

## ASSIGNMENT #4: FINAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 1. Introduction

The following literature review is intended to provide a background for the investigation of land use and urban design strategies which may be used by the City of Cupertino, CA, to redevelop the Vallco Fashion Park as part of a lively, 24-hour downtown core.

Vallco Fashion Park (“Vallco”) is an enclosed regional shopping mall which was constructed in 1976. Although Vallco was once considered one of finest shopping centers in the region, its quality has declined significantly in recent years. It is now characterized by physical and economic blight. The city’s General Plan indicates that Vallco and its surrounding area are intended to be part of a lively 24-hour city core that includes mixed-use environments.<sup>1</sup> An exploration of viable revitalization strategies may assist the City of Cupertino in realizing its goals for Vallco and reaping the economic and social benefits of a successful retail center in the heart of the city.

A key step in the exploration of potential strategies for Cupertino is a thorough review of the currently available research on retail redevelopment, in particular the redevelopment of enclosed regional shopping malls into mixed-use centers. The literature review that follows seeks to provide insight into the current trends and best practices in shopping mall redevelopment.

The literature review begins with an exploration of the growing problem of enclosed regional mall decline. The main themes and debates in the field of shopping center redevelopment are then identified and discussed. Reasons for decline are explored, followed by best practices in redevelopment. The most common practices discussed include the strategies of mixed-use development and place-making, the necessity of public involvement, and the need for a tailored market analysis. The major gaps in this field of research are also identified and discussed. The literature supports the development of a hypothesis regarding the most effective redevelopment strategies for the area. These include mixed-use development with pedestrian orientation, the introduction of housing, and other land use and urban design improvements. The methods used in the reviewed literature are next examined to provide support for the proposed methods of this study. Finally, the potential sources to support and contradict the findings of this study are briefly analyzed.

### 2. Review of Literature

The sources considered in this review include books, peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and professional publications in the fields of planning, real estate, and economics. Many of the sources examined focus solely on commercial redevelopment, mixed-use development, or the history and economics of shopping malls. While a number sources deal with the intersection of these research areas – the redevelopment of enclosed regional malls into mixed-use centers –

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<sup>1</sup> City of Cupertino, *The City of Cupertino General Plan 1993*, pp. 1-1 and 2-11. <[http://www.cupertino.org/city\\_government/departments\\_and\\_offices/planning\\_and\\_building/index.asp](http://www.cupertino.org/city_government/departments_and_offices/planning_and_building/index.asp)> [14 May 2005].

these sources are primarily descriptive rather than evaluative. They generally identify mixed-use development as a trend and provide examples, but do little to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in relation to other alternatives. In addition, very little of the material reviewed consists of actual research. Instead, practice guides and descriptive articles are most common. There are a few notable examples of research studies on the topic of the redevelopment of regional malls. However, gaps in the body of literature and research still remain. These provide a challenge in identifying best practices in the field and relating them to the Vallco example. Below is a summary of the key findings of the literature review.

### 2.1. Clearly show the significance and relevance of the proposed research.

Many cities and towns have engaged in redevelopment programs of some kind, usually in the hope of economic gains. Commercial redevelopment has been explored in a variety of contexts, from downtown revitalization to shopping center redesign. In general, commercial redevelopment is favored because a healthy economy is considered an important goal for most jurisdictions. Professors Joan Fitzgerald of Northeastern University and Nancey Green Leigh of the Georgia Institute of Technology argue that the need for a strong economy makes commercial redevelopment an important issue for all planners.<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh not alone in placing a strong emphasis on retail. J. Thomas Black and his colleagues at the Urban Land Institute note that we must take notice of under-performing retail if we are to properly care for and nurture our cities. They suggest that retail is a key aspect of urban life, and a downturn in retail signals a wider problem of urban decline.<sup>3</sup> Such a pattern must be arrested immediately. These arguments highlight the centrality of retail to the economic well-being of cities, as well as the general relevance of commercial redevelopment efforts in the field of urban planning.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) applies this theory to downtown cores, and argues that business interests are not the only ones at stake. According to ULI, the revenues produced by a healthy downtown allow a city to fund its support of needy citizens.<sup>4</sup> Narrowing the focus of redevelopment to the downtowns of smaller cities, Black suggests that these areas may be at greater risk of decline than downtowns in large cities.<sup>5</sup> The severe decline experienced in the downtown area of Cupertino, a small city of approximately 50,000 residents,<sup>6</sup> supports this idea. But other researchers look beyond the downtown core, pointing to a more specific unit of commerce: the shopping center.

Fitzgerald and Leigh observe that shopping malls in various forms have become the center of all retail activity in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the shopping center has been described as “a focal

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<sup>2</sup> Joan Fitzgerald and Nancey Green Leigh, *Economic Revitalization: Cases and Strategies for City and Suburb* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 132.

<sup>3</sup> J. Thomas Black, Libby Howland, and Stuart L. Rogel, *Downtown Retail Development: Conditions for Success and Project Profiles* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Land Institute, 1983), v.

<sup>4</sup> Urban Land Institute, Panel Advisory Service, *Downtown Santa Cruz: An Evaluation of Development Potential and Redevelopment Strategies for the Pacific Garden Mall Area of Santa Cruz, California* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1990), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Black et al., 86.

<sup>6</sup> City of Cupertino, “About Cupertino: Facts and Figures,” [http://www.cupertino.org/about\\_cupertino/facts\\_and\\_figures/index.asp](http://www.cupertino.org/about_cupertino/facts_and_figures/index.asp) [18 November 2005].

<sup>7</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 132.

point in... people's lives" in America.<sup>8</sup> Public policy scholar Robert Fishman identified enclosed regional malls as one of the top ten influences on American cities in the past 50 years.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the growth of the shopping mall as a fixture in the American landscape has been rapid and seemingly without end. Portland-based consultant Terry Lassar reports, "between 1970 and 1990, a new shopping center opened every seven hours in the U.S."<sup>10</sup> And as malls have grown in number, they have also grown in size. According to Black, their expansion "has far outpaced growth in retail sales."<sup>11</sup>

But despite the apparent prosperity of American shopping, it would be incorrect to state that all is well in the world of the mall. In *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, Benjamin R. Barber argues that an excess supply of shopping centers that lack character has led to changing shopping patterns and retail decline.<sup>12</sup> And Black notes that excess supply has shifted retail dollars to new centers without creating additional demand, leading to decline of the old centers.<sup>13</sup> As a result, America is littered with failing or abandoned malls, even in economically robust regions such as the Bay Area. These decaying structures are sometimes referred to as "ghost malls,"<sup>14</sup> but are more commonly known as "greyfields."<sup>15</sup> The exact characteristics that define a greyfield regional mall are a matter of some debate, but a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) offers persuasive evidence for the use of size and retail sales per square foot as identifiers.<sup>16</sup> However greyfields are defined, it is generally agreed that their presence is a problem, and it appears to be an increasing one. ULI's Michael Beyard suggests that, of the more than 2000 enclosed malls in the U.S., approximately 15 to 20 percent are headed for closure.<sup>17</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers arrived at similar figures in their independent study, concluding that 7 percent of regional malls are currently greyfields and another 12 percent are at risk of declining to greyfield status over the next five years.<sup>18</sup>

What is the relevance of these closures in terms of the life of our cities and urban spaces? Architect David J. Smiley argues that, just as a city's downtown must remain vital, so must its shopping centers. Abandoned malls "no longer generate profits, no longer serve their

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<sup>8</sup> William Ivey, foreword to *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Fishman, "The American Metropolis at Century's End: Past and Future Influences," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 1 (2000): 200.

<sup>10</sup> Terry Lassar, "Shopping Centers Can Be Good Neighbors," *Planning* 61, no. 10 (October 1995): 14.

<sup>11</sup> Black et al., 9.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, "Civic Space," *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 35.

<sup>13</sup> Black et al., 84.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin Mattson, "Antidotes to Sprawl," in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth N. Chilton, *Greyfields: The New Horizon for Infill and Higher Density Regeneration*, Practice Guide #6, EPA Region 4 (Southeastern Regional Environmental Finance Center, University of Louisville, n.d.), 1.

<sup>16</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers and Congress for the New Urbanism, *Greyfield Regional Mall Study* (January 2001), 13.

<sup>17</sup> Mattson, 40-41.

<sup>18</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers and Congress for the New Urbanism, 4.

communities, and worse, drain the financial base and social spirit from their neighborhoods.”<sup>19</sup> Given the increasing number of greyfields and the severity of their impact on communities, Lee Sobel and his colleagues at CNU refers to greyfields as “the biggest issue facing America today.”<sup>20</sup> Redevelopment may offer a solution to this problem. Greyfields have many advantages over other development sites, including common ownership of large parcels, attractive locations, existing infrastructure, and lack of contamination.<sup>21</sup> These qualities make redevelopment of greyfields an appealing option. And developer Larry Feldman notes that redevelopment costs are generally lower than replacement costs for greyfield properties, suggesting that redevelopment of these sites makes financial sense for cities and property owners alike.<sup>22</sup>

However, the appropriate form of redevelopment is a subject of considerable debate. While shopping center owners may opt for cosmetic improvements, retail researcher Mark Eppli states that giving a decaying mall a face lift or introducing a new department store is unlikely to stem the tide of decline.<sup>23</sup> What is needed is a more serious reconsideration of the relationship between the site and its surrounding community.<sup>24</sup> Some argue that the shopping mall has no place in the American city and suggest its elimination. Kenneth T. Jackson suggests that “the shopping mall and the automobile culture that makes it possible waste time, energy, and land that the United States can ill afford.”<sup>25</sup> Yet others take a more optimistic view of the possibilities for integrating the shopping mall into a more successful urban landscape. In *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, Mark Robbins imagines a new and innovative retail design. He argues that by creatively rethinking public space and urbanism, decaying malls can be transformed into “genuine places in the older areas of our spreading suburban environment.”<sup>26</sup> For suburban communities like Cupertino that lack a downtown with any significant identity, the potential for genuine public space is an exciting prospect.

Whichever view one chooses to take, it is virtually undisputed that the traditional American shopping mall is in trouble. With perhaps one fifth of the nation’s enclosed malls on the verge of closing their doors, the question of how to reuse and adapt these centers will be a concern for many jurisdictions in the coming years. Research on the redevelopment of defunct regional malls to make them economically and socially successful will be of immense value to cities facing this problem. Like many other cities with greyfield malls, Cupertino will benefit from identifying and pursuing viable strategies immediately, before further decline and complete closure of Vallco occur.

## 2.2. Identify the main themes and debates in the field of research.

<sup>19</sup> David J. Smiley, “Addressing Redress,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>20</sup> Lee S. Sobel, Ellen Greenberg, and Steven Bodzin, excerpt from “Greyfields into Goldfields: Dead Malls Become Living Neighborhoods” in *Greater Philadelphia Regional Review* (Fall 2002): 28-31.

<sup>21</sup> Chilton, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Larry Feldman, “Successful Investment and Turnaround Strategies for Distressed Shopping Centre Properties,” *Journal of Retail and Leisure Property* 4, no. 1: 33.

<sup>23</sup> Sobel et al., 30.

<sup>24</sup> Ivey, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, “All the World’s a Mall: Reflections on the Social and Economic Consequences of the American Shopping Center,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 4 (October 1996): 1121.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Robbins, “Redressing the Mall,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 7.

A number of key themes appear in the literature on retail redevelopment, including possible reasons for the sharp decline of enclosed regional malls as well as the best practices to be pursued in mall redevelopment. The most commonly discussed practices include the emergence of place-making efforts, the importance of public-sector involvement to help reach consensus, the success of mixed-use environments, and the need for careful and detailed market analysis before developing retail property. While there is general agreement among scholars and researchers that these are key elements of the redevelopment discussion, there remains some debate about the value and success of these strategies. The key redevelopment themes and related debates are discussed in detail below.

### *Reasons for decline of the regional mall*

The history of the shopping mall in America is a matter of general agreement in the literature, as is the reality that many of these centers are in decline. But multiple explanations for this decline are offered. Although the concept of the shopping center seems to have arisen in the 1920s or 1930s, it was primarily characterized by local stores grouping themselves under common ownership or management.<sup>27</sup> Until World War II, American shopping was primarily done in downtowns and town centers.<sup>28</sup> The enclosed mall anchored by department stores appeared in the postwar period, then gradually “expanded into regional, super-regional and megamall sizes” over the next twenty years.<sup>29</sup> During this period, rapid mall construction occurred in the suburbs as retail followed the movement of the American population away from central cities.<sup>30</sup> Unsurprisingly, this migration of residents, retail, and dollars had dire consequences for American downtowns. Sharp retail decline in central cities occurred as market share was lost to suburban malls.<sup>31</sup> According to Fitzgerald and Leigh, inner-ring suburbs have faced many of the same problems as downtowns as a result of continued suburban expansion.<sup>32</sup> The success of suburban shopping has resulted in the movement of malls to ever more distant exurbs, making older suburban centers “victims of their own success.”<sup>33</sup> The continual construction of new shopping centers has resulted in an America that is “overstored.”<sup>34</sup> Oversupply appears to be the most common explanation for the decline of enclosed regional malls in downtowns and inner-ring suburbs. But many researchers have suggested additional reasons for the decline.

Jackson takes a broad view of the issue, suggesting that the proliferation and later abandonment of suburban malls is the combined result of our tax structure, which allows rapid

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Crawford, “Suburban Life and Public Space,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Heckey, “Central City Revitalization and Lincoln Avenue: The Shopping Street Pattern as Urban Design Solution,” (M.U.P. Thesis, San Jose State University, 1983), 6.

<sup>29</sup> Crawford, 23-25.

<sup>30</sup> Black et al., 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>32</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Smiley, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 133.

depreciation of commercial land, and the low consumer cost of automobile use brought about through government subsidy.<sup>35</sup>

Fitzgerald and Leigh argue that crumbling infrastructure and ineffective design may prevent downtowns and inner-ring suburbs from meeting modern retail needs, prompting their tenants to seek out newly-built areas.<sup>36</sup> According to marketing expert Nora Ganim Barnes, the safety of older malls and their surrounding areas has also become a concern for some consumers.<sup>37</sup>

Barnes also blames a lack of strong identity for the decline of regional malls. She explains that developers in the 1980s began to purchase department store chains in order to control mall anchors, but managed them ineffectively leading to bankruptcy. Closures and name changes confused customers, who were already seeking to cut back their shopping in the midst of a recession. Sales and promotions were offered by department stores to lure customers in, but only served to create an expectation of bargain prices. In the end, regional shopping centers with uncertain and shifting identities lacked the ability to appeal to increasingly value-conscious consumers.<sup>38</sup>

This shift in consumer preferences has been identified by others as a factor in the decline of regional shopping malls. *Fortune* writer Kenneth Labich notes that Americans are increasingly adopting a “do-it-yourself” mentality that drives them away from traditional retailers and towards warehouse stores, which may provide few services but offer superior bargains.<sup>39</sup> In addition to warehouse centers, other alternative retail types attract the attention of value-conscious consumers, luring them away from the shopping mall. Labich notes that enclosed regional malls have suffered from the growth of “power centers,” which group large discount retailers together, as well as the increasing popularity of home shopping by catalog and internet.<sup>40</sup> Barnes points to factory outlets as a new hotspot for bargain-obsessed consumers, and Barnes and Fishman each note that strip malls are increasingly popular for the modern shopper.<sup>41</sup> Of course, no discussion of retail formats would be complete without mentioning the “Big Box” or “category killer,” which Crawford identifies as the most popular form of retail space today.<sup>42</sup> The vast array of shopping options available to American consumers makes it difficult for enclosed regional malls to compete.

The most common explanation offered for regional shopping mall decline seems to be the oversupply of retail space as new centers open in distant exurbs. But the literature describes several alternative factors, including outdated infrastructure, lack of mall identity, changing consumer preferences, the proliferation of retail alternatives, and others. Each of these is a persuasive explanation for decline. It seems likely that the deterioration of regional shopping malls results from a combination of the factors listed above.

### *Current trends and best practices in mall redevelopment*

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<sup>35</sup> Jackson, 1115-1116.

<sup>36</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 133.

<sup>37</sup> Nora Ganim Barnes, “The Restructuring of the Retail Business in the US: The Fall of the Shopping Mall,” *Business Forum* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Labich, “What It Will Take to Keep People Hanging Out at the Mall,” *Fortune* (29 May 1995), 102.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-106.

<sup>41</sup> Barnes, 5; Fishman, 206.

<sup>42</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 140.

A common theme found throughout the literature is the description of recent trends in retail and commercial redevelopment. Several sources, most notably the practice guides, also offer lists of the best practices in redevelopment today. Below is a brief inventory of the trends and best practices identified in the literature.

The introduction of new retail formats, especially those that add entertainment and cultural uses, appears to be a current trend. As noted above, oversupply of retail space that lacks a strong character has been identified as a key problem facing regional malls. In an effort to address this issue, retail started to get creative. Beginning in the 1980s, several new shopping center types were introduced to recapture the attention of the American consumer.<sup>43</sup> These included “the festival marketplace,” which integrated mall features into the historic fabric of a downtown, “the specialty mall,” which focused on narrow target markets rather than on general retailing, and the roadside “mini-mall.”<sup>44</sup> In more recent years, “the entertainment mall” has arisen with a focus on recreation and nightlife.<sup>45</sup> This format, also known as a “lifestyle center,”<sup>46</sup> is intended to introduce a sense of identifiable character while non-retail uses lure those who might otherwise shop elsewhere. Through these changes, developers have sought to improve the competitive advantage of suburban shopping malls.

While some shopping malls are being given facelifts and new formats, others are being given new life through unconventional uses. Chilton argues that one of the primary barriers to greyfield redevelopment is insisting on replacing the failed mall with a retail use.<sup>47</sup> The fact that a mall is decaying may be an indication that it has outlived its original purpose and needs to be significantly reimagined.<sup>48</sup> Both Chilton and Homsy advocate “demalling,” the process of replacing a failed shopping mall with an alternative use.<sup>49</sup> Depending on community needs, demalled properties can be turned into mixed-use centers, big box retail outlets, educational facilities, medical clinics, or a variety of other uses.<sup>50</sup>

While malls have been renovated and reimagined, downtown shopping has experienced a renaissance. Mark Heckey argues that the energy crisis in the late 1970s prompted developers to begin looking to central cities again. Over the past few decades, “the select, in-town location has... taken on a new significance.”<sup>51</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh agree that downtown shopping may be poised for a recovery. They observe that “shoppers who used to buy in malls are now more willing to shop on ‘Main Street.’”<sup>52</sup> As a result of this shift, an increasing number of stores are choosing downtown locations. This trend further threatens the viability of the traditional enclosed regional mall. However, it has also led to a retail format that Charles Lockwood has named “The Mall Meets Main Street.”<sup>53</sup> Lockwood describes this format as a pedestrian-

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<sup>43</sup> Crawford, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> George Homsy, “New Lives for Old Malls: Rethinking the Nation’s First Generation Shopping Centers,” *Planning* 65, no. 5 (May 1999): 22.

<sup>47</sup> Chilton, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>49</sup> Chilton, 8; Homsy, 22.

<sup>50</sup> Chilton, 10; Homsy, 22.

<sup>51</sup> Heckey, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 135.

<sup>53</sup> Charles Lockwood, “Emerging Trend: The Mall Meets Main Street,” *Shopping Centers Today*, September 2001. [International Council of Shopping Centers web site]: <<http://www.icsc.org/srch/sct/current/sct0901/>> [2 October 2005].

oriented main street with retail that serves as the entrance to an enclosed shopping center. By combining a mall with a town center atmosphere, developers seek to offer shoppers the best of both worlds.

Based on the many trends in retail described above, several researchers have established lists of the best practices in shopping mall redevelopment. In his practice guide on greyfield redevelopment, Kenneth Chilton suggests that reconsideration of the need for retail space, followed by demalling if appropriate, is the best practice in this field.<sup>54</sup> The principles to be followed during this process are community involvement and public participation, reeducation “NIMBY” residents to accept alternative land uses, using public power to assist one owner in gaining control of the greyfield parcel, and the use of public investment to support the project. Strong knowledge of the local market is essential, as are finding the right tenant mix and planning complementary uses to avoid peak traffic congestion. Once the redevelopment takes place, sound 24-hour management must be in place to prevent decline.<sup>55</sup>

Mariwyn Evans reports on the advice of real estate consultant Michael Buckley, who expands on the demalling concept by offering a list of the practices to be followed in determining whether a failing shopping mall should be redeveloped as retail or as an alternative use. Buckley describes a nine-step process for finding the appropriate use. These steps include property assessment, the development of a number of detailed “creative reuse scenarios” followed by analysis of each alternative, and selection of the preferred option. Finally, Buckley advocates a careful consideration of how flexible the chosen strategy will be in the future, when the property inevitably requires another redevelopment.<sup>56</sup> Ultimately, Buckley’s steps outline a process of detailed market analysis which should be used before a redevelopment strategy is selected.

Lee Sobel and his colleagues from the Congress for the New Urbanism discuss best practices in greyfield redevelopment only briefly, emphasizing that the key is to remember and integrate the principles of new urbanism. These include mixed uses and housing types, street-facing activities, reconnection of grid street patterns, integration of the project into the community using design, and provision of public space.<sup>57</sup> Many of these principles echo those advocated by Chilton.

Urban affairs professor Kent Robertson identifies and analyzes the current best practices in the redevelopment of small downtowns. While his research does not focus on shopping mall redevelopment, it may be relevant to Cupertino’s efforts to revitalize Vallco as part of a 24-hour downtown. Robertson examines the key strategies of pedestrian malls, festival marketplaces, indoor shopping malls in downtown cores, mixed-use centers, along with a host of other tools such as historic preservation, “Main street” programs, and pedestrian skywalks.<sup>58</sup> His research evaluates each of these tools, examining the benefits and drawbacks of each. The most effective and widely applicable tools appear to be mixed-use centers and indoor downtown malls. Ultimately, Robertson concludes that the most popular strategies are generally those that are most similar to suburban shopping malls.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Chilton, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>56</sup> Mariwyn Evans, “Too Old to Be a Mall Any More?” *Journal of Property Management* 62, no. 5 (1997): 32-37.

<sup>57</sup> Sobel et al., 31.

<sup>58</sup> Kent A. Robertson, “Downtown Retail Revitalization: A Review of American Development Strategies,” *Planning Perspectives* 12, no. 4 (October 1997): 384-398.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 398-399.

Pierre Filion and his colleagues also identify several key principles when developing a healthy downtown for a small metropolitan area. Like Robertson's research, Filion's focuses on downtowns rather than shopping malls. However, it may still be relevant to Cupertino's efforts. Filion notes that successful downtowns must have active streets with pedestrian-oriented retail, a concentration of residents to promote 24-hour activity, and effective design that blends new development into the downtown.<sup>60</sup> Strategies to accomplish this type of development include public incentive financing; careful streetscape design incorporating furniture and art; civic buildings; pedestrian-oriented transportation design with minimal parking; the restoration of waterfronts or other natural areas; and effectively coordinated marketing and events to lure people into the downtown.<sup>61</sup> Ultimately, the goal is to provide a strong sense of distinction between the downtown and suburban development patterns.<sup>62</sup>

Of the trends and best practices described in the literature, there are four which are most commonly advocated. These are mixed-use redevelopment, place-making strategies, carefully tailored market assessments, and the need for strong public involvement and support. These key themes are explored in greater detail below, and the debates surrounding these strategies are briefly considered.

### *Mixed-use redevelopment*

One of the most common strategies advocated for the redevelopment of failed regional malls is the integration of a mix of uses. Chilton suggests that mixed-use redevelopment is "one of the most exciting" trends in greyfield redevelopment.<sup>63</sup> And Heckey argues that "the day of the super-regional center... is gone," and mixed uses are now dominant."<sup>64</sup> This is perhaps an overstatement, as many super-regional centers continue to thrive in the suburbs. However, new retail development and redevelopment do appear to be increasingly focused on a mix of uses.

A number of descriptive sources identify the trend toward mixed-use projects. Terry Lassar describes mall redevelopment cases from Washington to Virginia to Florida, all employing some form of mixed-use scheme. He argues that mixed-uses and pedestrian-orientation are the new best practices in retail development.<sup>65</sup> Joan Rosenstock describes the case of Seattle's Northgate Shopping Center, which faced public pressure to convert to mixed-use during a 1990 expansion. The community "saw the expansion as an opportunity to transform the mall into a true urban center."<sup>66</sup> Paul D. Childs and his colleagues suggest that, in addition to the consumer preference for mixed-use projects, developers may have reasons to support them. Childs suggests that a mix of uses may be "a hedging strategy" that decreases investment risks by providing a diversified product.<sup>67</sup> Given the risk reduction benefits, Childs argues that mixed-use should be popular in weak or over-saturated markets.<sup>68</sup> If Childs is correct in his

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<sup>60</sup> Pierre Filion, Heidi Hoernig, Trudi Bunting, and Gary Sands, "The Successful Few: Healthy Downtowns of Small Metropolitan Regions," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 331-332.

<sup>61</sup> Filion et al., 336.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>63</sup> Chilton, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Heckey, 7-8.

<sup>65</sup> Lassar, 16-19.

<sup>66</sup> Joan Rosenstock, "The Transformation of Northgate," *Planning* 61, no. 10 (October 1995): 16.

<sup>67</sup> Paul D. Childs, Timothy J. Riddiough, and Alexander J. Triantis, "Mixed Uses and the Redevelopment Option," *Real Estate Economics* 24, no. 3 (fall 1996): 317.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 319.

assessment, the current over-supply and low demand in retail markets may explain trend toward mixed-use redevelopment of shopping centers.

However, these sources serve only to identify and describe the mixed-use phenomenon. They do not offer evaluation or critical examination of the format. In contrast, several authors discuss the barriers to mixed-use redevelopments. Christopher Swope argues that attracting a developer for such a project is difficult, since many are still uncomfortable with the format.<sup>69</sup> Charles Lockwood concurs, observing that even after decades of use, lenders do not understand mixed-use and therefore view it as a financial risk. In addition, Lockwood points to the fact that many developers specialize in particular uses, and therefore none are comfortable with mixed-use. Regulatory barriers such as zoning codes combine with the need to phase large projects, contributing to a lengthy process and making investors impatient.<sup>70</sup> Kent Robertson also warns that the design and construction for a mixed-use project is more complicated and costly than for a suburban mall.<sup>71</sup> This may become a barrier to securing financing.

Beyond the barriers to mixed-use development, a number of researchers warn that the format has its perils, and must be pursued carefully in order to produce benefits for the community. Mark Anders suggests that both planners and developers tend to take an “over-simplistic view” of the format.<sup>72</sup> Throwing together a random mix of uses without regard to the specific needs of the community in question can produce ineffective results. In addition, says Anders, it is important to pay close attention to design issues such as scale and massing. There is a potential for “monolithic buildings” which, even if they contain a mix of uses, are inflexible and unlikely to result in the revitalization of urban areas.<sup>73</sup> Anders’s critique suggests that issues such as design, walkability, and neighborhood character are as important as the uses represented. Robertson agrees that design is essential, stating that a mixed-use center may fail if it is not well-integrated into its surroundings, is inward-facing, or focuses too heavily on retail so as to undermine other uses.<sup>74</sup> But retail consultant Carl Steidtmann takes the opposite view, arguing that entertainment and other uses merely distract from shopping and should be limited.<sup>75</sup>

Another critique of certain mixed-use models has been levied by Mark Robbins. He notes that a popular new form of suburban shopping development is the small-town shopping street within a suburb, which creates the illusion of a truly mixed-use urban center. Robbins considers this trend dangerous for two reasons. First, the format “preys on our desire for connection and community” in the name of marketing.<sup>76</sup> Second, although the format seems to offer a retreat from suburban forms, illusory town centers may actually worsen sprawl and other suburban ills if located in an outlying area with infrastructure needs. Robbins urges professionals to remember that these developments aim “to engage us in a fantasy, which includes the participation in what appears to be a public realm...” but is not, in fact, public.<sup>77</sup> In essence, he warns against mixed-use developments that fail to foster genuine community interactions. This is particularly relevant when considering shopping centers, where a certain degree of fantasy and

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<sup>69</sup> Christopher Swope, “After the Mall,” *Governing*, (October 2002): 20.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Lockwood, “Raising the Bar: Town Centers are Outperforming Traditional Suburban Real Estate Products,” *Urban Land Magazine*, (February 2003): 76.

<sup>71</sup> Robertson, 395.

<sup>72</sup> Anders, 354.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>74</sup> Robertson, 395-396.

<sup>75</sup> Labich.

<sup>76</sup> Robbins, 5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

deception is often introduced in the interest of encouraging consumer spending. Similarly, Lockwood cautions that the “Main street” approach may be abused by developers who copy the small-town atmosphere while removing true mixed-use features.<sup>78</sup> And Homsy offers his own warning against reliance on mixed-use town centers, arguing that the approach is not suitable for every declining mall. However, he does not provide further detail as to when mixed uses may be inappropriate.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the many criticisms levied against mixed-use developments, the shopping street and related models seem to be the order of the day. Fitzgerald reports that, according to national retail expert Robert Gibbs, recent studies suggest successful retail areas are human scale and pedestrian-oriented. Beyond these characteristics, there may be some leeway in determining the specific mix of uses to be pursued. According to Gibbs, traditional department store anchors can be effectively replaced by “alternative anchors such as churches, police stations, and libraries,” provided the anchors can draw the community in.<sup>80</sup> These findings support the introduction of mixed uses to traditional retail developments.

### *Place-making*

Perhaps the most common strategy advocated for regional mall redevelopment is some form of place-making. One of the many problems facing enclosed regional malls today is their homogeneity and monotony of design. Mattson addresses this theme, observing that the modern consumer has a greater number of places to shop than ever before. These include catalogs, internet sites, big box stores, and other alternative retail formats.<sup>81</sup> Given an increasing number of choices, fewer shoppers are choosing to enter an enclosed regional mall that lacks identity and character. To address this problem, many shopping centers are seeking to reposition themselves as exciting and unique destinations. These place-making efforts are aimed at turning the mall into a significant urban or suburban space.

The key to place-making is the creation of a unique character appropriate to the specific location of the retail center. In their assessment of redevelopment opportunities in Santa Cruz, the Urban Land Institute noted the following: “Every great project, organization, or place has a unique factor, something it does so well that the competition talks about it. If such a factor does not exist, it has to be invented because it represents a marketing edge—a secret weapon.”<sup>82</sup> Real estate consultant Michael Buckley agrees that identity is critical. He argues that every redeveloped retail property must create a “core image identity” based on a few key elements of the development.<sup>83</sup> This identity will become the center of marketing efforts.

The emergence of place-making efforts in regional shopping malls is a recurrent theme in the reviewed literature, and is closely related to the mixed-use development trend. The creation of new shopping mall types such as the festival marketplace and the entertainment mall, as described above, is one aspect of the place-making effort. Carrying this innovation further, Mattson notes that developers are increasingly “diversifying and ‘complexifying’ what has become an overly simplistic design and retailing formula.”<sup>84</sup> Some of the more complex forms

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<sup>78</sup> Lockwood, “Emerging Trend.”

<sup>79</sup> Homsy, 22.

<sup>80</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 135.

<sup>81</sup> Mattson, 40.

<sup>82</sup> Urban Land Institute, 33.

<sup>83</sup> Evans.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

referenced by Lockwood, including the Mall Meets Main Street, fall into the category of attempts to complexify the retail formula while adding instant character.<sup>85</sup> Place-making efforts are especially sought in small communities that lack a downtown with any significant identity. Christopher Swope notes that many bedroom suburbs have “grown up” into full cities, but without developing a real urban character or public space.<sup>86</sup> For these cities, of which Cupertino may be one, place-making efforts are an excellent way for redevelopment to clean up a greyfield while simultaneously creating a sense of urban space and community character.

Available research suggests that place-making strategies such as town center developments are highly successful. Charles Lockwood compared the performance of eight newly developed town centers with nearby malls and other shopping areas. He found that, invariably, town center developments performed higher than their nearby competitors with regard to sales figures, lease amounts, occupancy rates, and property values.<sup>87</sup> This research provides validation for the place-making trend. An effectively created urban shopping area has the ability to outperform regional shopping malls, creating fiscal benefits for cities and developers alike. Research conducted by Pierre Filion and colleagues, however, may cast doubt on the success of the place-making strategy. Filion examined small metropolitan regions which are considered to have healthy downtowns in order to determine what makes for an effective town center.<sup>88</sup> Although he creates an impressive list of ingredients for success, his study ultimately reveals that only a few of the cities that use these ingredients are successful. A closer look reveals that all of the successful downtowns in the study have either a university, a historic district, or are the state or provincial capital.<sup>89</sup> Filion’s work suggests that place-making strategies alone may not be able to breathe life into a declining area. Instead, other conditions that increase density and contribute to a sense of place must be present.

If a city opts for a place-making strategy, care must be taken to create a truly successful space, not just the cosmetic appearance of one. Walter Gross suggests that, “the character of the new downtown must have more than surface improvements.”<sup>90</sup> Mark Anders argues that creating a town center or other significant place “is not as easy as scattering a few bars and restaurants around.”<sup>91</sup> Even if an appealing place is created, it is not clear that it will be a genuine space for community. The criticisms of mixed-use town centers levied by Robbins, Lockwood, and Homsy ring equally true when applied to place-making efforts.<sup>92</sup> And Barber states that the New Urbanism so revered by planners may have been a negative force in effective place-making. According to Barber, new urbanists have “addressed the loss of vitality in the suburbs in a primarily cosmetic way, opting for the appearance of cities but avoiding those essential urban traits...”<sup>93</sup> If improvements are merely cosmetic, or the creation of a sense of place is a shallow game to win retail dollars, then the efforts may be ineffective and even insidious in their impact on the community.

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<sup>85</sup> Lockwood, “Emerging Trend.”

<sup>86</sup> Swope, 20.

<sup>87</sup> Lockwood, “Raising the Bar.”

<sup>88</sup> Filion et al., 328-330.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>90</sup> Walter Gross, “Revitalizing Downtown Shopping Requires More Than Cosmetification,” *Journal of Marketing* 42, no. 1 (January 1978): 13.

<sup>91</sup> Mark Anders, “Understanding and Balancing Mixed-Use Schemes: The Key to Creating Successful Communities,” *Journal of Retail and Leisure Property* 3, no. 4 (April 2004): 354-355.

<sup>92</sup> Robbins, 5-6; Lockwood, “Emerging Trend;” Homsy, 22.

<sup>93</sup> Barber, 34-35.

Despite these debates over the value of place-making, it is clearly a key strategy being used to address the problems facing suburban shopping malls. The absence of unique character in these shopping environments has been a significant force in their decline and abandonment. In the wake of this decline, many jurisdictions are turning to place-making – the creation of an exciting destination with unique character – as a potential solution.

### *Tailored market analysis*

Before a city can undertake a place-making or mixed-use strategy, it is essential to perform a carefully tailored market analysis. Throughout the reviewed literature, the importance of a specific market analysis for each redevelopment project is strongly emphasized. Fitzgerald notes that a marketing strategy is a key aspect of redevelopment, but it “must be preceded by competent marketing analysis.”<sup>94</sup> Heckey suggests that, whatever the social problems in a redevelopment area may be, they cannot be addressed without careful examination of the related economic conditions and needs.<sup>95</sup> It is generally agreed that a market analysis is an important step towards any form of commercial redevelopment.

Applying these ideas to the redevelopment of a downtown, Gross advocates “the marketers’ approach to product development.”<sup>96</sup> He suggests that the mix of stores and other uses in a downtown must be tailored to the needs and preferences of the current market. Only increased research can give downtowns the information they need to market themselves.<sup>97</sup> Black and Anders both warn that the needs and benefits involved in any redevelopment project must be considered on a case by case basis. Anders cautions, “it should not be assumed that if a scheme is a mix of uses and is fully let that it regenerates the community.”<sup>98</sup>

How does downtown development relate to suburban shopping centers in the context of market analysis? Fitzgerald argues that small cities and inner-ring suburbs face many of the same problems as larger cities, and that similar strategies may be used to address their needs.<sup>99</sup> These strategies begin with a careful market analysis that is specifically tailored to the jurisdiction in question. Cookie-cutter approaches will not result in effective development, nor will “a following of the latest fad.”<sup>100</sup>

Considering the issue of downtown development, Black offers a detailed guide for preparing a market analysis. According to Black, assessing the market for redevelopment requires looking at factors such as potential customers, competitors, surrounding attractions, environment, access, and costs. “Four basic submarkets exist – households living near the downtown, households in the metropolitan area, downtown office workers and other daytime population, and transient visitors.”<sup>101</sup> Any analysis must identify the demand represented by each group. Black reports that there is significant debate about the ability of downtown retail to thrive without a high-density population nearby.<sup>102</sup> Conventional wisdom in retail states that, due to reduced purchasing power among inner-city residents, downtowns must depend on

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>95</sup> Heckey, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Gross, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Black, 4; Anders, 363.

<sup>99</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 6-7.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>101</sup> Black, 5.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 6.

shoppers who are not nearby residents.<sup>103</sup> This suggests that adding residential density in the downtown core may be a key strategy in bolstering the market for downtown retail.

Michael Buckley also offers a guide, this one a nine-step process in conducting a market analysis for greyfield redevelopment. According to Buckley, the property and its market must first be carefully assessed. Once this is complete, the developer should construct a series of “creative reuse scenarios” that explore many options without judgment. Analysis must then be performed to evaluate each alternative, after which the preferred option may be selected. However, even after selection, Buckley urges developers to consider how adaptable their chosen plan will be in 10 to 15 years, when the property is once again ripe for redevelopment.<sup>104</sup>

Lassar concurs that a tailored market analysis is essential for commercial development. He urges planners to be competent in economic issues in order to facilitate their interaction with developers.<sup>105</sup> However, this does not mean that planners must be slaves to a strict market analysis approach. There is some room for creativity. Planners, he argues, “can also point out to developers that retail tenants are often willing to try something new in order to remain competitive.”<sup>106</sup> Performed correctly, these negotiations may create the common ground where public interest in open space and socially-desirable design meets private interest in successful retail and ample profits.

Whether urban or suburban, in a downtown or shopping center, the impact of a proposed redevelopment plan on the specific market in question must be carefully studied. It is generally agreed that this should take place before the adoption of any redevelopment plans. In the case of Vallco Fashion Park, this would mean examining the demographics and shopping preferences of the area, the extent of retail competition, and the possibilities offered by the site. Using Black’s theory, the introduction of dense housing near the site may provide the necessary market for a lively shopping, entertainment, or cultural use.

### *Necessity of public involvement*

Facing decline and even closure, it is clear that many regional malls will be forced to significantly renovate or redevelop in the coming years. As noted above, mixed-use development and attempts at place-making are dominating the field of redevelopment efforts. But what kind of “places” will these malls become? Who has the power to decide this issue? City governments may envision one type of place, while developers have something vastly different in mind. Lassar neatly sums up the debate when he observes that city planners view mall redevelopment as a chance to introduce mixed uses and pedestrian orientation. Developers, on the other hand, view redevelopment as the introduction of “marble floors, sky-lit atriums, and snazzy foot courts.”<sup>107</sup> These clashing visions are emblematic of one of the key themes of the relevant literature on shopping mall redevelopment: the difficulty in reconciling the objectives of the many stakeholders in the redevelopment process.

In some cases, disagreements arise over issues of community values and goals. In the wake of the Loma Prieta earthquake in Santa Cruz, complete redevelopment of the downtown was required. However, the Urban Land Institute observed that residents had vastly different

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>104</sup> Evans.  
<sup>105</sup> Lassar, 19.  
<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 19.  
<sup>107</sup> Lassar, 14.

opinions of the ideal redeveloped community.<sup>108</sup> In general, the identification of community goals can be a difficult and protracted process. More often, however, disagreements in the redevelopment process are public-private in nature and focus largely on financial issues.

Contributing to public-private tensions is the fact that the fiscal needs of developers and lenders are not always met by the projects desired in the public sector. While redeveloping Oakridge Center in Vancouver, disputes arose over the project's housing requirements and retail focus. The developer objected to the inclusion of community-serving retail, citing a clash of different project visions.<sup>109</sup> Referring to downtown redevelopment, Black notes that it can be difficult to attract developers to projects because land, construction, and operating costs are typically higher downtown than in the suburbs.<sup>110</sup> Some of the principal causes of these differentials are stricter codes in urban areas and "higher costs of vertical construction."<sup>111</sup> These cost differences can make it more difficult to plan a project that is financially feasible for investors. Therefore, developers may be reluctant to embark on a downtown project, even as city planners are eager to see such a project get underway. Even David Smiley, who argues strongly for a reinvention of the mall into public space less devoted to commerce, nevertheless recognizes that a shopping mall is "an economic entity as much as a physical one."<sup>112</sup> Without the promise of profits, developers and lenders will not bring their skills and resources to the table.

Several solutions are proposed to deal with this difficult reconciliation of objectives. First, public agencies are urged to take the lead in organizing redevelopment efforts, and to work closely with developers. Black suggests that the public sector may need to play many roles to make downtown redevelopment feasible. These roles range from catalyst to planner to political supporter to financial backer. One of the key public roles he proposes is partnering with the development community in a process known as "codevelopment," which can help facilitate projects that are desired by the community but remain economically infeasible.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to codevelopment efforts, the public sector may use other means of assistance and persuasion to bring developers and bankers on board. Lockwood notes that public agencies control zoning and design guidelines, many of which create barriers to redevelopment. At the simplest level, the public sector can assist in the development process by removing or reducing regulatory barriers.<sup>114</sup> Financial incentives, however, will undoubtedly prove the most seductive. Mattson argues that the dismal condition of regional malls creates an incentive for developers to accept financial assistance wherever they can get it, with whatever strings may be attached.<sup>115</sup> Lassar notes that cities who can give financial incentives "can also demand public benefits," thereby securing amenities the developer would be unlikely to volunteer.<sup>116</sup> For example, where planners seek to introduce public space into a retail complex, financial incentives are essential. Developer Mark Falcone agrees that civic uses require public

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<sup>108</sup> Urban Land Institute, 6.

<sup>109</sup> Lassar, 15.

<sup>110</sup> Black, 13.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Smiley, 15-16.

<sup>113</sup> Black, 14-16.

<sup>114</sup> Lockwood, "Emerging Trends."

<sup>115</sup> Mattson, 37.

<sup>116</sup> Lassar, 19.

funding.<sup>117</sup> Overall, planners must seek to predict which features and incentives will make a project financially feasible for developers and lenders.<sup>118</sup> This may include design modifications to a project, financial commitment from the public agency, and partnerships with community and nonprofit organizations.<sup>119</sup>

Given the complex and costly process of redevelopment, Swope argues that “local government must be heavily involved.”<sup>120</sup> Falcone and others agree that public-private partnerships are one of the most important aspects of a successful commercial redevelopment project.<sup>121</sup> To facilitate these partnerships and ensure the ability to work together, public agencies must recognize that a social or community goal may not make sense to all developers, but a financial problem or incentive often will.<sup>122</sup> The developer’s interests, largely financial in nature, must be understood and exploited by public agencies to ensure an effective redevelopment process that serves the community.

### 2.3. Identify the specific areas where additional research is needed, thus justifying the need for the proposed research project.

As noted above, the sources examined for this report focus primarily on one of the following areas: commercial redevelopment, mixed-use development, and shopping mall development history and economics. While these topics are relevant in forming an understanding of greyfield redevelopment, they remain somewhat peripheral to the specific purpose of this report: the redevelopment of enclosed shopping malls as mixed-use centers. A number of sources, including Lassar’s “Shopping Centers Can Be Good Neighbors” and the articles in *Sprawl and Public Space*, do offer a treatment of mixed-use greyfield redevelopment. However, these sources are generally descriptive in nature, without evaluating or analyzing mixed-use redevelopment of greyfields in relation to other alternatives. Other sources, such as the study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Congress for the New Urbanism, are research-orientated but serve only to identify and describe the greyfields problem, not its potential solutions. In other words, very little of the material reviewed consists of actual research that evaluates redevelopment strategies. The two notable exceptions are Lockwood’s “Raising the Bar,” which evaluates the performance of mixed-use town centers relative to enclosed regional malls and other types, and Robertson’s “Downtown Revitalization,” which evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of a number of redevelopment strategies including mixed-use centers.

Aside from these two examples, the majority of available literature either deals with issues which are peripheral to the topic at hand, or treats greyfield redevelopment in a purely descriptive fashion. The scarcity of research studies pertaining directly to the redevelopment of enclosed shopping malls as mixed-use centers is a serious gap in the body of redevelopment

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<sup>117</sup> Mark Falcone et al., “Roundtable: Obstacles to Development,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, ed. David J. Smiley (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts; New York, N.Y.: Distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 87.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>120</sup> Swope, 20.

<sup>121</sup> Falcone, 89.

<sup>122</sup> Mattson., 45.

research. This creates a challenge in gathering and interpreting information to assist in the redevelopment of Vallco. It also suggests a need for further research in this area.

Another aspect of this topic which is not adequately explored in the available literature is the unique retail situation of Cupertino and other cities of a suburban nature. Many cities in the Bay Area function as suburbs of San Jose and San Francisco, having distinctly suburban character and lacking true downtowns of their own. Their housing, job, and retail markets are closely integrated with and even indistinguishable from others in the same metropolitan area. However, these cities can also be very large – sometimes having over 100,000 residents – and are incorporated as separate jurisdictions. They occupy a complex and uncertain space in terms of identity, being neither independent cities with downtowns nor true suburbs of another city. In the existing research, a consideration of these types of cities is a largely absent.

The majority of the sources examined drew a strong distinction between city and suburb. For example, Black, Gross, and Robertson deal specifically with revitalization efforts in downtowns, ignoring the suburban context almost entirely. Most of the remaining literature deals with both urban and suburban contexts, but addresses them separately and seems to consider them in their pure forms. Filion's work is a notable exception. He offers a treatment of small metropolitan regions that have healthy downtowns. However, Filion's work focuses on metropolitan regions with populations of 100,000 to 500,000, not to small cities whose individual populations are less than 100,000.<sup>123</sup> This suggests that his work may not be relevant to Cupertino, a city with a population of 50,000 in the South Bay region of more than 1 million.

So where does a city like Cupertino, which is both city and suburb, fit in? Only Joan Fitzgerald addresses this issue. In *Economic Revitalization: Cases and Strategies for City and Suburb*, Fitzgerald argues that “older suburbs often find themselves sharing the problems of the inner city.”<sup>124</sup> She notes that older or “inner-ring” suburban areas “are communities with their own distinctive characteristics,” although they may have uncertain identities with relation to the larger cities for which they were once bedroom suburbs.<sup>125</sup>

Fitzgerald's identification of inner-ring suburban areas as a distinct category is the notable exception in a body of literature characterized by strong urban-suburban divisions. The prevalence of these cities of dual identity, particularly in the Bay Area, suggests a potentially necessary new field of research. It may be that retail and other markets in these areas are strikingly different from those in both urban and more traditionally suburban areas. For the time being, Fitzgerald's view of inner-ring suburbs must necessarily dominate the discussion. As noted above, she argues that these suburbs are most similar to inner cities in their conditions and problems. Therefore, in examining redevelopment strategies for the City of Cupertino, we may wish to consider more carefully literature pertaining to urban downtowns rather than to traditional suburban areas.

An additional gap in existing research is the age of many of the sources examined in this literature review. Although more than half of the reviewed literature was written in 2000 or later, a significant fraction was written in the 1990s. These sources may be as many as fifteen years old. In a field as rapidly changing as retail, where new trends and formats are constantly being introduced, literature from the 1990s is somewhat outdated. In addition, several of the sources considered in this report were published in the 1980s or earlier, calling into question their relevance today. These sources are unlikely to be of significant use because of their

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<sup>123</sup> Filion et al., 328-330.

<sup>124</sup> Fitzgerald and Leigh, 4.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 5.

advanced age, and must be considered with appropriate suspicion. The age of the relevant literature in this field suggests a need for more current studies of commercial redevelopment in general and shopping malls in particular.

Overall, the body of available literature in this field is found to be somewhat lacking. More evaluative research is needed on the redevelopment of enclosed shopping centers into mixed-use environments. The treatment of suburban cities such as Cupertino that function both as urban and suburban environments is also an area of future research that should be explored. Finally, research in this field must be updated with more current literature, as a significant portion of the relevant work is more than five years old.

#### 2.4. Develop a hypothesis.

A review of the relevant literature suggests that the most common trends in shopping mall redevelopment today are mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented centers and place-making strategies. In both urban downtowns and older suburbs, this may take the form of a “Main Street” approach – a shopping street closely linked with the town center.<sup>126</sup> In other suburban areas, the mix of uses may tend toward ‘lifestyle’ elements that make up leisure-oriented retail entertainment centers.<sup>127</sup> These centers often seek to create the illusion of a vital town center but lack close connections with the actual fabric of the city.<sup>128</sup> Other key themes in commercial redevelopment today include the need for strong public involvement and the necessity of a carefully tailored market analysis before embarking upon any redevelopment effort.

Applying these themes to the case of Vallco Fashion Park requires a recognition of the area’s dual urban-suburban character. Vallco Fashion Park is an enclosed regional shopping mall located in an auto-oriented environment and directly served by major thoroughfares including Wolfe Road, Stevens Creek Boulevard, and Interstate 280. Yet despite these suburban characteristics, Vallco is also part of Cupertino’s downtown, and is surrounded by relatively intense office and residential uses. The City of Cupertino envisions an urban future for the Vallco area, stating that it is intended to be part of a lively 24-hour city core that includes mixed-use environments.<sup>129</sup> A successful redevelopment strategy for Vallco must recognize the complex character of this area as well as the city’s visions and goals for the parcel.

To successfully redevelop Vallco, a mixed-use development should be pursued along with reintegration of the site back into the fabric of downtown. This integration should include pedestrian enhancements, reconnection of the traditional grid pattern of streets currently interrupted by the shopping center, and the conversion of existing surface parking lots to multi-story garages occupying a smaller footprint. The available land may be used for retail, housing, and public space. While the subject of parking conversion is a topic of some debate within the world of shopping center planning, retail strategist J’Amy Owens argues that a sea of surface parking lots is unnecessary for commercial success. She observes, “shoppers don’t need to see an entire field of cars to know that they’re at a shopping center. Instead, they need to be assured that parking is available.”<sup>130</sup> This can be accomplished through effective design and signage.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>127</sup> Michael D. Beyard et al., *Developing Urban Entertainment Centers* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1998), 11.

<sup>128</sup> Robbins, 5.

<sup>129</sup> City of Cupertino, *The City of Cupertino General Plan 1993*, pp. 1-1 and 2-11.

<sup>130</sup> Lassar, 19.

Continuing to apply the themes found in the literature to Vallco, it is clear that an analysis of the market in the area must be performed to help to reveal the appropriate mix of uses. The information provided in the literature suggests that competition from nearby regional centers should be considered and the new design should be selected to “complement rather than compete with” existing shopping opportunities.<sup>131</sup> The proximity of newer enclosed regional malls such as Valley Fair, as well as upscale lifestyle centers such as Santana Row, suggests that Vallco may perform best with a mix of neighborhood-serving retail and a few lifestyle elements that target the middle-income rather than upscale market. Housing should be introduced as part of the mixed use scheme in order to intensify density and provide an enhanced customer base in the downtown. Public-private partnerships should also be vigorously pursued, and the city should be prepared to bring any financial assistance it can to the table to ensure the provision of public space and other important amenities.

However, it should be recognized that Vallco is located adjacent to a freeway and other major commuting streets. Closure of these streets to automobile traffic and closure of freeway on- and off-ramps are unrealistic and solutions for reuse of the parcel. Furthermore, these actions would fail to take advantage of the center’s strong location along major transportation routes. Instead, a successful Vallco plan must preserve the existing major automobile thoroughfares while integrating a pedestrian focus into the traffic patterns of the site itself.

## 2.5. Support the methods used in the proposed research.

The methods proposed for the Vallco Fashion Park study are on-site research in the project area; an examination of the surrounding neighborhoods to provide context; a brief inventory of nearby retail competition; a review of relevant city codes and documents within Cupertino; a series of interviews to determine the needs and goals of city officials and residents; a literature review; and a series of relevant case studies. These methods are supported by the existing literature.

As noted above, very few of the sources examined are studies using a research methodology. The methods used by the few research studies in the body of literature are examined below. Lockwood’s “Raising the Bar” is perhaps the most relevant research available, comparing the performance of town centers to more traditional retail products. Lockwood’s chooses eight case study cities and retrieves data regarding their retail sales, rent and lease prices, occupancy rates, land values, and other economic statistics both before and after redevelopment. He compares these figures to determine the economic benefits the properties gained through redevelopment. He also obtains the same economic statistics for adjacent areas and nearby traditional shopping malls and uses these for comparison purposes. Lockwood’s methods are effective for comparing the performance of town centers to other retail types. This specific purpose may not be useful for the proposed Vallco study. However, Lockwood’s method could be used to compare the performance of case studies examined for the Vallco project, both before and after redevelopment. Robertson does not describe his research methodology in detail, but a review of “Downtown Retail Revitalization” suggests that he uses case studies and literature review to identify examples of successful and unsuccessful downtown revitalization projects. Robertson does not elaborate on the measures he uses for success, making it difficult to evaluate or duplicate his method. However, his work does support the use

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<sup>131</sup> Urban Land Institute, 10.

of case studies to illustrate and evaluate various redevelopment approaches. A similar strategy will be used in the Vallco project.

Other research studies performed by Fishman, Burns and Warren, and the Congress for the New Urbanism use methods that are less relevant to the Vallco project. To identify the top ten influences on the American city, Fishman used “urban specialists” to generate a long list of potential influences.<sup>132</sup> He then identified a large group of experts consisting of planners, planning faculty, and architects, and mailed them a study asking them to rank these influences. Participants were also allowed to add to the list if necessary. Fishman analyzed the results by assigning points for various rankings and determining the top ten choices overall.

David J. Burns and Homer B. Warren conducted a study to determine why consumers choose to shop at regional malls that are not closest to their homes. Burns and Warren hypothesize that shoppers make irrational shopping decisions based on a need to show their own uniqueness from others.<sup>133</sup> The research was conducted by surveying a number of mall customers to find out about their shopping preferences while measuring their psychological need for personal uniqueness. Burns and Warren conclude that people with higher desires for uniqueness are more likely to shop at malls distant from their homes.<sup>134</sup> However, an apparent flaw in the research method is the absence of any consideration of other spatial considerations beyond home location. Burns and Warren seem to suggest that proximity to one’s home is the only rational spatial factor related to shopping center choice, when in fact it seems likely that proximity to work locations, doctors’ offices, or other similar locations may be a rational consideration for shoppers.

In their study on the greyfield problem (performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers), the Congress for the New Urbanism describes their methods in detail. The purpose of the study is to estimate the number of greyfields in the U.S., and therefore much of the discussion of methods centers on the appropriate way to measure greyfield status. After analyzing several alternatives to determine their level of statistical correlation with malls considered to be greyfields, it is determined that retail sales per square foot are the most appropriate measure of greyfield status. Using this definition, the Congress for the New Urbanism makes a count of the number of regional malls that are likely to be greyfields. While the methods used in the study appear to be sound, they are not likely to be relevant for the Vallco project, as no count of greyfields or other property types is being prepared.

In contrast to the studies described above, the vast majority of sources considered in this literature review are practice guides and descriptive articles using a journalistic approach. These sources support the use of literature review and interviews to gather information about a topic or project. For example, it is evident that literature reviews were performed by Anders, Black, Childs, Fitzgerald, Gross, Heckey, Jackson, Lassar, and Smiley, among others. Interviews with experts were the key method used by Homsy and Lassar to gather information for their overviews of mall redevelopment. Many sources also employ brief case studies as examples of the types of development under consideration. Case studies were presented by Black, Fitzgerald, Lassar, Rosenstock, Smiley, and others.

On-site research, review of relevant city codes, retail competition inventories, and interviews are supported by Heckey’s analysis of downtown Willow Glen. This Urban and

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<sup>132</sup> Fishman, 199.

<sup>133</sup> David J. Burns and Homer B. Warren, “Need for Uniqueness: Shopping Mall Preference and Choice Activity,” *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management* 23, no. 12 (December 1995): 6.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Regional Planning Thesis is a design project that is quite similar in nature to the proposed research. Therefore, Heckey's methods may be most relevant to the Vallco example. His use of on-site research, city code review, interviews, and retail competition analysis suggests that these are appropriate methods for the proposed study.

One additional research method suggested by a review of the literature is a much more detailed economic and market analysis for the project area. Heckey provides a very detailed economic profile of his study area and performs an analysis of business, employment, and sales trends. And numerous experts, including Fitzgerald, Gross, Black, Anders, Lassar, and Buckley agree that a careful market analysis is essential before redevelopment plans take shape. Given this information, it may be appropriate to conduct a more detailed economic analysis of the Vallco project and examine the market conditions in the area more closely. Incorporating this type of analysis is likely to strengthen the research significantly.

## 2.6. Identify literature that will support or contradict the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the proposed research.

The hypothesis developed above is well-supported by the relevant literature. The introduction of mixed-use developments as a retail and commercial redevelopment strategy is supported by Heckey, Lassar, Rosenstock, Anders, Smiley, and Fitzgerald. Transportation strategies such as pedestrian orientation, reconnection of the street grid, and reduction of parking are directly supported by Lassar and Smiley. And the overall goal of revitalizing the area through the creation of an exciting community space, or place-making, is supported by Smiley, Gross, Anders, and the Urban Land Institute as a key aspect of successful redevelopment.

However, some of the conclusions of the relevant literature may contradict the findings and recommendations of this study. For example, Robbins warns against the dangers of place-making, arguing that it can lead to the creation of false public spaces that masquerade as an integrated part of the community but are merely illusions intended to encourage shopping.<sup>135</sup> And, indeed, a shallow approach to place-making strategies poses the danger of creating this type of false space which, while potentially financially successful, may not provide the city with the full social and cultural benefits of redevelopment. Another potential contradiction is raised by Lassar, who suggests that the mixed-use communities envisioned by planners may not be financially feasible for developers. Lassar notes that public and private visions of redevelopment may collide, and serious disagreements over the terms and costs of may jeopardize the project.<sup>136</sup> A design plan that fails to consider market realities and the needs of private sector developers is unlikely to be successful, but it may be possible to take these needs into account while still seeking the community benefits provided by mixed-use. Finally, the literature's treatment of location relative to freeways and transportation infrastructure may contradict the finding that a mixed-use town center or other neighborhood-serving use is the best choice for Vallco. Sobel notes that many older decaying malls are located too far from freeways to serve a regional need, and hence are best redeveloped as mixed-use neighborhoods.<sup>137</sup> Swope agrees that locations with good freeway proximity are suitable for regional retail uses, while locations further from freeways may need to be redeveloped with another use.<sup>138</sup> Vallco Fashion Park has excellent

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<sup>135</sup> Robbins, 5-6.

<sup>136</sup> Lassar, 14-15.

<sup>137</sup> Sobel et al., 30.

<sup>138</sup> Swope, 20.

transportation access, being located at the junction of Interstate 280 with the high-traffic Wolfe Road and Stevens Creek Boulevard. The information provided by Sobel and Swope suggests that this orientation may make Vallco more suited to regional retail than to a town center or other neighborhood-serving use. However, Lockwood believes that malls with freeway proximity can easily support mixed-use centers, as these high-traffic areas may be more suited for higher density development without community opposition.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, Vallco's freeway orientation may not actually contradict the finding that it is well-suited to become a mixed-use center.

### 3. Conclusion

Vallco Fashion Park is an enclosed regional shopping mall in a state of serious physical and economic decline. The area must be redeveloped in order to bring it into compliance with Cupertino's General Plan, which envisions Vallco as part of a lively, mixed-use, 24-hour city core. A key step in this redevelopment effort is the creation of a menu of potential redevelopment strategies. Examination of currently available research on retail redevelopment, in particular the redevelopment of enclosed regional shopping malls into mixed-use centers, is essential to this task.

The sources considered in this literature review include books, peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and professional publications in the fields of planning, real estate, and economics. Unfortunately, the majority of these sources focused on commercial redevelopment, mixed-use development, or the history and economics of shopping malls alone. The intersection of these research areas – the redevelopment of enclosed regional malls into mixed-use centers – was explored in only a few of these documents. Furthermore, few of the sources reviewed consist of research. More often, sources are descriptive and journalistic articles without a significant research methodology. In addition, much of the available research is more than five years old. These issues suggest that further and more current research needed in the area of enclosed shopping mall conversion.

Despite the limitations of the available literature, several key themes were identified which are relevant to the proposed research. These include the prevalence of place-making as a commercial redevelopment strategy; the popularity of mixed-use environments in commercial redevelopment; the need for strong public involvement in the process; and the essential nature of a carefully tailored market analysis before undertaking any redevelopment effort.

Based on the themes and conclusions of the literature, a hypothesis was developed with relation to the Vallco Fashion Park site. Specifically, the key land use and urban design strategies that can be expected to effectively revitalize the area include the use of pedestrian-oriented mixed-use environments, the reconnection of the grid pattern of streets through the parcel, the introduction of higher density housing, and a shift in retail focus toward neighborhood-serving retail with some lifestyle elements. These strategies are supported by the sources considered in this review.

The available literature also supported the proposed methods to be used in this research, including site visits, interviews, code review, retail competition analysis, literature review, and case studies. The literature review also suggests an additional and potentially important method; namely, a more detailed economic and retail market analysis.

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<sup>139</sup> Lockwood, "Emerging Trend."

The annotated bibliography that follows describes the literature considered in this review and identifies the objectives to which each piece contributes.

### 3.1. Annotated Bibliography

<u>Citation</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Objectives Met</u>
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