuperscript{221} This comment from a "Guidance Note" provided by the British Home Office on retail planning goes on to say, "what constitutes the public interest \textit{is not defined} but it is founded on the recognition that land is a scarce resource and its use for private or public sector purposes is of interest to all citizens" \textit{(italics added)}. The circular continues, "public interest is served if private investment is directed to places and land uses which allow both private and public services to exist and, at the same time, provide benefit to private capital and the general public in a cost effective way. Central and local government, in ensuring adequate provision of these public services, seek to minimize the cost and maximize the benefit to the community.\textsuperscript{222} It is interesting that the guidance note indicates that the public interest will not be defined but then goes on to do so with a largely economic definition of what constitutes the public good.

Other researchers would dispute the contention that regulation has any interest in public goodness. Instead, they would consider the role of local government to be more enabling than regulatory, protecting the rights of individuals over the needs of the collective. Pinch argues that the retail landscape has been shaped not by the active involvement of citizens and governments in attempting to determine the public good, but by government inaction and acquiescence to the myth of the individual.\textsuperscript{223} Keating adds that in the United States, "the dominant ethos of possessive individualism legitimizes inequalities in economic outcomes. Acquisitiveness and individualism, liberty and property, are seen as inseparable."\textsuperscript{224} He continues that local government regulations more fully protect individual rights and businesses than offer any meaningful support for the concept of the public good.\textsuperscript{225} While the complexity and detail of regulations are sometimes viewed as a barrier by
the development community, Pinch and Keating accuse local governments for swinging too far into an enabling role and protecting the rights of individuals and businesses instead of regulating the retail landscape to satisfy the public good.

Viewed from the perspective of the capitalized retail landscape, the public good is most often equated with economic good. New retail uses that contribute to the tax base are attractive to local governments. Politicians and economic development departments value new commercial uses because commercially-zoned land is assessed (and then taxed) at a much higher rate than residential land, and the cost of developing the land for a major development is carried by the property owner. The municipality may even be able to negotiate additional amenities from the developer as part of the approval process. New developments also create employment (first in construction and then in service positions) for local residents. As well, the maintenance of the parking areas, landscaping, and travel lanes at major retail facilities are the responsibility of the property owner, not the municipality. A shopping mall does not lobby mayor and council for costly parks, recreation facilities, or other civic programs. Through the 1970s and 1980s, many local governments across Canada offered tax concessions and partnerships to developers with large-scale development proposals (with the tax concessions offered to West Edmonton Mall being the most notable example). These mega-proposals are attractive to planners, as well. As discussed by Jones and Simmons, "because of their concern with managing land use externalities, municipal planners welcomed the innovation of the planned shopping centre. Compared to the typical strip development, planned centres improve traffic control, eliminate parking problems, and reduce conflicts with residential uses. And because malls are designed for a
fixed scale of operation, there are no further demands for roads or services. The planned shopping centre is one of the keystones in a planned community."²²⁸

Equating the public good to growth in the retail landscape has long raised ethical questions.³³⁹ According to Saul (1997), the rise in corporatism has had negative consequences for the public good because the focus on the self-made man and corporate success are often detrimental to the support of actions taken to promote common interests. Zepp (1997) stridently adds that our obsession with the success of the individual and our worship of consumption at the new cathedral of the mall have been detrimental to public life and community. From an urban planning perspective, Friedmann agrees that our “pleasant ascent up the candy mountain of consumption” has resulted in a lessened collective belief in common interests and the possibility of the public good in the retail landscape. He cautions, however, that the public good and the success of the market economy go hand in hand; a loss of the former will lead to lessened opportunities, greater regulation, increased government, and a highly repressive state.³⁴⁰

Planners are not unanimous in opinion that all growth is good. Holt (in a review of British local government regulations) notes that “retailing in the UK has gone through nothing short of a major revolution in the past 20 years in terms of the dramatic shift away from traditional High Street outlets to large out of town superstores. This fundamental change has largely been achieved despite the fact that most local planning authorities have been unhappy with it, and has been allowed to happen by central government policy… yielding to market pressures.”³³¹ Guy adds that “a genuine fear among many local authority planners is that the changes in the structure of shopping provision will result in underutilization of existing facilities … inherent in this view is the belief that there is a
relationship between the retail function of a centre and its other functions to the extent that the success of the latter would be adversely affected if the former were to decline. ...planners [also] fear that substantial loss of consumers’ expenditure in town and city centres will cause a reduction in the level of services available and in the access provided for the disadvantaged groups of society.”\(^{232}\)

The dichotomy between the admiration for organically-evolved downtown shopping areas and high streets versus the large-scale master planned retail developments relates to the planner’s reliance on regulations to control development. The degree of control granted to the planner to regulate a new mega-retail development fits well with the planner’s methods for managing land uses. “The innovation of the planned shopping centre fitted into this approach rather nicely, and resolved many of the commercial/residential conflicts that initiated land use planning in the first place. The shopping mall is isolated from nearby residential areas by a sea of parking spaces, and more often than not, it has been designed to fit within the layout of the entire community... The mall is sold to the public as a necessary community service.”\(^{223}\) Conversely, the evolved downtown cores or older shopping areas are problematic, with a lack of parking, unevenness in the form and character of store fronts, traffic in volumes larger than street capacities, noise, and a mix of uses that may not be precisely what the planner had in mind for the area. Whitehand notes that for the retail landscape, “… the precise lines of the cause and effect relation between planning and private enterprise are difficult to disentangle... Nevertheless the impression, though it is difficult to quantify, is of planners responding to the agents and processes already mentioned more than acting as a positive, directive force.”\(^{234}\) That is, in examining the relationship between the retail landscape and planning, planners seem to have taken the role of reacting to the plans of
developers instead of making plans. Whitehand speculates that this is partially the result of the changing nature of retailing. Instead of dealing with a rezoning application for a single, owner-operated shop, planners and municipalities are faced with highly advanced concepts from non-local, large corporations, backed by pension funds and staffed by a team of professionals. The concepts are filled with franchise and chain developments designed around national siting strategies and corporate façades that care little for local form and character. The sheer size and complexity of such projects, the promises of employment and improved municipal status, and the tax dollars they represent, make it difficult for municipalities to refuse this type of application.

When examining the distribution of retailing on the landscape, two primary trends emerge: the decline of downtown and the rise of suburban retailing. In many North American cities from the 1970s to the 1990s, growth followed a predictable pattern: greenfield sites on the edge of serviced lands in the city were acquired; servicing extended; and the lands were subdivided into new residential lots, often as “master planned” neighbourhoods. Commercial services generally followed, built in a hierarchy of local service centres, strip commercial developments, and shopping malls; the latter use sized to service several neighbourhoods and to satisfy a complete spectrum of shopping needs in a self-contained, climate controlled, generically pleasant retail environment. While private investment financed this urban expansion, the significant involvement of local governments was required to approve new developments and provide community servicing. Whether or not this trend is demand- or supply-led is not completely clear. Birkin, Clarke, and Clarke note that consumer pressures for cheaper prices and greater consumer mobility undoubtedly contributed to the suburbanization of retailing where economics of scale allowed big box
stores to give consumers cheaper pricing, and where the availability of large acreage greenfield sites on the city’s edges was also important. Still, change required “a pliant planning regime” that acquiesced to the masterfully planned proposals of major developers. That is, without amendments to zoning bylaws and official community plans to support suburban retailing, the modern retail landscape could not have developed.

The siting of new retail facilities in a municipality is an excellent example of this question of priority. At one end of the current practice spectrum, in an approach more characteristic of centralized planning authorities, adopted legislation and bylaws allow planners to determine the future location, size and type of retail facilities, largely restricting private developers to these predefined facilities and locations. At the other extreme of the spectrum, the private sector determines the location, size and type of new facilities, subject to some control by planners so as to avoid detrimental effects on the environment, traffic patterns, and existing residential communities. Most long range plans across North America fall somewhere between these two extremes. A typical long range plan identifies a hierarchy of retail services within a municipality, starting with neighbourhood level convenience centres and advances through more intensive uses on primary traffic arteries and key intersections, then on to large scale, comprehensive facilities (often designated town centres or commercial nodes in growth strategies). These plans provide assurances for residents and business owners who base their purchasing or siting decisions based on the land use plan to protect property values and limit the type and location of new threatening uses. Ideally, any new retail proposals would fit within this prescribed hierarchy and the desired future illustrated on the land use plan. But what if a retail proposal does not fit the plan?
This raises the question of who should lead the process of retail planning. Should it be planners or the private sector? Current Canadian practice points to a role for both parties. While the private sector likely has a greater handle on the pulse of retailing, long range plans (that is, the regulations of planning) provide the necessary checks and balances to ensure that any proposal fits into a community’s goals. The question is to what degree existing plans and bylaws should be amended to respond to new proposals from the private sector. The efforts required to develop long range plans are considerable, often committing years of staff resources and requiring extensive public involvement. Yet these plans remain amendable by private interests. This process can be complex, expensive, and time consuming. "The monopolistic powers of the planning authorities," as noted by Davies, "have so far tended to mitigate against the smaller, marginal businessman and support the claims of the larger organisations." Lock has also drawn attention to the detrimental (and usually accidental) effects of planning policies upon the small shop owner and has berated planners for favouring large, comprehensive, and professional proposals over the more amateurish efforts of the independent retailer.

The practice of land use planning for local governments requires the intersection of private interests (land developers, retailers, mall owners, and individual citizens) with the public sector (the planners and elected officials, other levels of government, and "the public" who see themselves as directly involved through democratic processes in the governing of a municipality). What remains unclear is whose interests should prevail in the name of the public good.
Conclusion

An interventionist approach remains the foundation of planning. This is evidenced in the widespread adoption of planning regulations, long range plans, zoning bylaws, development permit areas, and more recently, regional growth strategy legislation across Canada. The planner intervenes to bring greater understanding of the myriad interactions shaping the urban environment, with a stepped-back, comprehensive long-view that seeks to balance the needs of all sectors and uphold the public good. The planner also intervenes to mediate among competing interests and advocate for the marginalized. The disconnect, however, is that planners are often placed in reactionary, regulatory roles, instead of serving as the agents of change for upholding the public good. For many planners (particularly in the public sector), the ability to implement the public good is limited by power. The planner must rely on the private developer or permission from politicians to enact change. Planners have little control over construction budgets or decision-making. Instead, their role is reduced to providing recommendations to political masters and thwarting the efforts of private developers. The difficulties are obvious to Hodge: “It is coming to be seen more and more that the “public interest” is not monolithic and neutral. Our cities and towns are made up of “multiple publics” each with a potentially different view of the public good.” Hodge maintains a belief in planning as a rational activity with a goal of determining land use patterns on behalf of the public interest and goes on to state that “... it is up to community planners to prepare plans that ensures sound, amenable development for the community as a whole.” (itals in original, 2003 p. 161). While the public good may be difficult to determine, Hodge maintains it must remain as foundational to the theory and practice of planning.
The key question at the juncture of land use planning, the retail landscape, and the place of the public good is the extent to which issues other than the economic advantages of a retail use should be considered when evaluating a retail proposal or the state of existing retailing. That is, a definition of the public interest from a land use planning perspective should also include non-economic considerations, such as social and environmental issues, demographics, infrastructure capabilities, the impact of growth on citizens and existing development, the democratic involvement of all citizens (including the disenfranchised), the well-being of socially excluded elements of the population, the preservation of historic landscapes, and the aesthetics of the urban environment. However, while most planners would agree that the practice of planning requires a thoughtful, holistic approach, the success of land use planning in recognizing these values in the form and distribution of the retail landscape in most North American cities is not so obvious.

The public good is difficult to conceptualize and define, but efforts must be made on the part of planners to allow the public good to "become known" and follow this search with implementation. First, planners must seek to understand the impacts of action and inaction. When faced with a development proposal, what are the consequences likely to result from the consideration of the application? Any change in social, economic, or environmental conditions will have an effect on some individual, cohort, or group. But at what level is this effect deemed positive or negative, effective or sufficient? What if the proposal does not proceed? What are the costs of maintaining the status quo? In some instances, the cost of inaction (loss of employment, lack of local establishments, no new investment, and the loss of services to a competitor municipality) outweighs the negative externalities attributed to the proposed development. Second, the costs of the proposal
must be understood. For municipalities, costs are often divided into hard services (such as the extension of roads, transit, water and sewer services to a new development) and soft services (such as the increased cost of providing land use planning, police and fire services, and recreation programming). What are the likely costs of the proposed development? Are there amenities negotiated that will outweigh some of these costs? Are the costs too significant to allow the proposal to proceed? From the perspective of efficiency, local governments must be prudent in the provision of services and the use of the land base and resources, but efficiency must be balanced against effectiveness, equity, and the accessibility or usefulness of the proposal for all citizens affected. Ultimately, the cumulative impact of a development must be weighed against the likelihood of the proposal to have positive or negative impacts on the quality of life of its citizenry. In short, difficult questions surrounding the public good must be addressed.

Endnotes


124 It is noted that quotations used sometimes reference “the public interest” or “the common good” instead of the term employed in this research- “the public good”. The meaning ascribed in the references used all pertain to the idea of a concept of good that can be defined for some grouping larger than the individual, and thus the references are considered to accurately address the topic of this research.


126 It is noted that the discussion that follows pertains only to the concept of the public good, and not “public goods.” Hood (1986) defines “public goods” as a generic term used to describe consumption that meets these three policies: jointness of consumption, non-excludability, and indivisibility of benefit. He further explains that public goods are representative of the idea of joint consumption- for goods or services where it is necessary to protect life and property, and the benefit cannot be provided for one without being provided for all. Inhabitants who choose not to pay a share of the costs cannot be excluded from enjoying the benefits, because according to Hood’s definition, this is not practical. The benefit provided to one person does not diminish the benefits conveyed to others (for example, one person’s enjoyment of sunshine does not diminish the amount available to others).

The discussion of the public good problem goes back to 18th century economist Adam Smith and applies to goods that do not meet common market assumptions and cannot be provided or sold by individuals. These works are paid for by voluntary collective provision- all inhabitants band together (creating the problem of
free riders—those that won't pay but enjoy the benefits), voluntary provision—by one or a few people (landlord decides to provide service), or coercion— provision is financed by taxation (using the term to stand for any kind of payment that is compulsory). The concept of "public goods" is presented here to ensure an understanding of the terminology and will not be further discussed in this dissertation.

127 Durkheim (1938) suggested that there was a universal need in every society to have individuals who functioned against the society—acting in the opposite of the public good. These deviant individuals assisted the society in the definition and maintenance of boundaries—without them, good could not be recognized. Jacobs (1994, 96) notes that so essential is the role of deviance for the recognition of normalcy and the very existence of society, that Durkheim concludes that even in a society of saints, very trivial or minor infractions of saintly behaviour would come to be defined as some form of 'deviant' behaviour.

129 Lynch (1984, 103)
130 Ver Eeke (1999, 139).
131 Ralston Saul (1997, 3).
133 Meyer (1999), 117.

134 with order defined as agreement on a moral code through laws and regulations.
135 Grant (2008, 69).
136 O’Neill (1994, 8).
139 in Freeman (1976, 9–10).
140 Saul (1997, 500).
141 Ibid, 500.

142 See Hodge, 2008 for a succinct discussion on the history of land use planning in Canada. Kitchener’s bylaw was adopted in 1924.

143 Specifically when considering the responsibilities of local governments (as land use planning is a function handed down from through provincial legislation to municipalities or regional districts), local government bylaws in British Columbia were first enacted to provide locally controlled services (with the first municipalities incorporating in the 1880s and infrastructure bylaws often being among the first considered by these new governments). Land use planning legislation was developed through the early 1900s with most provinces having planning legislation in place in the 1920s. Land use planning bylaws followed. That is, citizens recognized that some form of local authority was necessary to provide protection for land owners, with the secondary benefit of protecting the rights of other citizens. An excellent source on the evolution of local government in BC is R.L. Bish (1987) Local Government in British Columbia.

144 See Jones and Simmons 1990 for a general discussion on the role of land use regulations with respect to the retail environment.
146 Meyer (1981, 251).
147 Arnold and Reynolds (2003) discuss hedonic shopping motivations and suggest that stores should tailor their interiors to 6 hedonic cohorts. In this way, store "atmospherics" can be targeted to shopper segments.
149 Ibid (2001, 3-4). Geuss quotes German liberalist theorist von Humbolt in supporting his arguments against a definable public good. Von Humbolt claimed that self-activity and the self-development of human individuals is the highest human good, and the state has no value in itself but is merely a necessary means to individual self-activity. Therefore, any positive provision for individual welfare, whether spiritual, moral, or material, on the part of the state is inappropriate and in fact actively harmful because it preempts individual action. The state ought to limit its sphere of activity to maintaining security, and it should otherwise allow its members to get on with their own private lives in whatever way they choose.
150 Ibid (2001, 100). He goes on to add that a definition of the public good is impossible.
152 Ibid 133.
153 (Dewey, as quoted in Meyer (1981, 175)
156 Grant (2008, 69).
157 Hodge notes that “it is up to community planners to prepare plans that ensure sound, amenable development for the community as a whole.” (2003, 161 italics in original).
158 Hodge (2003, 7).
159 Geuss (2001, 96). Additionally, consider the issue of Bountiful, British Columbia from a perspective of the public good, as defined within and outside this community.
161 Meyer (1981, 47).
162 Both John Locke and Henry David Thoreau wrote on the idea of leaving society when one’s personal views were out of agreement with the direction taken by the collective. However, as the world rockets from 6 billion to 9 billion in less than a 50 year period, as humans are increasingly bound by advances in communication and technology, and as the lack of unclaimed space on the surface of the earth shrinks to zero, the utopias of Locke and Thoreau are much more difficult to achieve.

For Aristotle, the idea of separating oneself from society was an option available only to a beast or a god: a man could not exist outside the polis (the society or collective). A god could be above the society, and a beast could be outside the society, but man could only exist as an actor within the group. There could be no separation from the group and the man would then need to find ways to actively participate and best fit within the norms and mores of the collective.
164 Sections 890, 891 and 892 of the Local Government Act.
165 Perhaps the most often cited example in Canadian land use planning is the dismantling of the neighbourhood of Africville in Halifax in the 1960s. At the time, civic decision makers believed that relocating residents to social housing projects throughout Halifax was a better solution for the neighbourhood than the extension of community servicing to address health and safety issues, and the “highest and best use” of the now vacant lands would be for industrial activities. In hindsight, the loss of a sense of community among residents and the resulting social problems attributed to the dissolution of the neighbourhood would suggest that the wrong choice was made. Today, the former neighbourhood stands as an underused community park.
Alexander (2002, 226-227). Alexander identifies seven approaches to understanding various concepts of the public good through a planning lens, divided between substantive interpretations which look to the results of planner’s actions, and procedural interpretations, which focus on the quality of the planning process.

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This section does not debate the definition of the public good (see Chapter 1) but seeks to understand it in the context of land use planning.

167 Chapin (1965, 47).

168 Ibid, 47.

169 Ibid, 54-55. He adds “The task of land use planning becomes one of gauging the public temperament, discovering and recognizing levels of acceptance and tolerance, and balancing these considerations with local practicalities. This final aspect of bringing all public interest determinants of land use into focus in one perspective is concerned with local practicalities: 1) physical characteristics, 2) fiscal capabilities, 3) jurisdictional considerations, and 4) the political climate. All affect the extent to which control is necessary or feasible in the face of economic and social realities, and together they include the more practical considerations which condition the use of controls in the public interest.”


171 Ibid, 322. It is noted that Thomas Adams, credited as the founder of Town Planning in Canada, was instrumental in the adoption of legislation as promoted by the Commission of Conservation, a federally sponsored committee with the mandate of implementing planning reforms across the nation.
Mumford (1961, 423). He adds “Contrast the gridiron of San Francisco to the winding streets of medieval Sienna. As early as 1865, Fredrick Law Olmstead had pointed out these advantages (working with the topography of the land) to San Francisco – only to have his advice cast aside.”

As discussed by Anne McAfee, former Co-Director of Planning, City of Vancouver, obtained online at http://www.discovervancouver.com).

Referred to in other references as the classical rational problem solving process (Patton & Sawicki 1993) and the Rational Comprehensive Method (Harper & Stein 1995; Weaver, Jessop & Das 1985), among other variations. This model has been identified as the paradigm that governed the practice of planning through the 1950s, joined by other theoretical models in the 1960s and beyond (Alexander 1984; Hemmings 1980).


Wolfe (1980, 71). Consider this in the context of the gridiron pattern of street development: the rationality of the map was supported by the dispassion of the planning process. The mathematical precision of the grid, proven by engineering equations, outweighed other criteria such as protection of environmental features, topography, and human scale.


Grant (2008, 69).

Chapin (1965, 41).

Grant (2008, 69).


Klosterman (2003) theorizes that the role of planning is to bridge the gap between private and public interests (although he concludes that planner’s efforts have been largely inadequate). It is noted that not all theorists see the split between public and private interests as necessarily separate: Galbraith (1971) speculated that the interests of the public and private sectors often overlap, and the ideals of the public interest do not solely lie with the public sector: the private sector has a role in the implementation of plans and projects that speak to the public good.


Lloyd (2006, 1).


Robert Putnam documents the increasing disconnection of citizens from one another and the structures of societies in Bowling Alone (2000). In this text, he examines the “broken bonds” that typify social interactions in North America, where citizens are increasingly less likely to join clubs, affiliate with a political party, or align themselves with others who share similar hobbies and interests. This decline in “social capital” is most clearly seen in the loss of social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. He notes that social capital can simultaneously be a private good and a public good: private in the sense that strong social connections benefit the individual, and public in the sense that some of the investment in social capital benefits other members of the group (he cites examples such as Rotary International as representative of a public good (fundraising to complete projects in a community) and a private good (providing opportunities for networking and friendship).

The first professional planning organization in Canada was the Town Planning Institute of Canada, founded in 1919. Thomas Adams (often viewed as the founder of Canadian planning) was the first President of the Institute, an organization focused on promoting the discipline of planning to a rapidly changing nation. The Institute largely ceased operations during the Depression, but was reinvigorated in the post WWII years of rapid urban growth. Planning schools were founded at McGill University, the
University of Toronto, University of Manitoba, and the University of British Columbia in the 1950s. The organization has continually published a professional journal, intended to highlight best practices (although the frequency of publication slowed during the organization’s less active phases). Today, the Canadian Institute of Planners has more than 7000 members and planning instruction is provided in 28 university programs across the nation (19 graduate and 9 undergraduate). The American Planning Association was founded in 1978 following the consolidation of the American Institute of Planners and the American Society of Planning Officials. The start of the profession in the US can be traced back further, however, to the incorporation of the American Institute of Planners in 1917 (originally as the American City Planning Institute, then renamed to the current title in 1939). Others would trace the profession back to the first National Conference on City Planning in Washington, DC in 1909. The American Planning Association currently numbers more than 43,500 members (source information: www.cip-icu.org and www.planning.org).

189 Campbell S. and S. Fainstein (2003, 3).


191 Campbell and Fainstein concur with Alexander, documenting four principal reasons for the difficulty in defining precisely what constitutes planning theory:

1) The broad nature of fundamental questions in planning and inherent overlap with other social science disciplines;

2) The porous boundary between planning and related professions such as architecture and politics;

3) Divisions within planning between those that see it as an object (land use patterns and the built environment) and those that consider planning to be a method (the process of decision making); and

4) Planning borrows from a wide range of methodologies (economics, sociology, psychology, political science) and therefore the theoretical base becomes difficult to pinpoint with precision.


193 Wildavsky, A. (1973, 127). It is noted that some 10 years later a response was published by Earnest Alexander in Town Planning Review which was titled “If Planning Isn’t Everything, Maybe It’s Something.” He called on planners to readdress Wildavsky’s claims and reassert the profession. Read (1982 and 1983) also followed with two rebuttal articles to Wildavsky’s claims.

194 Ibid, 127.

195 In Canadian planning, the most oft-quoted example of this authoritarian approach to implementing the public good is Africville, Halifax. Hindsight on this action and the resulting collapse of a community would identify this as a “tipping point” in Canadian planning- from that point forward, public consultation and the role of people in the decisions that impact their lives became increasingly part of every planning action.

196 Shifting back to practice, in the immediate post World War II years, planning in North America was influenced by the building boom to serve burgeoning populations. In North America, massive expansion of urban lands was deemed a requirement to house returning service personnel and their growing families, and a growth paradigm became the prevailing approach of planners. The master planned community was a new
development on the urban landscape, favoured by planning as it allowed for a comprehensive approach to the development of greenfield sites. Inherent in this approach is land economics—planning was shaped by the lure of tax dollars and the profits realized through economic development: “This was a new kind of urban order, in which business took precedence over every other kind of activity... The beauty of the new mechanical pattern allowed engineers to plan a metropolis, with standard lots, street widths, and standardized, comparable, replaceable parts.” The city was a breeding ground for commerce and profit, with continued importance given to producing land use patterns that maximized financial returns: instead of protecting the city as a haven for public institutions, park space, and the protection of the natural environment, success was measured by square feet of commercial space and population growth.

Current examples include British Columbia’s Agricultural Land Reserve and increasing interest in urban growth management (with the inclusion of enabling legislation in the Local Government Act in the mid 1990s.

For examples, see Hallsworth and Taylor, 1995; Guy 1996; and Friedmann 1987.

The business of land use planning, where citizens became clients and Gabler and Osborne’s Reinventing Government became the new guidebook for service provision, changed the shape of land use planning from the late 1980s forward. The adherence to this business model was in response to the public, private interests, governments, and other professions increasingly critical response to land use planning as an impediment to economic progress, blocking the modernization of cities. The pace of change required rapid decision making and flexibility—neither of these qualities that were inherent in land use planner’s desire to reform communities and create urban utopias. The watchwords of efficiency, effectiveness, benchmarking, and re-engineering for a new planning practice, focused on rapid approval processes that forced planners into a pragmatic, reactionary role, far removed from the search for ideal and perfect states for urban citizens.

Grant (2006, 330).

Chapin (1965, 39-40).

See Part 26 of the Local Government Act in British Columbia for the required and permissive content of Official Community Plans.


Leopold (1949, 29).


Krugman (2003, 5).

Lloyd, quoting Krugman (2004, 2)

Part 26, Division 4, section 890(3) of the Local Government Act.

Or as better stated by Winston Churchill “Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

It is interesting to note the wider context of this often quoted statement, which in its entirety reads: “We accept in the fullest sense of the word the settled and persistent will of the people. All this idea of a group of supermen and super-planners, such as we see before us, “playing the angel,” as the French call it, and making the masses of the people do what they think is good for them, without any check or correction, is a violation of democracy. Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time; but there is the broad feeling in our country that the people should rule, continuously rule, and that public opinion,
expressed by all constitutional means, should shape, guide, and control the actions of Ministers who are their servants and not their masters.”

Churchill was speaking before the House of Commons in 1947, to a bill that would reduce the delaying period for the House of Lords from two years to one year. He notes that democracy means that the people should rule and should shape decision making, not the decrees of “supermen and super-planners.”


Hodge (2005, 7).

Dewey, as quoted in Meyer (1975, 75)

Meyer (1975, 95)

Jones and Simmons (1990, 421).

Stoker (1993, 121). He goes on to add that stability within the society (as protected by regulations) is of paramount importance: citizens need to know that the society will operate in a particular manner and the rules of engagement will not change based on the personal power or position of the individual involved.


Not all would agree that equality is the key goal: for others, the role of government is to not impede the individual. As noted by Guess (2001, 3-4) (and with reference to German theorist Von Humbolt), “The state has no value in itself but is merely an necessary means to individual self-activity, any positive provision for individual welfare, whether spiritual, moral, or material, on the part of the state is inappropriate and in fact actively harmful because it preempts individual action. The state therefore ought to limit its sphere of activity to maintaining security, and it should otherwise allow its members to get on with their own private lives in whatever way they choose.”

Dewey (1965, 65).

Summarized in Dawson (1983a).

Department of the Environment (1988, 66).

Ibid, 67.

Pinch (1989, 3).


Keating (1991, see Brunet-Jailly, Chapter 13) suggests that to improve policy making, local governments must be able to include as many interests as possible in the decision making process.

These costs would include connecting to municipal water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems, as well as amenity costs which might include a public meeting space, parklands, trails, or an amenity contribution of cash to the local government. The developer may also be required to complete off site works, such as road improvements, signaling at intersections, or road construction, if it is deemed that the excess traffic created by the development will cause traffic beyond the current capacity of the road system.

Local governments have long used political powers to attract growth, amending incorporated boundaries, offering tax credits, waived fees, and development partnerships to compete against other municipalities or to ensure that developments did not locate in suburban locations beyond the municipality. In the late 1970s, the City of Edmonton negotiated a tax “holiday” for the developers of West Edmonton Mall to ensure that the mall would not locate in Calgary. The City of Nanaimo expanded its incorporated boundaries in the late 1970s to be assured of the tax revenues from potential sites for a regional shopping mall. Jones and Simmons detail the experience in Minnesota with the arrival of Triple 5 Corporation (the developers of West Edmonton Mall) and their proposal to build the largest shopping mall in America.
(unambiguously named the "Mall of America"). While civic officials in Minneapolis were less than supportive of the idea at first, given the level of investment the city had made in the downtown core, a site became available in neighbouring Bloomington and the Mall of America was completed.

228 Jones and Simmons (1990, 398).

151 As noted in Finnis, 1998. The early writings of St. Thomas Aquinas are typical of this line of inquiry: Aquinas believed that society should not focus on increasing the wealth of the individual or the corporate organization, as the search for profit enterprises would ultimately cause these individuals and corporations to act against the society itself and against good of all. His survey of St. Thomas's contributions to moral, legal and political philosophies focuses on the logical coherence within Aquinas' social theories (such as reasonableness, natural equality, and love of neighbour) and the relevance of these ideas to modern civic life.

229 Friedmann (1987, 313). Friedmann echoes Saul's conclusion, noting that without joint responsibility as members of a society, "each individual, each corporate entity and each social aggregate must go its own way in a Darwinian struggle without pity." (1987, 13).


233 Jones and Simmons (1990, 400).


235 In some locations (for example, Portland Oregon) this pattern of growth was halted sooner than the 1990s due to the early adoption of strategies to control urban growth such as urban containment boundaries, cessation of servicing expansions, and moratoriums on development of greenfield sites. In British Columbia, while some municipalities expressed an interest in growth management in the early 1990s, the legislation enabling local government bylaws was not adopted until 1995.

236 The shopping mall is one establishment that is often sweepingly categorized as 'all the same'. Baudrillard (1988, 33-4) depicted the mall as a consumer machine producing homogenized consumers. For him: "We have reached a point where 'consumption' has grasped the whole of life, where all activities are squeezed in the same combinatorial mode; where the schedule of gratification is outlined in advance, one hour at a time; and where the 'environment' is complete, completely climatized, finished and culturalized... work, leisure, nature, and culture all previously dispersed, separate, and more or less irreducible entities that produced anxiety and complexity in our real life, and in our 'anarchic and archaic' cities, have finally become mixed, massaged, climate controlled, and domesticated into the single activity of perpetual shopping."

Lunt and Livingstone (1992, 21) refer to the shopping mall "as a public forum – the site of participation in late capitalist society as formulated through commoditization.

Bauman notes that the word 'mall' in its original meaning meant a tract of land for strolling (1996, 27). He notes that the meaning of the word has been replaced – from a place for strolling to a place for shopping. Goss (1993, 41) takes this further and uses a language of plots, lures, and decoys to describe the strategic effect of malls on consumers. The mall is an instrument to bend the consumer, "concealed by the mask of the carnival, the patina of nostalgia, and the ironic essences of elsewhere." (Goss 1993, 40).

Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Hollbrook, and Rowlands take a less extreme view, interpreting shopping malls as "part of the process by which goods communicate, and are communicated as, social relationships." (1997, 26, italics in original).


238 See Dischhoff, 1979 for a discussion on the retail approval environment in Germany, and Guy, 2006 for a discussion on the approval process in Britain.
239 Guy 2006 notes that in the British context the former approach was more characteristic of the 1970s and the latter more so of the heady economic times of the 1980s.

240 In British Columbia, the legislation on the amendment of regional growth strategies (contained in Part 25 of the Local Government Act) requires the completion of a public hearing process, four readings of the bylaw, and referrals to other local governments and agencies.

241 Davies (1977, 57) and Lock 1976.

242 Criticisms of this role and of comprehensive planning are many, ranging from Altshuler’s (1965) to criticism that planners could not be capable of this wide understanding to Gabler and Osborne’s (1989) call for a focused, business-like, strategic approach. Others noted that the definition of public good in comprehensive planning was corrupted as only the loudest and powerful voices could be heard (as these were the only groups or individuals capable of participating in long term intensive planning processes), ignoring the needs of more marginal groups (see Krumholz 1996 and 2003).

243 As noted by Campbell and Fainstein (2003, 8) “The most powerful planners are those who can marshall resources to effect change and get projects built. They bend the role of the planner and alter the traditional separation between the public and private sectors. The resulting public-private partnerships make the planner more activist yet they also strain the traditional identity of the public planner and make many idealistic planners squirm.”


245 As discussed in Hodge (2008).
Chapter 4 The Public Good and Elements of the Retail Landscape

The evolution of the retail landscape is traced from the mid-twentieth century forward to the present form and distribution of retail establishments to consider the third of the three links underpinning this dissertation; that is, between the public good and elements of the retail landscape. The emphasis in this chapter is on the pragmatic realization of the way in which the retail landscape is shaped by or somehow incorporates the concept of the public good in the current distribution of strip malls, shopping centres, enclosed malls and big box stores, and in the relative demise of downtown retailing.

Leaving Downtown

While the decentralization of retailing to suburban locations was well underway by the 1920s in large cities where streetcar suburbs and increased automobile use had impacted urban form, at mid-century the central business district was still the primary shopping destination in most North American cities. Downtown was the centre for shopping, cultural activities, civic life, and professional employment, creating an urban structure that was supported by hub-designed public transit systems and by land use regulations that further concentrated these functions in a central location. However, as population shifted to suburban locations, the retail services formerly located downtown followed. At first, as Pacione writes, most suburban retailing was small, developing independently to serve the convenience needs of outlying residential communities, with retailing consequent to the residential development. Later (from the 1960s to the 1980s), retailing complexes grew in
communities that often focused the development around an enclosed shopping mall. Large-scale retailing was typically concentrated along major arterials and at key intersections to best serve multiple neighbourhoods. Retailing sometimes became the catalyst for new residential development, with shopping complexes built in advance of residential development. Woodgrove, the regional shopping centre considered in this study, provides an excellent exemplar of catalytic shopping centre development.

The suburbanization of retailing and the formats that evolved from the mid-century forward are, not surprisingly, the result of a complex interaction of many processes. Beuka credits the expansion of the middle class, the valorization of the nuclear family, and a trend “both utopian and exclusionary in nature” toward cultural homogenization as factors contributing to the outward growth and suburbanization of retailing. In addition, a rise in per capita income and new reliance on mass marketing techniques by chain stores and franchises also facilitated changes to the retail landscape and encouraged the development of strip malls and shopping centres. While these first chainstores and franchises were well-established by the start of the twentieth century, their mid-twentieth century growth is cited by Longstreth as “among the most significant developments in national retailing practices and one that ultimately had a profound effect on the nature of outlying business centres.”

Chainstores and franchises grew to dominate the retail landscape because they offered consumers two perceived benefits: first, lower prices, due to expanded purchasing powers and cost savings that could be passed on to consumers; and second, uniform product quality and availability across the retail establishments. The chains were early adopters of the shift to the suburbs, responding to the lower rents, a desire for new and individually-designed retail spaces (where the retail space itself became a sign or signature of the store),
free and ample parking, and high accessibility and visibility along major traffic arteries.\textsuperscript{257} Early understanding of retail location theory and the ability to conduct complex locational analyses validated the chain's suburban strategy, with operations sited near sufficient densities of better-off consumers.\textsuperscript{258} \textsuperscript{259} In city after city, the same mix of retailing is contained in most enclosed shopping malls, powercentres, and lifestyle commercial centres; with some regional variations, these outlets provide the same array of products and services in stores with largely identical layouts and price points; in Canada alone it is estimated that there are more than 1,000 retail chains that operate at four or more locations.\textsuperscript{260} While economic conditions in early 2009 have resulted in the closure of several well-known chains (including Linens N Things, Petcetera, and Circuit City) and major reductions in the number of outlets of others (such as Eddie Bauer, Ann Taylor, and even the Disney Store) the ubiquitous array of chainstores and franchises across North American cities remains the most defining features of today’s suburban retail landscape.

Birkin, Clarke, and Clarke (2002) conclude that it is difficult to understand if the trend pulling retailing toward the suburbs was entirely demand-led or supply-led. "On the one hand, consumer pressures for cheaper prices and greater consumer mobility undoubtedly created conditions that allowed (suburban retail) to grow. On the other hand, development cannot be understood without recourse to the rapid growth in retail buying power, resulting from the most innovative retailers gaining greater scale economies, which in turn allowed discount prices to be offered to the consumer. The change also required a pliant planning regime, both nationally and locally."\textsuperscript{261} Regarding a "pliant planning regime," it is worth noting that local governments and in particular land use planners had a role in encouraging the shifting outward of retailing through support for new zoning bylaws that
enabled the dispersion of commercial services. As zoning bylaws became more common from the 1950s to the 1970s, each new proposal for suburban-based shopping required a zoning amendment. Greenfield site development remained the norm for retail venues until the 1990s, therefore most of these zoning amendments considered the application of commercial zoning on lands formerly used for rural or rural-residential land uses. Along with the suburbanization of retailing, other tangential land uses shifted outward, both leading and supporting change in the retail landscape. Kent Robinson (1999) cites the suburbanization of professional offices, movie theatres, hotels, post offices, libraries, and even city halls as factors that increasingly allowed suburban populations to focus their life activities in regional centres. The reasons to go downtown were reduced, and citizens began to stay away. Robinson contends that downtown areas engaged in “a vicious cycle where remaining businesses were forced to close or relocate as the number of downtown visitors declined.” He adds that a new perception of downtown areas began to develop, imaged as “an obsolete place with vacant storefronts, poorly maintained buildings and sidewalks, and empty streets.”

Why is the decline of downtown-based retailing of consuming interest to many cities? At issue is the municipality’s definition of the public good, and whether it is viewed as important to the citizenry to include a vibrant downtown core in the retail landscape. In most North American cities, the downtown is the historic heart. Usually the sites of first settlement, downtowns contain a city’s oldest buildings and heritage structures. Downtown is often the centre for civic life, and the image of a city is shaped by the health of its downtown core. The downtown core also represents significant and long-term civic investment in infrastructure and services. Post-1970, many municipalities admitted to the
decline of a retail focus in downtown with the rise of suburban retailing, and pursued
downtown revitalization strategies. The level of investment in revitalization by municipalities
across North America would suggest that civic officials do see the public good reflected in a
healthy and lively downtown core. Investment in street improvements, conference centres,
walkways, and parkspace are all methods by which local governments have attempted to
breathe new life into urban centres. From a review of downtown revitalization efforts that
have had some measure of success, it would appear that the public good for downtown areas
will be realized in regaining a role in civic life, culture, and ceremony — but not retailing. The
development of new retailing downtown will remain limited unless the resident
population reaches a threshold level to support new services, or levels of tourism and
itinerant populations are sufficient to support retail functions. For many cities, however, a
lack of confidence in the viability of downtown-focused retailing will perpetuate the
suburban-focused retail landscape.

**Strip Malls and Shopping Centres**

Outside the downtown core, new forms of retailing — the strip malls and shopping
centres — dominated after the mid-twentieth century. These outlets offered clusters of retail
services in attached units with integrated store façades. The new suburban strip malls and
shopping centres were set apart from residential areas as single purpose land uses,
characterized by parking areas that offered free and ample parking. These new facilities were
modern, clean, orderly, and quiet when compared to downtown areas. Most importantly,
they offered a distinct shopping experience to patrons who were motivated mainly by
shopping, compared to the myriad objectives of persons found downtown.
New building technologies contributed to the pace of change in the retail landscape. Stores could be built quickly and relatively cheaply. The architecturally-designed and recognizable façades of chainstores and franchises gave a feeling of cohesiveness to new developments. Building codes were amended to encourage single-use developments, allegedly for reasons of fire separation and for control of occupancy. Planners and elected officials were captivated by the concept of master-planned and comprehensive commercial developments. Zoning bylaws were written or amended to include larger-scaled developments proximate to burgeoning residential populations. The entrenchment of strip malls and shopping centres is also attributed to new methods of financing from private sources, banks, and even government by capitalists willing to take a risk on large projects located far from the city centre. Dawson credits consumers with “embarking on the road to a mass consumption economy, becoming more mobile, increasingly suburban, and willing to undertake and finance multi-purpose shopping trips” as a key factor needed to ensure the success of suburban shopping centres. Longstreth adds additional factors: the implementation of a 40-hour work week (which increased leisure time); the proportional rise in the middle class; sustained economic growth; low land costs in suburban areas; and the pursuit of the “American Dream” by all with the financial wherewithal to qualify for a mortgage on a freestanding dwelling unit with a sizable yard area. Jonassen argues that “consumer’s market behaviour is essentially a compromise adaptation to attracting and repelling forces evaluated within a framework of his attitudes and values (parking, traffic and crowding become meaningful motivational factors)” in pushing or pulling consumers out of downtown and into the suburban shopping centres. His research confirms that while downtown retailing offered a wide selection of goods and the opportunity for a consumer to
complete multiple errands, the suburban advantages of proximity to home, expanded hours of operation, and easy parking more than outweighed the compensations of downtown. In addition, the disadvantages of downtown shopping, especially poor parking, excessive traffic, congestion, and crowding, were perceived as more negative than a suburban shopping centre’s problems such as a lack of selection in consumer goods and a limited range of businesses. While Jonassen was prescient in his study on the impact of shopping centres, he concluded less successfully by predicting that “the fad of shopping centres would be short-lived.”

How is the public good reflected in a landscape of strip malls and shopping centres? First, it can be said that locating retailing proximate to residential population is foundational to the public good, enabling residents to satisfy shopping needs in multi-purpose trips to a single strip mall or shopping centre location. Ideally, the location of these centres near residential developments encourages alternative modes of transportation and potentially creates a focal point for the community. In reality, the purpose of most twentieth-century malls and centres was not to encourage “walkability” or “community” in residential neighbourhoods, as might be the case for today’s New Urbanist neighbourhood-based shopping nodes. Instead, the early strip malls and shopping centres were sited for automobile-driving shoppers. The safety of pedestrians was of secondary concern in parking lots designed for maximum parking availability and rapid access and egress. Second, it is reasonable to say that local governments served the public good by encouraging the development of new retailing to add to the mix and range of available services and create new employment opportunities. Kivell and Shaw state that local governments, when faced with well-prepared plans that proposed modern retail establishments, the lure of new tax
funding, and the potential for new employment, were quick to approve suburban retailing. They argue that local governments were more than willing to acquiesce to the master plans of well-financed developers, noting "the original intent behind zoning legislation was to create a logical orderly system of land use regulation where the intended use of every property was known in advance and development would occur as a matter of right." Moreover, the concept plans presented by retail developers appeared to be the very picture of economic right and order. Longstreth concurs, noting that policies and regulations drafted in the decades following World War II have increasingly favoured the development of outlying areas over the infill or redevelopment of city centre sites, and cites the local government rationale noted above.

At first glance, the economic gains from suburban residential development would appear to be a strong rationale for acquiescing to the lure of new retailing. As early as 1955, however, researchers were questioning whether the economics of new retailing was really "good" for municipalities. Employment creation in suburban shopping complexes contributed to the loss of retail functions in the downtown core. Municipalities sprawled outward as new residential and commercial development expanded incorporated boundaries, creating infrastructure costs that are only now being realized. The growth of the suburbs changed city form, and new developments focused first on the ease of automobile travel and only secondly on the place of the pedestrian or the public realm. From a taxation perspective, new businesses and assessment added to the tax base, but gains were somewhat offset by business closures and declining land values downtown. While difficult to quantify, it is questionable if the economic gains realized by ever-expanding retailing outweighed the social and environmental costs of suburbanization.
Malls and Mega-Malls

By the 1970s, the retail landscape across North America was characterized by downtown area with declining retail functions, commercial strips focused on major roadways, shopping centres anchored by grocery stores surrounded by chain establishments, and the occasional stand-alone discount centre. Through the 1970s and into the 1980s, however, a new form of retailing placed a significant footprint on the retail landscape – the enclosed shopping mall. As with most seemingly new ideas, the architectural form of the modern mall is an idea as old as cities, with the benefits of agglomeration recognized early on by both retailers and consumers. The new enclosed malls offered a conglomerate of retail stores contained under a single roof – a format not particularly inventive or generally architecturally interesting, but serving the utilitarian purpose of expediting consumer expenditures in a perceived clean, safe, climate-controlled venue, one that separates the consumer from traffic, noise, street-life, and anyone not engaged in the pursuit of retail satisfaction. Jane Jacobs notes that “probably nothing characterizes the change in American cities and suburban areas in recent history so much as the growth and expansion of large shopping malls.” Jones and Simmons concur: “The retail landscape both reflects and reveals the social system in which it is embedded. North America is a shopping mall.”

The factors supporting the development of enclosed shopping malls are well understood: the omnipresent automobile; increased interest in consumer goods along with greater disposable income; the shifting of urban populations to the suburbs; and support from council and land use planners seemingly without consideration of the impact on downtowns, traffic generation, or the deadening of a wide swath of urban space with a blanket of asphalt for temporary automobile storage. While strip malls and shopping centres
might provide the same range of services, the mall offered protection from traffic and weather in an enclosed, climate-controlled environment. As a structure, the mall proved its superiority over the strip mall or shopping centre, providing a greater degree of separation of pedestrians from traffic and controlled access into the facility which minimized consumer options for direct travel paths within the mall. The enclosed mall also created a new experience for consumers, limiting their interaction with the non-shopping public and offering full control over noise, street activities, and even climate. Visually, consumers were not faced with the unsightliness of loading zones or garbage areas; instead the streetscape contained coordinated signage, finishes, and fixtures. Careful coordination among its tenants created a meaningful shopping experience for consumers. Longstreth observes that “the shopping mall was the most important means by which fully-integrated management and merchandising techniques became institutionalized in retail development.”

Most malls constructed after the 1950s echoed the design of Victor Gruen’s famous Southdale prototype in Minneapolis, with its covered hallways, interior courtyard spaces that functioned as food courts, and controlled access limited to a few shared entrance locations. Malls were generally built in the shape of an ‘I’, ‘T’, or ‘H’, but variations and combinations of these three standard forms can be found. Within the mall, Jones and Simmons note that “clusters of closely related or competitive activities may provide sub-foci in their own right” with synergistic uses gathering together for customer convenience. The finishes used both within and outside the mall were usually standardized. Jane Jacobs (1984) comments on this homogeneity, noting that malls are marked by hard-surfaced interiors made of tile, plastic, and glass that are easy to maintain and largely indestructible. The exteriors as well are low maintenance and intentionally unattractive, featureless facades (except for signage) bound on
all sides by parking and minimalist landscaping. Jacobs sees the standardization of malls across North America as both positive and negative. While the same stores, same signs, and same interiors can be comforting and familiar, the banality of mall space, its predictability, and even its convenience can be overwhelmingly boring. She writes that “malls are constructed with one major goal in mind – to make money” and the standardization of indestructible places is a means of ensuring profit for the retailers and mall management.  

Jacobs also comments on the second purpose of the mall. To her, the mall is a place to escape the vulgarities of urban life. She states that “unlike the variety of people one might encounter in the downtown area, one does not encounter vagrants, drunks, prostitutes, street people, ex-mental patients, anyone who does not belong. The mall is homogeneous, and contains respectable looking and well behaved people.” Consumers expect to see the same range of stores and facilities in shopping malls, that is, to see only people who are engaged in mall-supported behaviours. Longstreth concurs, adding that “cars are absent, but so are animals, carts, wagons, street vendors, and many forms of unorganized activity.” The mall served as a place of protection for the consumer, of separation from “the other,” where activities are limited and controlled. Homogeneity and predictability became the key factors in attracting consumers. The mall provided what was expected by consumers.

While the content and intent of malls remained unchanged, the structures themselves did evolve into new formats in the late-1970s and 1980s. The megamall added wide range of new activities at first seemingly unrelated to shopping, such as movie theatres, amusement parks, and game zones, replicating elements more closely associated with theme parks or entertainment centres. West Edmonton Mall remains the most widely-known example, containing 825 stores, 32 theatres, a waterpark, submarines, amusement park, miniature golf
course, skating rink, more than 100 restaurants, a chapel, and a theme hotel within its 2-level, 5.2 million square feet.290 A second familiar North American megamall is the The Mall of America in Minneapolis-St.Paul, Minnesota. It boasts a Lego Land, the world's largest underground aquarium ("voted the World's Best Shark Encounter with over 4,500 sea creatures and a virtual submarine"), a theme park, indoor golf, and along with 520 stores, 50 restaurants, and 20,000 parking spots.291 The intent of including entertainment facilities in malls was simple. It was to offer a product to certain reluctant clientele who were not interested in acquiring new goods; now they had a reason to go to the mall and find satisfaction at the mall's playlands and sports bars. "In retrospect," Lucas concludes, "it is clear that malls were essentially theme parks from the beginning, thanks in part to the rise of chain stores, each of which provided a mini-theme in the form of an idealized brand experience.292

Investment in large-scale shopping malls in North America largely ceased by the mid-1980s as this form of retailing was proving to be increasingly difficult to support from an economic perspective.293 A lack of inexpensive land, difficulties in land assembly, ever-increasing construction costs, and the costs associated with the negative space and fixtures of the mall – the corridors, atriums, parking areas, and landscaping, all features that do not generate an income – made the construction of malls less attractive to developers. In addition, the entertainment facilities did not always generate expected incomes. For tenants, the high costs associated with enclosed malls caused some retailers to seek other, stand-alone opportunities. Retailers could separate themselves from the corporate environment of the mall, decrease expenses related to mall administration, and construct structures that provided greater interior flexibility and independent ownership.294 These establishments could
agglomerate in powercentres that offered some of the synergies of massing but allowed for independent management. More on this follows below.

Megamalls continue to be constructed in other world regions, offering an increasingly larger and mind-boggling array of services.\textsuperscript{205} They persist on the retail landscape because they serve a purpose, providing concentrated retailing opportunities to a surrounding trade area in a place of relative safety and comfort. But malls and megamalls, like any other form of retailing, have a lifespan both in terms of built construction and in the consumer's continued attraction to an aging shopping venue. To this end, several current examples exist of the re-invention of enclosed shopping malls. Some venues continue to add new services (locally with the expansion of the Harewood Mall and its rebranding as University Village). Others "implode" the mall by reorienting access points to individual storefronts on the exterior of the building, or by adding new uses such as office space.

| Table I: The 10 Largest Malls by Gross Leasable Area (GLA) in the World |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Ranking** | **Mall** | **Location** | **GLA (millions ft\(^2\)) / GLA (m\(^2\))** |
| 1 | South China Mall | Dongguan, China | 6.5/600,000 |
| 2 | Jin Yuan | Beijing, China | 6.0/560,000 |
| 3 | Central World Plaza | Bangkok, Thailand | 5.9/550,000 |
| 4 | Dream Mall | Kaohsiung, Taiwan | 4.3/400,000 |
| 5 | SM Mall of Asia | Pasay City, Philippines | 4.2/386,000 |
| 6 | West Edmonton Mall | Edmonton, Alberta | 3.8/360,000 |
| 7 | Cevahir Mall | Istanbul, Turkey | 3.8/348,000 |
| 8 | SM City North EDSA | Quezon City, Philippines | 3.6/331,000 |
| 9 | SM Megamall | Mandaluyong City, Philippines | 3.6/331,000 |
| 10 | Berjaya Times Square | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | 3.5/320,000 |

(source: Eastern Connecticut State University – Shopping Centre Studies. Obtained online at http://www.easternct.edu/depts/amers/MallsWorld.htm)
Locally, Country Club Centre has added a call centre which encompasses a substantial portion of the once vacant interior space of the mall, as well as two new fully attached big-box stores and two stand-alone mid-sized box stores). Currently, the largest redevelopment project in Western Canada is Heritage Mall in Edmonton, Alberta. The mall had a relatively short lifespan, opening in 1981 and closing in 2001. In the 1980s, the two-storey structure was anchored by four tenants, Eaton’s, Safeway, Sears and Woolco and was well-leased until the closure of Eaton’s and the purchase of Woolco by Wal-Mart in the early 1990s. Wal-Mart soon left for a stand-alone structure, and the inability to lease the vacated spaces resulted in the loss of smaller chainstores and franchises. The mall has now been fully demolished, and will be replaced by Century Park, a 3,000 multi-unit residential development with extensive greenspace and a very small retail component.296

Again, how is the public good represented in a landscape of malls and megamalls? Notwithstanding previous comments on the single-minded focus of elected officials and planners on the perceived economic benefits of new retailing in any format, Zepp (among others) has written on the issue of the privatization of the public realm as being contrary to the public good. Although the interior space of the mall, with its wide hallways, food courts and architectural features such as large-scale fountains and clock towers that replicate features found in public parks, gives the appearance of public space, malls are privately-owned and operated to preserve order and encourage consumer behaviour (Zepp, 1997). Not all uses or people are welcome. “In shopping malls people considered disruptive to shopping are excluded and shops found in the high street such as pawnshops and second-hand bookshops are not granted a tenancy. Other unwelcome folk include the homeless and groups of teenagers.”297 The contempt of Jane Jacobs for the sanitized mall environment is
well-known. She dismissively characterizes the space as a place only for “respectable and well-behaved people” (1984, 13). It is important to note that Victor Gruen, the architect perhaps most closely affiliated with the enclosed mall as a retail space, believed that malls should be designed to “service civic, cultural, and social community needs.” That is, the mall should be more than a place for selling and also part of the social fabric of a community. To a degree, enclosed malls succeed in doing so. They can be the focal points of surrounding communities, a place for teens to socialize and walking groups to be protected from inclement weather. This social role, however, is tempered by fact that the mall is a privately-owned and operated space.

The power of retailers to protect the private spaces within shops or malls has long been an issue, first argued in the United States Supreme Court in 1946. At that time, the Court determined that constitutionally, individuals do not have an absolute right to enter and remain on private property to exercise their right to free expression. This ruling has been tested on a number of occasions and has been supported by the majority of states faced with the question of balancing personal rights of expression with rights of private land owners. For example, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that the Mall of America is not a public space with First Amendment rights protection. This ruling was made in response to a charge from a local group of activists who felt their rights had been violated when they were prohibited from passing out leaflets in the mall. The New Jersey Supreme Court, however, in one of a few exceptions, decided first in 1980 and then again in 1994 that because mall owners "have intentionally transformed their property into a public square or market, a public gathering place, a downtown business district, a community," they cannot later deny their own implied invitation to use the space as it was clearly intended. In Canada, the ...
question of the mall as private or public space does not appear to have been responded to directly by the courts. However, specific points on the public use of private space have been tested. A group of retail union organizers attempted to hand out information in Toronto’s Eaton Centre in 1984 and were prohibited from doing so by the local police, who charged the protesters with trespass. The union took the case to the Ontario Supreme Court which ruled against Cadillac Fairview, owners of the Centre, stating “the right of workers to meet union organizers is more important than a company’s right to protect its private property from trespassers.” While the private/public space question has not fully been determined, “codes of conduct” are common postings on mall entrance points, prohibiting activities as diverse as skateboarding and picture taking. No examples of legal challenges to these codes could be found. At the core of this issue is the question of social power and its relationship to the public good. The suburban mall is a place for shopping and a community node, a focal point for citizen activities and a gathering place. If the hallways and food courts of shopping malls are perceived by most as public spaces, can it then be considered to be in the interests of the public good for citizens to have use of these spaces? If malls are not part of the public realm, and if all but mall-approved activities are excluded from the space, can the public good be found at the mall? What is the role of land use planning in protecting the public use of pseudo-public spaces? It is evident from the literature that while the place of the public within the confines of the mall has been at least noted by the courts, land use planning has largely avoided the discussion.

At issue, as well, is land use planning’s role in allowing the enclosed shopping mall to become the “megacultural feature of the urban landscape” (Dawson, 1983, 7). Zoning is the primary tool that has been used to permit the addition of shopping malls to the retail
landscape. In Dawson's view, these bylaws have exaggerated the importance of accessibility and agglomeration processes in the suburbs by designating lands adjacent to major intersections for commercial uses and by favouring the comparative ease of developing greenfield sites over the redevelopment of lands in city centres. He adds that the original intent of zoning regulations was to create a logical, orderly system of land classification where the use of every property would be known in advance and development could therefore occur as a matter of right. However, local governments have increasingly used zoning bylaws as a means of giving more flexibility to developers and more discretion to elected officials and land use planners. In municipalities with adopted zoning bylaws, each site for a strip mall, shopping centre, and enclosed mall has required the approval of local government. Most often, these approvals were sought by developers bearing well-developed land use proposals. On occasion, local governments pre-zoned suburban lands to attract development or offer certainty to local residents on the future location of commercial uses. The allure of new retailing, the enticement of comprehensive plans, and the economic gains from development have often proved too difficult to resist.

As to the future of shopping malls, Jane Jacobs predicted in 1984 that given the number of malls, sunk costs, and the economic and social effects that malls have on the physical and social landscapes, it is reasonable to expect that malls will persist on the landscape, supplying a diversion for the bored, convenient shopping, and perceived safety for consumers. However, Jacobs has warned that these spaces will be replaced when a retail use is proposed that is seen as more entertaining and more convenient for consumers (1984, 15). By the mid-1980s, this new use had appeared on the landscape.
Arrival of the Big Box Stores

The prevailing form of new retailing constructed from the 1980s into the 1990s was the stand-alone big box store. Big box retail stores, typically larger than 50,000 square feet in size, may in fact range up to 250,000 square feet for the largest supercentres. From an architectural perspective, their defining features are few: the structures are rapidly constructed with a standardized facade, either windowless or with windows only on the front face of the single-storey building. Adherence to corporate signage and colour schemes make all outlets of one retail business identical, regardless of location. Big box stores offer benefits similar to shopping centres and enclosed malls: a climate controlled, efficiently ordered, highly consistent, one-stop shopping experience. Consumers can expect different stores from the same chain to have the same product line, layout, and interior and exterior design, making shopping the same regardless of the location of the store. The big box stores also add new benefits for shoppers, the most important perceived as cost savings. The shift to a supercentre model by some big box retailers has added further services such as film processing, optometrists, and banking services. After the sheer size of the buildings, the strongest visual impact is the vast parking acreage fronting each establishment. These parking lots are a physical representation of the target audience of the big box store – the automobile-using consumer who is willing to sacrifice customer service for low prices and convenience shopping.

Arnold and Luthra detail five categories of big box stores: (1) the discount department store carrying non-food merchandise (for example, small format Wal-Marts); (2) super warehouses carrying food only (e.g., Real Canadian Warehouse); (3) category specialists (also referred to as "category killers") such as Home Depot and Toys R Us; (4)
warehouse membership club stores (e.g., Costco); and (5) supercentres carrying food and non-food merchandise (e.g., Wal-Mart SuperCentres). These five types of large format retailers differ from each other in the spectrum of products offered, but are similar in their adherence to a low price/high volume retail strategy, in their impact on independent retailers and localized economies, and in their sheer physical size. Size depends on the category of the retailer. In a recent analysis, Genest-Laplante wrote that big box shoe stores and clothing stores are among the smallest of the big box centres at 30,000 to 50,000 square feet, while the largest of the multi-product supercentres, offering foodstuffs, hardware, clothing, shoes, and household goods, exceed 200,000 square feet.

The intrinsic benefits of the big box format are obvious from a supply perspective: large purchasing power, negative inventories, high sales volumes, low staffing costs and the reach of national advertising. All of these factors make the big box format an attractive option for retailers who achieve this scale. But the big box stores persist on the retail landscape from a demand perspective, as well. Arnold, Handelman, and Tigert, in an investigation of consumer choice and large-scale marketers, found that consumers ranked (in order) location, assortment, and low prices as the most important criteria shaping shopping decisions. In a later report, Arnold and Luthra reviewed Huff’s (1964) gravity model of retail attraction against shopping patterns in a defined study area and concluded that their findings concur with Huff’s model: shoppers choose stores primarily on the basis of distance and product availability. However, if low price, which is generally equated with the big box format, was part of the equation, consumers would favour that location, particularly if the big box stores operated as part of a larger powercentre. Benefits are seen by local governments, as well, in support for commercial activities that contribute to the tax base and
create local employment. On occasion, the development of big box stores and powercentres on the peripheries of cities can lead to developer-funded infrastructure expansions, providing further benefits to local government.

Figure 9: Relative size of big box formats


It would be neglectful not to mention Wal-Mart in any discussion of big box stores.\textsuperscript{311} 312 The first Wal-Mart establishments offered, at best, a utilitarian shopping experience that quickly gained popularity with consumers. “Presentation and quality were not initially hallmarks of Walton’s strategy, but offering the lowest prices was, and customers began to flock in from miles away.”\textsuperscript{313} In fact, these early stores had “all the ambiance of bus stations, but with dirt-cheap prices.”\textsuperscript{314} 315 The number of Walton’s Wal-Marts quickly expanded, targeting sites within driving distance of existing nucleations, acquiring
competitors, and gradually extending beyond the existing market place. Laulajainen adds that Wal-Mart’s expansion strategies in the United States also contained untried but proven elements of opening warehouses in advance of the new stores and focusing on small towns and fringe areas. Larger centres were only targeted after rural areas were saturated, a pattern of “hierarchical diffusion in a reverse order.” This store siting approach recognized that in the United States, at least, there was purchasing power in small centers and surrounding rural trade areas, and also that competition from other rapidly expanding retail formats was limited. In 1975, Wal-Mart became the largest retailer in North America in terms of dollar sales per year and a primary reason for the ongoing success of suburban-based retailing. Wal-Mart entered the Canadian market in 1994 by acquiring the 122-store Woolco Canada chain, increasing in number to 278 by 2008.

Along with Wal-Mart, other major companies in the big box category embarked on massive Canadian expansion campaigns in the mid- to late-1990s. Home Depot entered Canada in 1994, growing to 165 stores with 28,000 employees by 2008. Other major retailers joining in the big box expansion included Costco, the Real Canadian Superstore, Future Shop, Canadian Tire, Zellers, Home Outfitters, Staples, and Pier One, as well as retailers who shifted to a big box format, including Shoppers Drug Mart and numerous clothing retailers. Of these, a stand-alone format is favoured by some such as Costco, while others seek to concentrate in “powercentres” or agglomerations of big box stores concentrated in regional locations with access to major collector routes or highways.

Weighed against consumer and local government support for big box stores are a number of concerns. The excessively large format of big box stores along with low staffing levels, minimalist aesthetics, changing layouts, pricing mistakes, and their impact on existing
local businesses are all factors that raise the issue of the public good.\textsuperscript{324} As with the
chainstores and franchises, the ubiquity of these establishments is a strength for retailers and
for consumers looking for a uniform shopping experience, but is negative from the
perspective of urban aesthetics. The adherence of big box stores to a corporate format
creates a landscape of sameness along the highways and fringes of urban areas, representing
everywhere and nowhere at the same time. For detractors, one of the impacts of big box
stores that have been inadequately researched is abandonment, where “a business already
operating in a node opts for a larger-format model by relocating to new premises and leaving
behind a vacant storefront and possibly the beginning of a blighted landscape.”\textsuperscript{325} In many
cases, these abandoned big box stores remain empty because new buildings are purpose-built
to specifications unique to each company.\textsuperscript{326} On some occasions, these vacant storefronts
have been replaced by lower-order retail uses such as dollar stores; in the United States even
churches have taken up residence.\textsuperscript{327} The impact of the large format retailer on local
employment is also cited for concern. Jones and Doucet (2000) note that a concentration of
big box stores creates jobs but at the same time results in job losses at competing stores.
Their research reveals that big box employment in the Greater Toronto area grew by 61
percent in the 1993-1997 period, while non big-box employment declined by 2 percent. The
net effect might be an actual increase in the number of jobs, but the quality of employment
opportunities is perceived to be lessened, with greater likelihood of part time employment,
lower wages, limited benefits, and non-career employment. Rychilwsky (1996) found that
power centres tend to hire fewer people than regional malls. A Brampton, Ontario
powercentre employed one person for every 560 sq.ft of Gross Leasable Area (GLA), while
a regional mall employed one person for every 504 sq.ft. If power centres replace regional malls, this could lead to a net loss in employment. 328

While difficult to quantify, the impact of big box stores and power centres on urban life and a sense of community is also of concern. Weinstein (1994) found that the entry of large format retail stores can disrupt the traditional patterns of social exchange in a community. Kunstler’s Geography of Nowhere (1993) over-dramatically maps the decline of North American cities and city centres, largely blamed on the evolution of big box stores, permissive planning legislation, and a “car-crazed” lifestyle. Hernandez and Jones (2005) comment not only on the significant shift in retail activities to suburban areas, but on the diminished role of public places to congregate and experience a sense of community. While it might be argued that an enclosed shopping mall at least attempts to integrate a sense of community into the common areas by supplying benches in defined spaces and introducing “street art” in the form of fountains and statues, the asphalted landing strip in front of stand-alone big box stores and in powercentres does little to contribute to community or sociability in an urban environment. In defense of these formats, at least they do not pretend to be public gathering spaces; their sole purpose remains directed toward economic efficiency and profit (Hahn, 2000).

Given levels of investment and consumer popularity, the future of big box stores on the retail landscape is assured for the short-term, although the expansionism of the late-1990s is currently slowing. 329 Other studies have suggested that “large format retailers are likely to experience a life cycle of growth, maturity, and decline that is similar to department stores and variety stores.” 330 For example, Hahn (2000) argues that big box stores and powercentres reached their maximum capacity in about a ten-year period, from the mid-
1980s to the mid-1990s. This was followed by a decade of relative stability. The big box stores and powercentres are now venturing into a period of consolidation and bankruptcy. From an international perspective, Cliquet (2000) submits that that hypermarket growth in France appears to have slowed, and suggests that the natural life cycle curve of retailing operations predicts the eventual demise of this format, which he confidently predicts for 2015.

The Newest Format: Lifestyle Commercial Centres

As large greenfield sites on the edges of cities become scarce and as development costs continue to rise, a “smaller is better” format appears to be making inroads on the retail landscape. The latest embodiment of retailing is a return to earlier times, when pedestrians were separated from traffic, shade trees sheltered shoppers, and two-storey buildings lined the street front with retail outlets on the main floor and either residences or office space above. The latest feature on the retail landscape – the lifestyle commercial centre – is an attempt to recapture and replicate elements that characterize organically evolved retail precincts. The goal is to create an environment where community appears to exist and the comfort of the shopper appears to be paramount.

Lifestyle commercial centres are intended to bridge the product mix of the mall with the street life of the friendly downtown of years past. Shoppers are surrounded by small store fronts that replicate a village or small town street. The apparently separated storefronts might in fact simply be façades; the business behind may in fact stretch across several seemingly separate storefronts, and not all the doors may open to grant access the store. The street fixtures and furnishings are built at a human scale, and outdoor gatherings of
shoppers are encouraged. Parking is hidden behind the storefronts, creating safe passage for the shopping pedestrian. The colours, textures, and signage used are highly thematic and generally muted, all intended to create the appearance of a consolidated street front. Most buildings and structures are two stories in height, giving the appearance of two-storey mixed use structures. In fact, the second story is often a pretense, masking the immense height of the interior structure, or may house the office space relating to the retailing below. The stores themselves are chainstores and franchises that typically populate enclosed malls and powercentres, but in this case presented in smaller formats. The lifestyle commercial centres are much informed by New Urbanist principles that encourage walkability, a lessened role for the automobile, and human-scaled design.

This latest addition to the retail landscape is too new to have received much formal attention in the literature. More information is available from a developer’s perspective, as these lifestyle commercial centres are increasingly part of a master planned community. They have replaced the powercentres once sited on the periphery a community. In these centres, the requisite coffee space, perhaps part of a smaller-scale big box book store, creates the “third space” for consumers. The small-scale office supply store meets business needs and clothing stores and restaurants provide necessary diversions. These new lifestyle commercial centres appear to be a genuine attempt to address the inhumanity of stand alone big box developments and powercentres, and are designed to re-connect the patron with outdoor street life. A less altruistic view suggests that the implosion of the mall to allow street access to retail spaces has cleverly eliminated the expensive corridors that mall owners were once required to maintain, and parking spaces have not been reduced, simply relocated.
Further observation of this latest retail phenomenon is needed to fully understand its impacts on the retail landscape.

Conclusion

The retail landscape continues to be shaped and reshaped by consumer demand and available supply, and new forms of retailing keep evolving to respond to the needs of consumers and suppliers. Change in the retail landscape has been enabled by advances in technology, the rise of private transportation, and changing consumer preferences. What cannot be said with the same certainty, however, is that change in the retail landscape can be attributed to actions or the intent of land use planners to achieve the public good. As a defining feature of the urban environment, the retail landscape has an enormous impact on the quality of life of urban residents. However, noticeably absent in both the literature and the practice of is a clear understanding of how the public good is realized in the retail landscape. The following chapters address this oversight.

Endnotes

246 As to the practice of retailing, Crowe, W.A. and M. Siemonsen (1996) define retailing as “the business activity of selling goods and services to customers for consumer use.” (1996, 14) and further, note that the major function of retailing is to sell products and services at a profit. Statistics Canada defines retail trade as the aggregate sales made through retail outlets and a retailer as a business location (usually a store) in which the principal activity is the sale of merchandise and related services to the general public, for household or personal consumption. Crowe and Siemonsen note that many retail activities – for example, door to door sales, internet, and home sales are not captured in this definition. (1996, 13).

247 Pacione would add the background of a relatively free market economy and the absence of strong state and local planning laws as reasons for the decentralization of retailing (2000, 233).

248 Leach (1993, 30).
In thriving downtowns, the defining feature was often the department store. Department stores offered a wide assortment of goods, new credit policies, price awareness, media promotion, and new inventory control procedures that better guaranteed the availability of goods (Savitt 1992, 1999). New services such as restaurants, gift wrapping, and an emphasis on the aesthetics of retailing gave further definition to the department stores as "machines for selling" (as coined by Victor Gruen).

The structure of the department stores required a rethinking of retail space. The size and open configuration of department stores required new building techniques and materials that were later applied to large-scale shopping malls and big box stores. Within the department store, the compartmentalizing of goods was a precursor to the enclosed shopping mall, which expanded on the idea of partitioned sites for selling.


Beuka (2004, 2).

Gillette (1985, 450).

Longstreth (1998, 71). He notes that chains offered greater purchasing power, commanded lower prices from manufacturers, had operating efficiencies, their own wholesaling, credit and delivery services systems, stock that enjoyed rapid turnover, could advertise, and could attract skilled retail workers. The chain stores were clean, orderly, and had similar store layouts, offering predictability and familiarity. While the establishment of chain retailers (defined as three or more units with commonalities in appearance and product lines) was initially opposed by independent retailers, retail consolidation through the economic downturn during the 1930s silenced most critics, and chain and franchise operations were well established by the mid-century.

Courser (2005, 8). The author notes that in 1929 and 1930 over 140 anti-chain store bills were introduced in US state legislatures.

Ortega (1998, 40).

The A & P was among the first major North American chain operation, growing from a single Great American Tea Company storefront in Manhattan. The company opened the first A & P Economy Store in 1912, offering a range of lower cost groceries along with tea, and quickly realized phenomenal growth: By 1915, the company had 1600 store fronts, rocketing to almost 14,000 by 1925 and 16,000 by the early 1930s. By the 1950s, the A&P (as it was now known) was the largest grocery retailer in the US with operations in 40 states. In the latter half of the 20th century, the number of store fronts was substantially reduced, in part due to internally initiated processes of store consolidations, but also due to increased competition from discount retailers and other retail formats. Note: A&P statistical information obtained from the company's website through Annual Reports, news articles, and press releases (aptea.com and apsupermarket.com).

Jones and Simmons (1990, 76).

Within the chainstore category, discount stores also contributed to the changing retail landscape. Ortega (1998, 35) notes that the railway and telegraph also had a role in allowing for the evolution of the discount store. Retailers could now order products directly from the manufacturers and have items shipped within days of ordering either from the factory or warehouse. Prior to the widespread adoption of the telegraph, retail owners in rural areas would travel to major markets themselves to acquire goods and transport them back to the storefront (burdened, then, with all upfront costs of the products). The railway offered a rapid, reliable method of transporting goods, reduced the need for the retailer to purchase large inventories of products that may or may not sell, and allowed the retailer to remain on site. Early on, the discount establishments favoured low-rent fringe areas with access to large trade area population, and offered a
variety of discounted goods to shoppers, focusing on “five and dime” products including kitchen supplies, toys, and candy. These “five and dime” stores have evolved into the modern day dollar stores now locating throughout abandoned big box stores, declining strip malls and shopping centres, and moribund shopping malls. Of course, the term “dollar store” is intended to reflect the cost of goods in the store, just as the “five and dime” stores was reflective of costs early in the 20th century. While not a focus of this dissertation, much could be said about the phenomenal success of the largest discounter, Wal-Mart. From a single storefront first opened in 1945 (it is noted that this first store was a Ben Franklin Discount Store. The Wal-Mart name would not be used until 1962. See http://walmartstores.com/FactsNews/FactSheets/) by Sam Walton, Wal-Mart has become the largest retailer in the world, with $375 billion in sales for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2008.


263 See Robinson, 1999 for a detailed discussion on several revitalization efforts in the US.


265 Longstreth notes that many of these services operated in a complementary fashion to a larger, parent retailer that remained in the downtown core for much of the mid-20th century, before the rise of suburban shopping was completed.

266 Dawson (1983) adopts the Urban Land Institute’s definition of a shopping centre as “A group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site which is planned, developed, owned, and managed as an operating unit related to its size, location and types of shops to the trade area that the unit will serve.” The unit usually provides onsite or associated car parking in definite relationship to the types and total size of the stores. This definition is also applicable to strip malls, although the form of ownership in strip malls can sometimes be more fractional (strata units vs. a single corporate owner). The unified architecture of the strip mall and shopping centre makes them an obvious feature of the urban landscape. To differentiate the two, the strip mall is generally a series of separate retail establishments located along a single tangent, facing a shared parking lot. A shopping centre is more complex, with multiple buildings comprised of single retail functions, offering a wider range of shopping opportunities.

267 That is not to say that retailing had been inexistent outside of city centres: Dawson (1983) documents a number of notable examples, from Cyrus Butler’s fifty shop, three level arcade which opened in 1829 in Providence, Rhode Island, to Baltimore’s Roland Park Shopping Centre (opening in 1907) as well as a number of free standing supermarkets located at key intersections. Longstreth, as well, provides two notable examples: the Olmstead brother’s firm was retained in the 1920s to develop Palos Verdes, an 80,000 resident planned community with its own integral shopping centre and parking area, with a design scheme that focused on retaining natural features and a high level of architectural controls. While the plan was not immediately realized (the municipality did not incorporate until 1939) it did illustrate the importance of the commercial area to the overall development.

Longstreth also notes the Westwood Village development, located between Beverly Hills and Santa Monica. Harland Bartholomew was employed to work with the Los Angeles Planning Department to design the community, which included a commercial development along Wilshire Boulevard. The development was to proceed slowly, with only a small number of businesses permitted at first and allowing only for a few to be added each year (with no competitor businesses). The design proved highly successful and persists today as an important, historic development in the Los Angeles area. The pre-1950
development of strip centres is also noted by Hoyt (1933) and Proudfoot (1937) in their separate but both seminal research on the distribution of retail functions. These “hinterland” retail establishments, however, were not located in the suburbs as they are known today; instead, they located in the streetcar suburbs, areas hardly considered suburban in today’s far-flung municipalities. It is also worth noting that these retail establishments followed population expansion instead of leading it: these were purpose built centres intended to serve the existing population. It would take the widespread adoption of the automobile to push/pull retailing to the periphery of cities.

While the shift to suburban focused shopping was not instantaneous, it was rapid and consuming. These new centres did not replicate the glamour of downtown areas; however, nor did they recreate the perceived negatives associated with downtowns including a lack of parking, crime, heterogeneity, and crowding.


Dawson (1983) notes that this new form of retailing required acceptance by land use planners and civic decision makers, reacting to development proposals from private enterprise, and the relocation of retail services to the suburbs was well supported. Today, much of the current literature in land use planning on Smart Growth, New Urbanism, or neo-traditionalism continues the call for the location of retailing functions proximate to residential developments (although it is recognized that these three approaches call for a much finer grain of services in the retail landscape). The idea of dispersed retailing remains entrenched.


Jonassen (1955, 5). Jonassen’s study is among the first behaviourist examinations of shopping habits, focusing on individual consumer’s motivations, habits, and attitudes.

Johassen (1955, 98).

Ibid, 99.

Kivell and Shaw (1980, 75).

See Johassen (1955).

The generalized form of the mall (smaller retail spaces facing into a courtyard or corridor) is likely as ancient as the city itself and is replicated around the world in bazaars and marketplaces.

Longstreth (1998, 269) notes the commercial arcade was common in Europe, but had never been widely adopted in North America, although the built environment of the arcade did inform the design of shopping malls.

Several structures are credited with the honour of being the world’s first shopping mall (or more accurately, surviving - it is unknown if ancient Greece or Rome contained enclosed shopping areas, although they certainly contained marketplaces that resemble the basic structure of the mall) – these include Tehran’s Grand Bazaar (estimated 10th century) and the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul (15th), and even Moscow’s GUM in 1890, but among the most beautiful must be the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, built in Milan, Italy in 1878 – all three still operate as a shopping centres today.

Jacobs (1984, 1).
Jones and Simmons (1990, 1). Lucas (2004, 243) reports that in North America, the first shopping mall is generally considered to be the Southdale Shopping Centre, which opened in 1956 in the Minneapolis suburb of Edina, Minnesota. Southdale, still in operation, has undergone numerous renovations and updates. The original structure was considered to be revolutionary in its provision of amenities, including a garden courtyard and surprisingly for the times, two competing anchor department stores connected by hallways lined with chain store establishments.


Jones and Simmons (1990, 125).

Jacobs (1984, 6).


Jacobs notes that although malls are constructed to generate profit, they also serve a latent function – that of the public interest. Malls often sponsor non-profit days, arts and craft shows, or performances available to the public free of charge. Many open early to allow mall walkers to complete their circuits in a safe, climate controlled environment, safe from the criminal elements found on public streets. The relationship between the retail landscape and the public interest will be explored in the next chapter.

Longstreth (1998, 308). He notes that while the design of the mall pandered to the automobile, the enclosed interior space was intended to fully separate the now pedestrian shopper from their car, to the safety and protection found inside.

The homogeneity found inside the mall is part of its charm, and the reason why it continues to persist on the landscape. There is comfort in the familiar.

Crowe and Siemonsen (1996, 165) note that for almost two decades, West Edmonton Mall, constructed by the Ghermezian brothers in 1985, was the largest shopping mall in the world. It held this position until recently, replaced by a renovated Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota (while the King of Prussia mall is sometimes listed as larger than the Mall of America, the author notes that it is constructed in two separate buildings). Currently, the Burj Dubai mall under construction in Dubai, UAE, will far surpass these lesser cousins with a square footage estimated at five times the size of West Edmonton Mall.

Mall of America’s website, mallofamerica.com.


...and were never supported from social or environmental perspectives.

Douglas Rushkoff of New York University has popularized the term “Gruen Effect” to the impact of the mall on consumer behaviour. The consumer responds to environmental cues such as signage, music, water features, surfaces, and the interior climate of the mall by either making rash purchasing decisions or taking on a hypnotic appearance.

Mega malls continue to be constructed in many other places in the world (see Figure 7). While North America no longer figures prominently in this wave of new construction, the largest North American project of the last two decades, Meadowlands Xanadu, is currently under construction in New Jersey. Upon completion, it will feature approximately 2.3 million square feet retail, entertainment and attractions.
(including the world’s largest climate controlled Ferris Wheel, a snow dome, skydiving tower, and a live theatre venue) in five theme areas (sports, entertainment, youth, food and home, and fashion). It is anticipated to be opened in 2009, a date delayed from the anticipated 2008 opening due to financing and construction concerns. See Van Riper, T. (2007, 1)

296 See www.centurypark.ca; www.deadmalls.com

297 Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Holbrook, and Rowlands (1998, 74)


299 See http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org for links to the findings of the US Supreme Court and discussions on the right of private citizens to use the privatized spaces at shopping malls. Links to a series of stories on the Mall of America can be found on the website for the Minneapolis Post newspaper (for example, http://www.minnpost.com/infodoc/2008/11/24/4823/mall_of_america_timeline).


301 As posted at the Woodgrove Town Centre in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

302 Big box stores are also interchangeably referred to in the literature as value retailers, superstores, and category killers given their tendency to remove all smaller competitor businesses from the retail landscape. In this dissertation, all large format retailers will be referred to as big box stores for convenience.

303 Jones and Doucet (2000).

304 It is noted that Costco is something of an exception to this “sameness” rule. Part of the attraction of Costco to consumers is the rapidly changing product line- the Costco formula focuses on bringing in large quantities of a single item, selling them at a low price point, with no guarantee of stocking the product for the long term. While there are certain products where the company has long standing supply contracts, others are intended to generate consumer interest due to perceived scarcity (once they’re gone, they’re gone). The Costco shopper knows that certain items may not be available for more than a few days, and has been educated in rapid shopping decision-making. The particular savvy shopper knows that any product with a price ending in “7” is a one-time purchase that will not be re-ordered (information from Kurt Larson, Manager of the Nanaimo Costco).


306 Ortega (1998) outlines that the first of these “membership” only warehouses was a Sam’s Club, operating under the Wal-Mart corporate structure, opening in Oklahoma City in 1983. The company supported a members only philosophy, as it was perceived that consumers would need to write cheques to pay for the large volume products they would purchase at the site, therefore the ability to shop was first extended to business owners (who would understand the importance of paying for products with cheques that were unlikely to bounce) and then to government workers (who were likely to have an ongoing income stream).

307 The evolution of Wal-Mart in Canada did not follow the same pattern of small town targeting and contagious diffusion as was used in the US expansion; given Canada’s dispersion of population and urban structure, Wal-Marts were first targeted to mid-sized cities and suburban shopping areas. As of February 2008, the Company had 971 Wal-Mart discount stores, 2,447 Supercenters, 591 Sam’s Clubs and 132 Neighborhood Markets in the United States, for a total of 4,141 units. Internationally, the Company operated units in Argentina (22), Brazil (314), Canada (305), China (Wal-Mart 102; Trust-Mart 101), Costa Rica (149), Guatemala (145), Honduras (47), Japan (394), Mexico (1025), Nicaragua (46), Puerto
Rico (54), El Salvador (70) and the United Kingdom (351). The company has almost 2 million “sales associates” (Wal-Mart Quarterly Sales Report, obtained online at http://walmartstores.com). In 1975, Wal-Mart became the largest retailer in North America in terms of dollar sales per year (Laulajainen (1987, 242)).


311 Graff and Astor (1982, 76) note that Sam Walton opened his first Ben Franklin Discount store in 1945 in Newport, Arkansas. This was followed by a second storefront in Bentonville, Arkansas in 1952, growing to an empire of 16 stores by 1962.

312 It is often stated that the first Wal-Mart opened in Bentonville, Arkansas, but this operation and the handful that followed it were named “Walton’s 5 and 10” or were part of the Ben Franklin franchise owned by Sam Walton. The Wal-Mart name was not used until 1962 on a storefront in Rogers, Arkansas.

313 Courser (2005, 10)

314 Ortega (1998, xi). Ortega notes that these discount stores were not a dominant force on the retail landscape until the 1950s, when greater consumer spending bolstered a range of new retail options.

315 Along with innovating the discount store, Walton also was an early adopter of the concept of ‘self service’ which required customers to find their own items stocked on open shelving instead of having a clerk bring items to the customer. This allowed customers to browse the aisles and select “impulse purchases”, thereby increasing sales. Staffing levels were also reduced as the store did not provide one on one service to shoppers, and concentrating staff at the checkouts in the front of the store further reduced staff numbers. While the consumer was faced with a less than luxurious shopping experience, the trade-off was low prices. Walton observed the success of the self service concept at local “Piggly Wiggly” grocery stores, which pioneered the concept as early as 1916 (Ortega 199, 33).


317 Many of the references to the expansion of Wal-Mart speak to the US based strategies. The evolution of Wal-Mart in Canada did not follow the same pattern of small town targeting and contagious diffusion; given Canada’s dispersion of population and urban structure, Wal-Marts are found across Canada in mid-sized cities and suburban shopping areas with a targeted rather than evolving locational strategy.

318 The retail empire created by Sam Walton is the world’s largest: as of February 2008, the Company had 971 Wal-Mart discount stores, 2,447 Supercenters, 591 Sam’s Clubs and 132 Neighborhood Markets in the United States, for a total of 4,141 units. Internationally, the Company operated units in Argentina (22), Brazil (314), Canada (305), China (Wal- Mart 102; Trust-Mart 101), Costa Rica (149), Guatemala (145), Honduras (47), Japan (394), Mexico (1025), Nicaragua (46), Puerto Rico (54), El Salvador (70) and the United Kingdom (351). The company has almost 2 million “sales associates” (Wal-Mart Quarterly Sales Report, obtained online at http://walmartstores.com).


Ortega (1998, 122 – 132). In 1973, Wal-Mart recognized the benefits of computerized stock tracking, and was involved in early system designs that created massive efficiencies in tracking goods and reordering stock. The company was also an early adopter of bar code technology, further increasing the speed and accuracy of stock counts. By 1988, Wal-Mart had purchased its own satellite system linked to transmitters on vehicles for monitoring the movement of goods; the satellites also provided an independent credit card authorization system to improve the speed and limit downtime, and allowed store thermostats to be controlled from headquarters. The company is also well known for its practices of “negative inventory” where goods are obtained from suppliers and sold before payment is due (suppliers, then, are financing the inventory costs).

Wal-Mart Canada Inc. information obtained online at walmart.ca, the Canadian corporate website. It is noted that the website reports that Wal-Mart Canada has almost 78,000 sales associates (March 2008).

Data obtained from homedepotcorporate.com and through conversation with Sarah Aulds at the Home Depot Museum (opened in 1999) in Atlanta, Georgia.


One exception noted by the author is the replacement of an Eagle Hardware Store with an Ikea outlet in South Edmonton in the early 1990s.

Re-uses of abandoned K-Mart buildings include the Spam Museum in Austin Texas, a flea market in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and the Blueridge Community Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. In a circle of abandonment and reuse, a derelict Future Shop on the fringe of Nanaimo BC was replaced by a Dollar Giant. Future Shop then constructed a new superstore at Country Club Mall, replacing a Wal-Mart that abandoned this location in favour of a larger site within the Woodgrove Town Centre.

It is interesting to note that big box retailers are sometimes seen as an economic generator by some municipalities, particularly smaller cities. Lang (1981) notes that the City of Corner Brook agreed to waive some development cost charges and paid for road improvements to attract a specific big box retailer, putting the costs of attracting the development onto the citizens and local independent retailers. It is also noted that the City of Edmonton offered substantial tax concessions to the developers of West Edmonton Mall to ensure that the developers would remain in Edmonton and construct the world’s largest mall (thereby generating tourism and recognition opportunities for the city).

As early as 1997, Genest-Laplante noted this slowdown and suggested that one causal factor may be that market saturation had been reached. He also questioned the perceived trend to ever increasing big box stores, stating that larger did not necessarily equate to higher or even stable median sales per square foot. At some point, he predicted that the big box store would become too large to be cost effective.


Jacobs (1984) predicts that the lifestyle commercial centres will replace big box stores and power centres as they recognize the importance of designing opportunities for community and street life into these developments.

Richard Heapes, in a June 2005 article in the New Urban News (an online newsletter “for planners, developers, architects, builders, public officials and others who are interested in the creation of human-scale communities) commented “and now there are lifestyle centres, but there’s not a lot of life there, and very little style.”
An excellent local example is the new Park Royal Village adjacent to the Park Royal Shopping Centre in North Vancouver, BC.

For a developer’s viewpoint on lifestyle commercial centres, view the websites of major residential development companies.

That is, if “smaller scale big box” is possible.

R. Oldenburg (1991) coined the term “third space” to mean the streetfront gathering spaces, pubs, and coffee places that are the places where people naturally gather to talk and enjoy community. He theorizes that these spaces are necessary for a community’s vitality and to provide for a functioning democracy, and without them, the city cannot be fully realized. Oldenburg suggests that most of each citizen’s time is spent in their first space (home) and second space (work), and that time should also be spent in the third space to connect and bond.

Jones and Simmons (1990, 133).
Chapter 5 Searching for the Public Good

From the previous three chapters, one matter is clear. There are significant gaps in the literature that focuses on the intersections between land use planning, retailing geography, and the public good. To address these gaps, a research design that included three methods – a questionnaire survey, archival research, and depth interviews – was used to triangulate research results. This process was intended to increase the reliability of findings and reduce the risk of serious researcher bias in influencing the outcomes.338 This chapter considers these techniques for their effectiveness in understanding the relationship between the public good, land use planning, and the form of the retail landscape.

The area analyzed is the retail landscape of the City of Nanaimo, British Columbia. A case study is also included that focuses specifically on the impact of siting Woodgrove, a regional mall. Nanaimo serves well as the case study for it is representative of many North American urban centres. It is a mid-sized and formerly resource-based city now focused economically on health, education, and retailing. It possesses a struggling downtown subject to ongoing revitalization efforts by the local government. Extensive post World War II suburban growth comprised largely of single dwelling units has spurred an array of strip malls, shopping centres, and enclosed malls built from the early-1950s to the early-1980s. Big box stores marked change from the late-1980s through 1990s. Civic decision-making favoured the lure of economic development over social or environmental considerations. The Woodgrove case study is used to bring realism to the discussion and assist in illuminating decisions and actions that typify the lack of connection between the retail
public good, Nanaimo has been viewed among municipalities in British Columbia as a place where community and civic life have taken a secondary role to development, and where the decisions of elected officials appear to be uninformed by any rationale other than economic growth. The story of events leading up and subsequent to the siting of Woodgrove is a tale of retail change, suburban growth, and central city decline.

Selection of Methods

In spatial analysis, as with any scientific inquiry, "the challenge is to find out which information is most needed and most useful in a given situation and then to employ those methods best suited to producing the needed information." In this study, the overarching goal is to understand the links among land use planning, the public good, and the form of the retail landscape. The methodology engaged is a balance between a humanistic approach for understanding how individuals create their subjective world of meanings towards space and place, and a post-structuralistic approach that considers how power and the positioning of elements in the built environment shapes the retail landscape. The research framework also balances the theoretical (Fiske 1989, Shields 1992a) and the pragmatic (McGoldrick and Thompson 1992, National Retail Foundation, 2002). The intention is to bridge theoretical and practical approaches and develop conclusions that will ultimately affect the practice of land use planning. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in this study. Archival research provides a narrative of Nanaimo’s evolving retail landscape, with particular emphasis on the development of Woodgrove. Local and provincial government files and private papers found in the archives were invaluable. To augment this material, in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals involved in shaping the retail landscape in
Nanaimo. Planning professionals, mall and retail managers, municipal staff, elected officials, and retail developers offered their view on intersection between land use planning, the retail landscape, and the public good. As to quantitative research, a questionnaire survey was conducted to better understand the shopping patterns and motivations of patrons (or non-patrons) of Woodgrove, as well as to extract a common understanding of the term “the public good” in relation to the retail landscape. The triangulation of results enabled the substantiation of the findings, allowed for the discovery of commonalities and unexpected relationships, and deepened the understanding of the research questions. As with most research, the careful examination of results also identified new questions for further study. As noted by Morse, “the obvious strength of using a multi-method design is that it provides one with a different perspective on the phenomenon and many different levels of data... providing a more comprehensive picture than any one method would alone.”341 A comparison of findings follows after the presentation of each research method.

Archival Research

Archival research informs all aspects of this study. As noted by Palys (2003, 231), primary archival records are not produced explicitly for the purpose of research, although they nonetheless produce very useful data.342 Letters, diaries or journals, newspaper articles, taped records, advertisements, photographs, historic maps, and other printed materials all provide valuable information on a research topic and both qualitative and quantitative approaches may be used to interpret the data. From a quantitative perspective, the researcher might conduct a content analysis of archival materials to categorize or count the number of incidences or mentions of an issue of research interest. From a qualitative perspective, the
researcher could examine materials on an historic event both for technical information and to understand the subject's perception of that event. The strength of primary archival records is that the materials provide a glimpse of historic context not available through statistics or secondary data sources. An additional benefit is that the records may also allow the researcher to conduct a longitudinal analysis through the review of past events. However, archival research is not without flaws. Archival records provide a take on reality that is specific to the viewpoint of the person or organization maintaining them, coloured by the technical, political, and social context within which the material was fashioned. Palys admonishes the researcher to "be critically aware of the processes and perspective embodied in their sources and of the contexts in which those accounts were produced" when completing archival research. Additionally, the producer may never have intended that the information be made public, which is true in particular for letters, diaries, and journals. The author may not have expected they would be viewed and interpreted by a wider audience, and the materials as recorded may not accurately represent the facts on an issue or the full perspective of the producer. Finally, archival research is complicated as it is limited to what exists. The research is limited to the artefacts that have been preserved and continue to be available to researchers, whether or not available materials provide the most relevant data. However, given these potential drawbacks, the subject at hand is well suited to archival research. The time frame under consideration (1950 forward) focuses on recent history where a wealth of print and photographic materials is available and well preserved by archivists. Differing perspectives were obtained through the investigation of a number of sources including newspapers, personal files, photographs, and government sources. These
materials were evaluated against the conclusions drawn from the depth interviews and questionnaire.

Archival research was conducted at the City of Nanaimo, the City Archives, and the Vancouver Island Public Library. In addition, mapping dating from 1950 forward was obtained from the province and the Regional District of Nanaimo (for the latter post-1969, following the incorporation of the Regional District). Council minutes dating from 1950 forward were obtained from the City and reviewed for mention of development proposals or recommendations relating to retailing or store location. Where references were found in the minutes, copies of the original staff reports were obtained, and where possible the recommendations of Council were traced back to the project files to fully inform the research. Daily newspapers (available on microfiche) were also reviewed from 1950 forward to seek out news stories, editorials, and advertisements that related to the development of new retail establishments. Where greater certainty was needed on the siting of individual retail establishments, telephone directories provided a means of pinpointing the date of operation of a store, with a phone number considered indicative of activity. In addition, the province records yielded copies of Letters Patent which spoke to the mid-1970s expansion of the City of Nanaimo's intent to incorporate the five potential sites for a regional town centre, as well as materials on the development of the Agricultural Land Commission, the application of the Agricultural Land Reserve designation to Woodgrove lands, and the process by which the parcel was removed from the Reserve.

The most informative archival research was provided through reviewing the private files of Mr. Bill MacKay, the Director of Planning for the City of Nanaimo from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Mr. MacKay had retained many of his notes from conversations
and meetings held at City Hall, and specifically on the development of shopping malls through the 1970s and 1980s. He had also retained a copy of the original 1974 architectural renderings of the Woodgrove Regional Centre which were not available at the City Archives (but have since been provided to them). The review of Mr. MacKay’s private papers was invaluable in bringing a sense of involvement and immediacy to the research, expanding on the information available in City Council minutes and the materials retained on file at the city.

Three key themes emerged from the archival research: (1) the decline of downtown; (2) the pre-development story of Woodgrove; and (3) the role of land use planners in shaping the retail landscape. First, the decline of downtown as the centre for shopping and civic life in Nanaimo was an issue so integrally woven into the comments of depth interview subjects and questionnaire respondents that more in-depth archival research became necessary. Noted by many respondents was the economic approach to defining the public good. This approach was documented in archival research which verified that increased tax revenues and employment outweighed other measures when new retail proposals were being evaluated by elected officials, the press, and the public through the 1970s. Editorials and Council minutes expressed strong support for new forms of retailing that would expand shopping options for Nanaimo’s residents. Even the pictorial history of Nanaimo illustrates how things “modern and suburban” were favoured over the protection of the downtown core or the preservation of the city’s original morphology (see the photos depicting the refurbishing of the Eaton’s store in the Prologue). However, toward the later-1970s, questioning emerged on the impact of suburban Woodgrove on Nanaimo’s urban core. As noted in one newspaper article: “About 7 and a half miles separate most Nanaimo residents from this proposal. It
seems unlikely that most city residents would travel that distance for their day to day shopping, but if they do, they won’t be shopping downtown anymore.348 The impact of expanded suburban retailing was fully realized by the mid-1980s and civic officials began the long journey of reversing this trend. Even the province took an interest in Downtown Nanaimo and the city was granted $870,000 in 1981 for unspecified “downtown revitalization” works by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Bill Vander Zalm.349 A series of projects (sidewalk widening, awning funding for individual shops, and replacement of streetlights) followed, and the city continues to finance improvements downtown. The most recent is the new Vancouver Island Conference Centre which opened in 2008. It remains to be seen what impact this facility will have on revitalizing the city’s core.

Second, the pre-development story of Woodgrove required in-depth research. The decision to site a regional mall in Nanaimo was determined by a group of developers early in the 1970s. Following machinations with the acquisition of a sufficiently-sized parcel, the site was selected and purchased from a local farmer. A north-end location was favoured to increase the possibility of attracting trade from up-Island and the Island’s west coast residents. Of course, immediately upon the announcement of the proposed project at a Regional District Board Meeting on 29 January 1974 (as the site was not yet within the City), competitor developments were quickly assembled. For the next seven years, Woodgrove was seldom out of the news or absent from Council agendas. Mention was contained as well in Hansard, given the inclusion then exclusion of the parcel from the Agricultural Land Reserve. The inclusion of the Town Centre site within the Agricultural Land Reserve (after the site was declared but before the zoning amendment was approved by Council) late in 1974 was viewed by some as a purely political ploy on the part of province to assist the
developers of a competing regional mall proposal, as was reflected in letters to the editor at the time. The later exclusion of this site and the process by which the exclusion was approved (by the Environment and Land Use Committee on July 8th, 1976) was viewed by others as the more questionable maneuver. Both incidents are an integral part of understanding Nanaimo’s retail landscape.

Important as well is the third area of research noted above – the role of city planning staff in the shaping of the retail landscape. The Environment and Land Use Committee called for rationality, efficiency, and “goodness” in the pattern of land use resulting from the exclusion of the Woodgrove site from the Agricultural Land Reserve, saying, “the Committee concurs with and supports the need for intelligent locally based planning and land use control. Applications such as this give emphasis to the need for land use policies as the framework for rational and economic provision of community water and sewer facilities in developing urban areas and for judging the best long range use patterns… (we) hope your proposal will result in the development of good land use patterns.”330 The reticence of land use planners to support the proposal was only discovered through in-depth archival research. Council minutes are a weak source of information because they report only outcomes and not any of the discussion that shapes these decisions. A content analysis of staff reports and notes-to-file was necessary. This information was later verified through extensive conversations and the review of personal papers of the Director of Planning at the City of Nanaimo through Woodgrove’s pre-development phase. Throughout these documents, it is clear that staff struggled with the impact a distant regional shopping mall would have on the downtown core and ultimately the morphology of the city. Staff noted that up to 1970, Nanaimo was a relatively small, compact city, with a clear focal point for
commercial and civic uses. However, after the development of Woodgrove and Rutherford Mall, new residential construction shifted to the undeveloped lands between the former boundary of Nanaimo and the new shopping malls, resulting in the current pattern of low density, single residential development over much of the north-end landscape. In an undated note on one of many Woodgrove files, Mr. Bill Mackay emphatically states “I cannot support this proposal.” He then provides a list of reasons: “impacts on traffic, unrestrained urban growth, new commercial development not needed, and detrimental impacts on Downtown Nanaimo.” Mr. MacKay maintained his personal opposition to the Woodgrove site even after Council’s approval of the project for these cited reasons. He also provided a recommendation to oppose the Rutherford Mall proposal, given the added impact of a second north-end shopping mall on existing commercial centres. For both Woodgrove and the Rutherford Mall proposals, the archives document that planning staff attempted to expand the discussion to include more than the economic benefits of the two shopping malls. However, for both proposals, Council weighed the noted negative impacts against the perceived positives of an increased tax base, new employment, and a new role as a regional shopping destination for the mid-Island area. Not surprisingly, Council decided in favour of both proposals. As later expanded on by Mr. MacKay, “these were the two worst planning decisions I ever had the pleasure of being a part of.”

The archival information was invaluable in triangulating the comments of interviewees, particularly given the almost fifty-year time span since the development of the first significant retailing centre outside of downtown Nanaimo. In addition, the layering of information from news articles, staff reports, file documents, mapping, telephone directories, and personal papers gave depth and veracity to the research. Building a stratum of research
is a means of achieving a greater understanding of the biases and approaches of actors within the research question, and the narratives that are constructed about places. As well, the use of multiple data sources makes the research findings more persuasive. Of the three methods of research drawn on in this dissertation, the archival research was most valuable in providing a clear and detailed understanding of the forces and factors shaping the retail landscape in Nanaimo.

**Depth Interviews**

Depth interviews were conducted with twenty-eight individuals who had first-hand knowledge of retail development, the role of land use planning in the shaping the city, and the place of the public good in the retail landscape. Interviewees included local government elected officials, City of Nanaimo staff (Development Services, Engineering, and Subdivision Departments), consultants with involvement in the development of Nanaimo (engineers, planners, lobbyists, and architects), provincial government staff, retired elected officials and staff, retail managers, and the developer of Woodgrove. The interviewees represented a wide range of experience and involvement in the shaping of the retail landscape in Nanaimo, ranging from five years of career experience in land use planning to one respondent who had spent a considerable portion of his over seventy years on land development. It is noted that some of the interview subjects were personally known to the researcher (n=4), others were professionally known, with limited personal contact but recognition through professional roles in the development community (n=19), and others were not known to the researcher prior to the interview but were interviewed due either to their mention in archival research
or by referral from another interview subject (n=5). Specific questions were asked to generate discussion and focus the conversation. The questions were:

1. What is your current involvement in the Woodgrove Town Centre?
2. How, from your perspective, did the Woodgrove Shopping Centre and the evolving Town Centre come to be located at the northern edge of Nanaimo?
3. From your background/involvement, how has the location of the Shopping Centre and Town Centre shaped the development of Nanaimo?
4. How has the location of Shopping Centre and Town Centre impacted residents of Nanaimo?
5. Has the location of the Shopping Centre and Town Centre influenced any aspect of the built form of Nanaimo?
6. Has the location of the Shopping Centre and Town Centre influenced the provision of goods and services in Nanaimo?
7. How would you define the term 'the public good'?
8. What measures could be used to evaluate 'the public good'?
9. What is the role of local government in creating or maintaining 'the public good'?
10. What would indicate that local government had achieved some measure of 'the public good'?
11. Conversely, how would you evaluate if a decision or action of local government did not contribute to 'the public good'?
12. How would you relate this term to the form of retailing in Nanaimo?
13. How would you relate this term to the location of the Shopping Centre and Town Centre?
14. What are your views on the future of retailing in Nanaimo and the mid-Island area?
It was anticipated that a great deal of useful information would be obtained from the depth interviews, and this certainly proved to be the case. The interviewees were very knowledgeable and interested in sharing their views on the evolution of retailing in Nanaimo and their role in developing the landscape. One positive outcome was the high level of congruence between the archival research and the comments of interviewees. In particular, the reporting on key dates (such as the placement of the Agricultural Land Reserve designation on the Woodgrove lands, the Council meeting at which the Woodgrove development was selected over the other four proposals for regional malls, and the opening of Woodgrove) was remarkably consistent among interview subjects, and assisted in targeting the archival research to specific timeframes. In addition, the facts reported in the interviews themselves were surprisingly homogeneous. The differences among the interviews were on the more subjective or perceptually-defined information (in the words of one respondent, "depending on your side of the fence"). A greater variation in remembered information was expected, given that that the interview subjects were reporting on events that took place from the mid-1970s forward, although it became apparent that all the interview subjects retained strong recollection of the important events shaping the retail landscape of Nanaimo.

The interview subjects were provided with the questions for discussion at least three days prior to scheduled interviews, and only a cursory description of the research was provided at that time to limit the potential for influencing the respondent's comments. None of the depth interview subjects requested a longer explanation of the research prior to agreeing to participate in the study, nor did any of the potential respondents refuse to participate after hearing this brief introduction. Every attempt was made to address each
question with the interview subjects, although the length of time spent on a question varied with the respondents. In many interviews, the conversation sometimes drifted in unexpected directions. The questions of primary interest to the respondents as evaluated by the relative time spent on these questions compared to other questions for each questionnaire respondent was the series of questions on the place of the public good in the retail landscape. The depth of comment and the thoughtfulness of the interview subjects about the public good were surprising but gratifying.553

At the outset of each interview, the purpose of the research was restated for the interviewee, although again every attempt was made to limit the potential for leading responses due to unintended research-introduced bias. The interviews were recorded and the interviewer took notes as well to frame the discussion with additional formality. Although the interview subjects were clearly informed of their right to decline participation, to refuse to answer any particular question, or to end the interview at any time, no interviewee expressed any discomfort or dismay with the conversation. In fact, it is telling that no interview was less than 45 minutes, and the longest was more than five hours. In several instances, the interviewees followed up by providing additional written documentation or by suggesting new people to interview.

While depth interviews are a conventional research method, a potential issue with these interviews is the prior relationship of the researcher to some of the interview subjects. Baker notes that "because the interview involves two people, the nature of the relationship developed between these two people before and during the interview will have a great effect on the success of the interview obtained."554 However, for most of the interview subjects, the prior relationship between the interviewer and interviewees was professional, made
through employment in the planning field. In no case did an interview subject express concern about discussing the issues with the interviewer, and it remains telling that no interview subject declined participation or halted the discussion at any point in the interview. A second issue with the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is one of impartiality. The researcher may carry attitudes and biases into the interview which may colour the way in which the researcher explains the study, asks questions, records the information, or interprets the results. The same is true of the respondent. Every attempt was made not to lead the respondent or provide clues to a desired response by reacting to a respondent, although it is difficult to determine without an external evaluation of the interviews if introduced bias was an issue. In addition, every attempt was made neither to be so casual that the respondent questions the importance of the interview nor so formal that the respondent would become uncomfortable. A third issue with the interviews was the critical question of anonymity. In some instances, it was possible that certain comments could be ascribed to particular respondents. The potential for a lack of anonymity was discussed with each respondent, and respondents were instructed that they could rescind any comment made in an interview and have it stricken from the interview transcript. It is interesting to note that no respondent availed themselves of this opportunity. The respondents were assured that no particular remark would ever be formally attributed to any individual in the reporting of the findings without their expressed written consent, and the responses would only be used in this research. The final issue with the interviews, and one tied to the issue of anonymity, is that of prestige or social-desirability bias. That is, a respondent may knowingly or subconsciously answer inaccurately to place themselves in a better light. Additionally, the interviewee may have believed themselves to be aware of the
response expected by the interviewer, and may have provided that so-called “right answer” while being fully aware that the response was not entirely truthful. This issue was not discussed with the interview subjects, however, because of their professionalism, the length of each interview, the depth of many of the interviews, and the subject's willingness to participate in the research, the researcher is reasonably confident that the results obtained are representative of the subject's true feelings on the issues discussed.

As the interview questions tended to overlap in conversation streams, the responses are discussed below in two groupings, first focusing on the evolution of the retail landscape and second on the place of the public good within this landscape, instead of mechanically providing the responses to each of the fourteen questions. To the first grouping, respondents were highly consistent in the “telling” of the Woodgrove story. The interview subjects spoke to the city’s incorporation initiative in the mid-1970s, the development of the Agricultural Land Commission, the extension of community servicing to the northerly extent of the city, and the subsequent infilling of formerly rural lands with new residential development. As to the impact of Woodgrove on the retail landscape, responses were mixed. Of the 28 respondents, 53% (n=15) related the development of Woodgrove directly to the decline of downtown. Approximately 30% (n=8) related downtown’s current status to the cumulative impact of Woodgrove and Rutherford Mall. The remainder (n=5) either saw the decline of downtown as inevitable and characteristic of the North American city (“this is not a problem specific to Nanaimo”) or related to other factors, such as changes in shopping preferences or the construction of the Parkway Bypass (which created a high-speed access route to Woodgrove). Respondents did, however, unanimously agree that the development of Woodgrove changed the shape of Nanaimo. Much discussion ensued on
the linear development pattern typical of many of British Columbia’s small urban centres (for Nanaimo, ribboned along highways and developable lands, and hemmed in by the ocean, watercourses, and mountains). Approximately 75% (n=21) of the respondents commented that Nanaimo likely would have a more compact form of development today had Woodgrove not opened lands for residential development in the mid-1970s. As to the impact of the retail landscape on residents and on the provision of goods and services in Nanaimo, responses were more scattered. About 25% (n=7) considered the concentration of retail services at Woodgrove to be positive for local residents, as it “…provided a clear focus for shopping- one trip and you can purchase everything from groceries to a new car.” Approximately the same number (n=8) saw this concentration as detrimental for both residents in the southerly neighbourhoods and for those located around Woodgrove: “either you have too much or nothing.” Others were more pointed in their opposition to the city’s long-standing policy to concentrate large format retailing at the northerly perimeter of the city: “Just look up ‘mistake’ in the dictionary and you’ll see Nanaimo.” The most cohesive response was on the primary factor shaping the retail landscape: almost unanimously (93%, n=26), respondents agreed that major changes in the retail landscape had been driven by the private sector. As noted by one respondent “the private sector visionaries have often been opposed by local government planners – often, but not always, for good reasons – but market forces have largely carried the day.” Approximately 50% (n=14) stated that the role of land use planners and elected officials has largely been limited to reacting to development proposals instead of proactively implementing bylaws or policies that would shape the retail landscape. As noted by one land use planning professional “we don’t generally deal with retail in our work except to protect aesthetic values through site design and landscaping.
The developers bring in the proposals and we make them work." The respondents generally concluded (75% or n=18) that the retail landscape in Nanaimo was largely complete. Given the lack of land base for new developments, no new large scale retailing was anticipated that would reshape the retail landscape (it is noted that these interviews were conducted before the application for the Sandstone Development was advanced to Council. This development required the expansion of the urban containment boundary, so it is logical that the respondents would not have conceived of this project). As for Woodgrove, only individuals currently involved as retail managers of the mall and the surrounding facilities considered themselves to be still involved in the shaping the retailing landscape at the mall. All other respondents considered the mall and their involvement to be complete.

The discussion on the public good (the second grouping of questions) began with the respondent’s definition of the term, providing shape to the questions that followed. Definitions of the public good included:

- I believe the market should deal with this. There is no public good.

- Something that contributes to the quality of life of the average citizen.

- The public good could take many forms including physical space, park lands, buildings, environmental protection, access provisions, trails, might even be intrinsic (not necessarily accessible, for example protection of a natural feature to benefit wildlife), public transit services.

- Probably varies from one community to the other, physical locations, access to other opportunities.

- I'm more accustomed to using the term "in the public interest" and to me public interest means seizing an opportunity that serves a previously determined objective ... the public good. I can't base my connotation of public good on a specific circumstance but I consider public good as a strategic objective that is fundamental and unencumbered with the specifics of a circumstance. Public good is a core value of an institution.
• The terminology I prefer is the "public interest" and I define the public interest as seeking to include the interests of all parties, with particular emphasis on those who are unable to articulate their own.

• What's in the best interest of the majority of society for a stable and sustainable lifestyle whether they personally support it or not.

• That which is in the beneficial interest of the public, reflective and supportive of collective values and beneficial to societal condition and function.

• In my capacity as a municipal planner, whatever the elected Council determines is the public good. I think this is important point to make because I also have a personal sense of public good – that which serves the community best – however, any definition of public good is value laden in my opinion. My sense of what is best for the community may not be consistent with another persons sense of what is best, or with what Council considers best for the community.

• At the end of the day, if Council sets out a corporate position with respect to a particular public good then I will support that position as part of my job – whether I personally agree or not, because that is the will of the elected body of the citizens of Nanaimo.

• The public good is the best action for the most people, although sometimes the best action is only for a few people, or the environment, etc. It is an action that decries profit and looks to the good for society over the long haul.

• My simplistic definition is "something that benefits society as a whole".

• The public good is a vague notion in which one hopes to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number, including those who are not represented at the table.

• This notion is highly situational and depends on the competing interests in a particular policy or application.

• My definition should not change for different land uses, although we are often asked for it to do so. For example, the government will ask that we do not impose conditions on the rezoning of a new elementary school as it is expensive and the taxpayers have to pay, yet the safety of the school children cannot be assigned a monetary value. Similar arguments are made for seniors housing, waive the fees as it is a public good. Yes, it is, but the public good of adequate servicing is paramount.
That is, definitions ranged from the vague "the good of the whole" to "let Council decide" to the "leave it to the market" approach. Others questioned the use of the term at all, stating "in my practice I tend to not use the term "public good" as it implies that there is a "public bad"..." The careers and interest areas of the interviewees were sometimes evident in their responses with definitions that ranged from "I define the public interest as seeking to include all parties, with particular emphasis on those who are unable to articulate their own" – this from a social planner – to "the public good is seen in actions that respect nature," from an environmentalist. A local government politician provided, not surprisingly, a political response: "The public good is that which is in the beneficial interest of the public, reflective and supportive of collective values and beneficial to societal condition and function." As to a land use planning perspective, one interviewee provided a written response, as follows: "The public good is what enhances ecological sustainability or prevents further deterioration in the health of ecological systems; it is what enhances a sense of community and stewardship/ responsibility for those things which we share in common (such as natural and social capital), and it involves the maintenance and enhancement of sense of place/heritage. It also involves economic sufficiency, as much as possible local control of the economy, and access to the essentials of life, such as food, housing, education, and health care. Every planning decision either enhances one or more of these parameters or makes them worse." Several respondents indicated that the definition of the public good is situational and influenced by other factors, such as the era of the decision: "What made sense in 1972 doesn't look the same today. Hindsight and time need to be considered." Of all the interview questions, from the interviewer's perspective at least it appeared that this was the one that the interviewees had given the most forethought to (although it is noted
that this impression cannot be quantified). Eleven of the interviewees had prepared written responses to this question, and one provided a reference (quoting John Ralston Saul) to substantiate their view on the public good.

Overlapping with this discussion on the definition of the public good was the next question on the role of local government in maintaining the public good. Of the 17 respondents who provided an unambiguous response, 10 indicated that the public good was the responsibility of local government. One local government staff person responded, “I integrate my definition of public good into every decision I make. As public administrators, we have a moral and ethical obligation to do so.” Four of these ten indicated that the definition of the public good rested solely with elected officials, with civil servants responsible for implementing Council’s directives. The remainder saw the definition of the public good as the responsibility of elected officials, with public servants as the implementers of Council’s decisions. Curiously, no respondent linked the protection and enhancement of the public good solely to land use planning as a profession. One respondent noted that “in a policy context a planner may have to balance protection of neighbourhood character against a higher goal of reducing sprawl or providing services to the mentally or physically challenged,” but went on to add that Council sets the priorities and directions for staff.

The idea of measuring the public good brought a mix of reactions, from the mathematical, “I would expect politicians to determine the public good through some form of social calculus,” to the less quantifiable “some combination of social, economic, and environmental factors.” Others took a more qualitative approach, with public good equated with an evaluation of a community as a pleasant, appealing, and safe place. One respondent referenced the Brundtland Commission’s definition of sustainability, and viewed the
protection of future generations as the ultimate measure of the public good. A single respondent mentioned that a measure of the public good should recognize the planner’s role and professional obligations as outlined in the Planning Institute of British Columbia’s Code of Professional Conduct. A more cynical interview subject defined the measure of the public good as shorthand for “big box envy” because local governments evaluate themselves on attracting economic functions away from their municipal rivals. This person commented that “if big boxes are the latest rage and if community ’x’ got one, why can’t we?” This respondent indicated that the only possible measure of the public good that would be palatable to elected officials would be quantifiable reportings on economic success. Other suggested measures included:

- Bringing new investment
- Creating new jobs
- Being a multiplier or a platform for further opportunities
- Doing something that the public views as worthwhile
- Providing a suitable return for the property owner
- “On the social side I’d try to ascertain the “big picture” impacts on our community. For example, my person bias is that Casinos do not have a positive economic or social contribution to communities, even if the “numbers” show a positive impact”
- The health of the retail sector in a community is the measure of the public good.

This discussion was summarized by a retired planner: “This is typically represented as a trade-off or as a dichotomy between economic, environmental, and social interests. The measure I would use would be balance all three (or four, if one includes the cultural leg of
the stool) aspects in reaching a decision of the public good. The key measure is not the number of competing interests but in creating the balance between them. Certainly one approach that I think would be very helpful and educational would be to conduct an evaluation using full cost accounting so that the real cost to the community could be assessed. I think that all we can say is that it is likely that there will be major shifts in terms of what is regarded as good for society in terms of the provision of future retail facilities as the need to conserve resources and develop more efficiently starts to register with the public, as is beginning to happen at the present time.”

When asked to draw the link between the public good and the retail landscape in Nanaimo, the responses became more varied and the respondents sometimes quite animated. A land use planner noted “the advent of big box retail and other forms of current retailing have eliminated most of the previous elements of public good. Forcing consumers to rely exclusively (or for the majority anyway) on the use of personal automobiles, has in fact resulted in a deterioration of the public good.” This view of the retail landscape was reinforced by another respondent who stated that, “there are no instances of the public good that I can see in the current retail environment as represented by that model (the retail landscape). With the current single minded emphasis on the bottom line, whether that be in the private or public sector, there are fewer opportunities to enable the public to gain access to features and facilities other than the bare minimum retail environments.” The retail landscape in Nanaimo was not seen as community-affirming by another land use planner who argued: “huge stores placed around the perimeter of an immense and unfriendly parking jungle does little to encourage public activity. In fact, you see many shoppers get into their vehicles to go from one store to another.” However, one respondent (a local
government politician) noted “retail landscape and the public good? I find it interesting that there has always been a positive correlation between the value of residential land and the proximity to the largest new retail facilities.” In an effective dodge around the question, one respondent concluded “there are many ways in which the “retail landscape” can positively or negatively, directly or indirectly relate to the public good. There is a responsibility, and potentially a self-serving as well as a societal benefit for the retail landscape to assess how it affects the public good.” Other respondents focused specifically on the location and impact of Woodgrove, noting “the success of the mall illustrates that it is in the public good” and “the City is the regulatory authority that ultimately defines the retail landscape through development approvals. So given this connection, retail is in the public good – and maybe should be considered a public good – because it has a distinct effect on the local economy, and is a key gauge on the health of the economy. Historically, the City’s elected representatives have opted to let the market decide what is viable or not with respect to new retail development and this includes the Woodgrove Town Centre; however, given the state of the City’s downtown and some of the other, older retail areas in Nanaimo, such as Harewood Mall, that may not have necessarily been the best approach to community development overall.”

To the final question “what are your views on the future of retailing in Nanaimo and the mid-Island area?” the respondents provided comments ranging from practical to philosophical:

- I think the favouring of big box and power centre retail by municipal politicians (and, to some degree, planners) is often based on a very limited and short-sighted calculus. Some of the pioneering work that has been done, both in research and policy, to address the impacts of this increasing centralization and homogenization of retail needs to be more widely known and disseminated.
• Answering the question “what do we now do with our crumbling downtown” will be the most important thing in the future. In my view “re-inventing” downtown Nanaimo holds great promise for creating a great place to live, work and play. Because the timing of the fall-out often lags the decisions which lead to the need for re-inventing communities… the “public good” issue becomes one of accepting that a dynamic economy will invite change… providing an optimistic culture which embraces the adaptations required is the real challenge

• We in Western Canada are experiencing unprecedented economic vibrancy and as a result generating demand for places for us to spend our earnings. “Public good” in this environment seems to be one of managing the impact of “to much disposable income”……also recognizing that “this too will pass”

• Planners have a responsibility to understand the market place and to steer the private sector to “do the right thing” ……the larger question is “what is the right thing”….and what are the principles which shape a healthy “public good” perspective? One factor is the realization that our whole system depends on the profitability of those who invest in our communities. From our experience in the Industrial and Residential sectors, the ability to shape this segment of our communities should include a solid understanding of the economics of the retail industry.

• Recognize that like many things in life the “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”……the opportunity is to build for the future; the challenge is to mitigate the negative impacts. We live in very good times…..we can be catalysts to build a positive environment…..encouraging new creative initiatives and re-inventing those areas negatively impacted by change.

• I do not subscribe to the view that Wal-Mart or Big Boxes are inherently evil. Nor do I view all retail as benign. Again, the approach to Public Good is situational. If all retail areas of a community are functioning well then a less interventionist approach may be valid. If one area such as the downtown is suffering a more strict approach is warranted, such as, policies in an OCP that prohibit office development in any area outside of the downtown.

• Mixed use is a public good concept because it assists in creating complete communities where people can walk and use cars less [good for the environment] and assists in vibrant communities, reducing vandalism and increasing individual safety thereby making a community safer/nicer/healthier for all residents from all aspects of the sustainability spectrum.

• As one can see, it is a very complicated issue where sometimes the scenario is not black and white.
Most often the respondents noted that the public good has been defined by a “single-minded emphasis on the bottom line” without seeming consideration of social or environmental consequences to decisions.

As a group, the respondents remain optimistic about finding the public good in the retail landscape. A social planner suggested that retailing be disconnected from sales profit, so in “90% of the cases, the retailer should be able to tell the customer you don’t need this product” to completely remove economics from the retail landscape. Another respondent (a local land use planner) believed that, “there are many ways in which the retail landscape can positively or negatively, indirectly or directly, relate to the public good. Most important, there is a responsibility that is potentially self-serving as well as on a societal level to carefully assess how the retail landscape can affect the public good.” Most of the interviews concluded with unsolicited positive comments on the research question, which were much appreciated.

The Questionnaire Survey

The depth interview respondents spoke to the influence of the both the public and private sectors on the retail landscape, where the pattern of retailing proposed by developers has been endorsed by local government decision-making and implemented through the adoption of regulatory land use bylaws. The two bylaws with the greatest impact on land use planning are the city’s official community plan (OCP) and the zoning bylaw. The former document sets out the city’s long range plans for growth (over a ten- to fifteen-year time horizon). The OCP (the current version is Plan Nanaimo 2008) is intended to provide direction for future land use amendments, define desirable levels of and locations for
growth, provide a definition of progress, and offer the development community a “blueprint” on the goals and objectives of the municipality. The zoning bylaw (Bylaw 4000 in the City of Nanaimo) is the regulatory means for implementing the OCP’s goals and objectives, matching the long range vision for the city with regulations that specify permitted uses, setbacks, height, and density. Prior to the adoption of Plan Nanaimo 2008, the city’s retail policies for the previous 20 years supported the concentration of large format retailing in the area surrounding Woodgrove. The current OCP does not, and four issues triggered the rethinking of the former approach. First, the lands around Woodgrove are largely developed, with open space reduced to two sites: one is currently under development as a mixed use commercial/multi residential development; the other is a greenfield site on the city’s northerly boundary, and is slated for a future stand-alone big box store. Second, since the mid-1980s, trends in land use planning have focused on Smart Growth, sustainability, urban containment, and the creation of walkable, mixed-use communities. The acres of parking and large format stores found at Woodgrove are not consistent with current theory and practice in land use and development. Third, increasing vitality in the downtown core is a long-standing core priority of civic officials. The City has deferred development cost charges, funded a Downtown Business Association, partnered with shop owners to encourage façade improvements, and funded the development of a new conference centre. All of these actions are intended to bring new life and economic activity back to the downtown core. The final issue is perhaps perceptual but no less important than the previous three. Residents in the southerly neighbourhoods of the city have long taken issue with the location of all major retailing facilities in the north-end of the city. To some, the concentration of retailing at Woodgrove has been considered indicative of Council’s
continued favouritism (as expressed in newer servicing, higher quality infrastructure, and fewer "undesirable" social services) of the north-end. While the first issue is one that is more related to real estate development than philosophy, the latter three all relate to the question of the public good. That is, the form of the city, concerns for the vitality of downtown, and the north/south divide in retail servicing are all issues that are encompassed in a discussion of the place of the public good in the retail landscape.

The questionnaire undertaken as part of this research was a means of delving into these latter three issues. The questionnaire asked residents in the north and south of Nanaimo to consider their own place in the retail landscape, how the distribution of retail facilities shapes their shopping behaviour, and requested that respondents consider their own definition of the public good. The questionnaire was the third data source (along with archival research and the depth interviews) that enabled the triangulation of results obtained for the research. It was also the primary means of bringing the public into the discussion of the public good, as the research would have been deficient without their involvement.

Early on in the research, efforts were made to determine if any other questionnaires had been conducted locally by academic researchers, by government agencies, or by businesses or marketing firms that could inform this study. No published academic research could be found on Woodgrove, nor did it appear that any local, provincial, or federal government agency had ever investigated a specific research question on retail development at Woodgrove (beyond the usual statistical data available through Statistics Canada, BC Statistics, Nanaimo’s Economic Development Department, and sources such as Dunn and Bradstreet). Woodgrove does periodically conduct its own research, but this research is limited to mapping the addresses of patrons obtained from contest entries to evaluate the
mall’s trade area and ultimately to allow for targeted advertising. In addition, several of the larger chain and franchise establishments in the mall collect “point of purchase” postal codes or provide shoppers with loyalty cards that enable the retailers to record purchasing data. However, Woodgrove staff could not recall a questionnaire being conducted on the questions addressed in this research. Confirmation was also sought from city planning staff about their knowledge of previous research or studies on the retail landscape. Again, staff could not recall a questionnaire or any research that attempted to investigate questions about the retail landscape or the public good either in relation to Woodgrove or to any retail development within the City. This is not surprising – why should there have been any research? The concept of the public good is likely of little practical (economic) interest to the franchises and chain stores that populate Woodgrove, or to their head offices in points afar, such as Bentonville, Arkansas. Planning staff, as well, while expressing interest in the proposed questionnaire, indicated that understanding the relationship between the public good and the retail landscape was not a priority item in the city’s work plan. While the relevance of the research was not questioned, the difficulties inherent in defining and understanding the concept of the public good were noted by several city planners, and key staff expressed doubts that any understanding of the public good could be realized “in a place like Nanaimo.” The questionnaire was intended to remedy this observed gap of understanding on the place of the public good in the retail landscape.

One of the earliest steps in the development of the questionnaire was the selection of the study areas. Given the long-standing perceptual split of the city into two different regions, north and south, and given the comments of depth interview participants on the impact of the north-end concentration of retail services on residents in both
neighbourhoods (positive in the north and negative in the south), it was anticipated that these two neighbourhoods might have very differing opinions on the place of the public good in the retail landscape. Therefore, the questionnaires were distributed to two neighbourhoods, one close by Woodgrove and the other located at the southern reach of the City (see Figure 10, p. 197). The two neighbourhoods selected are locally perceived to differ markedly in socioeconomic characteristics, with the north-end neighbourhood having higher economic status than the south-end neighbourhood (although the census data do not reflect this). The two neighbourhoods do, however, differ on a number of key socio-economic characteristics:

- the percentage of single detached housing of the total housing stock is higher in the north (78% to 57%);
- unemployment rates are higher in the south (7.5% to 16.3%);
- the proportion of married couples vs. common law couples shows that more couples are married in the north when compared to the south;
- The opposite is true for common law relationships (with the percent comparison for married/common law at 85%/5% for the north and 59%/13% for the south);
- The percentage of lone parent families, headed by either males and females, was higher in the south end, comparing at 4% in the south to 2% in the north for male-headed families and 23% in the south to 8% in the north for female-headed families;
- The proportion of one person households in the north end was more than double the south end at 33% vs. 15%; and
- From an urban sustainability perspective, it is noted that more than twice the percentage of south end residents (over 15, total labour force) stated that walking was their primary mode of transportation (12% in the south compared to 5% in the north).

In addition, as noted anecdotally by the City’s Social Planner, the sense of community among residents appears stronger in the south, if measured by the longevity of and high participation rates for the residents’ association. This was attributed to the longer history of
development in the south and the fact that this area was at one time the separate community of Harewood, incorporated into Nanaimo in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{359}

Two postal code areas were selected as study areas: V9V to the north and V9R to the south. Given the population size in each postal code area, two postal routes of approximately 250 dwelling units each were selected (again, one in the northerly neighbourhood and one in the south) in a process of multi-stage cluster sampling. In this approach, the study area was selected, postal routes were identified, and then one route was selected in each neighbourhood as representative of the population (and was also identified as a route where the postal carrier would guarantee delivery of the questionnaires).\textsuperscript{360, 361} This method carries some inherent risk, as the sample selected cannot be considered a random representation of all households within the population. However, the method was used as it allowed full assurance that the selected mail carrier responsible for the route would deliver the “To Occuapt” addressed envelope to the targeted population. There is some risk, as well, in the use of bulk-mail as the delivery method: increasingly, residents are refusing bulk-mail to decrease unsolicited materials and unwanted advertising. Increasingly, if notified by an occupant of a household, Canada Post will cease delivering any unaddressed mail to that address, with the exception of information from any level of government. After discussions with staff at the local Canada Post sorting outlet, it was agreed that the envelopes containing the questionnaire would be considered “government mail” and delivered by the postal carriers to the households on the targeted routes.\textsuperscript{362} A random sampling method for addressed mail was also considered, but this would have required obtaining the name of occupants at an address; information that the City of Nanaimo would not provide to the researcher. A third method considered was addressed mail without specific resident
### Table 2: Statistics Canada Profile Report on Nanaimo, BC (2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Nanaimo</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Northern Postal Code Area (V9V)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Southern Postal Code Area (V9R)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>84,609</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>22,950</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>35,422</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,215</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9,990</td>
<td>28.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population by Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>3605</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-19</td>
<td>8545</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4605</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>13865</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1510</td>
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<td>25-34</td>
<td>13780</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2810</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>10435</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1365</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3530</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>45-54</td>
<td>12495</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1555</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3560</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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<td>55-64</td>
<td>10510</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>6925</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>5235</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant age group</td>
<td>5-19 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-19 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-19 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Census Families</td>
<td>225,800</td>
<td></td>
<td>2695</td>
<td></td>
<td>6185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per family</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married couples</td>
<td>15530</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2280</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3670</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common law couples</td>
<td>3250</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lone Parent families-Male</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lone Parent families-Female</td>
<td>3155</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupied dwellings</td>
<td>33,525</td>
<td></td>
<td>3210</td>
<td></td>
<td>6990</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owned dwellings</td>
<td>23,635</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2770</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3920</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rented dwellings</td>
<td>9,890</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3110</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single detached houses</td>
<td>19,975</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2510</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5735</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi detached</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per dwelling</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area (sq km)</td>
<td>189.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings per sq km</td>
<td>392.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>402.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>119.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private households by size</td>
<td>33,520</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,990</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>9720</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3285</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 person</td>
<td>10,895</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3455</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 persons</td>
<td>12,905</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3,245</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility by one year status-same address</td>
<td>62,010</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7,560</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>17,495</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility by five year status-same address</td>
<td>34,945</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4,420</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10,450</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population 15 years + by labour force activity</td>
<td>65,695</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td></td>
<td>18,255</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In the labour force</td>
<td>40,445</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4,340</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10,980</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>37,525</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4,015</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2915</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in the labour force</td>
<td>25,255</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,760</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7,275</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total employed labour force 15 + by Mode of Transportation</td>
<td>34,470</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,575</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car, truck, van as driver</td>
<td>27,125</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6,325</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car, truck, van as passenger</td>
<td>24,535</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk or Bicycle</td>
<td>3,140</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average employment income</td>
<td>$25,692</td>
<td></td>
<td>$23,901</td>
<td></td>
<td>$32,674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
identification (that is, a random selection of identified addresses sent “To Occupant”). However, the directed route option offered the greatest assurance that the questionnaires would reach the targeted population and as such was selected as the method for this study.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested, adjustments made, and then bulk-mailed to the two neighbourhoods in October 2006 on the targeted postal delivery routes (with the thought that individuals would be most likely to be thinking about shopping behaviour in the months leading to the most intensive shopping season from mid-November to end of December). Questionnaire respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire and return it in a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Given the low number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Questionnaire Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st mailing-number of questionnaires mailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to First Mailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminder mailing-number of questionnaires mailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Reminder Mailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total from 2 mailings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of questionnaires mailed=500 plus 500 reminder mailings sent to same households (250 to each postal code x 2 mailings)
Total received=171 Per cent response= 34.2%

of responses (35 in total to the first mail out), a reminder questionnaire package was redistributed to the same routes in January 2007 (with a note clarifying that the receiver need not fill out the questionnaire if they had completed the previous questionnaire). This
increased the questionnaire response rate to 171 questionnaires, or 34.2% of the 500 targeted households. Of these, 115 (67.3%) were obtained from the north study area and 56 (32.7%) from the south. While the same postal routes were used and the reminders were delivered by the same postal carriers, it is true that it would be impossible to fully guarantee that the questionnaire package was received by the same household member. It is possible that the second questionnaire survey could have been returned by an individual uninformed of the household’s earlier response. It is also possible that the household could be occupied by new residents who responded to the reminder survey, unaware that the previous owners had responded. However, given the fairly short time span between the first mailing and the reminder, and given that the number of new residents and/or double responses from a household were anticipated to be small, this situation was not considered detrimental to the obtained results.

An online statistical program, OriginPro, was used to analyze the questionnaire data. As to the sufficiency of the sample size, using a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 6, the required sample size for the north-end study area was 246 and 260 in the south; therefore if the sampling were truly random, the sample size of 250 in each study area would be adequate and the results would be considered statistically representative of the respective populations. However, given the non-random aspects of the sampling (that is, the selection of a particular postal route) the sufficiency of the sample size cannot be statistically assured nor should it be interpreted as such. It can be said that multi-stage cluster sampling is a tested means of research and while the sample cannot be
Figure 10: Map of Postal Code Areas
Source: Canada Post Householder Counts
Available online at:www.canadapost.ca/tools
theoretically representative of the population, it is reasonable to state that rationally it can be considered representative of the population.\textsuperscript{364}

To determine whether the questionnaire respondents were comparable to aggregate of citizens from their census tract areas, the responses were compared to the census data from 2006. As shown in Table 5, the results were found to be similar by household demographic composition within the north and south study areas. For example, the larger proportion of single-person households in the north compared to the south holds in the study data, as does the age by cohort data (this information is cross-tabulated with the questionnaire responses later in this chapter to examine whether the demographic characteristics of the respondents shaped their opinions on the retail landscape in Nanaimo). However, some differences are notable. For both the north and south neighbourhoods, respondents reported a higher level of mobility than would be expected from the Statistics Canada data. The census data report that 87\% of north end residents and 79\% of south end residents indicated that they were at the same address as they were one year ago, while only 67\% and 55\% respectively of the questionnaire respondents responded accordingly. It may be that the questionnaire only reached residents with shorter tenures in their neighborhoods, or that residents with shorter tenures responded more often to the questionnaire. It may also be that new housing tracts were constructed in each neighbourhood, therefore attracting recently-arrived populations that were inadvertently selected when the sample area was chosen.\textsuperscript{365} Ultimately, the reason for the discrepancy between the reported length of residence and the Statistics Canada information cannot be surmised from the data as collected. However, this information is not considered to have an impact on the respondent’s ability to comment on the place of the public good in the retail landscape or
the series of questions on shopping behaviours which followed the profile responses on the questionnaires.

Table 5: Statistical Profile of Survey Respondents with comparatives from Census Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>V9V North end</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Census Data</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>V9R South end</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Census Data</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of stay at location</th>
<th>&lt; 1 year</th>
<th>77</th>
<th>67.0</th>
<th>7560</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>55.4</th>
<th>17495</th>
<th>79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>4420</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>10450</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of household</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One person</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>3285</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two person</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>3455</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than two persons</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>3245</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Respondent Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you the primary shopper for your household?</th>
<th>&gt;18?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N #</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N %</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S #</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S %</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The targeted questionnaire respondent was a person over 18 and the primary shopper for the household. For the north sample group, of the 98.3% of the questionnaire respondents who indicated that they were over 18, 82.6% indicated that they were the primary shopper. For the south sample group, 98.4% indicated that they were over 18 and 87.5% indicated that they were the primary shopper. The difference in responses from primary/non-primary shoppers to the questions on shopping behaviour were statistically
tested but not found to be so anomalous as to warrant the separation of the non-primary shoppers from the data base.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location by name of retail complex</th>
<th>North yes</th>
<th>North no</th>
<th>South yes</th>
<th>South no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks Landing</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Mall</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Nanaimo</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harewood Mall</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northridge/Longwood</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old City Quarter</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Place Mall</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford Mall</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southgate Mall</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Park Mall</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodgrove Centre</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: respondents were not given a "no response" or "don't know" category but could choose not to check either yes or no for each retail complex. The variance from 100% for each retail complex yes/no paring represents those individuals who did not provide a yes or no response. The question was worded in this manner to ascertain to what degree shoppers from each study area favoured the listed shopping destinations.

On the questionnaire, the shopping destinations were presented alphabetically, not in geographic order.

The questionnaire continued with an examination of the respondent's use of primary shopping destinations in Nanaimo. As expected, Woodgrove was the destination visited in the last calendar year by the highest proportion of both north and south area respondents (93.0% and 91.1%, respectively). North respondents also patronized Northridge/Longwood (the location of two major grocery stores), with 87.0% indicating a visit in the last calendar year.

As a shopping destination, Downtown Nanaimo was the next option selected by respondents, followed closely by Country Club Mall (79.1% and 78.3% respectively, a difference of one "vote" from questionnaire respondents). South-end residents were more likely to patronize Harewood Mall than any other location, with 98.2% indicating that they had shopped at this retail centre in the last calendar year. This was followed by Southgate Mall (73.2%) and Port Place Mall (62.5%). Interestingly, a similar proportion of south-end residents patronized
Downtown Nanaimo when compared to the northerly neighbourhood (79.1%). Three respondents (all north-end residents) indicated that they had not patronized any of the listed destinations. Figure 5 illustrates all listed shopping areas as well as the two study areas:

![Map of Shopping Centres](image)

**Figure 11: Map of Shopping Centres**

*Note: not included in survey, provided for reference.*
An open-ended, follow-up question asked respondents to provide a response to “What is your primary shopping destination in Nanaimo?” Again, questionnaire respondents indicated a preference for Woodgrove. For north-end respondents, Woodgrove was selected by 73.04%, and was also the primary shopping destination of 60.71% of south-end residents. It was anticipated that the results would show a preference for Woodgrove followed by retail centres that contained grocery stores (as groceries tend to be among the lowest order of shopping goods). This did not prove to be the case. Neither Brooks Landing nor Country Club was cited as the primary shopping destination by any respondents, although they both contain mid-sized grocery stores. However, these two locations are geographically the most distant from the two selected study areas. The results show a market preference for Woodgrove and a secondary preference for proximate locations that contain the lowest order shopping functions.

What the results do not show is the influence of place of work on the primary shopping destination. It may be that residents work in Downtown Nanaimo and therefore cite this location as a response more than would be expected. It may also be that north-end residents are employed at Harewood Mall and south-end residents work at Woodgrove, and this impacts on the reporting of primary shopping destinations. A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8: Location by retail complex</th>
<th>North %</th>
<th>South %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks Landing</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Mall</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Nanaimo</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harewood Mall</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northridge/Longwood</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old City Quarter</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Place Mall</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford Mall</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southgate Mall</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Park Mall</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodgrove Town Centre</td>
<td>73.04</td>
<td>60.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
future study would ask the respondents to indicate their place of employment, and add a follow up question on the influence of their employment location on shopping patterns.

North-end respondents who indicated they primarily shopped at Woodgrove were also the most frequent shoppers: when cross-tabulating responses to the previous question on the primary shopping destination and selecting only those who indicated Woodgrove as their selected location, 67% of north end respondents were contained in the categories “about once a week” and “more than once a week” (the two highest shopping frequency categories). When all responses were examined, the highest frequency response for both north and south study areas was “about once a month”. The overall distribution of responses was similar for both areas. Overall, approximately two-thirds of the respondents in each area (66.95% in the north and 64.29% in the south) indicated that they shopped at least once a month at Woodgrove.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Shopping Frequency-Woodgrove</th>
<th>North study area %</th>
<th>South study area %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you shop at Woodgrove?</td>
<td>Check one only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once each year</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 6 months to 1 year</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 3 months to 5 months</td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 1 month to 2 months</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>10.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a week</td>
<td>21.74</td>
<td>17.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
north and south study areas, the automobile was overwhelmingly the primary mode of travel, followed at a much lower rate by walking in the north and transit in the south. All other modes of travel received very few responses, with approximately three-quarters of respondents indicating that they “never” traveled to Woodgrove by taxi or bike in the north study area, and 78.6% and 87.5% of south area residents indicating that they “never” bike or walk (which would be expected given that Woodgrove is approximately 12 kilometres linear distance and between 13 to 15 kilometres by road (depending on the route used). The pervasiveness of the automobile as the primary mode of travel made it difficult to extract any significant correlation between the respondent’s opinions on the overall form of the retail landscape, their perceptions on the location of Woodgrove, and their usual method of travel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% response</th>
<th>Auto</th>
<th>Transit</th>
<th>Taxi</th>
<th>Bike</th>
<th>Walk</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North %</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>78.26</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>78.26</td>
<td>79.13</td>
<td>73.91</td>
<td>46.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>96.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South %</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>66.07</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16.07</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16.07</td>
<td>58.93</td>
<td>51.79</td>
<td>78.57</td>
<td>87.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>80.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Questionnaire requested that respondent specify “other” mode of travel. Single responses were received for Vespa, scooter, skateboard, and roller blades. Two responses were received for running from north study area respondents.

The focus of the questionnaire then shifted toward gaining an understanding of the respondent’s opinions on the retail landscape and the connection between this landscape and the public good. Respondents were asked to consider the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: Responses to Opinion Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note: responses do not equal 100% as non-responses and &quot;no comment&quot; responses are not shown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre makes sense for Nanaimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre is good for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Retail activities should be grouped together so they do not cause noise and traffic in other parts of the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Costs are kept lower for consumers if retail activities are concentrated in one area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre has helped me to reduce my transportation costs for shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has made my life easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo citizens from an environmental perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has helped to decrease costs for all residents in Nanaimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has had little impact on other retail locations in Nanaimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre from home by bike or walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am interested in how city officials make plans for my city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The City of Nanaimo has made good decisions in locating shopping centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have heard of 'Plan Nanaimo' the city's official community plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre by transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
North-end Responses

Respondents in the north expressed clear support for the location of Woodgrove, agreeing that:

- The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre is good for me (74.8%);
- The location has helped me to reduce transportation costs (73.9%); and
- It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre by bike or walking (81.74%).

When responses to “the location has helped me to reduce transportation costs” were correlated with mode of travel, more than 90.5% of the north-end respondents indicated that the automobile was their primary choice with this question. The results were 100% consistent with individuals who indicated that they usually biked or walked to Woodgrove (with all of these respondents supporting “the location has helped me to reduce transportation costs”). Very low levels of agreement were achieved for the statements “The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo citizens from an environmental perspective” and “The City of Nanaimo has made good decisions in locating shopping centres” (4.35% to both questions) from north-end respondents. These low levels of agreement were internally consistent within individual surveys; respondents who disagreed with the first statement also disagreed with the second (for 100% of the responses). Questions 1 and 15 were also intended to test the internal consistency of the surveys: it was anticipated that the response to “The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre makes sense for Nanaimo” would be the same as to “The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo.” While reasonably consistent (85.4% of surveys contained matching responses, either consistently agreeing or disagreeing with the
statements), the amount of variance was surprising. It may be that respondents were interpreting two different meanings for the statements; placing meaning other than what was intended on the operative terms to makes sense or good. Ultimately, the reason for the variance cannot be known from the survey analysis.

**South-end Responses**

Respondents in the south indicated a much lower level of support for the location of Woodgrove when compared to the north study area responses. The statement "The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre makes sense for Nanaimo" received the highest rate of agreement at 44.6%, while the highest rate of disagreement (at 85.7%) was offered for the statement "The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has had little impact on other retail locations in Nanaimo". South end residents also disagreed that:

- Retail activities should be grouped together so they do not cause noise and traffic in other parts of the city (75%);
- The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre has helped me to reduce my transportation costs for shopping (75%); and
- The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has helped to decrease costs for all residents in Nanaimo (78.5%).

Within the surveys, 92% of the respondents exhibited consistency in their responses to the above statements, responding in the negative to all three. A high rate of consistency (87.5%) was also shown between a negative response to the statement on transit ("It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre by transit") and a positive response to "usually" or "sometimes" reaching Woodgrove by bus. That is, those persons most able to comment on the ease of traveling by transit to Woodgrove found it wanting. To the first and last
statements, "The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre makes sense for Nanaimo" and "The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo" south respondents were slightly more consistent in their responses than north respondents at 87.5% (that is, agreeing to both statements or disagreeing to both statements). Virtually all variance in internal consistency was a result of individuals choosing not to respond to one of these statements.

The two questions receiving the fewest responses in both the north and south study areas (either "no comment" or no response checked) were "I am interested in how city officials make plans for my city" and "I have heard of 'Plan Nanaimo' the city's official community plan." More than half of the respondents in each of the study areas provided no response to these statements. One might speculate that this speaks to a lack of interest in local government or land use planning, or perhaps to a higher than expected level of unfamiliarity with Plan Nanaimo. However, when correlated with written comments added to the surveys, it is interesting to note that 82.4% of the comments were received from individuals who did express a response to these two statements, either wholeheartedly agreeing or disagreeing. It may be that these individuals were more likely to have some awareness of the role of local government and land use planning in shaping the retail landscape, and therefore were more likely to provide additional written comments.

The final question asked: "This research project focuses on the question of 'the public good' with this term being defined as 'an action for the good of all people.' Do you think the location of retail facilities in Nanaimo supports the public good?" Responses to this question were as follows:
Table 12. Responses to the question

This research project focuses on the question of ‘the public good’ with this term being defined as ‘an action for the good of all people’. Do you think the location of the Woodgrove Town Centre supports ‘the public good’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree %</th>
<th>No Comment %</th>
<th>No response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>16.52</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>18.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>41.07</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>17.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For both north and south-end residents, the most frequent response was to “disagree” with the statement. When the combined response to “disagree” and “strongly disagree” is considered, the responses totaled 47% of north-end respondents and 62.4% for south-end respondents. It was anticipated that the split between the north and south for these combined responses would be even higher; given the distance of Woodgrove from south study area respondents and given the response on the impact of Woodgrove on the retail landscape in Nanaimo; a response of at least 80% expressing disagreement had been predicted. Written comment from respondents assisted in a more complete understanding of their comments, with south-end residents noting:

- What can I do about it? The mall is where it is
- I catch the bus- it takes more than one hour to get to Woodgrove
- The south of Nanaimo has no services and never will as long as Council remains populated by developers
- There is more than enough retail in Nanaimo- we do not need the development at Southgate
- All the shopping is at Woodgrove and Rutherford- the downtown is dead
- I do not shop at malls. People should shop less
- There should be a store like Wal-Mart closer to the centre of Nanaimo so it is equally accessible to all residents (where it used to be)
• There is no connection between the public good and retail facilities

• What is good for me is not necessarily good for all people (also: “I know what’s good for me, but what’s good for you?” And “the public good is relative”)

• I would like to see a more even distribution of stores and services across the City- it would make sense to make the City more friendly to bikes and walkers (other modes of transportation).

That is, for some residents, the public good and retailing have some connection, and the proximity of shopping is not always considered to be “good” for a neighbourhood.

Three south-area respondents provided comments that spoke to a relativistic definition of the public good, noting that what was considered “good” for one may not be considered “good” for all.

North end respondents provided a much more positive review of the location of Woodgrove in their comments, stating:

• Woodgrove is part of the reason why I bought my house (I am within walking distance)

• It is helpful to have a range of services in the same place

• Having all big box stores grouped together creates a synergy of uses

• The location of all shopping at Woodgrove is good, but we do not need any more

• The pool and ice arena are at the south end on 3rd Street and the north end has nothing except shopping

• The land the Woodgrove Town Centre sits on is Class 1 farmland and should never have been developed as a mall

• Plan Nanaimo supports all the retail activities in one place – I am not certain this is a good strategy

• The City needs to re-invest in Downtown- that would be good for all people in Nanaimo

• Who decides what is good? I know City Council has the final say, but we need to be more involved in what’s going on at the City

• Woodgrove is like a second downtown core. It has public services like the theatres and just needs more people living in the area to make it work even better

• What is the public good? I don’t know how to respond to this.
With the exception of the final comment listed above, no north-end respondent commented directly on the issue of the public good or their understanding of the relationship of the public good to the retail landscape. The questionnaire format did not lend itself well to an in-depth discussion on this issue: future research should consider an approach where depth interviews are also conducted with the public to better draw out their opinions on this topic.

The use of a questionnaire is an accepted method of data collection in social science research and an efficient means of collecting data from a large target population. Questionnaires are considered to be “one of the most valuable tools of social inquiry” and their advantages are many: the researcher can collect a wide variety of information; data can be manipulated to obtain additional findings; a questionnaire allows for ease of response and anonymity; and statistically sufficient samples allow the researcher to apply the findings to a larger population with some confidence.369 When triangulated with the archival research and depth interviews, few direct links could be drawn between specific questionnaire responses and these other sources. However, no marked inconsistencies were noted. Overall, this research would have been deficient had it not sought out the input of residents on questions surrounding land use planning, the retail landscape, and the public good.

Conclusion

It should be noted that this research does not examine the question of the economic impacts surrounding the diversion of retail dollars from Nanaimo’s downtown core to the outlying shopping centres and malls. Ideally, reliable quantitative information would be
available that would show the impact of each mall on retail sales in the previously existing sites. That is, one would expect that data could be obtained on how the “malling” of the city impacted shops and services in Downtown Nanaimo. However, for the time frame under consideration, no reliable measures are available that benchmark the economic structure of Nanaimo in 1950 and then allow the monitoring of key indicators to the present. Statistics Canada publishes Small Area Retail Trade Estimates by Forward Sortation Areas (the Forward Sortation Area is first three letters of a postal code), but this information has only been available since 1989, well after the opening and initial impact of Woodgrove on existing retailers. The City’s Economic Development Department publishes a Retail Sector Profile. This document has only been published in very recent years, and provides only aggregated information for the entire city. Assessment data for each of the shopping centres and malls could perhaps be used as a proxy measure, with the assessed value considered to be representative of the financial health of the retail establishment, but there is some danger inherent in inferring a higher level of meaning for data collected for other purposes. While a better understanding of the quantifiable impacts of change in the retail landscape would be an interesting area for future study, it is not further examined here.

Upon review of the archival material, the recollections of interview subjects, and the questionnaire data, all three sources speak to the profound impact that the siting of two northerly enclosed malls, Woodgrove and Rutherford, had on the retail landscape and in particular on the downtown core. Respondents equated a definition of the public good with economic good – that is, land uses that create taxes and employment are “good” both for the city and citizens. Respondents to the depth interviews added other elements to a definition of the public good by noting the civic pride and the prestige that would be
brought to the city with the addition of the largest mall on Vancouver Island. However, no
evidence could be found that civic officials, city staff, or even the public called for a serious
and thoughtful discussion of the impacts of new retailing on the public good for any of the
noted developments, with the exception of the comments noted from the Director of
Planning in the mid to late-1970s. In addition, while mention was made of the influence of
new mall development on the downtown by speakers at the Public Hearings and at Council
meetings who raised concerns, it would appear that no actions were taken to either
ameliorate or even measure the potential impacts.

What has been the effect of Woodgrove on the retail landscape? Today, all large-
format shopping in Nanaimo is clustered around the Centre. The future will likely see a
shifting of new retailing to the “main streets” and corridors, due in part to new policies in
the Official Community Plan and in part to the lack of available greenfield development sites
surrounding Woodgrove. The most significant expansion will be the Sandstone project at the
city’s southerly boundary, which will add retail space similar in square footage to the
Woodgrove area, including the mall and the surrounding retail development. Rutherford
Mall (now renamed Nanaimo North Town Centre) is undergoing refurbishment and shifting
toward a lifestyle commercial centre format with the “implosion” of the mall and
development of external access points for individual storefronts. Other shopping mall and
shopping centre complexes appear to be holding their own, and new commercial
construction is underway along Bowen Road, one of the two main arteries running through
the City. Optimists continue to predict a significant rebound for the downtown core,
resulting from the construction of two new residential towers, the previously mentioned
Conference Centre, and the refurbishment of a number of downtown shops.
The City has implemented new criteria that must be addressed as part of any development review process since Woodgrove opened in 1981, which assists in more fully responding to the question of the public good. Today, an applicant must provide extensive information on the environmental impacts of their project and either avoid environmentally sensitive areas or ameliorate any damage caused by the development. The applicant must report on the wider context surrounding their site, and discuss the impacts on adjacent properties as well as on the wider neighbourhood. The impact of the development on roadways with increased traffic, water, sewer, and storm drainage systems is now carefully considered for any new development. As well, larger-scale applications must provide an assessment of the social and “soft” impacts likely to result (for example, greater needs for social services, policing, or fire protection) and either provide amenities, cash, or fund works in response. The City, along with local governments across North America, has also been grappling with the concept of “sustainability” and how to reduce the footprint of new development.

Movements toward Smart Growth, neo-traditionalism, and New Urbanism, the watchwords of land use planning in early twenty-first century Canada, are all steeped in the search for the public good. While each takes a slightly different view (Smart Growth focuses on density and access to transit, neo-traditionalism on a return to the street patterns and housing formats of the early twentieth century, and New Urbanism calls for high densities, public open spaces, reduced road widths and strong design controls), the core objective is the same: to alter the urban landscape to make cities more livable, increase the quality of life for residents, and improve the public good. That is, while the economic contribution of development projects remains important, it is by no means the only criteria that should be
considered in the evaluation of major applications that will change the form and character of the urban landscape.

To the question: is the public good reflected in the retail landscape of Nanaimo? The superficial answer is no. It would be difficult to state emphatically or prove at some level of precision that the current pattern of retailing in Nanaimo matches some test of "goodness" should such a test even exist. The public good is not a concept receptive to a simple quantified score. Instead of a yes/no dichotomy, the public good is better conceived of as a series of questions that must be asked, evaluated, and responded to, even if the process is time consuming, difficult, and without a clear "right" answer. What appears to be missing is a tool or technique for evaluating the public good — a means by which local governments, development professionals, planners, and the public could appraise a project and ensure that the needs of the public are at least considered or more optimistically, addressed. One such technique is discussed in the concluding chapter.

Endnotes

338 Each research method has the potential for inadvertent manipulation from researcher bias. The results of depth interviews could be led by the selection of interview subjects, format of questions and the delivery of questions. Archival research can be impacted by the sources considered by the researcher and the researcher’s scotomas to seeing materials that do not support the contentions of the research.


340 See Johnston (1983, 5) for a good discussion on humanism. It is noted that this may at first seem to be a contrary pairing of methodologies: humanism see the individual as the primary causal variable, and post-structuralism references some larger construct as the constant. The approach considered in this study attempts to draw from both these methodologies, where individual decisions and applied meanings have an impact on the form of the retail landscape, but these actions take place within a framework shaped by local government decision-making and approaches, power structures (that is, who holds power over the form of the retail landscape, including elected officials, developers, financiers, and ultimately the consumer).


342 Palys (2003, 248).
Ibid, 249.

While a similar statistic could not be found for the Canadian National Archives, the US National Archives publish that only 1% to 3% of all materials produced by the US Federal Government annually are considered important enough to archive (source: www.archive.gov/research). It is anticipated that this figure will increase as digital storage enables the long term retention of vast quantities of information with limited space needs.

A daily newspaper has been published in Nanaimo since the late 1800s, under the banner of the Nanaimo Free Press and more recently as the Nanaimo Daily News. Other broadsheets, including free newspapers, were reviewed when available.

Mr. MacKay passed in 2007, some months after completing a marathon five hour interview, many telephone conversations, and after providing an incredible array of Council reports, draft plans, and insight on the unrecorded discussions and machinations that shaped the retail landscape of Nanaimo. The author is indebted to Mr. MacKay for the hours spent and information provided to assist in this research.

It is interesting that this original proposal contained all the elements of a complete community with two residential towers, walking trails, a transit exchange, a community recreation building, hotel, an office and professional building, and designated public gathering sites. Ultimately the site developed only as a shopping mall, benefit of all other facets of the original vision. Mr. MacKay noted that at the time, most zoning bylaws were written to separate land uses into distinct categories, and a mixing of uses on any one property was considered to be less desirable than a single purpose zone, particularly with the intensity of retail uses intended for the Woodgrove site. The addition of any other uses was considered to be incompatible and would lead to difficulties in site design and impacts.


Note to File obtained from City files on the Woodgrove Town Centre.

Interview notes.

Complete comments from the respondents are contained in the Appendices.


Blanchard, B. in Freeman, B. (1976, 50).

It is noted that the interviews were conducted about 18 months before the Sandstone Development, located at the southerly perimeter of Nanaimo at a size and scale that will correspond to the Woodgrove Town Centre, was publiy proposed. This proposal required an amendment to the City’s urban containment boundary and hence brought in land that had not been considered developable by the respondents.

The Brundtland Commission (named for the Chairperson, Gro Harlem Brundtland) was a commission of the United Nations that was created in 1983 to address a growing interest in monitoring the human footprint and the long term impact of land uses. The commission, among other findings, produced a definition of sustainability that remains widely used: “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” A report on the Brundtland Commission entitled Our Common Future, was published by Oxford University Press in 1987 and is the well-referenced source for the Commission’s discussion on sustainability.

These comparison stereotypes prove not to be accurate, as will be illustrated in the review of census data.

John Horn, with permission given for crediting the comment.
360 It is noted by Simmons (Research Note #2) that caution should be exercised in the use of census tract data to ensure it has not been aggregated to a level of uselessness.

361 Babbie and Benequisto (2002) define the non-probability aspects of multi-stage cluster sampling as “a sample selected in some fashion other than any suggested by probability theory.” Examples include reliance on available subjects, judgmental, quota, and snowball samples. While the researchers favour true random sampling, they recognize that this is not always possible or desirable in social research.

362 This may raise questions on the abilities of local postal outlets to censor materials, but that is a topic for another dissertation.

363 Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Holbrook, and Rowlands (1999) and Bloch (as quoted in Friedman, 1991) employed similar methods in their retailing studies.

364 Palys (2003) considers the validity of results obtained from multi-stage cluster sampling techniques vs. truly random samples and suggests that the methods used by researchers should be tailored to suit the research question and the target populations. While multi-stage clustering techniques do not allow for the reliance on theoretical statistics, significant results can be obtained as long as the researcher seeks to document and understand how sampling errors or omissions could shape the study results.

365 A visual survey of the selected study areas did not document new construction in either the north or south areas.

366 It is noted that multiple responses to this question could be made by any respondent. The figure shown is the ratio of the number of responses to the total number of questionnaires received from that study area.

367 It is noted that there may have been overlap in the responses to Downtown Nanaimo and Port Place Centre, as the latter is located along the southerly edge of Downtown.

368 A question was also asked on “preferred retail location” but is not presented here as it offers no new information to the discussion. Again, the Woodgrove Town Centre was the preferred location for both north and south area respondents at approximately 85% for the north and 79% for the south. Northridge/Longwood was the 2nd preferred location for north respondents, while Harewood Mall held that position for the south respondents. This question was asked to triangulate the results of previous questions and the survey responses remained consistent over the related questions.

369 Del Balso and Lewis (2001, 241).

370 This development is discussed in the Prologue.

371 See the previous reference in this chapter to the Bruntland Report.
Chapter 6  Boxed In: the Place of the Public Good in the Retail Landscape

The retail establishments that characterize our urban environments are often the focal points of human activity. These services are part of our social system and their distribution shapes our everyday experiences. However, even though the placement of retail establishments is so essential to our being in urban places, the impact of the retail landscape on the collective quality of life for urbanites – the public good – has been given limited academic attention. Searching for the place of the public good in the retail landscape became the key task of this research, requiring the investigation of several research areas: the evolution of the built form of the landscape; theoretical approaches to retailing geography; and an in-depth review on the meaning of the public good from a variety of philosophical and disciplinary perspectives. Emerging from this, land use planning as a profession and practice was necessarily included in the study, both to understand the role of regulation in shaping the landscape and to gain insight into the planner’s responsibility of integrating the public good into plans and bylaws. It was found that the intersection between retailing geography, the public good, and land use planning was not well represented in the literature. To remedy this, this study investigated these questions through archival research, a questionnaire survey, depth interviews with development professionals, as well as through a case study analysis on the place of the public good in the retail landscape of Nanaimo, British Columbia. This dissertation delved into an uncharted area of study, contributing information on the interrelationships between retailing geography, land use planning, and the public good.
To understand the associations between these three areas, Chapter 1 introduced three questions:

1. *How has retailing geography and the retail landscape evolved since the 1950s?*

   To the first part of the question, Chapter 2 investigated the progression of thought in retailing geography from 1950 forward to the early years of the twenty-first century. The theoretical progression of land use planning was integrated into the discussion to add depth to the analysis and provide a comparison between two related areas of study. It was shown that both retailing geography and planning, and the methodologies prominent in them, had evolved significantly since the mid-century. For the former, retailing geography had advanced from but still retained its roots in quantitative analysis. New methodologies added over the intervening decades since 1950 gave greater depth and breadth to the theoretical underpinnings of this area of study, adding less-than-rational human actors to quantitative models. Far from being "the most boring of fields," retailing geography remains today a central area of research in human geography. As for land use planning, methodologically the profession has shifted from reliance solely on a rational-comprehensive model to more holistic, inclusive approaches. Public involvement has been a key focus of the profession since the 1970s, as has the recognition of the importance of including environmental and social issues in the analysis of proposed developments (in addition to the more obvious economic and infrastructure impacts that often take precedence in shaping decisions on land use plans. Theories in land use planning are much more fractured today than in the past, and new perspectives continue to be developed or constructed from combinations of existing theories and methodologies. As concluded in Chapter 2, no single current methodology defines either retailing geography or land use planning. While some would
suggest a need for comprehensive theories in both research areas, it is more likely that both will remain fragmented and externally-referenced, continuing to combine methodological approaches and sometimes return to previous theoretical perspectives.

To the second part of the question, the Prologue told the story of retail change in Nanaimo, British Columbia, and Chapter 4 traveled through the progression of the retail landscape from 1950 forward in a general sense for North American cities. This research examined change in the built form of the landscape, from downtown's days at the apex of the retail hierarchy in the 1950s, through the evolution of strip malls and shopping centres, the malling of the suburbs and the boxing-in of powercentres, ending with a renewed interest in human-scaled retailing in the early years of the 21st century (as revealed through the façades of the new lifestyle commercial centres). Understanding change in the landscape was critical to this study if any connection was to be drawn between the form and distribution of retailing and the impact of this sector on urban life.

In response to the question "how has retailing geography and the retail landscape evolved since the 1950s?" research has shown that the days of the mega-mall as a format for new retailing have ended (in North America, anyway, although the format continues to expand in other markets). Big box stores have been exposed as useful from an efficiency perspective but repetitive, soulless, and placeless. While these forms of retail will persist on the landscape (given their investment in buildings and infrastructure), the next decade will bring much more interest in the refurbishing of these aging structures, the introduction of new mixed uses to retail properties (generally with the addition of multi-residential uses), as well as store closures and site abandonment. The success of the supercentre will likely continue, although at a continued cost for smaller retailers unable to compete with the purchasing power and reach of these establishments. Depending on economic conditions, and should New
Urbanist ideals be achieved, the future landscape will also be populated with finer-grained, mixed-use centres better integrated into the urban fabric. This approach is already being seen in the re-development of enclosed mall projects, where the anchor stores and blank façades are being replaced with smaller-scale, externally accessed services, stand alone small-box establishments, all facing realigned parking areas configured to safely include pedestrians. As for downtown, a renewed focus on culture and community appears to be the path to revitalization. While downtowns in many small and mid-sized cities will never regain their place at the apex of the retail hierarchy, they will remain as important foci for civic life. What remains true is that retailing has always been an important component of urban life, and this sector will continue to be a critical element in defining the shape and form of the urban landscape.

As to the case study, Nanaimo was revealed to be representative of the generalized process of change seen across many North American cities. The suburbanization of retailing had profound, negative, and not yet reversed effects on the health of the downtown core. Although documented evidence exists about the concerns of land use planners on the shifting of retailing to Nanaimo’s northern periphery, it is telling that these concerns were not given credence by decision-makers. Even more telling is that the developer of Woodgrove himself expressed concerns over the health of the downtown core once a second suburban enclosed mall was added to the north area of the city. Of course, in part his concerns were focused on an economic rival, but he was also genuinely apprehensive for the future of downtown. The developer recognized that some element of the public good would be lost if the city ceased to have a vibrant centre, and ultimately his concerns were well-founded. The addition of two enclosed malls to the north-end of the city in 1980 and 1981, along with the loss of key downtown anchor stores, precipitated a process of decline
that only now is slowing. Downtown Nanaimo today continues to struggle to retain or attract retail establishments. As to the place of the public good in the retail landscape of Nanaimo, it is evident that the pursuit of economic growth has been given priority over any other factor for much of Nanaimo’s development history. Archival evidence reveals that when the regional mall project was first proposed, decision-makers weighed the prestige associated with attracting the largest enclosed mall on the Island and the perceived economic benefits as much more persuasive than the quietly voiced questions on the impact of the development on existing retailers or city form. Later, when the voices calling for a more balanced approach increased in volume, proponents raised arguments on sunk costs and called for civic officials to honour decisions previously made. City planners at the time raised questions about the impact of the mall on the shape of the city, the costly extension of servicing, and the creation of vast areas of infill lands. These were dismissed. What is evident from this process is that no policy or processes were in place to comprehensively study or address the questions of the public good, to weigh options, and to consider the ramifications of significant land use changes. Instead, decision-makers, stakeholders, planners, and the public relied on a process that weighed competing objectives then selected a singular approach. In this case, economic arguments prevailed.

At issue here is the “lessons learned.” If it is accepted that this case study is representative of the development approval process across North America, then it would seem that a better method could be put in place to ensure that all issues, be they social, environmental, economic, or concerned with long-term questions on sustainability, are heard and represented in the review of the proposal. Instead of viewing issues as competing, a different approach would see them as integrated and equally worthy of consideration. Such an approach is outlined later in this concluding chapter.
2. What is the role of land use planning as a profession that shapes the retail landscape, and how do planners balance their pragmatic role with the search for an ideal?

Friedmann describes the profession of land use planning as “a science working in the service of humanity.” He cautions, however, that planners practice this profession in capitalist systems that value market rationality over social rationality, a system that seeks to improve collective outcomes for citizens. To Knox (1991, 188), the role of the planner has become increasingly geared toward the support of the “needs and wants of specific producers and consumers rather than to overarching notions of rationality or the public good.” In short, although planners may have grand ideas about improving the quality of life of residents, Friedmann suggests there are limits to the possible. “Planners rarely accomplished more than private (market) interests are prepared to accept. It is probably correct to say that in most cases public sector programs (that is, actions seeking the public good) are successfully launched only when they are broadly compatible with the interests of corporate capital.” Friedmann’s comments are particularly germane when considering the role of the planner in shaping the most capitalized landscape in the urban environment; the form and distribution of elements on the retail landscape. The importance of a well-functioning capitalist society cannot be disregarded; the proper functioning of the private sector is essential as it is the means by which most people earn a living. However, within a structure that emphasizes economics over any other perspective, balance in the review of land use proposals becomes difficult to achieve.

As discussed in Chapter 3, for many years, land use planning and the search for the public good was steeped in rationality (Robinson 1972, Faludi 1973). Ideally, if planners
could ‘think through’ objectives, actions, and consequences, some rational path of correct
decision-making would evolve. This approach evolved into one of “muddling through” as
coining by Lindblom (1979), and later expanded on by Hodge (2008) who explained the
search for the public good as something that “becomes known” through an iterative process
of seeking and testing. However, Campbell and Marshall caution that “the legitimization of
planning as an activity which intervenes in land and property markets has long rested on the
notion that some restrictions of individual property rights are necessary if the public interest
is to be upheld.”374 This has long been foundational to planning’s involvement in the retail
landscape. In Chapter 5, the reactions to depth interviews revealed that respondents
generally agreed that the public good was subjective, relative, based on perceptions, and
often focused solely on metrics that evaluated the economic good of a proposal. For a
minority of respondents, this meant that the public good was not a reasonable area of
discussion, as no conclusions could be drawn on an accepted definition of the public good.
It was interesting to view the overlap between the depth interview and the academic
responses to the questions of the public good. Perspectives that coincide with the
respondent’s expressed opinions on the futility of the question of the public good include
Reade’s (1987) conclusions, which contend that the public good is little more than an
expression of the preference of decision-makers, a façade behind which lies no real means of
evaluating what “good” is (see also Flathaman (1966) and Campbell and Marshall (2002)). To
this, Sandercock adds that “class, gender and race-based critiques have left this particular
notion of ‘the public interest’ in tatters, as have the lived realities of the late-twentieth
century existence” (1998, 197).

However, the majority agreed that there should be some understanding of the public
good, and that this was an important question to ask when altering the urban landscape with
new and significantly-sized development proposals. Respondents indicated that the search for the public good remained an important task for local governments and in particular land use planners, particularly for the latter to maintain legitimacy. During the depth interviews, respondents noted that planning as a profession could be seen as either anti-retailing or the planner was seen as a lackey of the retail developers, depending on the perspective of the respondent. These viewpoints on the role of the planner are also replicated in the literature. For the former, Hallsworth and Evers charged that “planning regulations are often at odds with other realms of public policy, which aspire to promote competition with the retail industry, reduce government intervention where possible, and bolster national competitiveness.” Knox takes the latter and opposing viewpoint, stating that the planning profession has “lost a good deal of its moral authority as a result of its inability to deliver the utopian goods...(and) has become increasingly cooperative and instrumental in its relationships with the development industry.” Knox’s comment points to the key focus of inquiry in this study – the role of the planner as “moral authority” and the planner’s professional responsibility to protect or achieve some measure of the public good. Whether or not planning is viewed as enabling developers or as an impediment to economic progress, respondents to the depth interviews were clear that the integration of the public good into the practice of planning remains critical. As voiced by the respondents and best summarized by Friedmann, planning as a practice must maintain its complex, conflict-ridden role in searching for and attempting to implement actions seen as enhancing the public good, and be prepared to use technical knowledge to inform effective public actions. Local governments (elected officials, based on recommendations from planning staff) must accept responsibility for decisions that shape the built environment and affect the quality of life for urban residents. For both local government officials and planners, finding the place of the
public good in the most capitalistic of all urban terrains, the retail landscape, remains important.

The responses from the questionnaire survey were less clear, as the respondents had less of an opportunity to expand on their perceptions about the public good. What was revealed, however, was that the respondents recognized a connection between the retail landscape and their place in it, with the current form of the city seen as positive by north-end respondents and negative by those located in the south-end study area. That is, it was understood that the siting of Woodgrove had profound impacts on the shape of the city, and that residents continued to be affected by the ramifications of this decision almost 30 years later. Where a viewpoint could be discerned, respondents tended to take a negative perspective on the role of land use planning in integrating the public good into the retail landscape. The lure of tax dollars and the prestige of new commercial development were noted to have overshadowed questions on the protection of existing retailing, equitable access to services, and the impact of retailing on city form and citizens.

A professional responsibility to seek the public good remains part of the role of the planner. This responsibility is clearly stated in the Code of Practice for the profession, both in the preamble “Planners work for the public good” and later in the document with “Members have a primary responsibility to define and serve the interests of the public.”\(^{377}\) The Code does not define the public good nor does it specify how the public good may be discovered or achieved. No pat, finite answer exists on what is the public good. But should this be the rationale cited for avoiding the question?

Through the review of the literature, the archival research, depth interviews, and the questionnaire survey, two issues appear to have shaped planning’s weak response to upholding the ideals of the public good. First, planners have acquiesced to the belief that
the process of discovering the public good is too complex, too difficult, and too time-consuming. Given the myriad interests of stakeholders and the physical impossibility of involving all citizens in decision-making, there can be no "public" to speak of in any rational sense. It becomes acceptable to believe that it would be impossible to implement processes that would work toward an understanding of the public good. Instead, land use amendment applications are made and planners become efficient technical enablers, concerned with meeting legal requirements and producing procedurally-defendable bylaws. Second, planners have conceded that the definition of the public good is subjective, context-specific, and relative. Ultimately, the definition of the public good is seen as inconceivable. If this is true, then it follows that planners cannot recommend actions that are justified as being within the public good. Instead, the planner reverts to a technical role, focusing again on a defense of rationality.

But is this still land use planning? Reflecting back on the formation of the profession, planning's roots are clearly in both betterment and rationality. Ideally, urban places are improved for having been planned, from perspectives of operational efficiency and the citizen's experience in the space. Hodge defines the role of the planner as both rationalistic and idealistic, a dual responsibility that cannot be fully severed. Friedmann calls it a "science working in the service of humanity." That is, while technical research and rational decision-making are half of the equation, the planner's role in creating a better environment for citizens cannot be disregarded.

To the first issue shaping planning's response to the public good, Massam clarifies that the process of determining the public good — of finding a working hypothesis and checking back with the affected public — cannot be disregarded. Hodge agrees, stating that the public good is "something that becomes known through collaborative planning
processes.379 How might a process be shaped to seek the public good? Flathman (1966, 38) put forward the case for what he referred to as a “trans-subjective view of the public interest.” He argues that the public good cannot be some utilitarian concept of a sum of self-defined interests, but a moral concept where citizens obey certain laws, commands, and policies even when they are contrary to personal interests. The process would require that all stakeholders gain an understanding of the criteria and values that should be considered in the public good. Some of these criteria, like the personal safety of citizens and the belief that people should reside in adequate housing, have maintained long-standing support irrespective of the divisions among stakeholders and sub-groups. It is not too much of a stretch to see these as belonging in everyone’s interests, representative of the public good. Other criteria, such as the introduction of high-density developments into established residential neighbourhoods to improve the mix and affordability of housing, are fraught with controversy. Again, some of these may easily be seen as contrary to one’s personal interests. At issue for each stakeholder is the extent to which personal interests should be superseded by the moral concept of the public good. The process of exposing points of agreement/disagreement, of weighing personal interests against an ethical approach, is the means of achieving some level of consensus on the public good. Anderson adds that the planner should attempt a value-neutral perspective, or at least recognize places of bias, and work through a process of deliberate resolution to achieve some understanding of the public good.380 The development of a process of review and analysis, then, presents a means of bridging the gap between theory and practice. What is missing is a method for planners to advance the ideal of the public good.

To the second issue, the lack of an operational definition of the public good cannot be used as a rationale for avoiding the question. For Massam, the lack of a definition lies not
with each individual understanding the concept, but with the creation of a definition that fits our collective understanding of the concept. By virtue of being tentative and not a priori, the public good must be “held only as a working hypothesis until results confirm its rightness.” He charges geographers (and by extension, land use planners) “not to be intimidated and pass over in silence matters concerning the public good” simply on the basis of a lack of an agreed-upon definition. Again, Hodge agrees: “It is coming to be seen more and more that the public interest is not monolithic and neutral. Our cities and towns are made up of multiple publics, each with a potentially different view of the public good.”

While a universally applicable definition of the public good may not be available to planners, a process of discovering the public good should be put in place for any decision-making with the potential of impacting the quality of life of urban residents.

The question then is not “what is the public good?” but “how is planning working toward the public good?” One approach is to require the development of a project-specific matrix of issues to be used as a tool for evaluating planning applications and processes for decision-making. The matrix would be presented as a grid to minimize the impression of a hierarchy or levels within the structure. Planners, politicians, and stakeholders would be given the opportunity to evaluate the question of the public good from a variety of perspectives that attempt to expose the conflict points between public and private interests. An iterative, dialogic approach would be required that allows for the integration of issues between categories; it is recognized that disagreement among interested parties would be inevitable. However, the purpose of the matrix would be to provide a focus for discussion, to allow decision-makers to determine the values important to the municipality, and to ask three important questions:
• "Where have we been indifferent to the public good?"

• "By what criteria are we defining the public good for this project?"

• "How are we working toward the public good?"

Ideally, the first step in applying the matrix would be a discussion on the issues to be included. These might be locality-specific and project-specific; what matters to one municipality may be of little consequence to another. The next step would be an open and transparent discussion on the question of the public good with participation open to all who feel that they may be impacted in some way by the proposed development. Of course, the resolution of all issues cannot be the intended outcome, nor should the process be advertised as such. Instead, the purpose of the matrix is to make the question of the public good more apparent and obvious. Overall, the matrix is a tool that will allow all parties to comprehensively explore the public good implications of a development proposal. An illustration of what a matrix might look like for a proposal to site a regional shopping mall is shown below. It is intended to be a preliminary working for future research on the practical intersection of the public good and the retail landscape.
Figure 12: Matrix of the Public Good - Regional Shopping Mall Proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing retailers</td>
<td>Existing retailers</td>
<td>Wildlife habitat</td>
<td>Creating a balanced retail landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax benefits</td>
<td>Surrounding residential areas</td>
<td>Watercourses</td>
<td>Protection of existing retailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required tax concessions</td>
<td>Distant residential areas with limited access to new retailing</td>
<td>Downstream impacts from increased run-off</td>
<td>Protection of environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of extension of community services (roads, sewer, water, storm)</td>
<td>Creation of part-time minimum wage employment</td>
<td>Increased traffic</td>
<td>Carrying capacity of the lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of new services in surrounding areas (requirements for new street lights, changing traffic patterns)</td>
<td>Loss of existing employment</td>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Community engagement-involvement of all interested citizens and groups made possible by the consultation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New employment (construction phases and in retailing/mall administration)</td>
<td>Increased consumerism</td>
<td>Pollution- air, water, light</td>
<td>Inclusion of marginalized groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of land use and layout-efficiency</td>
<td>Protection of heritage/archeological resources</td>
<td>Garbage</td>
<td>Flexibility in outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening land for new development</td>
<td>Transportation alternatives- transit, bike, walking</td>
<td>Site sustainability- the suitability of the site for the proposed development</td>
<td>Balance of private interests with public interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction of new services – synergy</td>
<td>Built form and character (of development and surrounding lands)</td>
<td>Evaluation of land use and layout-effectiveness</td>
<td>Overall anticipated impact (10 years, 50 years, 100 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>Site adaptive design</td>
<td>Costs of proceeding vs. costs of not proceeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community amenities</td>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>Cost/benefit analysis of maintaining the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Universal Design principles</td>
<td>Permeable surface areas and storm drainage</td>
<td>Impact on surrounding municipalities and jurisdictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on community character</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How is the public good reflected in the retail landscape?

As a profession, planning's current weak response to searching for the public good has edged dangerously close to Meyer's charge of indifference. At best, planners have relied on legislated processes for public involvement and passed these off as community consultation. Those who adhere to a process-based approach as outlined in the literature on Smart Growth, for example, may have attempted additional assessments of the social and environmental consequences of new development, but the lack of agreed-upon criteria of acceptable consequence clearly limit the impact of these assessments. More often than not, and particularly for the retail sector, the economic lure of new development far outweighs any questions of impact, excess, or societal need. At worst, planners have abandoned their idealism, their quest to create societies that are better for having been planned, and replaced this idealism with efficient application processing.

To this third question, Chapter 1 presented the themes of this study and indicated that the purpose of the research was to find the place of the public good in the retail landscape. The question was tested through the questionnaire survey, depth interviews, archival research, and case study, with the results detailed in Chapter 5. This research sought concrete evidence that the concept of the public good, by whatever definition used, had a place in land use decision-making processes. By extension, it was anticipated that the research would prove that the public good had been an important factor shaping the retail landscape (both in the wider North American context and specifically for Nanaimo), and that planners retained the responsibility for integrating the public good into land use decision-making. This was not found to be the case. To the question, "how is the public good reflected in the retail landscape?" the superficial response is that it is not. From the case study, it
was shown that the retail landscape adequately reflects a municipality’s egocentric approach to attracting and approving retail functions, irrespective of the long-term negative economic, social, or environmental consequences that might result from the development. Private interests and attractive proposals from retail developers proved to be more distracting, interesting, and amenable to decision-makers than any serious discussion of the public good. When pressed, the public good has been equated with positive economic benefits, including increased taxes, individualized cost savings, and corporate profits. It is anticipated that a similar story could be told in municipalities across North America. Future research will extend the question to the retail landscape of other cities, in the hope that new methods of finding the public good in the retail landscape will be identified.

Reductionist thinking, adherence to single-issue recommendations, and acquiescence to whatever retail format is brought to the table has, for too long, shaped the retail landscape. We are now in a place of limited choice, “boxed in” by past decisions and uncertain of how to incorporate the public good into decision-making. With reference to the title of this study, the following section explains how, by choice or neglect, we find ourselves in the current retail landscape.
Boxed In: reflections on the public good and the retail landscape

While it may seem unusual to address the title of this study in its concluding pages, there is purpose to this format. The title refers to seven specific areas where we have either by expressed preference or negligence "boxed in" our ability to find the public good in the retail landscape. We are boxed in by:

1. Local governments that focus decision-making only to within their incorporated boundaries;

2. Land use decision-making done on a piecemeal basis;

3. Adherence to land use bylaws that are shaped more by the separation of land uses and engineering standards than any detailed examination of what might make long-term sense for a municipality;

4. The struggle to balance individual, private interests in property against community-oriented actions deemed to be in the public good;

5. Taking a simplistic, superficial approach instead of a complex systems method to understanding the "wicked problems" of land use planning;

6. A loss of sense of place in the form of retailing; and

7. Approval rationales that favour short-term economic gain over long-term social, environmental, and sustainability considerations.

Each of these is expanded on below, and for each, land use planners are challenged to seek new ways to expand the scope of their work and re-discover planning's roots in idealism, betterment, and reform.

1. Local government decision-making

Given budgeting methods and decision-making authority, for local government politicians and land use planners, issues within the incorporated boundaries of a municipality tend to be of paramount interest, and issues beyond the boundaries are only considered when they are perceived to be in direct competition or in some way detrimental to the
economic health or other growth objectives of the municipality. This insular perspective causes municipalities to compete for businesses, pre-zone lands to attract development, and amend incorporated boundaries to assert authority over the surrounding land base. These political boundaries, often no more than imaginary lines on the landscape, serve as effective barriers to broader thinking that might take a wider view on the impacts of development within a region. In some instances, boundaries based on natural features (for example, watersheds) or that encompass municipalities with shared concerns (like the member municipalities in a regional district) are more appropriate for the issue under investigation. To address the parochialism in local government decision-making, the province adopted Regional Growth Strategy legislation (Part 25 of the Local Government Act) to encourage municipalities to move away from a competitive and boxed-in style of thinking about growth and change. However, it is noted that only half of the regional districts in the province have implemented or are considering growth strategies, although the legislation has been in effect since 1995. Breaking down the close-mindedness is critically important when land development proposals are at a scale sufficient to have regional impacts. In the Nanaimo area, the Sandstone Development discussed in the Prologue will contain more than 500,000 square feet of retailing and potentially more, depending on tenants. Sited at the southerly boundary of the City, the trade area of the development is estimated to extend to the northerly reaches of the Malahat, encompassing Ladysmith and Duncan. To the north, the primary trade area will encompass the southerly half of Nanaimo, including the Downtown Area. A secondary trade area is expected to attract trade from as far away as Parksville, again dependent on tenant mix. Legislative requirements for the involvement of adjacent and nearby municipalities in land use planning issues are limited to providing notification and an opportunity for comment. There are no requirements to consider the broadly based impacts
of a large-scale retail development, especially beyond the incorporated boundaries of the municipality. It remains to be seen how this new development will change the shape and focus of the retail landscape.

2. Land use decisions

Within municipal boundaries, planning decisions tend to be made on a lot-by-lot basis, considering only the development application currently under review. Even when official community plans are in place to offer long-range direction for a neighbourhood or broader area, the powerful arguments of individual property owners can sway decision-makers to amend these bylaws. In part, the approval process shapes this process. Applications are made and heard by Councils, forwarded to public hearings, and then returned for approval. Applicants seek expedited time frames to respond to the carrying costs of proposed developments, and most Councils are attuned to the needs of the applicants. From an individual property owner's perspective, private interests often supersede the moral questions of the public good. For Councils, it can be difficult to justify the imposition of public good criteria on an applicant when all previous applicants have proceeded through the review process seemingly unpunished. It may be, however, that change is on the horizon in approval processes. Judging by the adoption of a range of new bylaws in many of the larger municipalities in British Columbia, there appears to be a genuine interest among local governments in issues of sustainability, reduced ecological footprints, and improved social equity. Planning paradigms focused on Smart Growth, New Urbanism, urban containment, and transit oriented design all speak to the development of new evaluative tools for measuring the performance of local governments. A much more
holistic evaluation process is required to evaluate the impacts of a proposal from environmental, social, economic, sustainability, as well as public good perspectives.

3. **Land Use Bylaws**

Land use bylaws, themselves, are a means by which we are boxed-in to procedures that take precedence over intent. In Canada, local governments create zoning bylaws that list permitted uses: eighty years of case law have established that local governments can prohibit any use not expressly contained on that list. The zoning bylaw sets out height limits, setbacks from property lines, parcel coverage, and floor area ratios. That is, the bylaw creates a box within which development may occur, and establishes boundaries which box-out any other options for development. Should an individual have a proposal that expands on the uses or regulations for that zone, the only possibilities are to amend the bylaw or apply for a variance. It is irrelevant if the new proposal is the epitome of the public good or the most selfish realization of private interests; procedurally, the review process is the same. Planners are bound to uphold the terms of the bylaw even in instances where the conditions make little sense. As an example, many municipalities are facing challenges around incorporating green measures into zoning bylaws. A height variance may be needed to allow for solar panels or wind turbines, as these uses were generally not conceived of when the zoning bylaws were originally drafted. Councils are being challenged to amend bylaws to allow for these uses, but have been faced with opposition from residents who oppose the unsightliness and potential noise of on-site energy generation. For Councils, the balance among competing interests is difficult and often results in retention of the status quo. As noted above, some municipalities are choosing a more proactive approach to amending bylaws to incorporate those issues seen to be in the public good. Staff-initiated bylaw
amendments to address height requirements for green infrastructure have been advanced in Surrey and Langford. Nanaimo, Ladysmith, and Prince George allow heat pumps to be placed in side yard setbacks. Cumberland now permits clotheslines on any residential lot (although it may still be prohibited by building schemes). The Comox Valley municipalities are considering a ban on drive-through windows for banks and restaurants. New Urbanist transects encourage the drafting of zoning bylaws that allow for a wide range of uses on any particular lot. Ideally, lots will develop with an eye to the form and character of surrounding development, and also realize an agreed-to, idealized future for the land base. By relying less on the technicalities in the zoning bylaw and more on the long-range vision for a municipality, it is intended that the resulting development be more in keeping with a shared perspective on the public good.

4. Individual interests vs. the public good

The difficulty in balancing individual interests for the use and enjoyment of property against decisions viewed as being in the public good is an ongoing issue for local governments. Many private landowners believe that the rights of the individual should take precedence over some perceived public good criteria, especially given the difficulties in achieving an agreed-upon definition of the public good. Even in instances when the public good seems obvious, such as increased environmental protection, providing access to the waterfront, the provision of parkland, and tree protection, individual landowners are dismayed when it appears that their interests will be superseded by a defined public good. Myriad examples abound, from the removal of trees from a public space to improve a landowner’s view, to waterfront property owners that place rocks across public access points to the ocean, to the closure of hiking trails that impinge on forestry lands. Given the
financial investment made by landowners and prevailing beliefs that see property rights as paramount, local governments have a difficult task in either requesting or requiring that individuals consider a wider viewpoint.

The siting of new retail facilities in a municipality is an excellent example of this question of private interest/public good priority. At one end of the current practice spectrum, in an approach more characteristic of centralized planning authorities (e.g., as would be found in England), adopted legislation and bylaws allow planners to determine the future location, size and type of retail facilities, largely restricting private developers to these predefined facilities and locations.385 These regulations are not easily amended, and residents and business owners are given assurances upon which they may base their purchasing or siting decisions. These regulations are also intended to protect the value of property, and are used to limit the type and location of new uses, thereby protecting existing commercial uses from undesirable competition. At the other extreme of the spectrum, the private sector determines the location, size and type of new facilities, subject to some control by planners so as to avoid detrimental effects on the environment, traffic patterns, and existing residential communities. Houston, Texas is often cited as the North American municipality most characteristic of this approach. Most municipalities across North America fall somewhere between these two margins. The local government adopts a long range plan that identifies a hierarchy of retail services within a municipality, starting with neighbourhood level convenience centres, through more intensive uses on primary traffic arteries and key intersections, then on to large-scale, comprehensive facilities (often designated town centres or commercial nodes in growth strategies). Ideally, any new retail proposals would fit within this prescribed hierarchy and the desired future illustrated on the land use plan. However, if
a new and exciting proposal does not fit within the parameters of the plan, procedures are in place to allow for amendments. Depending on the municipality and the nature of the application, the process may be fraught with difficulty or proceed easily through to amendment. At this point rises the conflict: most long range plans are drafted by planners after consultation with interested citizens and stakeholders, but most amendment applications are made by private developers with site-specific interests. Whose interests prevail, those of the citizen/stakeholders or the private developer, is a decision left to Council.

The issue for planners is the balance between flexibility and consistency. Current practice in Canada would suggest that long range plans can be amended, and that most retail amendment processes are led by private interests. As to flexibility, the question is to what degree existing plans and bylaws should be amended to respond to new proposals: the efforts required to develop long range plans (like regional growth strategies in BC with intended time horizons of 20 to 25 years, or the newest enhanced long range plans such as the City of Calgary’s 100 year plan) are significant, often committing years of staff resources and requiring extensive public involvement, yet these plans are amendable generally by a fairly simple review process. Contrary to the free market’s ideals on flexibility, ordinances (US) or zoning bylaws (Canada) can be written to control or prohibit certain forms of development on localized retail landscapes, and this prohibition is viewed by some municipalities to be representative of the public good. Salkin (2004, 11-12) provides an extensive shopping list of examples of local planning and zoning regulations that can be used to control retailing, including: limitations on the size of the footprint of buildings and restrictions on the amount of space that can be used for the display of certain products; site
layout and development standards; parking standards; aesthetic design standards; and requirements for impact assessments. The fact that most municipalities have chosen not to adopt these controls to limit retail development speaks volumes as to the persuasiveness of maintaining flexibility in bylaws to allow the local government the opportunity to react to new proposals and determine the public good on an application by application basis.

As to consistency, the question focuses on the consideration by planners of development applications. As charged by Davies, “the monopolistic powers of the planning authorities have so far tended to mitigate against the smaller, marginal businessman and support the claims of the larger organizations.” Lock also drew attention to the detrimental (and usually accidental) effects of planning policies upon the small shop and berated planners for favouring large, comprehensive, and professional proposals over the more amateurish efforts of the small shop owner. That is, research would indicate that land use planners discriminate against small or piecemeal proposals and tend to be more easily swayed by large-scale, comprehensive proposals. For the retail landscape, this would seem to offer partial explanation for the evolution of retailing from the fairly fined-grained morphology seen in the 1950s through the ever-increasing size and intensity of development in today’s landscape.

Highly flexible planning regimes offer little protection for landowners but maximum opportunity for private development interests. Highly consistent regimes provide long-term security for private interests, but are unable to evolve to suit changing conditions or new proposals. The balance between private interests and the public good cannot be defined as a single pivot point. Instead, this discussion remains at the root of land use planning as a practice.
5. Complex systems approach

Instead of a boxed-in and limited approach to considering development, a complex systems approach is needed to understand the intricacies of the urban environment. As discussed in his recent text, Thomas Homer-Dixon suggests that a complex systems perspective requires that one sees the world to be more than a series of mechanistic cause-and-effect relationships, operating with clear proportionality. Instead, urban systems should be considered as unpredictable, layered, and multi-dimensional. Change in one area may have unpredictable consequences for another. An action taken in the public good may have far-reaching, unforeseen impacts for decades to come. Homer-Dixon characterizes these as “unknown unknowns” and at best local governments must work through iterative processes to carefully monitor the effects of decisions. Multiple feedback loops and a willingness to correct for negative consequences must be the new mandate of municipalities, and in particular planning departments. This should be second nature for practicing planners; from Chapin’s planning process illustrated in Figure 2 through the application of business models in the 1980s and 1990s, planning has always looked to processes that allowed space for reactions and response. A shifting away from boxed-in, uni-dimensional and linear thinking is required to begin to comprehend how current realities will shape the future.

6. Sense of place

The physical appearance of the suburban retail landscape is similar in many North American cities, with acres of characterless big-box establishments clustered in powercentres, stretching for kilometres down major roadways. These retail establishments are not built as monuments to engender civic pride or add to the individuality of the city, instead they are built from cinderblock and rebar with a 30-year lifespan, decorated by
corporate signage and colour schemes, fronting onto a sea of parking. The visual impacts of these establishments are among the most prominent defining features of today’s retail landscape.389

The pervasiveness of the big-box format and the powerful lobby of these major developers have boxed municipalities out of the ability to regulate the form and character of the urban environment. The shape and mass of big box stores prevail, because it meets the needs of both retailers and consumers. For retailers, the entire development essentially becomes a sign, a highly recognizable symbol defined by a corporate logo, colors and store configuration. The big-box format and the immense buying power allow the retailers to acquire products in bulk quantities at lower costs-per-unit than can ever be achieved by small stores or independent retailers. For consumers, low levels of staffing and the vulgarities of shopping in a warehouse environment are acceptable if they are exchanged for perceived cost savings. However, this quest for low prices has the paradoxical consequence (for the consumer) of reducing choice. Big-box retailers stock only those goods that can be produced in vast quantities, obtained at a discounted price, and rapidly sold. Specialty products that cannot be heavily discounted or produced en masse are not found in these establishments. To be clear, large format retailing does not equate with wider selections of goods and services, as one might believe given the size and number of these establishments. Instead, we are boxed in to purchasing only those products that meet the retailer’s economies-of-scale criteria.

To respond to the placelessness of the big box stores, municipalities have implemented bylaws that either overtly (through permitted uses) or covertly (through limits on maximum square footage, onerous parking restrictions, or requirements for urban design)
limit the form and extent of retail structures. For example, the Town of Qualicum Beach
has developed and maintained bylaws over the long term that restrict the footprint of any
retail establishment to 500 m² (approximately 5000 square feet). The Town of Ashland,
Oregon limits retail stores to no more than 45,000 square feet. These bylaws are intended
to directly confront the big box stores and control the form of retailing in these
communities. In both municipalities, the public good is equated with maintaining a fine-
grained village centre filled with owner-operated shops and services. The perceived social,
environmental, economic, and design benefits of a vibrant downtown core are viewed to
outweigh the potential tax benefits that could be accrued from large format suburban
retailing. Other municipalities are more covert in their efforts to control the form and
distribution of retailing. In Fort Collins, Colorado, the zoning ordinance (similar to a
Canadian zoning bylaw) forbids any “uninterrupted length of façade” in excess of 100 feet.
The ordinance goes on to say, “Predominant exterior building materials shall be high quality
materials, including brick, sandstone, other native stone, wood and concrete masonry units
that are tinted and textured. Facades shall be of low reflectance, subtle, neutral or earth tone
colors and the use of high intensity colors, metallic colors, black or fluorescent colors is
prohibited. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary
colors, but neon tubing shall not be an acceptable feature. Predominant exterior building
materials should not include the following: smooth-faced concrete block, tilt-up concrete
panels and prefabricated steel panels.” The ordinance also requires that any building or
structure incorporate architectural façade elements (awnings, display windows, and entry
areas) that must be approved by the local zoning board. It would be difficult for a standard
format Home Depot, Real Canadian Superstore, or Wal-Mart SuperCentre to comply with
these criteria, as is the intent. An even more surreptitious approach is employed by the
Town of Dublin, California, where Council recently supported an ordinance that prohibits the construction of retail stores larger than 170,000 square feet that dedicate 10 percent or more of their shelf space to nontaxable groceries. The ban is intended to exclude big box stores such as Costco from siting within the Town’s boundaries.¹⁹³

At issue for municipalities is whether or not a sense of place is viewed as important, or if the attraction of a wide range of large format retailing supersedes the protection of community character. As noted above in the discussion on land use bylaws, the fact that most municipalities have chosen not to impose limits on the form and character of big box developments is clearly indicative of what the municipality views as being representative of the public good.

7. Favouring short-term gain over long term considerations

From a regulatory perspective, local governments have been boxed in to approval rationales that focus on short-term economic benefits over long-term social and environmental considerations. The lure of tax revenues from a new commercial development is difficult to resist. The permit fees and development cost charges assessed on commercial developments far exceed the charges placed on residential land uses, and once established the commercial land uses are assessed at a much higher tax rate, thereby generating greater long-term revenue for the local government. If the quality of life for urban residents is measured in increased tax revenues and new economic development opportunities, then any new retail services must necessarily be viewed as highly desirable. But planners must also seek to understand the long-term consequences of decisions made. Any change in social, economic, or environmental conditions will have an effect on some individual, cohort, or group. What is the criterion that determines if this effect is positive or
negative, effective or sufficient? What if the proposal does not proceed: what are the costs of maintaining the status quo? In some instances, the cost of inaction (loss of employment, lack of local establishments, no new investment, and the loss of services to a competitor municipality) outweigh the negative externalities attributed to the proposed development. The real costs of the proposal must also be understood. For municipalities, costs are often divided into hard services (such as the extension of roads, transit, water and sewer services to a new development) and soft services (the increased cost of providing land use planning, police and fire services, and recreation programming). Has a full understanding of the costs of the development been determined? Are there amenities negotiated that will outweigh some of these costs? Are the costs too significant to allow the proposal to proceed? From the perspective of efficiency, local governments must be prudent in the provision of services and the use of the land base and resources, but efficiency must be balanced against effectiveness, equity, and the accessibility or usefulness of the proposal for all citizens affected. Ultimately, the cumulative impact of a development must be weighed against the likelihood of the proposal to have positive or negative impacts on the quality of life of its citizenry. The difficult questions surrounding the notion of the public good must be asked.

Reflections on Future Research

This dissertation has both practical and theoretical relevance as it augments knowledge of the processes shaping the retail landscape through the examination of the intersections between retailing geography, land use planning, and the public good. No coordinated academic review linking these three subjects has been completed. Massam (1999) agrees there is a need for future research on the public good, and Jones and Doucet (2001) call for further study the role of regulation in the approval process for siting retail
establishments. Along with these identified future research areas, there are additional areas that warrant further investigation. First, with reference to Nanaimo, there is much that could be written on the political processes that shape the retail landscape. Voting patterns for elected officials, negotiations that occurred outside of legislated approval processes, and the professional involvement local government politicians in land development activities are all topics which require further consideration. For example, at the time of the siting of Woodgrove and the major expansion of the city’s boundaries, the city’s Mayor was also the owner of a major real estate and land development company. The issue of conflict of interest and potential gain from this overlap between professional activities and the duties of elected officials has not been given attention from an academic perspective, and would be an interesting area to further explore. Second, the economic forces behind changes in the retail landscape deserve further examination. Studying the relationships between change in the built form of retailing, consumer spending, shopping behaviour, and the shifting of retail spending from Downtown Nanaimo to suburban shopping locations would deepen and reveal patterns of consumption on the retail landscape and provide a quantifiable rationale for the shape and pace of change. As part of this, an area of immediate interest is the development of a detailed database which accurately reports on the square footage of retail spaced added to Nanaimo each year from 1950 forward. From 1997 to the present, the City of Nanaimo has digitally filed building permit information in a “Building Activity by Year” database, which reports on the date of building permit application, completion, and the value of the construction. While this database does not currently report on the square footage of retail space, the information could be readily obtained. Prior to 1997, the process for extracting the data would require a review of zoning maps to identify commercial properties, then an examination of the paper files for each development to draw out the dimensions of
retail construction. While time consuming, it is anticipated that this would result in a highly accurate database that could then be mapped against other socio-economic or consumption indicators. Between 1950 and approximately 1970, building department records are incomplete. Further archival research and air photo interpretation would be required to complete the database. A third area for future research is a more in-depth understanding of the public's view and understanding of the term "the public good." While the questionnaire conducted as part of this research provided an opportunity for respondents to comment on their definition of the public good, few responses were received. It may be that the method used precluded consideration of the topic, and it is anticipated that a different method, such as depth interviews or focus groups, would be a better means of engaging members of the public in this discussion. It is also important to know how perception of the public good shifts during the on-going development of a major development project.

Proceeding with research in these three major areas would substantially round out this study. In addition, with consideration given to the intersection of the public good and land use planning as a profession, it would be intriguing to pursue amendments to the Local Government Act to include legislated requirements for ensuring that a more holistic review is conducted on major development applications. The Act currently contains regulations that speak to notification procedures for public hearings, required content for official community plans, and stipulations for bylaw adoption, but the Act does not require that local governments consider a wide-ranging array of issues when approving amendments to land use bylaws. If local governments were required to verify that they had, indeed, considered the social, environmental, economic, and sustainability aspects of a particular issue and that their decision reflected this discussion, and if local governments were prepared to provide a
definition of the public good and how a particular proposal fits within this definition, it is anticipated that an inclusive process for approving applications would evolve, one that would be significantly different than the current myopic focus on only the economic benefits of development proposals.

The research on the intersection of land use planning, the public good, and retailing geography is by no means complete. As noted by Simmons, “Like it or not, consumption plays a large role in people’s lives” and there remains much to be done to better understand the behaviours, forces, and structures that shape the retail landscape.

The Future of the Retail Landscape

Paco Underhill decrees, “the heyday of the mall is history” in his 2004 text *The Call of the Mall*. He announces that an aging population, increased online shopping, and a lack of progress in mall design will lead inevitably to the end of “salvation through shopping.” While Underhill’s statements are specific to the enclosed mall format, by extension they could apply to all current forms of retailing. An aging population means the needs of shoppers are changing. Crowe and Simeonson predict that an aging population will increase the importance of convenience and high comfort for shoppers. Birkin, Clarke and Clarke expect to see a decline in the demand for products and services typically consumed by youth, and an increase in demand for financial products, investments, pensions, holidays, home furnishings, and appliances. Other researchers have spoken to the changing retail market, citing increased spending on travel, high-quality but reasonably priced products, technology that is user-friendly, and an increased interest in universal design. The end of shopping is perhaps not as imminent as Underhill predicts, but certainly the needs and interests of
consumers are changing. To his second issue causing the decline of retailing, online shopping and the replacement of "brick and mortar" establishments with e-retailing have had less of an impact than might have been anticipated. Dawson notes that the full impact of e-retail remains underwhelming: "Much is promised, but little is delivered."398 While far from replacing the store front, it would appear that consumers have accepted Internet shopping for certain categories of retail goods and services; e-retailing appears to be making significant inroads into the retail landscape for the selling of tangible goods that do not need to be seen, fitted, or felt.399 Books, travel, and computers sell well on the Internet, while non-branded goods tend to be less frequently purchased. Generally, it would appear that consumers focus on virtual shopping for things "known" and on in-person shopping for goods or services that must be visually or tactiley experienced.400 To Underhill's third factor in the end of shopping, it is accurate to apply his comments beyond the enclosed shopping malls to the big box stores. These remain the most literal of all architectural forms on the retail landscape. There can be no confusion on the purpose, shaping, and dimension of these stores, economically crafted with exposed steel beam construction and concrete siding. However, evolving interests in sustainability and low-impact construction are changing this retail shell. The first "green" mega-mall is currently under construction in Syracuse, New York, and purportedly will be the largest complex in the world operating entirely on renewable energy (with the final structure powered by wind turbines, solar panels, fuel cells, and biofuels).401 From an international perspective, the previously listed "world's ten largest malls" contain a range of new entertainment uses, ranging from indoor ski hills to football fantasy parks: while not precisely innovations in design, the recognition of the mall as a place for more than shopping appears to be ever evolving with each new facility adding uses more
creative than the last. The shift toward lifestyle commercial centres, with a false but at least more interesting appearance, is also changing retail design.

Other factors are at work to impact the retail landscape of the future. Reduced greenfield space and increasing land costs mean that developers will be increasingly interested in higher density in multi-storied developments; in brownfield sites; and in mixed-use and infill schemes.\textsuperscript{402} Local governments must also reconsider parking requirements in recognition of transit-oriented designs and the wider adoption of non-automobile travel, decreasing the need for acres of parking.\textsuperscript{403} Increased interest in a sense of community and growing consumer militancy in the search for green products and producers will likely shape the landscape of the future. Across North America, consumers have effectively banded together to oppose new retail developments to protect a sense of community or existing independent retailers, valuing socio-economic factors above pure economics.\textsuperscript{404} Effective marketing and new evidence about the destruction of the planet have created the ethical shopper, one who accepts the mantra of reduce, reuse, recycle (and the fourth ‘r’, rethink) as a lifestyle and as an approach to consumerism. The impact of non-shoppers is too new to be fully represented in the literature, and remains an area of future interest. Finally, government regulations will play a role in shaping the landscape. On a local level, it would appear that mantra of “mixed use and higher density” from Smart Growth, neo-traditional, and New Urbanist factions has made the shift to the commonplace. Land use planners, city councilors, and developers are all seeking ways to reduce the footprint of retail buildings and better integrate these uses with office and residential developments.\textsuperscript{405} While the regulatory environment will take some time to catch up with the philosophical approaches to site and neighbourhood design, the trend toward development that better recognizes human scale
and mixed use appears to be well-entrenched, and will surely be part of the decline of large scale retail establishments.

What, then, is the future of retailing? A hierarchical structure will remain, with some form of central business district, enclosed malls, powercentres, stand alone big box stores, shopping centres, arterial strips, pedestrian oriented shopping streets, and stand-alone neighbourhood shops. Specialty areas will emerge, represented locally by the ethnically-focused developments in Richmond, British Columbia and the continued success of Granville Market as a destination for tourists, foodies, and shoppers. The retail landscape will persist in part due to inertia, in part due to existing investment, and in part due to the need to continue to match buyers to sellers. From the agoras of the Greeks to the contrived gathering spaces beneath artificial trees in a lifestyle commercial centre, people will continue to seek out opportunities to purchase, to browse, and to recreate in shopping venues. Shopping will continue to be part of the urban fabric.

It is intended that through a better understanding of the place of the public good in the retail landscape, future decisions will be made by implementing a much more holistic, transactive process than is currently in place for major land use amendments. It is expected that this work will contribute to the literature on retail geography, planning, public consultation, and public administration. In particular, this work has been undertaken to contribute a moral dimension to these disciplines, in essence seeking to reveal the “...shadows on the landscape which occur when common humanity is lost in ignoring the rights and needs of others.”

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406
Figure 13: Boxed In-

the place of the public in the retail landscape

Endnotes

373 Ibid, 21-22.
377 See www.cip-icu.com for the Code of Practice in its entirety.
379 Hodge notes that “it is up to community planners to prepare plans that ensure sound, amenable development for the community as a whole.” (2003, 161 italics in original).
381 Dewey, as quoted in Meyer (1975, 175).
382 Hodge (2003, 161).
383 See Meyers (1975). Meyers adds, “There is no wholesale, seamless answer. No one can or should expect a pat answer to ‘what is the public (good) than one would expect an astronomer to give a one word answer to: what is the universe?” (177)
384 This differs from an American approach that defines long lists of prohibited uses, but any use not listed may be conducted by the residents of a parcel.
See Dischkoff (1979) for a discussion on the retail approval environment in Germany, and Guy (2006) for a discussion on the approval process in Britain.

In British Columbia, the legislation on the amendment of regional growth strategies (contained in Part 25 of the Local Government Act) requires the completion of a public hearing process, four readings of the bylaw, and referrals to other local governments and agencies.

Davies (1977, 57) and Lock 1976.

Thomas Homer-Dixon (in his 2007 text The Upside of Down) also speaks to complex systems as multi-meaninged, a term well suited to urban systems.

It is noted that these establishments are not constructed for longevity- they are purpose built by individual retailers for a specific retail format, and their reuse upon abandonment (either due to the failure of the retailer or the relocation to an even larger big box store) is not assured. While secondary uses such as large-scale churches and dollar stores have been successful in some urban environments, one unfortunate trend appears to be the development of “big box ghost towns” where powercentres are abandoned by retailers. While Canada appears to be somewhat behind the US in both the secondary use of big box stores and their abandonment, it is likely that these trends will also be seen within the next few years on the Canadian landscape.

It is noted that the Town of Qualicum Beach also does not permit the packaging of food for consumption off site from any restaurant, thereby effectively prohibiting the sitting of any fast food restaurants. The Town is renowned for its “English” appearance, with well developed downtown design guidelines and award winning civic landscaping.

Qualicum Beach is consistently one of the top places in Canada with the largest proportion of seniors, with 41.1% of its population 65 years of age and over. In the 2006 Census, the median age in Qualicum Beach increased to a 60.9 years. (Source: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen)


Simmons, J. Research Note #9.

Crowe and Siemonsen (1996, 40).


See Jones and Biasiotto (1999), Birkin, Clarke and Clarke (2002).


Ibid, 119.

Jones and Biasiotto (1999) note that new technologies may require years to adopt and the shift to internet based shopping is by no means complete. The telephone, fax machine, and ATMs at banks all took time to achieve general acceptance; it is premature to speculate on the ultimate extent and pervasiveness of internet based shopping.

DestiNY USA is a mega mall development currently under construction by the Pyramid Group, one of the world’s largest commercial real estate developers. The 800 acre shopping and entertainment complex in upstate New York is billed as a “retail city” by the developer will contain thousands of shops, restaurants, theatres, hotels, a climate controlled biosphere park, a stadium and performing arts centre, three golf courses, and an indoor lake. The complex will contain a shopping mall larger than the Mall of America. Tax concessions at the local, state and federal levels are being provided to assist in the construction of the green project. The complex will consume approximately 1/3 of the total solar capacity installed in the US annually, and would be the world’s largest solar installation. A clean air transit system is planned to bring patrons to the complex, the total cost of the complex is estimated at $20 billion US.
Home Depot has constructed a retail store far different from its usual big box format in mid-Manhattan, and Wal-Mart has relaxed the built form of developments to better “fit” the form and character of existing retail centres.

Although Birkin, Clarke and Clark (2002, 8-9) would disagree: They suggest car ownership has grown and the hours spent in the car by consuming adults are also on the increase. They predict that this trend will continue, despite attempts to reduce car usage by all levels of government, and the most growth will be seen in multipurpose trips (shopping after work), by the most mobile group— the money rich/time poor (30-55 years of age, living with partner, 2-3 kids, full time job).

A well-developed website posted by a non-profit group (www.bigboxtoolkit.com) asks “Are you working to stop or prevent sprawling big-box development in your community? Are you looking for ways to strengthen local policies to protect your community and ensure that citizens control its future? Are you trying to expand locally owned businesses? The Big Box Tool Kit has the resources you'll need to both beat the big box and to chart a new course for economic development in your community.”

Citizen groups are intentionally not included in this list of supporters for mixed use and increased density, as it is difficult to characterize a prevailing public opinion on compressing land uses. Each development and each neighbourhood has its own concerns and opinions on growth: in some urban centres, support for these new principles of development is widespread; in others, protest groups are formed to battle against multi unit or mixed use development proposals. The determination of public reaction to new proposals remains site specific and unpredictable.

Tuan (1993, 239).
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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Boxed In: Retailing and the Public Good
Public Survey

The main shopper (over the age of 18) in your household is invited to participate in a study entitled "Boxed In: Retailing and the Public Good" that is being conducted by Pamela Shaw, a PhD CANDIDATE at the University of Victoria. Your address has been randomly selected and will not be attached in any way to your survey comments.

This research examines the how the City of Nanaimo has developed since the construction of the Woodgrove Town Centre. In addition, the research attempts to measure how the decisions of local government contribute to ‘the public good’ in our city.

As a graduate student, this research is part of the requirements for a degree in Geography and is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Larry McCann. You may contact Dr. McCann at (250) 721-7340 OR BY EMAIL AT LMCCANN@OFFICE.GEOG.UVIC.CA. Please be advised that the surveys will be destroyed after the survey analysis is complete, and all comments will be held in strictest confidentiality. All information will be kept in a secure place. The information will be available only to me and the members of my PhD Committee, AND WILL BE USED AS PART OF THE RESEARCH FOR MY PHD DISSERTATION. IT MAY ALSO BE PRESENTED AT CONFERENCES OR IN ACADEMIC ARTICLES DEVELOPING FROM MY DISSERTATION.

It is estimated that the survey should take only 10 minutes to complete and should be completed by the adult person who does most of the shopping in your household. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your response. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY, YOUR RETURNED SURVEY WILL BE CONSIDERED YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study! The information you provide will contribute to a better understanding of how retail development shapes our city.

Pamela Shaw
PhD Student
University of Victoria
PHONE: 250.619.9739
EMAIL: PSHAW@UVIC.CA

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE APPROVAL OF THIS RESEARCH, PLEASE CONTACT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AT 250.472.4545.
Information About You

This survey requests the participation of the adult within the household responsible for the majority of shopping for the household.

1. Do you do most of the shopping for the household?
   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐
   - Not sure/No comment ☐

2. Are you over the age of 18?
   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

3. Your Postal Code ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. How long have you lived at that location?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>check one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year to five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to ten years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven to twenty years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If less than 10 years, what were your previous locations in Nanaimo (by postal code or street address)
6. Number of persons in household (please write down the number of persons in each age group. For example, if there are three children under 10 years old in the household, write '3').

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>0-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>61-70</th>
<th>71+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Information About Shopping**

1. In the last year, have you shopped at any of the following locations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location by name of retail complex</th>
<th>Check one</th>
<th>Number of times in the last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks Landing</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Nanaimo</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northridge/Longwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old City Quarter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southgate Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Place Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Park Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodgrove Town Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What is your primary shopping destination in Nanaimo?

__________________________________________

3. How often do you shop at Woodgrove Centre?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>check one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than once each year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 6 months to 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 3 months to 5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 1 month to 2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. How far do you travel to Woodgrove Centre?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please estimate your travel distance</th>
<th>check one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 15 km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14.9 km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9.9 km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 4.9 km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How do you travel to Woodgrove Centre?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Rank the following retail locations based on the range of goods and services available at that location.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location by name of retail complex- check one for each column</th>
<th>Best location in Nanaimo</th>
<th>2nd best</th>
<th>3rd best</th>
<th>4th best</th>
<th>5th best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Nanaimo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old City Quarter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southgate Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Place Mall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terminal Park Mall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbour Mall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Club Mall</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford Mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodgrove Town Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Please respond to the following by placing a checkmark in the box that most closely matches your opinion. If you have any comments on any of the statements, please write them after the statement or on the reverse of this page:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither/No Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre makes sense for Nanaimo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre is good for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Retail activities should be grouped together so they do not cause noise and traffic in other parts of the city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Costs are kept lower for consumers if retail activities are concentrated in one area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The location of the Woodgrove Town Centre has helped me to reduce my transportation costs for shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has made my life easier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo citizens from an <strong>environmental</strong> perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has helped to decrease costs for all residents in Nanaimo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The location of Woodgrove Town Centre has had little impact on other retail locations in Nanaimo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre from home by bike or walking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>It is easy to reach the Woodgrove Town Centre by transit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The location of Woodgrove Town Centre is good for Nanaimo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One last question...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know/No Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This research project focuses on the question of ‘the public good’ with this term being defined as ‘an action for the good of all people’. Do you think the location of the Woodgrove Town Centre supports ‘the public good’?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or Why Not?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for completing this survey! Please mail this survey in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope.
Appendix II: Depth Interviews- Questions

QUESTIONS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS, DEVELOPERS, CITY OF NANAIMO STAFF, INVOLVED PROFESSIONALS

1. In the past 20 to 30 years, what was your position in Nanaimo (elected official, government official, retailer).

2. What is your position now? Describe length of time in position(s), description of involvement, description of decision-making responsibilities.

3. How would you rate/evaluate your knowledge of land use planning processes in Nanaimo?

4. What was your role in the development of Woodgrove Mall and Town Centre?

5. What is your current involvement in the Woodgrove Town Centre?

6. How, from your perspective, did the Mall and Town Centre come to be located at the northern edge of Nanaimo?

7. From your background/involvement, how has the location of the Mall and Town Centre shaped the development of Nanaimo?

8. How has the location of Mall and Town Centre impacted residents of Nanaimo?

9. Has the location of the Mall and Town Centre influenced any aspect of the built form of Nanaimo?

10. Has the location of the Mall and Town Centre influenced the provision of goods and services in Nanaimo?

11. How would you define the term ‘the public good’?

12. What measures could be used to evaluate ‘the public good’?

13. What is the role of local government in creating or maintaining ‘the public good’?

14. What would indicate that local government had achieved some measure of ‘the public good’?

15. Conversely, how would you evaluate if a decision or action of local government did not contribute to ‘the public good’?

16. How would you relate this term to the form of retailing in Nanaimo?

17. How would you relate this term to the location of the Mall and Town Centre?

18. What are your views on the future of retailing in Nanaimo and the mid-Island area?
Appendix III

Summary of Comments from Depth Interviews

1. In the past 20 to 30 years, what was your position in Nanaimo (elected official, government official, retailer).

   Twenty-eight interviews were conducted. Interviewees included local government elected officials, provincial government staff with interest/jurisdiction in Nanaimo, City of Nanaimo staff (Development Services, Engineering, Subdivision Approving Officer), consultants with involvement/experience in the development of Nanaimo (engineering, planning, architecture), retired elected officials, retired City staff, retail managers, developer of Woodgrove Town Centre.

2. What is your position now? Describe length of time in position(s), description of involvement, description of decision-making responsibilities.

   Interviewees represented a wide range of experience and involvement, ranging from 5 years of career experience to one respondent in his mid 80s who had spent a lifetime in development.

3. How would you rate/evaluate your knowledge of land use planning processes in Nanaimo?

   All respondents indicated that they had knowledge/experience of land use planning processes and were capable and interested in participating in the research.

4. What was your role in the development of Woodgrove Mall and Town Centre?

   As discussed in Question 1.

5. What is your current involvement in the Woodgrove Town Centre?

   Generally, only individuals currently employed as retail managers of facilities within the Woodgrove Town Centre (both the Mall and surrounding big box retail developments) considered themselves to have current involvement in the Woodgrove Town Centre. City staff from the Development Services Department considered themselves to be marginally involved as no new development is currently occurring in the Centre.

Questions on the retail landscape: responses to the following five questions are collapsed given the overlap among responses.

6. How, from your perspective, did the Mall and Town Centre come to be located at the northern edge of Nanaimo?

7. From your background/involvement, how has the location of the Mall and Town Centre shaped the development of Nanaimo?

8. How has the location of Mall and Town Centre impacted residents of Nanaimo?

9. Has the location of the Mall and Town Centre influenced any aspect of the built form of Nanaimo?
10. Has the location of the Mall and Town Centre influenced the provision of goods and services in Nanaimo?

- Major changes in the retail landscape here have tended to be driven by the private sector. The private sector visionaries have often been opposed by local government planners (often, but not always, for good reasons) BUT market forces have largely carried the day.
- Hard to say as we don’t generally deal with retail in our work except for new construction, in which case we look to protect values through site selection, site construction measures, site design (e.g., relating to stormwater management and pollution control). Although we don’t do landscape design, on a related aspect, green spaces, and landscaping with natural vegetation are important in the context of the public good.

11. How would you define the term 'the public good'?

- I believe the market should deal with this.
- Something that contributes to the quality of life of the average citizen.
- Could take many forms including physical space, park lands, buildings, environmental protection, access provisions, trails, might even be intrinsic (not necessarily accessible, for example protection of a natural feature to benefit wildlife), public transit services.
- Probably varies from one community to the other, physical locations, access to other opportunities.
- I’m more accustomed to using the term "in the public interest" as an Approving Officer. To me public interest means seizing an opportunity that serves a previously determined objective . . . the public good. I can’t base my connotation of public good on a specific circumstance but I consider public good as a strategic objective that is fundamental and unencumbered with the specifics of a circumstance. Public good is a core value of an institution.
- In my practice I tend to not use the term "public good" as it implies that there is a "public bad". The terminology I prefer is the "public interest". I define the public interest as seeking to include the interests of all parties, with particular emphasis on those who are unable to articulate their own.
- What's In the best interest of the majority of society for a stable and sustainable lifestyle whether they personally support it or not
- That which is in the beneficial interest of the public, reflective and supportive of collective values and beneficial to societal condition and function.
- An action for the public good is an action that allows a movement towards the enlightenment of the public, within and in respect of nature (the environment) through the blossoming of persons or group potentials.
- Respecting every person and acknowledging that each person can bring its uniqueness to the continuous creation of the world. Personally, I try to understand what is unique about me and how I can bring a contribution to the world.
- The public good is what enhances ecological sustainability or prevents further deterioration in the health of ecological systems; it is what enhances a sense of community and stewardship/responsibility for those things which we share in common (such as natural and social capital), and it involves the maintenance and enhancement of sense of place/heritage. It also involves...
economic sufficiency, as much as possible local control of the economy, and access to the essentials of life, such as food, housing, education, and health care. Every planning decision either enhances one or more of these parameters or makes them worse.

- In my capacity as a municipal planner, whatever the elected Council determines is the public good. I think this is important point to make because I also have a personal sense of public good – that which serves the community best – however, any definition of public good is value laden in my opinion. My sense of what is best for the community may not be consistent with another persons sense of what is best, or with what Council considers best for the community.

- At the end of the day, if Council sets out a corporate position with respect to a particular public good then I will support that position as part of my job – whether I personally agree or not, because that is the will of the elected body of the citizens of Nanaimo.

- the public good is the best action for the most people, although sometimes the best action is only for a few people, or the environment, etc. It is an action that decrees profit and looks to the good for society over the long haul

- My simplistic definition is "something that benefits society as a whole" which is close to what Saul is saying. The Co. has recently been giving thought to the criteria that it needs to see fulfilled in assessing "community need" in the context of the release of land within the ALR to meet that need. I might be able to make available its working paper if that would be of any help.

- It basically requires that a proper evaluation of the land availability outside the ALR be undertaken for the use having regard to growth projections and growth strategies and a comparison be made between the strength of this need against the value of the land for agriculture.

- The Public Good is a vague notion in which one hopes to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number, including those who are not represented at the table.

- This notion is highly situational and depends on the competing interests in a particular policy or application. For example, an application for subdivision will cause an Approving Officer to balance notions of environmental protection such as riparian setbacks or equity for adjacent landowners by protecting access to lands beyond with economic considerations such as lot yield and marketing.

- In a policy context a planner may have to balance protection of neighbourhood character against a higher goal of reducing sprawl or providing services to the mentally or physically challenged.

12. What is the role of local government in creating or maintaining 'the public good'?

- As a long term public servant I was always on the lookout for opportunities to secure benefits such as those for the public good, whether it be secured from a developer in exchange for approvals or bonuses, or from our own government through normal project activities. In my current work to support private
developers I am also looking for "extra" kinds of benefits their projects could provide. This work occurred through discussions with developers, with the public and in my advisory capacity to local government decision-makers.

- I look to politicians to confirm the public good and public servants to act in the public interest to advance the public good. An example is the conflict between the objectives of provincial highway requirements and the Fisheries Act. Both pieces of legislation were crafted for the public good but the public interest is determined through a thoughtful resolution of the conflicting, high level objectives.

- I integrate my definition of public good into every decision I make. As public administrators, we have a moral and ethical obligation to do so.

13. What would indicate that local government had achieved some measure of 'the public good'? Conversely, how would you evaluate if a decision or action of local government did not contribute to 'the public good'?

- I would expect politicians to determine the public good through some form of calculus (in the generic context not mathematical). One such calculus that seems appropriate to me is through the three pillars of sustainability, economics, environment and social.

- I integrate this idea in my day to day work through the development of consultation and communication plans for long range work. We consciously identify stakeholders and try to track who has attended and been heard and who has not. We also tailor our consultation strategies to address the needs and concerns of particular groups.

- For the most part, I rely on my personal sense of serving the public good. Council certainly identifies the public good in some of their initiatives but usually these are reserved for higher profile, or large scale, initiatives, that don't directly impact my day to day work activities.

- If there is cross over then I defer to the Council position, otherwise I rely on my own judgement and professional obligations as a planner (for example, as outlined in PIBC's Code of Professional Conduct).

- My definition should not change for different land uses, although we are often asked for it to do so. For example, the government will ask that we do not impose conditions on the rezoning of a new elementary school as it is expensive and the taxpayers have to pay, yet the safety of the school children cannot be assigned a monetary value. Similar arguments are made for seniors housing, waive the fees as it is a public good. Yes, it is, but the public good of adequate servicing is paramount.
- However, store placement is a design guideline that is regulated by DP guidelines for safety and aesthetic purposes, in the guise of public good so our communities are pleasant, appealing and safe places.

- However, store size is regulated to protect scale and existing commercial areas, both public good because of the aforementioned pleasant, appealing and to reduce sprawl and to encourage efficient use of land for future generations – the epitome of public good

- Impact on existing businesses is not really public good. One thinks about the issue more about the efficient use of land as opposed to how it impacts Mr Jones or Ms Smith. If you worry about individual business, then the public good is lost, unless of course, it is a big employer where many jobs in a community could be lost.

- As for "Public Good" in the context of retail land uses I have seen a variety of approaches taken. I have worked for a council that took the position that Council was to remain totally neutral in retail decisions and let the market decide. In other words, the market represented the greatest Public Good.

- A cynical view of this approach would be to describe the Public Good as "Big Box Envy" because it manifested itself at a time when big boxes were the latest rage in retailing and if community "x" got one, then why can't we? Conversely, communities such as Nelson BC have adopted a highly interventionist strategy that as a matter of policy excludes retail chains from operating in the City. I would describe my personal approach as falling between these extremes.

14. How would you relate this term to the form of retailing in Nanaimo?

- The advent of big box retail and other forms of current retailing have eliminated most of the previous elements of public good. Forcing consumers to rely exclusively (or for the majority anyway) on the use of personal automobiles, has in fact resulted in a deterioration of the public good.

- Courtenay is a prime example of the change. We used to enjoy going to the downtown and walking the main streets. Music filled the air, storefronts were attractive and eye catching, retail activity seemed to spill out onto the public space. In short, the area was alive with vigour and interesting things. In contrast, if you visit the new retail area centered around WALMART it is anything but attractive and inviting. Huge stores placed around the perimeter of an immense and unfriendly parking jungle do little to encourage public activity. In fact you see many shoppers get into their vehicles to go from one store to another.

- There are no instances of the Public Good that I can see in the current retail environment as represented by that model. With the current single minded emphasis on the bottom line, whether that be in the private or public sector, there are fewer opportunities to enable the public to gain access to features and facilities other than the bare minimum retail environments.
- Retail landscape and the public good? - I find it interesting that there has always been a positive correlation between the value of residential land and the proximity to the largest new retail facilities. Does this mean that those areas, or communities, most removed from the major retail facilities will be the first to demand mixed use type land development? Does this also suggest that within large urban centers, building community or neighbourhood identity will have a major impact on land development, (Google: City Repair, Portland Oregon)?

- How quickly will a "greening social consciousness" be translated into political action to support sustainable development where decisions are made in the best interest of the local ecology rather than the local or national economy?

- Ideally, retailing should be disconnected from sales profit. In 90% of cases the retailer should be able to tell the customer: "you don't need this product".

- Ideally, retailing should propose products that have low environmental and social footprints. The means and ways of retailing should also have low environmental and social footprints. They should promote communication, awareness...and action towards the public good!

- there are many ways in which the "retail landscape" can positively or negatively, directly or indirectly relate to the public good. There is a responsibility, and potentially a self-serving as well as a societal benefit for the retail landscape to assess how it affects the public good.

15. How would you relate this term to the location of the Mall and Town Centre?

- Market forces play such a huge role in shaping the commercial development of our communities that the "public good" issue is often trivialized.....if there's a market demand then it is going to happen is my observation.

- The real estate opportunities for profit are very persuasive in motivating outside investors to do the planning for us......and they are often extremely good at the process and the results of their activities shape our communities. A real opportunity for addressing the "public good" arises from the fallout arising from the decisions made by these investors.

- It is my observation that the private sector provides virtually all the capital investment which drives change in the retail landscape.

- I think a full cost analysis should be applied to retail businesses, and the benefits of small businesses should be fully acknowledged -- for instance, their keeping money circulating in the community, their contribution to a more interesting and finely-grained sense of place and urban design, their contributions to human relations and a sense of community, and so on. In addition, forms of retail that do not tend to be as dependent on automobile traffic, and that are more finely integrated with other land uses, are to be encouraged.
- I suppose that it depends upon what is determined as public good. The fact that two first world societies, North America and the European Community deal with retailing in completely different ways shows that perceptions can be radically different. How do you determine whether from the perspective of what is best for a First World Society that the North American based approach, which focuses on vehicular accessibility, is better or worse than the European approach which places more emphasis on concentrated retail centres with good public transport.

- Certainly one approach that I think would be very helpful and educational would be to conduct an evaluation using full cost accounting so that the real cost to the community could be assessed. I think that all we can say is that it is likely that there will be major shifts in terms of what is regarded as good for society in terms of the provision of future public facilities as the need to conserve resources and develop more efficiently starts to register with the public, as is beginning to happen at the present time.

16. What measures could be used to evaluate 'the public good'?

- Meet a worthwhile need (we avoid projects or clients which have any potential to compromise our integrity)

- Bring new investment

- New jobs

- Be a multiplier or a platform for further opportunities

- Provide a suitable return for our client

- I do have a hang-up about assessing the economic impact of projects......and justify my actions based on the economic contribution......pretty consistently for whatever land uses

- I'd look at the potential for a given project to be multiplier or platform for further opportunities. On the social side I'd try to ascertain the Big Picture impacts on our community, for example, my person bias is that Casinos do not have a positive economic or social contribution to communities, even if the "numbers" show a positive impact.

- In part I think it is the nature of the goods sold. For example, we try to discourage liquor outlets from locating near to schools. We also encourage the same use to locate in existing commercial areas so that a broad range of services can be offered in a concentrated area. The same goes for stores that are sexually or adult oriented.

- What I find interesting is the tools we have to create these distinctions. Zoning for example does not discriminate on the basis of the goods sold. A retail use is a retail use. It is the community that provides input to Council
who are generally the ones making distinctions about the nature of a retail use.

- I think every situation/issue has to be analyzed on its own merits while also keeping the larger picture in mind. In a certain situation, it may make sense to accept less than what would be otherwise desirable in the name of achieving a "beachhead" or in order to create leverage for further gains in the future.

- First of all I would say that the health of the retail sector in a community is a public good. In other words, even though the retail operations are privately owned it's a primary means of wealth generation and wealth distribution through the community via the people employed. Consequently, it plays a large part in a City's economy.

- In order to foster this public good, issues such as store placement, size, impacts on existing business, and mix of uses are all important. For example, could Nanaimo's economy support that 600,000 sq. foot mall development, based on projected population growth, without severely sapping the economic vitality of other commercial areas in the City?

- The type of retail is important as well – do we really need another big box grocery retailer if the one we have is struggling. Is the location of the convenience store/gas station retail use compatible with the long term objectives of the Community Plan, with respect to creating complete communities. These would be the sort's of questions I would ask with respect to new development proposals that require changes to the OCP or zoning in order to proceed. These questions need to be asked in order to ensure that approval of a given development does not result in a negative impact on the retail sector as a whole.

- I would emphasis that the planning of the community should be done in the community's interest, to the best that that interest can be determined and the political representatives allow.

- The City is the regulatory authority that ultimately defines the retail landscape through development approvals. So given this connection, retail is a public good because it has a distinct effect on the local economy, and is a key gage on the health of the economy. Historically, the City's elected representatives have usually opted to let the market decide what is viable or not with respect to new retail development; however, given the state of the City's downtown and some of the other, older retail areas in Nanaimo, such as Harewood Mall, that may not have necessarily been the best approach to community development overall.

- This is typically represented as a trade-off or as a dichotomy between economic and environmental or social interests. The model typically used to describe sustainability forces one to balance all three (or four, if one includes the cultural leg of the stool) aspects in reaching a decision of the public good.
The key element is not the number of competing interests but in creating the balance between them.

17. What are your views on the future of retailing in Nanaimo and the mid-Island area?

- Defining the “public good” is much easier to do as a philosophic historic exercise than in future based mode when the real cool stuff is quite secondary to the macro retail developments.

- The public good is well defined by the “Circle of Prosperity” which Oregon uses in defining the relationship between the economy and community health....also adapted by the Economic Development Group for Nanaimo.

- We in western Canada are experiencing unprecedented economic vibrancy and as a result generating demand for places for us to spend our earnings. We visited Edmonton this past fall and found the retail space lining the highways entering the city to be pretty overwhelming. “Public good” in this environment seems to be one of managing the impact of “to much disposable income”......also recognizing that “this too will pass”.

- Answering the questions such as “what do we now do with our crumbling downtown” will be the most important thing in the future. In my view “re-inventing” downtown Nanaimo holds great promise for creating a great place to live, work and play. Because the timing of the fall-out often lags the decisions which lead to the need for re-inventing communities......the “public good” issue becomes one of accepting that a dynamic economy will invite change......providing an optimistic culture which embraces the adaptations required is the real challenge.

- What is really cool is that the reinventing is often on a small scale that locals can embrace. The adaptations hold the promise for wonderful opportunities to make our communities live-able and unique. Much of the urban planning which we’ve found to be attractive in Perth Australia and in Europe involves re-inventing neighbourhoods which have been left behind as the communities change.

- Planners have a responsibility to understand the market place and to steer the private sector to “do the right thing” ......the larger question is “what is the right thing”...and what are the principles which shape a healthy “public good” perspective? One factor is the realization that our whole system depends on the profitability of those who invest in our communities. From our experience in the Industrial and Residential sectors, the ability to shape this segment of our communities should include a solid understanding of the economics of the retail industry.

- A gradual "greening of N.A. cultural values" will encourage more retailing, (resource distribution) at the local level which will require a greater emphasis
on mixed use neighbourhoods, where work, play, shopping for basic necessities and home are all available within a couple of blocks. Specialized product purchase will be focused at the global scale through global communications, (internet, etc) pending the availability of efficient or energy inexpensive distribution systems.

- Recognize that like many things in life the "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction".....the opportunity is to build for the future; the challenge is to mitigate the negative impacts. We live in very good times.....we can be catalysts to build a positive environment.....encouraging new creative initiatives and re-inventing those areas negatively impacted by change.

- I think the favouring of big box and power centre retail by municipal politicians (and, to some degree, planners) is often based on a very limited and short-sighted calculus. Some of the pioneering work that has been done, both in research and policy, to address the impacts of this increasing centralization and homogenization of retail needs to be be more widely known and disseminated.

18. Do you have any other comments on the connection between the retail landscape and "the public good"?

- I recall reading something many years ago that indicated the single largest form of adult recreation was "window shopping". In the previous model of indoor shopping malls, this was apparent with the provision of publicly accessible space that was indoors and sheltered, and could contain elements of passive and active recreation. I can recall enjoying Christmas Carols, fish tanks, public or group displays and other forms of "providing for the public good". The West Edmonton Mall might have taken that model to the highest level. Now with the advent of Power Centres, or whatever else they might be called, the model has broken down. I do not see, especially in Canada, the collection of people recreating and enjoying themselves by walking through immense parking lots to get from one giant retail outlet to the next. Instead here they drive, which defeats many of the opportunities to derive public benefit from the retail space.

- There were some really successful examples of public open space, supported by private retail activity. Some of the on street vending (retail, busking, outdoor seating for food and beverage services), many forms of public art, and activities such as parades and other forms of passive observatory recreation offered real public benefits. It is hard to see how any of these opportunities can be provided through Internet based shopping!

- the public good should be fundamental, determined in advance of a site specific circumstance and thereby universally applicable. Altering strategic objectives in the name of the public good is often an easy way for politicians to avoid tough decisions of governance, and staying the course (as George W. says).
- I do not subscribe to the view that Wal-Mart or Big Boxes are inherently evil. Nor do I view all retail as benign. Again, the approach to Public Good is situational. If all retail areas of a community are functioning well then a less interventionist approach may be valid. If one area such as the downtown is suffering a more strict approach is warranted, such as, policies in an OCP that prohibit office development in any area outside of the downtown.

- As one can see, it is a very complicated issue where sometimes the scenario is not black and white

- Mixed use is a public good concept because it assists in creating complete communities where people can walk and use cars less [good for the env] and assists in vibrant communities, reducing vandalism and increasing individual safety thereby making a community safer/nicer/healthier for all residents from all aspects of the sustainability spectrum.

- The connection between the retail landscape and public good is key. Adequate parking, transit, pedestrian walkways are needed to allow transactions in a safe manner. Commerce is a reality in society, it needs to happen.

- The public good around this economic reality is to ensure safety for the public [foot, cars, workers, shoppers, etc]. The aesthetics of a retail building/complex is key as well to ensure our communities are appealing and attractive thereby encouraging a higher quality of life, sustained growth, tax base.