

Pedestrian & Transit Malls Study



CENTER CITY COMMISSION

www.downtownmemphis.com

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Historical Overview of Malls in North America

- Pedestrian/Transit malls originally seen as downtown answers to suburban shopping malls in 1960s and '70s
- First North American mall built in Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1959
- Approximately 200 streets in North America were converted to pedestrian/transit malls
- Of those 200 malls, approximately 30 remain
- The others have been reconverted to streets with varying degrees of vehicular access



8th Avenue Mall, Calgary

Examples of Communities' Experience with Remaining Pedestrian Malls

City	State	Name	Population *	Yr. Built	Transit	Length	Reopened	Reference	Design	Comments
SUCCESSFUL PEDESTRIAN MALLS										
Aspen	CO		6,000				closed to traffic			decided not to expand pedestrian mall
Boulder	CO	Pearl St.	95,000	1977		4 blocks	closed to traffic	TLCNET/NYT/SCT/ DRA		very successful - relies on govt. offices & universities
Burlington	VT	Church St.	39,000	1981		4 blocks	closed to traffic	TLCNET/NYT/MS		
Cape May	NJ		4,000			4 blocks	closed to traffic	NYT/MS		successful because of tourists - MS
Charlottesville	VA		45,000	1976	no	8 blocks	closed to traffic	TLCNET/HR/MS/SCT		moderately successful, UVA within 1 mile
Denver	CO	16th St. Mall	554,000	1982	electric buses	13 blocks	closed to traffic	HR/MS/SCT/PI		highest rents at mall/116,000 office workers within 2 blocks & tourists
Ithaca	NY	Ithaca Commons	29,000	1975	no	3 blocks	closed to traffic	TLCNET/MS/HP/SCT/DM		HP case study, 95% occupancy
Madison	WI	State Street	208,000	1970's	buses	6 blocks	closed to traffic	AV/PI		
Minneapolis	MN	Nicollet Mall	383,000	1967	buses	14 blocks	closed to traffic	TLCNET/HR/A PA/ SCT/PI	2-way	160,000 workers within 2 blocks; 30,000 residents within walking distance of mall
STRUGGLING PEDESTRIAN MALLS										
Buffalo	NY	Main Street	293,000	1986	LRRT	10 blocks	proposed			allowing cars is being discussed
Evansville	IN		122,000	1971	trolley	7 blocks	proposed	SCT/DRA		Occupancy very low, few thriving businesses
Fresno	CA	Fulton Mall	428,000	1964	no	6 blocks	proposed	HR/APA/FB		HR case study, Plan proposed to reopen mall to 2-way traffic
Honolulu	HI	Fort St. Mall	372,000	1969	no	6 blocks	no	HA/HR/PI		HR case study, Hawaii Pacific University Campus nearby
Miami Beach	FL	Lincoln Road	362,000	1959	trams		no	HP/APA/PI	2-way	
Raleigh	NC	Fayetteville St. Mall	376,000	1976	no	4 blocks	proposed	NYT/APA/PV/PI		has had limited success, "not commercially viable" - PI
St. Louis	MO	North 14th St. Mall	348,000	1980's	no	2 blocks	proposed	St. Louis web/PI		"Project totally backfired - all retail stores are gone" - PI

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Examples of Remaining Malls



Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

State Street, Madison



Charlottesville, Virginia

Examples of Remaining Malls

- State Street, Madison, WI: open to buses, city vehicles, delivery vehicles, and bicycles; shopping and dining destination
- Downtown Mall, Charlottesville, VA: expanded in 2003; 120 shops and 30 restaurants; includes an amphitheater, bus terminal, movie theater, and ice skating rink
- Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis: 11 blocks; open to taxis and buses; upscale shopping and dining district; *(Currently studying the feasibility of converting to a complete street.)*
- San Diego, CA – C Street: C Street is a transit mall and pedestrian only mall; Retail uses do not cater to employee, residential, and visitor base
- Denver, CO.: 16th Street is a transit mall and pedestrian only mall; *Currently studying the feasibility of re-opening street.)*

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C Street in San Diego

- The retail on C Street in San Diego is inappropriately low-end and unattractive
- Auto-oriented streets in nearby Gaslamp Quarter are thriving with restaurants and retail



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Questionable Success: Denver's 16th Street Mall

On one hand

- Free transit line reportedly works for commuters, but not for retail
- Retail mix has deteriorated over the years, now fast food restaurants, souvenir shops, quick cash stores,
- Transients loiter
- Uncomfortable and threatening environment



On the other

- Mall extended in 2001 and 2002
- Free transit line with 60,000 riders per weekday
- Sections home to higher-end national chains: Chili's, Cheesecake Factory, Gap, Virgin Records, ESPN Zone,
- Group in Denver is leading public discussions on the mall's future, including the feasibility of reopening street.

Reported Economic Impacts of Pedestrian Malls

- **The majority of cities report negative economic impacts**
 - Vacancy rates along the mall increase
 - Retail businesses report reduced sales in the long run
 - Downtown's market base diminishes from the overall community to the downtown neighborhood itself
 - Retail focus shifts from comparison and destination goods/services to convenience goods/services

- **A few cities report positive economic impacts**
 - Attraction of higher-end retail when managed by limited entity
 - Development of indoor shopping centers along the mall
 - Increased foot traffic and window shopping

Conclusion: *In most cases pedestrian malls in North America have experienced negative economic results from the original conversion.*

Reported Economic Impacts of Pedestrian Malls

Buffalo, New York

- Mall constructed in 1987
- Some blocks reopened to vehicles in 2000

For remaining pedestrian blocks:

- Private property along the Main Street corridor decreased in assessed value by 48% from 1987 to 2001
- Retailer occupancy dropped by 47% from 1987 to 2001
- Overall vacancy rate increased by 28% from 1987 to 2001

Portland, Oregon

- Pedestrian improvements did not help retail
- BID reported that rent (function of sales) dropped 25% when established
- Phased re-opening to light rail and vehicular traffic

Reported Economic Impacts of Pedestrian Malls

- [Westminster Mall] actually **made things worse**...In the early 1980s, the mall was returned to auto use, though the sidewalks were made wider and the street trees and lighting were improved and coordinated. Westminster has not yet recovered from the **misguided experiment.**”

-- Peter Armato, The DOWncity Partnership, Inc., Providence, RI

- “In retrospect, all generally are considered to have been **disasters** in that it is felt that they **contributed to the decline** of the streets from a business/retailing perspective.”

– Harry Finnigan, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, on that city’s pedestrian malls

Pedestrian Mall Reversals

- Nearly 85% of the original 200 American pedestrian/transit malls have been reopened to traffic, examples follow

City	State	Name	Population	Yr. Built	Transit	Length	Reopened	Reference	Design	Comments
PEDESTRIAN MALLS THAT HAVE REOPENED (AT LEAST PARTIALLY) TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC										
Allentown	PA	Hamilton Mall	106,000	1973	no	4 blocks	yes	HR		HR case study
Ashtabula	OH			1979		4 blocks	1983			
Baltimore	MD	Oldtown Mall	657,000	1976	no	3 blocks	2000	HP/HR/NYT/ AV/SCT		HR case study/HP case study
Battle Creek	MI	Michigan Mall	53,000	1975	no	4 blocks	1992	EMU/HR		HR case study
Burbank	CA	Golden Mall	100,000				1989	AV/SCT		
Burlington	IO	Jefferson St.	27,000	1970's	no	2 blocks	1990	MS/SCT	opened 1 block	
Champaigne	IL		67,000				yes	SCT		
Chicago	IL	State St.	2,900,000	1979	buses	9 blocks	1996	ULI/APA/AV/ PI		thriving again - AV; has brought vitality "positively transformed the pedestrian experience"
Danville	IL		34,000					SCT		
Decatur	IL		82,000				yes	SCT		
Elgin	IL		94,000				yes	SCT		
Eugene	OR	City Center Mall	138,000	1971	no	7.5 blocks	1985	HP/HR/SCT/N YT/APA/SM/ DRA	opened 2 blocks and approved opening rest	Opening resulted in reinvestment & opening of new businesses. Vacancy rate went from 25 to 6 percent in 4 years. - HP, creating a pedestrian oriented street, but with auto access - MS.
Fargo	ND		91,000				yes	SCT		
Fayetteville	NC	Franklin Commons	?		no	3 blocks	yes	SCT/PV		
Freeport	NY		44,000	1977			1987	AV/SCT		
Galveston	TX	Post Office St.	57,000				yes	TLCNET/MS/S CT		
Greenville	NC		60,000				yes	HA/HR		
Greenville	SC			1977	no	5 blocks	yes	DRA	2-way traffic w/ angled parking	very successful after reopening for traffic
Helena	MT		26,000				yes	SCT		
Kalamazoo	MI	S. Burdick St.	77,000	1959		4 blocks	1998	city web/ NYT/SCT/APA/AV		
Lansing	MI	N. Washington St.	119,000	1971	no	3 blocks	2001	newspaper/HR		HR case study
Little Rock	AR	Main Street	183,000	1977	no	6 blocks	1991	MS/NYT	opened 5 of 6 blocks	businesses have returned but still high vacancy - MS
Louisville	KY	4th St.	256,000	1973	trolley	8 blocks	1989/2000	Louisville web/HR/SCT/ PI	opened 5 blocks	Vacancy rate decreased from 80% to 50%. Increase in property values.
Milwaukee	WI		597,000				yes	NYT		
Murcie	IN		67,000				yes	HR/SCT		
New London	CT	Captain's Walk	26,000	1973	no	6 blocks	yes	HR/MS/SCT		HR case study - very positive results from reopening - MS
Norfolk	VA	Granby St. Mall	234,000	1976	no	6 blocks	1988	MS/PI	2-way street	mixed success with traffic - APA/PI. Additional resaurants and office activities, but little new retail - PI

Examples of Re-opened Malls

- **Burdick Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan**
 - Suffered from lack of customers
 - Reconverted in 2000
- **State Street, Chicago**
 - Reconverted in 1996
- **Fourth Street, Louisville, Kentucky**
 - Opened 5 of 8 blocks in 2000
- **Main Street, Little Rock, Arkansas**
 - Opened 5 of 6 blocks in 1991
- **Main Street, Buffalo, New York**
 - Planning for full reopening ongoing
- **Chestnut Street, Philadelphia**
 - Reconverted in 2000
- **Fifth Street and Broadway, Portland, Oregon**
 - Reopened to rail transit and cars

TRANSIT

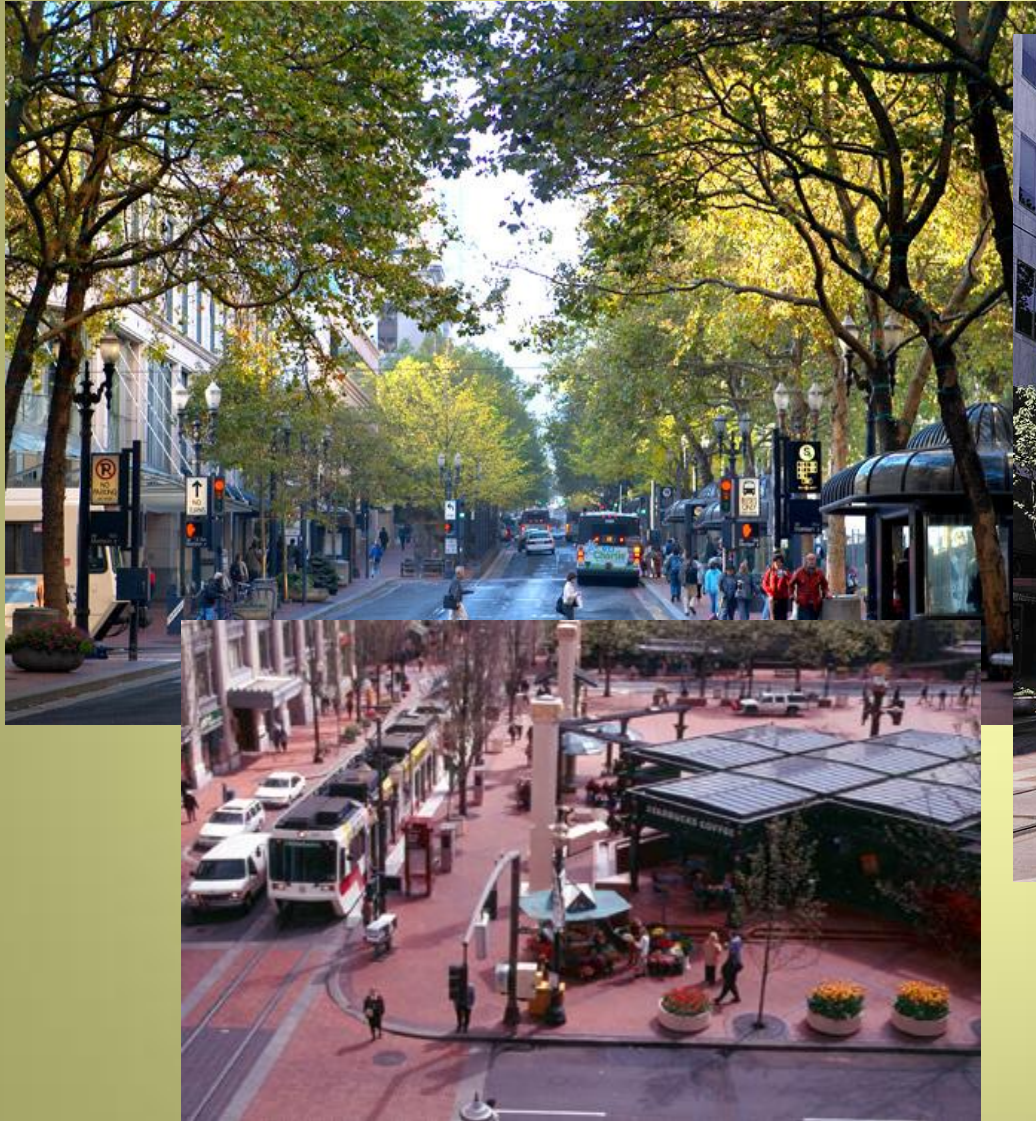
CARS



Fifth Street after reopening, Portland, OR

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Re-opened Malls



Portland, Oregon –
Fifth & Sixth Street Transit Mall

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Common Problems with Pedestrian/Transit Malls and Reasons for Removal

- Retail does not thrive or even succeed
- Retail mix deteriorates over time
- Lack of visibility and access for retail
- Uncomfortable and threatening environment
- Attract loiterers and transients, which create uncomfortable shopping environments
- Disrupt neighborhood traffic flows
- Fear/perception of crime



Case Studies: Results of Reopening a Mall

Far majority of cities reported:

- Significant decrease in vacancy rates
- New restaurants, retail, and offices attracted
- Increased visibility for businesses
- Return of customers
- Increase in rent rates
- Attraction of higher-end national chains
- Rise in private reinvestment

A few cities reported:

- Limited and slow development of new retail
- Limited signs of new investment
- Minimal change in vacancy rates

Conclusion: *While reopening a mall improved conditions in most examples, it did not ensure a successful recovery with all of them, and in some cases retail remained minimal along the street.*

Case Studies: Economic Results of Reopening a Mall

Louisville, Kentucky

- Mall constructed in 1973, reconverted in 2000
- Vacancy rate decreased from 80% to 50% by 2001
- Property Values increased in the same one year period

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Reopened for Republican Convention in 2000
- Rents then were \$25 psf and now are \$65 psf
- Better national chains moving in (i.e Sephora, H&M, and West Elm)

Keys to Pedestrian Mall Survival

- A varied **mix of active uses**
- A **large population of "captive" users** (including residents)
- Heavily **programmed activities**
- Incorporation of **efficient public transit**
- **Strong anchors** that serve both as pedestrian generators and help enclose the street space
- **Centralized** or coordinated retail **management**
- Well planned and extensive **parking adjacent** to the mall
- Located in an area of **high tourism**
- Located in a college town or **near a college neighborhood**

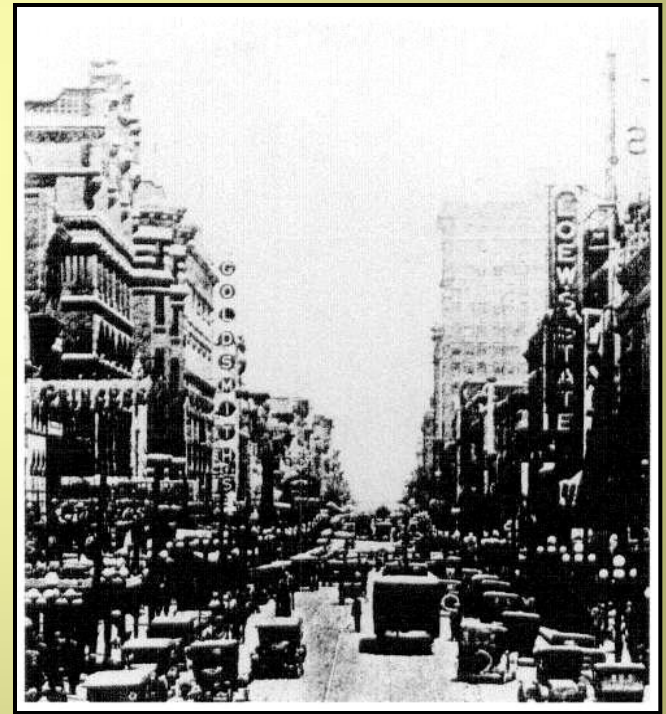
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Memphis' Main Street

- Trolley tracks were first installed in the late 1800s.
- In the first half of the 20th century, Main Street was the regional shopping destination, offering several department stores.
- Trolley tracks were removed in the mid-1900s due to changes in transportation and lifestyle trends.



View north from Union Avenue, 1906



Main Street, late 1920s

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Memphis' Main Street

- To compete with suburban shopping centers, Main Street was transformed into the Mid-America Mall in 1976.



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Memphis' Main Street

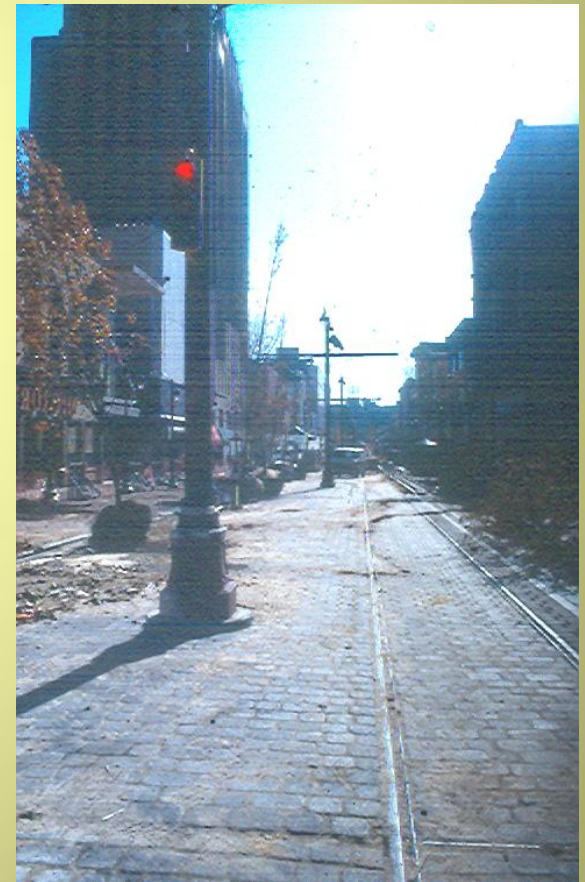
- As department stores left and retail became neighborhood focused, the Mall became less of a destination.
- Into the 1980s, the Mall's physical conditions deteriorated.



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Memphis' Main Street

- MATA opened the new Main Street trolley in 1992.
- This construction renovated the dated infrastructure of the 16-year-old Mall.
- Another 16 years have passed since then without significant reinvestment in the Mall.



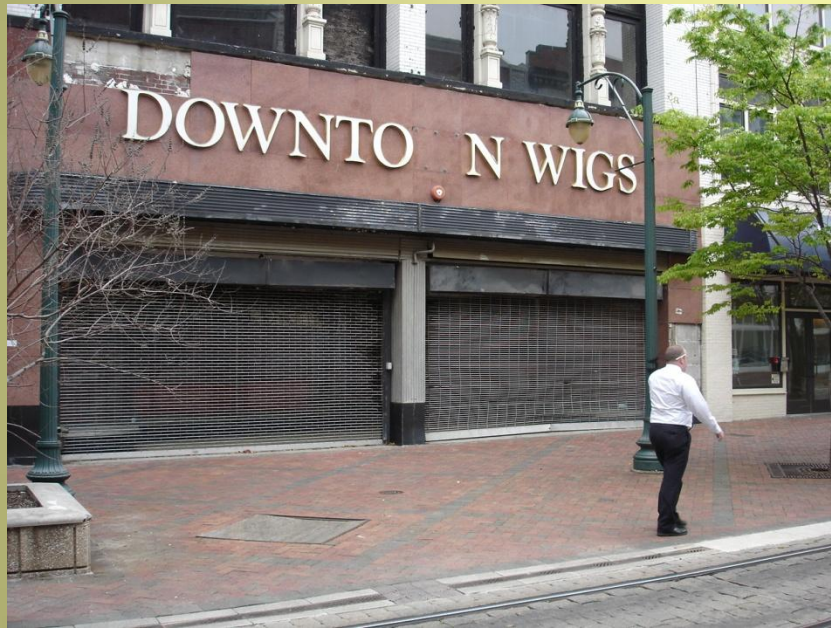
Images from the trolley installation period

How Does Main Street Memphis Fare?

- Maybe
- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- No
- No
- No
- Maybe
- No
- A varied mix of active uses
- A large population of "captive" users (including residents)
- Heavily programmed activities
- Incorporation of efficient public transit
- Strong anchors that serve both as pedestrian generators and help enclose the street space
- Centralized or coordinated retail management
- Well planned and extensive parking adjacent to the mall
- Located in an area of high tourism
- Located in a college town or near a college neighborhood

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How does Main Street Memphis fare? Existing Physical Conditions



➤ Vacant stores
create an unattractive
streetscape

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How does Main Street Memphis fare? Existing Physical Conditions



- Missing drainage grates replaced with plywood
- Missing street trees and grates
- Planting areas filled with gravel or covered with plywood



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How does Main Street Memphis fare?

Existing Physical Conditions



- Missing or broken utility pole pedestals



- Aged and weathered infrastructure



How does Main Street Memphis fare? Findings of ERA's Downtown Retail Study

- Main Street retail is handicapped by the transit/pedestrian only mall
- South Main works well with both cars and trolleys -retail is stronger there than core of Main Street
- Existing trolley system is not effective as a timely mode of transportation on the mall.
- Retail success of the street relies on reopening the Main Street Mall and reintroducing cars to the street
- The impact of thru-traffic street is much more significant than a partial block by block phased conversion.

Recommendations from ERA's Downtown Retail Study

Recommended Actions:

- REOPEN STREET TO CARS
 - Maintain transit presence, but with less frequency
 - Two-way traffic
 - Significant financial investment, but possible
 - Will enable “eyes and lights on the street” after business day – improve safety
- Transit should not be on primary retail streets, but rather on secondary streets
- It is imperative that the transit mall be reopened to vehicular traffic to improve retail conditions – access, visibility, and exposure

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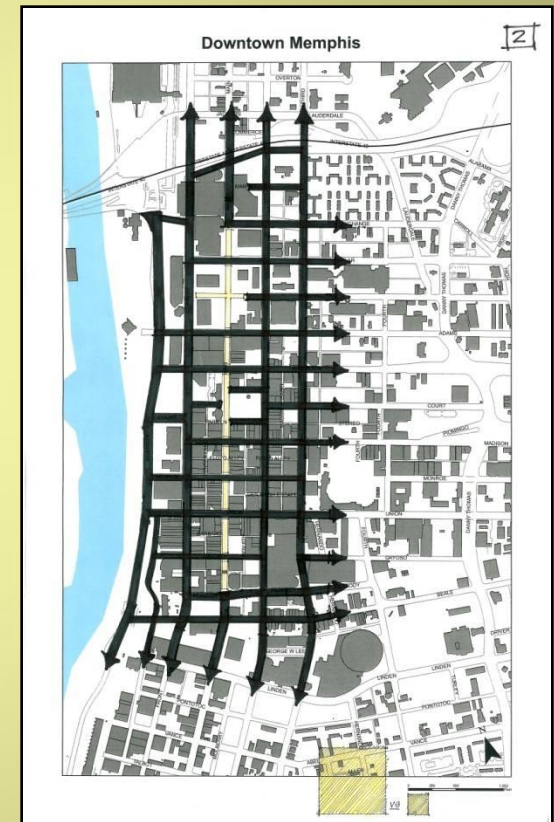
Recommendations from Jeff Speck Study

PUT CARS BACK ON MAIN STREET.

A preliminary but serious study of Main Street suggests that **no reconfiguration whatsoever is necessary** in order to bring cars back.

Travel paths wide enough for trolleys are wide enough for cars.

New signage and striping is necessary, as is the removal of a few curbs.



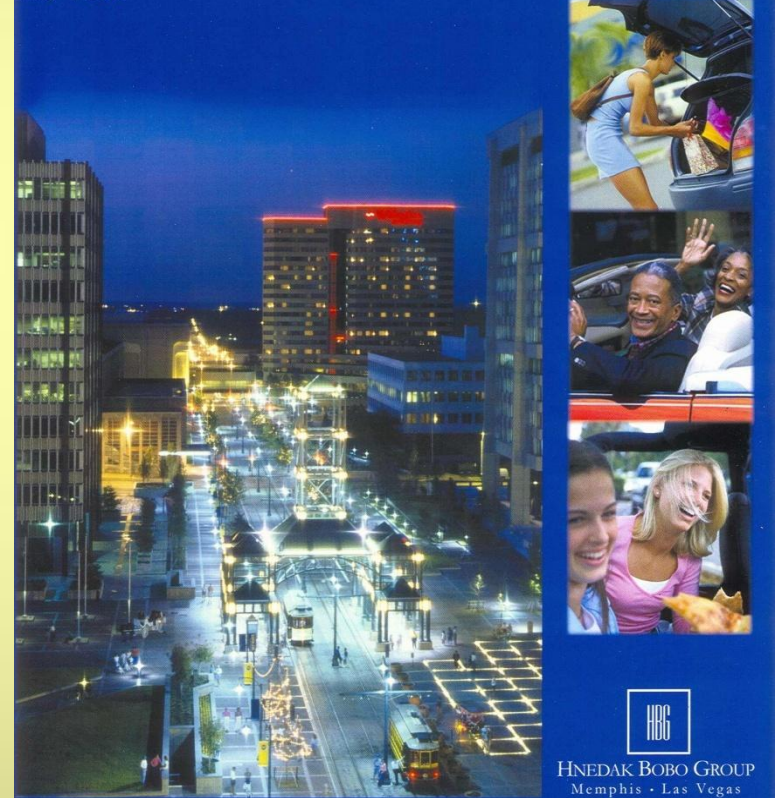
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What could be done?

- In 2004 the CCC commissioned Hnedak Bobo Group to determine the engineering feasibility of returning traffic to Main Street
- The preliminary analysis recommended two options that would insure the safe coexistence of pedestrians, cars, and trolleys
- Either option could encompass the entire length of the mall or phased conversion of selected blocks

A Preliminary Analysis of the Feasibility and Cost Estimation of Returning Vehicular Traffic to the Main Street Mall

May 4, 2004



What could be done?

Option One

- Complete replacement and lowering of the existing trolley system
- Construction of a 30 foot wide asphalt road with curbs to separate the sidewalks
- Current brick-paved sidewalks remain
- Creation of two 50' by 9' drop off zones on each block
- Reprogramming of the traffic signals
- Removal, redesign, and replacement of existing trolley stop canopies

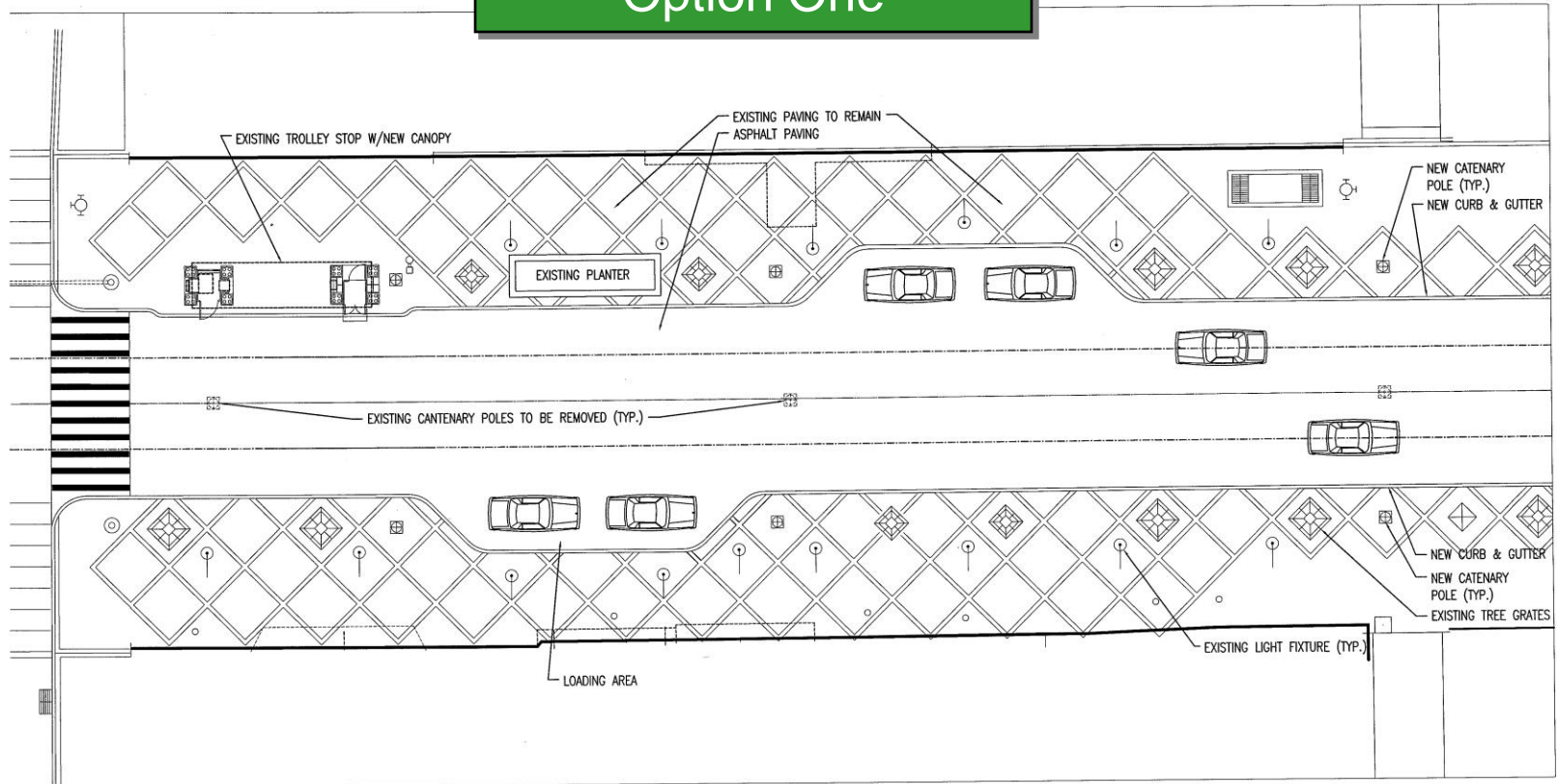
- **Construction Time:** 8 to 12 months, during which the Main Street trolley remains shut down

- **Cost for mall's total length:** \$9 Million (adjusted for inflation from Hnedak Bobo Group's original estimate in 2004)

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How could it be done?

Option One



OPTION ONE
PARTIAL BLOCK TYPICAL
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

What could be done?

Option Two

- Existing cobblestones, pavers, and drains remain
- Current trolley tracks remain
- Installation of bollards, planters, or other vertical barriers to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- Narrow concrete header constructed instead of a curb
- Creation of two 50' by 9' drop off zones on each block
- Reprogramming of the traffic signals
- Removal, redesign, and replacement of existing trolley stop canopies

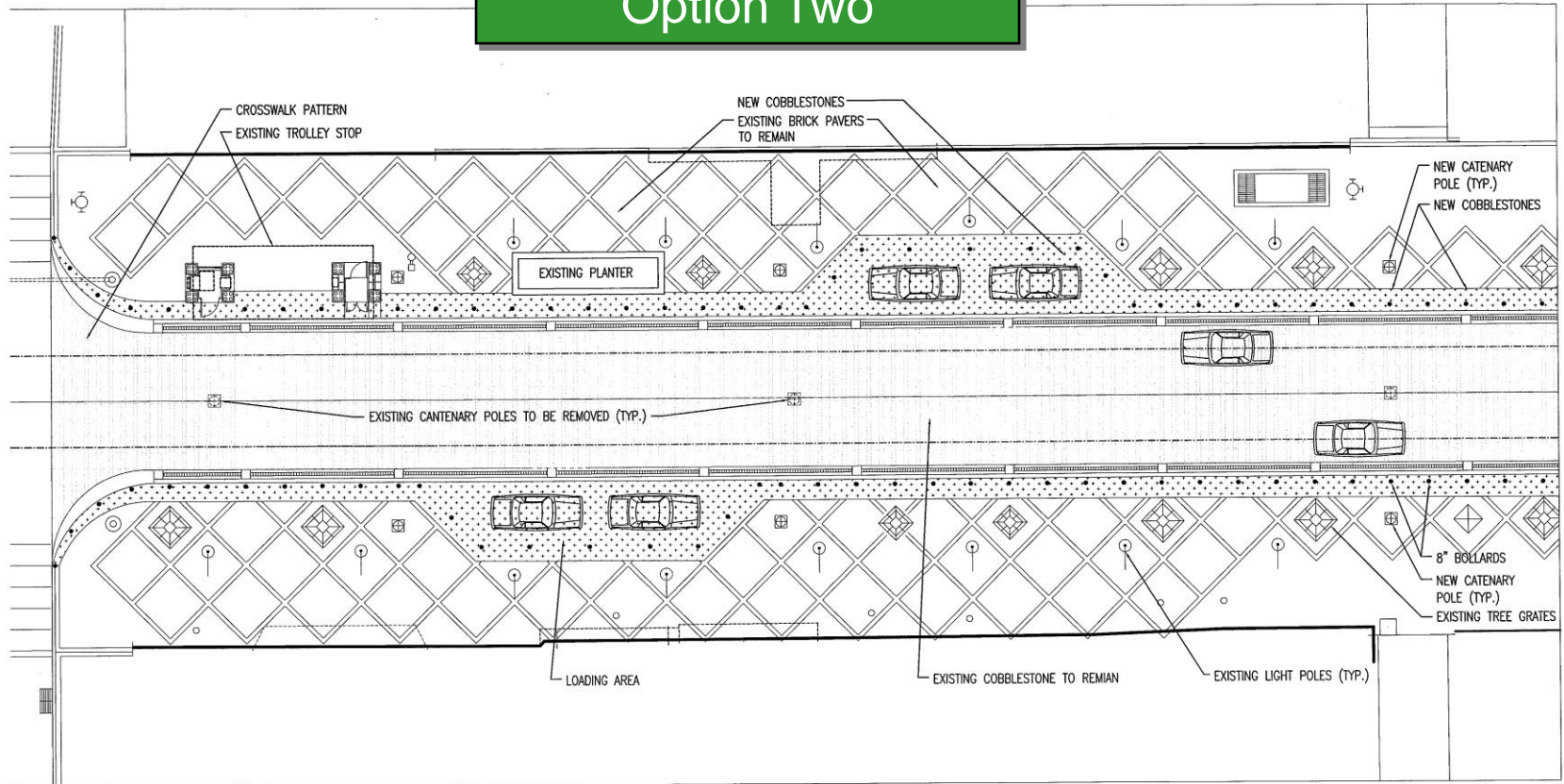
- **Construction Time:** 6 to 8 months, during which the Main Street trolley remains in operation with short, periodic shutdowns

- **Cost for mall's total length:** \$3.5 Million (adjusted from HBG's original estimate for inflation)

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How could it be done?

Option Two



OPTION TWO

PARTIAL BLOCK TYPICAL

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

What could be done?

Option Three

- Existing cobblestones, pavers, and drains remain
- Current trolley tracks remain
- Creation of two 50' by 9' drop off zones on each block
- Reprogramming of the traffic signals

- No barriers to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- No modification of existing trolley stop canopies

- **Construction Time:** 2 to 3 months, during which the Main Street trolley remains in operation with minimal periodic shutdowns

- **Cost for mall's total length:** < \$50,000 (based on Jeff Speck recommendation)

What could be done?

Option Four

Reintroduce vehicular traffic through a PILOT test program on the New Main Demonstration Block

- Existing cobblestones, pavers, and repair existing drainage system.
- Current trolley tracks remain
- Installation of bollards, planters, or other vertical barriers to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- Narrow concrete header constructed instead of a curb
- Creation of two 50' by 9' drop off zones on the block
- Reprogramming of the traffic signals

- **Construction Time:** 4 to 5 months, during which the Main Street trolley remains in operation with short, periodic shutdowns

- **Estimated Cost for demonstration block:** <\$500,000 (adjusted from HBG's original estimate for inflation)

What could be done?

Option Five

Maintain current configuration and promote funding for needed CIP dollars for maintenance

