Protecting the “Third Place:”
The Pandemic’s Impact on Commercial Corridors and How to Support Them

#LiveAtUrban
Housekeeping

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- The slides and speaker biographies are available online.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your questions or comments into the Q&A box at any time.

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The Pandemic’s Impact on Commercial Corridors and How to Support Them

Jorge González and Jein Park
Permanent business closures have increased steadily since the pandemic began.

Source: Yelp
The US was already experiencing a retail meltdown.

- Rise of e-commerce
- Shift in consumption patterns
- Poor management
Food services and drinking places have been outperforming non-food retail

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
The pandemic has affected food and drinking businesses more severely

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The pandemic has affected food and drinking businesses more severely

Home, local, professional, and auto services businesses have been staying afloat

- Lawyers: 1.6 per 1k businesses
- Body Shops: 6.3
- Plumbing: 6.8
- Auto Repair: 9.1
- Architects: 2.0
- Towing: 6.5
- HVAC: 8.0
- Landscaping: 9.5
- Accountants: 2.9
- Contractors: 6.6
- Tree Services: 9.0
- Roofing: 9.9

Restaurants and retail businesses have been struggling

- Women's Clothing: 24.2 per 1k businesses
- Pizza: 25.8
- Food Trucks: 28.1
- Home Decor: 29.6
- Men's Clothing: 31.3
- Gift Shops: 39.4
- Sandwiches: 55.3
- Burgers: 56.0
- Breakfast and Brunch: 56.8

Source: Yelp
Property vacancies on commercial corridors can create a vicious cycle

- Visually deteriorated landscape
- Decreased foot traffic
- Reduced sales opportunities
- Business closures
Vacant buildings are associated with negative effects on communities

- Reduced property values
- Risk of fires
- Crime
- Trash buildup and attraction of rodents
Uncharted territory
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Researching Urban Storefront Retail

Emily Talen
University of Chicago
The Urbanism Lab is a focal point at the University of Chicago for the study of the built environment and its meaning and impact. Our research interests are reflective of social, cultural and political movements aimed at improving the quality of the built environment. Of particular interest is the notion of sustainable urbanism and the ability of cities to be places of vibrancy, social diversity, and community identity.

urbanism.uchicago.edu
The long slow decline of urban storefront retail
The Great A&P and the Struggle for Small Business in America

Marc Levinson
1. Where/what is “Main Street”?
Concept illustration of block satisfying three categories: services, opportunity, quality
Degrading factors

Sidewalks

Enclosure
13 MAIN STREET BLOCKS IN CHICAGO
: Service + Opportunity + Pedestrian Quality

1. W Buena Ave ~ W Gordon Terrace
   N Clarendon Ave ~ N Marine Dr

2. W Foster Ave ~ W Winona St
   East of N Winchester Ave

3. W Giddings St ~ N Lincoln Ave
   North of W Leland Ave (Giddings Plaza)

4. W Berenice Ave ~ W Grace St
   East of N Lincoln Ave

5. N Lakewood Ave ~ N Racine Ave
   South of W Belmont Ave

6. N Broadway Ave ~ N Pine Grove Ave
   South of W Oakdale Ave

7. N Clark St ~ N Commonwealth Ave
   North of W Belden Ave

8. W Goethe St ~ W Division St
   N Wells St ~ N Laselle Dr

9. South of W Huron St
   East of N Franklin St

10. N Green St ~ N Halsted St
    South of W Chicago Ave

11. E Lake St ~ E Benton Pl
    N State St ~ N Wabash Ave

12. N Racine Ave ~ N Seminary Ave
    North of N Maud Ave

13. S Commercial Ave ~ S Houston Ave
    North of E 92nd St
Conclusion

“Main street” is rare
2. Quantifying the benefits of Main Street
Main Street Dividends

1. Density
2. Diversity
3. Stability
A. Main Street Block
: N Broadway St & W Oakdale Ave

B. Chain Store Block
: N Clark St & N Broadway St
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Stability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Median Household Income, 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Density, 2010</td>
<td>Racial Diversity, 2010</td>
<td>% Change Population Count, 1990-2010</td>
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<td>Walkscore, 2012</td>
<td>% Change Population Density, 1990-2010</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>% Change Housing Units, 1990-2010</td>
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<td>% Old Buildings, 2010</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

Compared to *chain store blocks*, *main street blocks* are in neighborhoods with:

- Higher pop density
- Lower median rent
- Higher % old buildings
- $< \text{change 1990-2010 pop}$
3. Do regulations hurt urban retail?
Fig. 1 Main street zones (B1 & B2) and other non-residential zones. Source: Author construction using city Chicago zoning data in shapefile format.
4. The status of mom-n-pops
A Survey of 75 Small Retailers
(2018)
5. Understanding urban retail vacancy
A Survey of 18 Business Organizations
Mitigation

- Vacancy tax relief
- Small grants
- Direct involvement in property leasing
- Relationship-building
Conclusion
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#LiveAtUrban
Kendra Macias Reed, Deputy Director
Kendra@FranklinBlvdDistrict.com
916.455.2124
Franklin Boulevard Business District, Sacramento, CA

- 2.5 Miles north to south
- Over 500 Businesses Served
- Generate $650,000 sales tax revenue annually
- Supports over 3,800 Jobs locally
- Industries include Health & Social Services, Warehousing, Administration and Professional Services, Retail and Restaurants, Auto-repair Shops, Grocery and other service-related industries
COVID-19 Impacts on Franklin Blvd Corridor

• 15 total vacancies in the district, likely more to come. 7 Closures since pandemic (Service-related industry such as Event Services, Quinceanera and Bridal retail, hair salons)

• Significant increase in illegal dumping, trash and debris from homeless encampments, broken windows and theft

• Uptick in businesses requesting help with social media advertising, marketing and tools to pivot online

• Greatest identified need is immediate financial relief
Programs & Partnerships

• Sac IEDC 15 partner organization, Technical Assistance and Advocacy
  Outreach to 260 businesses in 2 months
  Over 50 businesses signed up for technical assistance
• Donate4Sacramento Micro-grants, $1,000 grants for minority-owned businesses
• Sac Recover – Small Business Forgivable Loan Program – 75% of funds go to disadvantaged communities located in Promise Zone/Opportunity Zone areas and CDBG Eligible grant areas
• Purchase of 500 Live Scan Temperature Scanners to distribute to businesses
• Farm to Fork Al Fresco Program, $3,000 grants
• Emergency ordinance to suspend commercial evictions due to reduced rent payments (includes free tenant and landlord mediation services)
• Efforts focused on traditionally marginalized communities/communities of color
• Critical to disseminate information in various languages
• Food Trucks and Trailers as opportunity for business incubation (Need to advocate for creative ways to decrease permitting fees for minority entrepreneurs)