PLANNING FOR RETAIL
PLAN A6109.001

Spring 2012
TUESDAY 11:00 - 1:00; AVERY 300

Prof. Stacey Sutton
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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00 - 5:00 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In cities and towns across the country, banal and unsavory retail corridors have been transformed into quaint and alluring shopping destinations. Some neighborhoods that previously were considered “under-retailed” are now experiencing commercial growth and diversification, while neighborhoods long-celebrated for distinctive shopping and dining options are being increasingly populated by national and regional chain stores and suburban-style retail establishments. The degree to which intentional retail planning and policy informs corridor composition and character varies across municipalities and neighborhoods. What is common among corridors is that they are shaped and reshaped through local and extra-local factors -- tastes, behavior, collective action, social-history, economic condition, physical form, civic infrastructure, public and private decisions and spatial representations -- making them infinitely dynamic, although seemingly static.

It's generally agreed that retail access, density, diversity and quality inform popular perceptions about places as sites for consumption, entertainment, work and investment. Is there an appropriate level of retail access, density, diversity and quality? Given the inherent importance of retail amenities and services in our day-to-day lives, how should we be planning commercial corridors? What types of policies are needed to support commercial development and sustainability? Although these questions fundamentally pertain to good community planning, a dearth of practical and scholarly attention focuses on planning retail corridors.

The purpose of this “applied” graduate seminar is to examine the physical, social and economic infrastructure of downtown shopping districts and neighborhood Main Street corridors, to understand the changing form and function of commercial landscapes, and to develop analytic tools and methodologies for “small-area” decision-making.

In this seminar you will: (1) learn popular theories of retail development and retail planning tools; (2) draw upon multiple data sources, including business and industry data\(^1\) (e.g., economic census, [NOTE]: during the semester you will have access to a segment of a proprietary database, National Establishment Time Series (NETS) data, which will allow you to analyze “neighborhood retail” dynamics along your focus corridor. The NETS data is proprietary; hence certain variables will be excluded from your subsets.\(^1\)
NETS, RefUSA, etc.), archival data, organization information and surveys as the basis for planning and decision-making; and (3) develop a corridor plan.

**COURSE MATERIAL:**
Courseworks - links or pdf files

*Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (2006)

*Street Value: Shopping, Planning and Politics at Fulton Mall* (2010) - available at Book Culture (112th Street) (may be available via CU e-library)


**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

*Assignment 1: Commercial Corridor Base Analysis* (DUE week 5: 2/14)
Use retail trend data to generate descriptive statistics for the commercial environment and firm performance. Answer question on worksheet. We will focus on corridors within the community BIDs below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Pitkin Avenue</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Sunset Park BID</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Montague Street BID</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Kingsbridge Road BID</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Flushing BID</td>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Forest Ave BID</td>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DUMBO BID</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Flatbush-Nostrand Junction BID</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Southern Blvd BID</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Sunnyside Shines</td>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Court Livingston-Schermerhorn</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Assignment 2: The politics of survival and the regulatory environment* (DUE week 9: 3/20)
Drawing on materials from weeks 7 & 8 (and other weeks), evaluate the strengths and limits of the various zoning and regulatory tools for your district. What tools might you promote for altering or preserving the retail typology, and why?

*Assignment 3 & 4: Commercial Corridor Plan - presentation & paper* (week 14: 4/24)
Building on assignment #1, you should gather additional information about your corridor by speaking to BID director/staff, merchants, residents, and collecting secondary data that will make a compelling proposal for the corridor -- OR-- Use the retail data as part of a multivariate study. Research questions and methodologies must be approved by me well in advance.

[Papers are due Tuesday May 1st]
**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**PART I: THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR AS SITE FOR PLANNING**

**Week 1  1/17**  
**COMMERCE, CONSUMPTION AND CORRIDORS**  
What constitutes a “good” commercial corridor? Good for whom? What is the relationship between the corridor and the neighborhood? What types of places are we trying to create, maintain, or revive? Is there an explicit role for planners?

*Reading:*  
- Christina M.L. Kelton, Ph.D. and Robert P. Rebelein, Ph.D. “Can we have a high-end retail department store?” *Economic Development Journal / Winter 2007 / Volume 6 / Number 1 22*

**Week 2  1/24**  
**HISTORICAL CONTEXT: DOWNTOWNS & MARKETPLACES**  
This story of urban development and decline is told from the perspective of the American downtown. It shows how cultural values and intertwine with economic investment. It also shows how planners, policymakers and other civic actors shape downtown form and function.

*Reading:*  

**Week 3  1/31**  
**THE RETAIL TRADE: MALLS AND MICRO-HOODS**  
Theories of retail change, methods for analyzing the process and

*Readings:*  
- K. Chapple and J. Jacobus. 2009. “Retail trade as a route to neighborhood revitalization”  
- Center for an Urban Future. 2007. “Recapturing suburban shoppers”

*In Class:*  
We will begin discussing the various types of data used when conducting local area retail analyses. We will discuss the parcel-level longitudinal retail data you will be using for your projects, and select sites.
**Week 4 2/07**  
**GETTING TO KNOW THE CORRIDOR: GENERATING DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TELLING A STORY**
Commercial Corridors: A Strategic Investment Framework for Philadelphia  

**In class:** LAB SESSION

**Readings:**
- *Commercial Corridors: A Strategic Investment Framework for Philadelphia* (p 1-78)

**Week 5 2/14**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND RICH CASE STUDIES**

**Reading:**
- Elsie Achugbue. 2006. “Nontraditional Market Analyses: Dismantling Barriers to Retail Development in Underserved Neighborhoods” (Social Compact)

**Assignment #1 Due and discuss findings in class**

**PART II: POLICY & PRACTICE**

**Week 6 2/21**  
**STREET VALUE**
What happened to the “Fifth Avenue of Brooklyn”? What policies were used to support mall retail growth and sustainability? What should be done with the Fulton Mall area? Why are neighborhood identity and retail composition intertwined?

**Readings:**
- Rosten Woo, Meredith TenHoor. 2010. *Street Value: Shopping, Planning and Politics at Fulton Mall*

**Week 7 2/28**  
**CONVENTIONAL POLICY & PROGRAMS**
Main Street programs, business improvement districts (BIDs), and local (or community) development corporations (LDCs /CDCs) are widely utilized for corridor development and maintenance. How well do they work, and for whom? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

**Readings:**
- Stacey Sutton (2012) Are BIDs good for businesses?: The Impact of BIDs on Neighborhood Retailers in New York City
LESS CONVENTIONAL POLICIES & PROGRAMS
How are zoning and regulatory tools being used across the country to shape retail composition and preserve community character? What types of policies (or “interventions”) might work in NYC? Are chain stores the problem?

Readings:
• Patrick Hedlund. 2008. “Trying to find a new formula to tame the spread of chains”
• Center for an Urban Future - “chained up” http://nycfuture.org/content/articles/article_view.cfm?article_id=1297&article_type=6

SPRING BREAK

THE POLITICS OF BUSINESS SURVIVAL
Film: Twilight Becomes Night

• Scott Stringer “Saving the Mom & Pops”
• Urban Retail Inside, Outside And All Around - Arlington Economic Development, Research Paper

Assignment #2 Due

Conflicts between Large vs. Small Independent vs. Chain

Readings:
• S. Mitchell. “Major Flaws Uncovered in Study Claiming Wal-Mart Has Not Harmed Small Business”

RETAIL PLANNING IN LOW INCOME AND UPPER INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS

Readings:
• Site plan <forthcoming>

SITE VISIT

TBA
**Week 12**
4/11
(Thesis Jury Week)

**CORRIDOR PERFORMANCE**
How have retailers in your area performed historically? How are they performing currently? Relative to what area or type of businesses? How are retail sales and real estate traits correlated?

*Readings:*
- *Commercial Corridors* Chapters 4, 5 & 7

**Week 13**
4/17

**“ALTERNATIVE” APPROACHES**
When we integrate retail development theory and empirical evidence which approaches seem appropriate for NYC? For example, how might community supported enterprises, new zoning and ordinances; commercial rent regulation; retail niches and sectoral approaches; and others work in your study areas?

*Readings:*
- *Commercial Corridors* Chapters 14 & 15

**Week 14**
4/24

**COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR PRESENTATIONS**