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The Mall Comes To Town: Planning for Its Development

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This article analyzes the impacts of malls on the character and economic base of a community. Based on both applied planning and academic research, it is clear that malls stimulate major changes in the community fabric. It is also apparent that community leaders who have a clear perception that their cities and towns have the potential to attract malls, and prepare for them, will be able to gain far more from their development than those that simply wait and see. The theme of this article, in short, is that a community either plans for a mall or it is planned upon.

Over the past ten years many long established communities have had to struggle with the large scale proliferation of new malls. With names like The Center, Maple Tree Place, Mall of Maine and Fox Run, each is designed to create an image that they are as natural as the landscape and simply an evolutionary expansion of the development pattern. Yet, many Americans are ambivalent towards malls. There's not one Gucci shod, L.L. Bean shirted, Brooks Brothers coated shopper who will ever admit to going "to the mall". But they do. Seniors go "mall walking", young parents search for Santa and the Easter Bunny and teenagers go there to be seen. Even parents seeking to control where their teenagers hang out, breath a sigh of relief: It's hanging out but at least its clean, safe and controlled. For these reasons, a mall is better than downtown.

In short, there is popular recognition that the mall, the so called "market in the meadow", is foreign to small distinct settlements, expanding outward from our traditional, well established centers. There is also a realization that the perceived bargains, the cleanliness, the safety, the ease of parking and even the glitz have appeal. This ambivalence leads to constant consternation among planners and policy makers who wake up one day to find a mall proposal at their doorstep. When this happens, chaos inevitably reigns and quiet peaceful communities frequently become divided in not so civilized discourse. Yet, there are actions that can be taken to handle a mall proposal so that the best interest of the community can be met. This article explains some of these issues.

The article focuses upon the authors' experiences in various communities that were forced to come to grips with the fact that they were attractive to mall developers. There is a place for malls in the landscape when they are carefully planned, carefully designed and above all carefully located. If there are problems with any of these factors the mall proposal should be fought with every legal tool available to the municipality.

The article begins with an analysis of the mall developer and the nature of his/her entry into town. From there, there is a description of the likely impacts that result from the mall. A third section then focuses upon what can be done to plan for/against a mall coming to a community. Finally, in the fourth section, there is a commentary on the future of mall development and what it is likely to mean to settled communities.

The Mall Developer

There are several names of retail developers who will strike fear in the most sophisticated community. What would you do if, at your regular Tuesday night Planning Board meeting, a man introduced himself as follows: “My name is Attorney Caleb Farnsworth and I represent the DeBartolo, Campeau, Allied, Federated, Pyramid, American Development Corporation and we have options on 300 acres on the north side and hope to build a mega mall on the site”. Such a scene currently takes place in hundreds of communities across the United States and is likely to occur in hundreds more. It is at this point that the public begins to ask who are the people, what do they do and how do they do it? Here are the common characteristics.

They have “deep pockets”. The overwhelming number of mall developers have been tremendously successful. With an ability to finance projects and the necessary capital for the long term, they have the means to ride out the down side of economic cycles. Even when regional or sub-regional malls fail, there are factors at work other than an inability to provide the financial means to keep them healthy. In short, few regional malls have failed due to financial problems.

They are professionals and well prepared. Often, the representatives of mall developers are articulate spokespersons who are always well prepared. In fact, it is not uncommon for the representative of the mall developers to know more about the host community then most planning board members. For example, one developer moved from one state to a community in another where he was proposing a moderate commercial venture. Once re-located, he joined the Rotary and Lions Clubs and became a regular at the “Red Barn Restaurant” where he had coffee with the local “power elite” each morning. It was no wonder that his project sailed through the town meeting.

They are aggressive. The going rate for a typical regional mall of 1,000,000 square feet is $85,000,000. Deals of this magnitude are not for the timid! They will be politically active, attempt to influence political decisions and, at times, be accused of “political tampering”. When ten well dressed lawyers, planners, architects and engineers fill up the Planning Board room with briefs dealing with the proposed development it can be quite intimidating!

Questions arise regarding the legality of their actions: Is it legal for outside developers to contribute to local political contests for boards that will ultimately decide their fate? We know that this occurs and we know that it ultimately leaves a negative attitude in the minds of local citizens. In reality, such activities are not illegal. A fear remains that such activities will become so routine that they will become part of the price of entry for a mall development; i.e., that incumbents or new candidates will expect a contribution from a mall developer simply because he/she is a supporter. The issue of ethics remains a crucial component of mall development.

They know the law. It is most distressing when mall developers come to town, cite local law as backing for their proposal, and the community really doesn’t want it. Is there a way to fight this? Probably not, for a developer will use your laws to do his bidding. It does not matter if the development can be built by right, under special permit (exception), under site plan approval or under an overlay district. It does little good for a community to say, after the fact, that the mall is not what it wanted on the site in question. Such was a recent case in Auburn, Massachusetts, in which the zoning allowed a mixed-use development as an incentive to develop on an old drive-in theater site. The use by right was a strip mall. When the owner chose to develop the site as a strip mall, the town was quite perturbed.

In short, mall developers are affluent, prepared for a long lead time to gain approvals, have the cash reserves required for periods when financial conditions are difficult, are professional, aggressive and know the law. They will also hire the "best and the brightest" to represent them.

They plan well. They will work from basic "stock" plans that are tried and true. Basically, there will be a core building of 250,000-1,000,000 square feet surrounded by a sea of cars. They will be tailored to local site plan standards and adapted to intersect with local highway, sewer and water systems. Other than its name, there is generally nothing unique about the typical mall. Well known architects will be hired but under no circumstances will these products be radically designed or even trendy: they will be pleasant, "tried and true" structures.

They are prepared to contribute beyond direct costs to projects of concern to the community. It is now common practice for communities to exact a premium from mall developers as a price of entry into the community. Recently, the going rate of exactions is close to 10 percent of project cost. Money is often directly dedicated to schools, water, sewer and highway systems, recreation fields, housing, day care and the revitalization of downtown structures.

Though there may not be a correlation between the direct improvements required to make the mall work and the costs to the developers for civic improvements, it is understood that a deal will be cut. However, this negotiated development approach is now under intense scrutiny by several state legislatures as they consider the passage of enactments authorizing impact fees. These fees, if allowed, dictate the amount of costs the developer will have to cover as a price for coming to the community and will be designed for direct costs alone.

For communities, it means that they will only be able to recover direct expenses and not those associated with indirect costs (i.e., for a commercial mall, there will be some indirect expenses related to schools). It also means that the negotiated development options will be more difficult.

They are excellent marketers. Nothing is as stunning to local planning board members as the unveiling of the marketing plan. To realize that, for example, in a circle with a 15-mile radius, there is a market leakage of $500 million would surprise the most taciturn Yankee. To date, the work of major retail marketing experts has been virtually impeccable. And even when the market changes (i.e., there is unexpected competition), these firms have been able to re-orientate and re-target their focuses such that success can be achieved. This phenomena is now at work along the northern arc of Greater Boston's Route 128. In the 1980s, the Burlington Mall dramatically expanded and upgraded its shopping facilities. As a result, the North Shore Mall in Peabody, approximately ten miles distant, lost market share. This forced North Shore to program for re-targeting its market and upgrade its facilities.

They will meet with citizens groups and local action committees to resolve differences. This was not always the case. In fact, in the 1980s, it was far more common for mall developers to be brash and aggressive. However, there has been an increased realization that many of the concerns can be accommodated. As long as the group is not "anti-mall" simply based upon ideology, interaction can be expected to occur.

In summary, the mall developer is an outsider to the city or town with little initial understanding of the city or town beyond the land in question and what it can do for the corporation. He/she will assemble a highly talented team of professionals who, over time, will know as much about the host region as possible. They will be aggressive, political, and use every right of law that will help them to gain approval. They are prepared to pay for both direct and indirect costs provided that the latter are reasonable. They will work with citizens groups provided there is a degree of rationality at work. Finally, once the mall developer identifies an area of interest, he/she will not quit. Even if it takes years, once a market is identified every effort will be made to ensure that the development opportunity is not lost.

The Impacts

Inevitably there is a struggle between the supporters of the mall (tax revenues, jobs) and opponents of the mall (concerns over traffic, future development, the environment). The fact is that malls typically have many common impact characteristics.

The mall will hurt downtown. Virtually all mall proposals have brought changes to downtowns. For example, local department stores inevitably close. In turn, with an inability to compete with the retail stores at the mall, other retail outlets will also suffer. As they close, the ability to draw customers into the downtown declines and there is a steady erosion in the retail base of the downtown. In cases where downtowns are strong, impacts will be particularly severe. In cases where previous malls have already adversely affected the traditional town center, the impacts are likely to be less severe. Nonetheless, the same cycle of one commercial center harming another is likely to repeat itself.

An overwhelming number of a typical mall's tenants are already in the marketing region. This means that there is a likely series of relocations from existing buildings in the downtown (or from an existing mall) to the new mall. Retail areas are hurt in two ways. First, it will inevitably leave many owners without tenants and with a reduced ability to meet mortgage payments. Secondly, it means that many reliable firms are announcing that they have found a better place to sell and that the customer should follow. (It is a tough statement to try and correct).

Family owned department stores will close. When malls are located in market areas served by small towns and in which is located a family owned department store, the devastation to that market is extensive. In fact, throughout the Northeast few of the stores have survived as, quite simply, they cannot beat the prices or provide the choice of goods found in comparable shops at the mall. Occasionally family owned stores will move to the mall but, even there, under new marketing conditions they will frequently decline and eventually fold.

A "herd" instinct prevails. Once a key merchant leaves downtown for the mall other merchants follow. Mall operators know this and will attempt to attract local merchants to their facility. In doing so, they win in three different ways: 1) they rent space; 2) they weaken the strength of an alternative market area and; 3) they are able to demonstrate that they are part of the community by attracting local merchants to the facility. The impact of this phenomena has recently reached new heights in Rutland, Vermont, where the Zamias Group, fully recognizing that its proposed mall on the fringes of downtown would devastate it, agreed to make up to $10 million in improvements in the central city.

There will be a shift in retail functions between downtown and the mall. The most obvious shift will be in retailing. Downtown will initially become dramatically weakened commercially but then recover slowly. The nature of the recovery can take many different forms. First, downtown may become prosperous due to the ability of the merchants to provide goods and services not found at the mall. Such was the case involving the college communities of Amherst and Northampton, Massachusetts. Ten years ago, the Pyramid companies built two malls nearby. Local officials expected that the two town centers would suffer. Indeed there was some change, particularly in Amherst, where necessity shops (grocery stores, drug stores, hardware stores) closed shop and move to strip centers adjacent to the mall. The merchants, however, were able to react, spot market niches and attract supporting retailers to the point that there are virtually no vacancies in the downtowns of either community. They have been able to change, capture a share of the mall trade and have kept their college community customer base.

A second example is the "near wipe out". Throughout the 1950s, downtown Leominster, Massachusetts, was the retail hub for a community of approximately 20,000 people with approximately 200,000 square feet of retail activity. In 1961, Kimco Incorporated developed the Searstown mall along two state highways and almost immediately the downtown ceased to be the retail center of the city. By 1980, retail activity had declined to approximately 100,000 square feet. This downtown since 1980 has recovered and now serves as a "village" retail district, the civic center of the city and is increasingly attracting office/service users. Nevertheless, the retail function has been drastically impacted. It should be noted that shortly after the announcement that Pyramid was building a new mall and that Searstown was expanding, the owners of the last remaining department store, Allen's, decided to relocate to a strip mall. The shedding is now complete.

A third functional shift occurs when the anchor moves to the mall. In Holyoke, Massachusetts, this occurred when the Steiger Company decided to close its flagship store and combine it with a branch at the mall. At the very time that Steigers was making its move, the city was creating a "Main Street USA" program that would capture the character, history and culture of this famous mill city. One of the keys to the success of this effort was to keep a strong retail function downtown. Thus, the loss of Steigers was devastating in four distinct ways: 1) a locally successful department store was moving to the mall, 2) the flagship store was being closed, 3) the largest retailer in downtown was leaving, and 4) the only company with sufficient funds to contribute to a public/private venture was no longer a participant in the revitalization process.

In addition to these examples, there will be increased store vacancies across the region as the mall collects existing national chains at its facility. If the region has chain stores such as JC Penney, Sears, Walden Books, Kinney Shoes and the like and they are located in small neighborhood shopping centers, they will tend to move to the mall. This will leave an extensive number of facilities vacant and threaten their fiscal viability.

There will be a conscious attempt by mall developers to become the focus of the community and surrounding areas. Nothing illustrates this better than Pyramid's name for its new mall in Leominster: "The Centre". The name suggests a regional centralization akin to Worcester's Centrum as a civic center. There are two reasons for this phenomenon: 1) an attempt to upstate the existing mall, Searstown, as the regional mall in the area and; 2) an attempt to capture a greater regional market by emphasizing its central location and favorable highway access.

Developers will attempt to become the central point of assembly in the community and to some extent the region and are frequently quite successful in doing so. Beyond the significance of the name, they may open the mall early for "mall walkers", provide meeting space for civic groups, create jogging trails, develop a mini city square in the middle of the mall, attract a post office branch and provide day care facilities. All of this, so they say, in climatically controlled, accessible and secure spaces. The real question remains, is this desirable from the community's perspective?

Strip development is almost inevitable. It appears that malls are almost always "pregnant" in that once established the lands adjacent to the mall become attractive for further highway related uses. This is particularly true when surrounding lands are in large tracts, have ample frontage and were zoned for agricultural/open space uses. The types of uses are common to all of us: McDonald's, Jiffy Lubes, Midas Mufflers, Sunoco Gas Stations and the like come to mind. Unfortunately once this strip character emerges it is virtually impossible to stop and the community has to contend with new traffic burdens. All one has to do is look at the Route One strips down the East Coast that first emerged in the 1930s. They constantly and garishly replace themselves.

The initial density of malls is not the last density. Mall owners have a propensity to propose their developments at a density far below the maximum density allowed in order to project all of the impacts based upon this figure. Over time, the owners will inevitably move toward the maximum densities allowed regardless of whether there are deed restrictions. At some future time, mall owners will approach the legal signers of the agreement and go to court to seek the abrogation of the agreement. At times this expansion may be an increase in height or depth while at other times it may be horizontal. It is therefore important to base all planning assessments on the maximum buildout.

Mall developers will be able to defend their proposals in terms of impacts on direct local competition. They will tend to ignore regional impacts. If there is an existing mall in the community and a retail function for the downtown, the mall developers will very carefully analyze the likely impacts of the new project. The analysis will occur in terms of market leakage (the amount of shopping dollars spent by residents outside the market area), market capture, market share and market growth. Unfortunately, they will not be able to explain impacts upon the businesses, beyond those close by, leaving the loss or gain to a "Mom and Pop" store five miles away unknown.

Mall owners are willing to pay for infrastructure costs. For example, concerning roads, the developer will pay to upgrade all intersections such that they function to an adequate level (i.e., "Level of Service C"). In most communities, the sad part of this story is that the number and speed of cars on a street has a direct impact upon neighborhood interaction: The greater the number of auto trips and the faster the speed, the street will be more apt to become a separator rather than an integrator of neighbors and neighborhoods. Unfortunately the developers may not want to explain how much traffic will be generated on the road as a result of the project. They are also willing to make all necessary improvements to the water and sewer systems. Including upgrading the supply, improving delivery, providing pump and lift stations and ensuring the highest quality results.

These are all positive inducements to communities suffering under the yoke of limited tax bases and extensive bonded indebtedness. Yet, there are some resulting side effects that relate to the expansion of sewer lines as malls are located some distance from built up areas. This means that the sewer system must be brought through undeveloped lands to connect to the mall site. When this occurs it will inevitably increase the marketability of these properties, raise the assessed values and lead the community to re-assess the "highest and best uses". All of this will occur not because the community or the owners wish it to happen but as a by-product of the mall project. What this usually means is that farm land will be sacrificed.

Agreements to pay for additional personnel, such as police and fire, and new facilities are common. After all, the more accessible and professional these organizations are, the lower the insurance rates and the more secure merchants and customers will feel. However, many mall owners are re-assessing the powers given to security forces and "rent a cops". These people tend to have minimal training and, given our litigious society, could leave the owners vulnerable to law suits if inappropriate actions are taken. Several mall owners have curtailed the powers of their security forces to the point they can do little more than detain a suspect or report a crime. As a result, this could be a significant burden on police forces that are working at maximum conditions and it could also lead to an increased burden on the tax payers.

Mall developments have minimal direct impacts upon schools. A proposed 350,000 square-foot mall in Williston, Vermont, is expected, if approved, to bring 26 new families to the region. The 1,000,000 square-foot Leominster mall development is expected to attract approximately 50 new families. These numbers are not significant in themselves. However, there is the impact upon schools that must be noted: Malls hire high school age students as part time workers. On one side this is quite healthy in that extra income is gained, job skills are developed and responsibility is learned. However, there is a drawback: These students tend not to become involved in extra curricular activities and, often, school work becomes second to working at the mall.

Mall workers earn very low wages. Those New Englanders looking for work in 1975 would have jumped at the opportunity to work at a mall due to the fact jobs were scarce. Since that time, New England has had a job creation rate and increased wages that have far surpassed that of the nation. A by-product of this has been a concomitant rise in housing prices that have placed even the most marginal of homes beyond the reach of the average wage earner. The average non-managerial jobs at the mall, unfortunately, pay quite poorly, meaning that a mall worker, on his/her salary alone, can barely afford a typical apartment, never mind a home. Thus, there is a clear need to examine what this means to local residents.

The wage structure is particularly important when the mall requires a zoning district change. For example, what is the significance of a change from industrial use to highway business use? The question must be first answered by looking at demand. Typically, industrial space is developed in increments over time. In the Northeast, for example, industrial park buildouts take about ten years. Thus, the community must weigh the time factor (the future) against the mall proposal in hand (the present). In other words, the community must decide whether or not industrial jobs are worth the wait.

The question must also be answered in terms of the wages paid to retail workers at the mall. Full time mall workers in the Northeast earn an average of $13,000 per year. This translates out to a monthly house rent/mortgage payment of approximately $450 per month. There are virtually no houses available at that amount in areas where malls typically locate and relatively few apartments. Therefore, the majority of employment opportunities clearly will not provide sufficient income for the worker to live in any degree of comfort.

Industrial jobs, on the other hand, pay an average of $18,000 per year. This translates out to a house/apartment payment of $500 per month which, while still low, is much closer to the average rates paid in New England. If one compares the two options and assumes one full time wage earner per month, then the mall wages appear troublesome. However, the mall wages do not appear to be so negative if one considers that the typical non-managerial jobs are being offered immediately, that there is no guarantee of future industrial jobs, that more than 60 percent of the work force has a second spouse working and that the majority of jobs are filled on a part time basis by second spouses, teenagers, and senior citizens.

There will be environmental impacts that result from mall development. The most significant environmental effect will center upon the air pollution that results from the thousands of additional cars that will travel to and from the mall. The mall developers will typically argue that they are not directly responsible for increased traffic and, while they are correct that the trips to market are not new, they do collect at one point. Clearly, highway related development will attract autos and autos pollute. The real question centers upon the degree of pollution that is acceptable to the community.

In addition to traffic movement, ground water protection and sanitary waste, there will inevitably to constant calls for more studies. State, regions and communities with strong conservation commissions, boards of health, performance standards, water shed regulations and environmental protection review can ultimately set conditions governing how development can proceed. These issues tend to be far more technical than political and, given standards, can be resolved. The political element, however, should not be underestimated: In two mall projects in Massachusetts, following the completion of environmental review, the ultimate fate of a mall rested upon obtaining state permission to issue a curb cut on a state highway. In each case, the technical issues were resolvable. Nonetheless, both were denied at the state cabinet level. No matter what the issue, mall developers will work to resolve all of the technical questions related to the environment. They are familiar with the environmental concerns of the citizens and will do their best to insure they are alleviated.

There is another critical question in regards to what extent natural resources will be used by the mall. If we assume that a community has an active master plan, is implementing it through a capital improvements program and other growth management tools and the mall is not an expected development then there may be severe problems. For example, if a town that has developed a sewer program based upon buildout and has exceeded capacity for the moment, then the mall developers can expect to tap into the system along with other development. If the development takes a considerable amount of the excess supply, new capital costs or the slowing of sewer expansion in uncovered parts of the community may be required. Similar impacts may occur with water, road improvements and public services. In effect, the mall could upset plans for balanced growth. Clearly, impact fees could help to resolve this problem but, even with such a tool, not all of the impacts will typically be met.

What Can Be Done?

Communities across the United States rarely plan appropriately for mall development. They may call an area a Highway Business, Planned Development or Mixed Use District but it is rare to plan for a "Mall District" or "Major Development District". Development is expected to be incremental and typically is to be adjacent and contiguous to existing commercial areas. In most cases, when a mall developer announces his/her intention to build a mall there is a degree of shock and disbelief. This is usually followed by such questions as "Why here?" and "Where is the market"?

Problems exist largely because such development is not anticipated. Thus, it is essential for communities to take a hard look at their locations, growth patterns and existing commercial base and consider if they are likely to be attractive to such development. This is the first and most fundamental step toward coping with the impacts that could follow. It is in the community's best interest to address these issues as a part of its comprehensive or growth management plan and, in cases where a plan already exists, to make amendments that address these issues. Beyond this, there are a series of actions that are critical if the planning process is to work as it should. These are explained next.

a) If there is a new interstate or major state highway development, it is likely that this will contribute toward opening new lands for mall development.
b) If there is expanding affluence in the region and no regional mall within an easy commute then there is a likelihood that a community could be a candidate. This is particularly accurate if a new highway system was recently completed.
c) If the region is underrepresented in terms of shoppers' goods then it may well be a candidate for a mall. One of the ironies of mall development is that municipalities have the ability to generate market studies to determine if there is market leakage and if so, how much.
d) If existing malls are becoming dated or are directing marketing toward shoppers that are not reflective of the emerging populace (i.e., they are marketing toward blue collar workers rather than the growing white collar, Yuppie population), then the community may be a candidate for a new mall.

In short, results of the first step should tell the community if indeed it is a likely candidate. It should be noted, however, that even with this information, there are no guarantees. The Lanesboro, Massachusetts, mall defies all of the above and yet has been quite successful. Nonetheless, the information can provide a substantial depiction of the likelihood of candidacy.

The second major step is to create the regulatory tools that will insure that any mall development occurs in a manner that meets community goals. These include the following:

a) The mall should not be allowed by right. It should be under special permit.
b) The special permit should include criteria related to environmental issues, traffic issues, fiscal issues and community character issues. It should also have criteria concerning impacts upon the downtown.
c) The mall should be governed by site plan review. If the community does not have comprehensive site plan regulations it should either adopt or amend site plan review to address the impacts and magnitude of a regional mall development. Provisions for buffer and open space restrictions, design, design and landscape architecture components and covenants should be included and enforced in perpetuity.
d) If allowed by law, the developer should be compelled to submit his proposal to the planning staff and planning board for pre-preliminary review prior to

the start of the "legal ticker". Communities should also enact development or architectural review boards to assess and review plans in the conceptual stage. Too often, particularly in small cities, the staff and boards are overwhelmed and feel pressured to meet deadlines.

e) The mall developer should be expected to pay for relevant technical and legal assistance required by the community.

The third step is to develop the review process. The coming of a mall is so disruptive to the community that special procedures are in order. These include the following:

a) The development of an advisory committee that can take testimony from the proponents and opponents in a non-adversarial manner. This committee should report its findings to the planning board and special permit granting authority.
b) There must be compulsory involvement of the regional planning agency. Its task would be to assess regional impacts and report them to the advisory committee. It should also take testimony from the planning boards of surrounding towns.
c) There must be neighborhood meetings involving citizens whose homes are proxemic to the mall. These should be organized by the planning staff.
d) There must be meetings with the chamber of commerce and the merchants most affected by the mall proposal.
e) There must be a formal process that meets state and local regulatory procedures. This should include the option of the aforementioned pre-preliminary plan review.
f) There should be a pre-construction conference with contractors and local inspectors and;
g) The mall developer should be required to hire a clerk of the works for the community.

Finally, as a fourth step, the community must be prepared to negotiate with the developers to insure that community needs are met. This must include off-site needs and items not normally covered under impact fee assessments. The key point, for better or worse, is that mall developments are so dramatic in terms of community impacts that the city must be ready to extract funds to insure that the quality of life of the community is maintained.

The community's preparation must weigh legal costs, local technical capacity and its willingness and commitment to negotiate in good faith. Too often, poorly developed proposals are a result of the ability of an inflamed minority of citizens to influence decision makers or due to the ability of the developer to "dazzle" the community into a quick decision.

And so …….

The lessons are quite simply that a community must anticipate that a mall could locate within its boundaries. If it takes this step, then the rest of the process can work smoothly. If it does not, then there will be significant turmoil.

A community must also open up the process to a far greater degree than under typical procedures, insure more accurate and detailed information and finally be ready to negotiate. If these actions occur, many mall developments can be approved in a manner that is actually beneficial to the community.

As a last note, under no conditions should the community feel pressured or believe that this mall is the only chance at gaining a large scale asset to the community. It should be patient and, if the mall is not in its best interest, it should be prepared to reject the proposal. In fact, even if there are doubts about the mall's merits, it should then be urged to find another site or another community.