PEDESTRIANISATION OF COMMERCIAL STREET

Reclaiming Public Space
A Situation Analysis of Commercial Street in Bangalore

Study conducted by,
Evangelical Social Action Forum
India

Supported by,
HealthBridge
Canada
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 4

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION 5
1.1 History & Situation Of Public Space in Bangalore 5
1.2 Current Scenario of Public Space in Bangalore 6
1.3 Importance of Pedestrianisation in the City 7
1.4 Case Studies of Various Countries 7
1.5 Efforts in Commercial Street & Pedestrianisation 8
1.6 Why Commercial Street 8

CHAPTER II RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 10
2.1 Introduction & Rationale 10
2.2 Objectives 10
2.3 Personnel 10
2.4 Design 10
2.4.1 Study Area 10
2.4.2 Methodology 11
2.4.2.1 Merchants’ Survey 11
2.4.2.2 Visitors’ Survey 11
2.4.2.3 Mall Intercept Survey 11
2.4.2.4 Mapping of Parking Area 11
2.5 Finance 11
2.6 Limitations of the Study 11

CHAPTER III PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS ON PEDESTRIANISATION OF COMMERCIAL STREET 12
3.1 Merchants 12
3.2 Visitors’ Survey by Das et al 15
3.3 Identifying Parking in the Surrounding Area 16
3.4 Mall Intercept Survey 16

CHAPTER IV RESULTS & DISCUSSION 20

CHAPTER V RECOMMENDATIONS 22
References 23
Appendices 24
List of Tables & Figures 29
Notes & References 30
The ‘Pedestrianisation of Commercial Street’ study was commissioned as part of The Livable Cities Project Phase II being implemented by ESAF with support from HealthBridge, Canada to explore the possibility of developing Commercial Street into a ‘Pedestrian Only’ Street.

Bangalore is a ‘happening’ city and visitors from within and outside the country considers it as a shopper’s paradise. Commercial Street is one of the oldest, most popular and heavily frequented shopping places in Bangalore. It is situated in the Central Business District (CBD) of Bangalore and has the distinction of being the most important shopping district in Bangalore along with M.G. Road and Brigade Road. Many of the older buildings on Commercial Street have been pulled down to make way for larger, modern buildings. Traditionally, Commercial Street was a bustling street with enough space for women to chat and children to play; formerly, even merchants took time off to play a game of cricket. However, with the increase in the PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) of the average Bangalorean, cars from the international markets have become increasingly prevalent in the city and have started taking over all available public space. Commercial Street has become victim to this increasing level of motorization with cars increasingly limiting the space available. Simply to walk is now a formidable challenge; it is impossible to imagine people being able to socialize or play.

With the encroachment of space brought about by the invasion of the car, Commercial Street is slowly losing its charm as a ‘shopper’s paradise.’ This study is an attempt to understand the perceptions of the merchants of Commercial Street and the shoppers who visit the nearby malls regarding the need and possibility of developing Commercial Street into a pedestrian-only street. A study conducted by another civil society organization in Bangalore which has taken the views of about 900 visitors on the Commercial Street was also reviewed as part of the present study.

The key research findings include the following:

- Nearly 78% of the merchants in Commercial Street are not in favor of developing Commercial Street as the first pedestrian-only street in Bangalore because of their concerns about losing their business.
- Twenty-one percent of the merchants surveyed believe that 76% to 100% of their customers parked on Commercial Street. In addition, 24% of merchants believe that 50% to 75% of their clientele park on Commercial Street. This means that 45% of merchants believe the majority of their customers’ park on the street.
- Most of the merchants feel that the shoppers on Commercial Street are safe, even though the space for walking on the streets is being utilized for moving and parked cars.
- Very few merchants on the street are in favor of observing a car-free day.
- While mall shoppers believe that Commercial Street has all the potential of developing into a pedestrian-only street, they visit Commercial Street far less frequently than malls.
- While malls serve various purposes, Commercial Street cannot meet several purposes at the same time and is thus less preferred than malls.
- Nearly 45% of shoppers believe that Commercial Street has lost all its charm and legacy compared to previous times when one would eagerly look forward to a family outing to the Street.
- Seventy-five percent of shoppers agreed and supported the idea of making Commercial Street a pedestrian-friendly street, as it could then ensure safety of pedestrians, especially the elderly and children. The street would be less polluted from both fumes and noise, thus paving the way for increased socialization among urbanites.
- More than half (65%) of shoppers would like to celebrate an International Car Free Day every year on Commercial Street and see the difference it could make for the city.

The study shows that people like shopping in malls partly because the accessibility to many shops in a small area (high density, narrow front shops, variety of choice), child or people friendly spaces and amenities, can move about easily and safely due to lack of vehicles.

Hence, the scope of the study is broad, keeping in view the advocacy and networking that the project aims to undertake to reclaim the rights of pedestrians on Commercial Street. Wherever pedestrian Friendly Street is present, the first response of merchants’ is always opposition due to fear of losing business. It is obvious from the experience that the support from merchants’ happens only when they discover how good it is for them. This has been the same experience universally and no matter how much positive experience there is. Thus, it is hoped that this report will make clear the reasons for considering the possibility of pedestrianising Commercial Street, as well as potential obstacles and advantages. Following the introduction, methodology, and data analysis, the findings are discussed in depth in Chapter IV, followed by recommendations in Chapter V. The survey tools that were used in this study are included as appendices. The authors welcome comments from readers, especially those interested in joining our campaign!
This study was undertaken with the support and co-operation from different quarters; their support is wholeheartedly appreciated. The project team, including Ms. Manju George - Program Officer and Ms. Amruta Baichwal - Program Executive, is especially appreciated for meticulously undertaking the study inspite of all odds. Ms. Manju's effort especially in the initial phase of the survey and in reporting is particularly acknowledged and recognized. Ms. Sandhya Suresh - Program Manager provided overall guidance and oversaw the progress of the study including the editing of the report. Her efforts too are specifically acknowledged. The tabulation would not have been possible without the support of Mr. Shino Davis - Research Co-coordinator, ESAF, who is thanked for his timely inputs.

I would like to thank the merchants and the shoppers who participated in the study and gave their time and opinions. Mr. Dasarathi G V who shared his study conducted on Commercial Street is thanked for his co-operation.

Above all, I would like to offer my sincere admiration and gratitude to the HealthBridge team including Debra Efroymson, Regional Director, Ms. Kristie Daniel, Program Manager and Ms. Phaeba Abraham, Program Officer. I thank Mr. K. Paul Thomas Founder & Executive Director, ESAF, for his support and mentoring to make the project and the study a success.

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The Livable Cities Project – Phase II - ESAF
INTRODUCTION

The ‘Town of boiled beans’ or ‘BendaKaalUru’ as a cantonment, from KempeGowda’s dream of a ‘garden city’ to the current ‘Silicon Valley of India’ was unexplored. The sudden transformation of a small town into a metropolis left the authorities off guard, and they were unable to track the developments that encouraged the encroachment of public space and expansion of the sleepy village into a bustling commercial area. Once known as ‘Kalyana Nagara, (the city of lakes) or Kalyanis’; lakes are now rarely seen in today’s IT hub. Kalyanis were fully or partially destroyed owing to unconstrained development. A similar transformation also happened regarding Bangalore’s traditional markets, streets, the front yards of houses, public grounds, parks, gardens, and temple, mosque and church squares. Such spaces traditionally served as the places where people would gather to talk, where people of that area got to know each other and share their news, where ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘community’ acquired genuine significance. Just as urban sprawl transformed the city, so its public spaces also were transformed, generally not for the better. Unfortunately, as cities ‘modernise’, they often destroy the very public spaces that are vital to make them liveable. Parks, open grounds and street pavements are replaced by shopping malls and other high-rise buildings, which creates various health and social risks for the inhabitants. In this scenario, we need to consider the definition of ‘Public Space’ in order to reclaim that space.

A few of the definitions are as follows:

A public space may be a gathering spot or part of a neighborhood, downtown, special district, waterfront or other area within the public realm that helps promote social interaction and a sense of community. Possible examples may include spaces such as plazas, town squares, parks, marketplaces, public commons and malls, public greens, piers, special areas within convention centers or grounds, sites within public buildings, lobbies, concourses, or public spaces within private buildings. The textbook definition of a public space requires that three criteria be met:

“Firstly, a public space is of a physical nature, with a tangible existence. It may not exist in the virtual realm. Secondly, that space must be an accessible space for all urbanites regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level with free circulation of persons and goods. It may have been appropriated by a group or several groups of users or the general public, and affects their daily life. Lastly, a public space is one that forms part of the public realm and is owned and maintained by the public or the government.”

This widening of the definition suddenly opens up the way to a variety of contenders to the title of ‘public space’; from the classical plazas, squares, parks and sidewalks to redefined shopping malls, and transportation hubs.

As per the conventional standards, the norm for open space is 4 acres per 1000 residents, which is a huge amount of space when we look into the current situation of our developing cities. For a metropolis like Bangalore, this norm is still a faraway dream, yet at the same time, we need to reclaim spaces for people, especially children and the elderly, in order to increase social cohesion and wellbeing.

Public spaces play a vital role in encouraging or promoting certain characteristics, including:

1. Promote human contact and social activities.
2. Are safe, welcoming, and accommodating for all users.
3. Have design and architectural features that are visually interesting.
4. Promote community involvement.
5. Reflect the local culture or history and provide opportunities to socialize.
6. Are well maintained and serve as a reminder of the diversity of life.
7. Have a unique or special character.

It is important to point out the essential difference between a genuine and a pseudo public space. Shopping malls are sometimes considered as the ‘new’ public space in cities, but they are not welcoming to all, they do not serve as a reminder of the diversity of life, and are in fact highly controlled, privatized spaces that are free to reject any person or activity at any time. A genuine public space cannot be under private control.

1.1 History & Situation of Public Space in Bangalore

“Bangalore in the 19th century was a twin city comprising the pete, or Indian city, and the cantonment, or the colonial city. Both followed their own traditions of urban form and thus evolved different sets of public spaces. However, each presented a highly imageable urban structure: the Indian city continued the medieval tradition of high-density, mixed-use neighborhoods with temple squares and markets forming nodes and open spaces in the otherwise close-knit urban fabric; the British on the other hand adopted the cantonment type urban form, which was the antithesis of the Indian city. In contrast with the narrow meandering streets of the pete, the cantonment developed with wide tree-lined avenues and spacious bungalows. The mall, parade ground and park were some of the public spaces that were developed in the colonial city. After Independence, the two cities merged and both types of public spaces, traditional and colonial, became familiar to the citizens. Traditional families continued to prefer the pete area, which supported their life style, while the more westernized citizens found the cantonment area...
to be more to their liking. In spite of the differences between the public spaces of the two cities one can draw parallels between them – for example the parade ground was similar to the maidan, spatially at least. Likewise the bazaar street was similar to the mall in function, if not spatially. Streets have always been important public spaces in Bangalore. It is used as a place to do business/trade, to work / manufacture / provide a service, to socialize, and in some cases to live. Whether as residential streets or bazaar streets, they support a plethora of activities. People live, work and socialize on streets. They celebrate, mourn and demonstrate on streets. Children play on streets and people talk on the streets. The street is the primary public space in Bangalore. It is primary in several ways. It is the primary business space, primary retail space and primary entertainment space and the intensity of its use far exceeds those of the other public space types.”

UdayVagale, Bangalore- future trends in public open space usage: Case study on Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore

Bangalore is known for its shopping facilities and the wide choice it offers for all kinds of shoppers. Commercial Street is one of the oldest, most popular and frequented shopping places in Bangalore. Situated in the Central Business District (CBD) of Bangalore, it commands the distinction of being the most ‘happening’ shopping place in Bangalore along with M.G. Road and Brigade Road.

### 1.2 Current Scenario of Public Space in Bangalore

Commercial Street, a legacy of the British, is a shopping mecca that sells international brands (similar to Brigade road) alongside locally-produced items. Commercial Street is one of the busiest areas in the CBD of Bangalore. It lies between Shivaji Nagar and Kamaraj Road. Garments, hosiery, textiles, and shoes form the major part of the shops. In addition, there are shops selling artifacts and art materials, jewelry, eatables, hardware goods, sport goods and other general goods. The term Commercial Street generally includes the surrounding by-lanes like Dispensary Road, Ebrahim Sahib Street, and Narayan Pillai Street. This is one of the most frequented shopping places in Bangalore. Shopping and women appear to be synonymous, and the people who set up the street very clearly studied the sex in the city. Depending on one’s perspective, it is a bit fair or unfair that almost three-fourths of the shops cater exclusively to women.

Many of the older buildings that were on Commercial Street have been pulled down to make way for larger, modern buildings. The area used to be mixed use, comprising residential as well as commercial space, but as the city expanded and more importance was given to commercial purposes, people have moved from this area and converted their space to fully commercial space. Still, eight to ten families live on the street along with their business.

As business progressed and the attraction of the most sought-after place grew, the area, which once closed on Sundays, became open for 365 days of business. A previous generation of merchants played cricket and other country games on the street; they may still reminisce about the past glories of the street. As business increased due to the highly paid jobs of some Bangaloreans, and as former luxuries such as cars became affordable to many, the scenario of this quiet street has changed. It is now a busy area where pedestrians and cars are fighting for a small amount of space.

Though Police Officers in Commercial Street police station and merchants in general claim that there have been no accidents on the street due to traffic, we have come across a few merchants and people who shared their bad experience with motorists. Such conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, and the difficulty encountered by shoppers in moving about the area safely, mean that a pedestrian-only pollution free zone has been planned many times, unfortunately, with little success.
1.3 Importance of Pedestrianisation in the City

Pedestrian zones (also known as auto-free zones and car-free zones) are areas of a city or town reserved for pedestrian use and in which all motorized traffic is prohibited. Some streets are partially pedestrianized, for instance during certain times such as evenings or weekends, while other, pedestrian-priority streets use Traffic Calming design strategies to control traffic speeds and volumes (Boyd 1998).

Some of the known advantages of pedestrianisation across the world are:
- Increased safety for shoppers and visitors, especially for the elderly and children.
- Increased interest among tourists to visit the pedestrian-only zones due to easier, safer, and more comfortable movement.
- Increased sales and benefit for the merchants due to increase in visitors, as pedestrians require far less space than cars.
- Lower pollution levels (both air and noise) at pedestrian-only zones.

Celebration of car free days is known to provide an effective way for both people and merchants to understand the reality and advantages of pedestrianisation. Every year on 22nd September, people get together on streets, intersections, and neighborhood blocks in cities around the world to remind others that they are not in favor of a car-dominated society. World Car Free Day is an annual celebration of cities and public life, free from the noise, stress and pollution of cars. Car free days were organized as early as during the oil crisis of the 1970s, and several car free days were organized in European cities during the early 1990s. The carfree movement has since gained much momentum, due in part to the triple crisis of climate change, peak oil, and rising obesity rates, but also due to people's fatigue with the problems caused by the proliferation of cars in cities.

In city after city, urban planners and transport experts create policies and infrastructure to encourage pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit and to reduce dominance by the automobile. Celebration of Car Free Day is a big part of this; people can reflect on what their city would look like with fewer cars and what might be needed to make this happen. Currently over 100 million people in 1,500 cities celebrate International Car-Free Day.

An international car free day was organized in Europe in 1999, as the pilot project for the European Union's "In Town Without my Car" campaign. This campaign continues as European Mobility Week. The European Mobility Week is an awareness raising campaign aiming at sensitizing citizens to the use of public transport, cycling, and walking, and at encouraging European cities to promote these modes of transport and to invest in the necessary supporting infrastructure.

The goal of European Mobility Week is to:
- Encourage the use of forms of transport other than private cars,
- raise awareness and inform city-dwellers of what is at stake regarding long-term mobility in towns and the risks connected with pollution,
- Show the town in another light, in particular to reduce motorized traffic within restricted areas.

Characteristics of car free developments include:
- Very low levels of car use, resulting in much less traffic on surrounding roads.
- High rates of walking and cycling.
- More independent movement and active play amongst children.
- Less land taken for parking and roads - more land available for green or social space.
- Discouragement of private car and other motorized vehicles ("travel demand management" or TDM).
- Encouragement of active modes which refers to any form of human powered transportation - walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating or skate boarding.

Many towns and cities in Europe, designed before the car, have become overrun by motor vehicles. Lower pollution levels (both air and noise) at pedestrian-only zones. As a result of the problems caused by the car invasion and its effects on people and the city, activists have started to encourage car free streets and pedestrian 'malls' (shopping areas that may allow buses but no cars) across the globe. However, in virtually every city that has initiated a pedestrian-only commercial area, the first response of merchants is opposition due to fear of losing business. Despite the fact that the evidence from around the world shows the success of pedestrian-only streets for businesses, they are often not convinced until much after the introduction of pedestrianization. This seems to be true universally and no matter how much positive experience there is.

Figure 5 Piazza San Marco, Venice: One of the world's great public spaces

1.4 Case Studies from Different Countries

Around the world: The first purpose-built pedestrian street in Europe was the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam, which opened in 1953. The first pedestrianised shopping centre in the United Kingdom
was in Stevenage town centre in 1959. A large number of European towns and cities have made part of their centers car-free since the early 1960s. Around the world, many cities have instituted sustainable transportation initiatives.

In India: Walking Plaza, MG Road, Pune

Pune has taken the lead in pedestrian-friendly initiatives in India, being the first city in the country to introduce walking plazas. The Pune Walking Plaza functioned for more than one year, 20 months from March 2007 until the 26/11 attack in 2008. On Saturday and Sunday evenings, MG Road was fully converted to a walking plaza from 4-10 pm, and later was permanently declared as a walking zone by Pune Cantonment Board (PCB). When it was first launched, strong protests were staged by shop owners on the street, but citizens were in full support of the walking plaza, which finally made the shop-owners abandon their protest and join the bandwagon. The whole initiative was taken by PCB following a Supreme Court directive to clean Pune’s air and a campaign by environmentalists led by Pune’s INTACH chapter.

Around 10,000 to 20,000 Puneites patronized the walking plaza during weekends. It was rendezvous time for families and friends as they chattered along in the oasis of freedom and relaxation. Cartoon characters danced to the tune of the children’s moods, trees were decorated with festive lights, and shops attracted crowds. Instead of the blaring horns and the fumes of vehicles, visitors heard laughter and joy. The shopkeepers stopped grumbling. Creativity and innovation became hallmarks of the plaza. An art gallery on the roadside depicting Pune of yesteryear, organized story telling competitions for children, and the staging of plays of social relevance added more pep to the entire experience.

Following the success of MG Road, PCB decided to make Laxmi Road, a premier commercial street, into a walking plaza. According to Ms. Vinuta Desmukh, Senior Journalist and consultant, the event was highly successful until the Mumbai terrorist attacks, followed by 26/11. Sadly, concerned authorities decided to close the walking plazas due to safety concerns. Pune was the city that proved that such initiatives can be enormously successful and attract more tourists and income and to a place; it should have been considered as a replicable model for other parts of India suffering from similar problems of air pollution, congestion, noise, lack of quality outdoor public space, and the desire to improve the local economy.

In Phase I of the Livable Cities program, an extensive research was conducted in four zones of Bruhat Bangalore Maha Nagare Palike (BBMP) with a sample size of 800 children, 200 teachers and parents, and in-depth interviews with officials from police and health departments, and professionals from government as well as nongovernmental organizations. Focus group discussions were also conducted with differently-abled children and their parents, as well as with disadvantaged and institutionalized children from various slums. A few of the results were as follows:

- Traffic and pollution are the major challenges faced by children while travelling.

Research into the efforts put forth by government as well as civil society organizations in Bangalore reveals that a considerable amount of study and negotiations have occurred at various levels, but the city has yet to see the fruits of those never-ending discussions.

Commissioner Mr. M. R. Srinivasa Murthy first conceived the idea of pedestrianisation during his tenure in 2003; for unknown reasons, it was not pursued further. In 2005, Bangalore Maha Nagare Palike revived the proposal with the approval of BMP council and a standing committee on this work by sending the plan for government approval. All these exercises were started up as part of BMP’s plan to rejuvenate the Central Business District (CBD). Though everybody welcomed the idea, it never saw light due to unspecified reasons.

1.5 Efforts in Commercial Street & Pedestrianisation

1.6 Why Commercial Street?

After Mayor Mr. N. Narayanaswamy revised the pay and park system in the city, Commercial Street got automated parking meters and the process of pedestrianisation got delayed. This parking system benefitted both City Corporation and the Merchants’ Association, with a 40:60 partnership. This could be one of the reasons for the setback in project implementation, as a five-year contract was signed in 2005. Now that the contract is over in 2010, people have started to think about pedestrianisation of Commercial Street with different stakeholders. Online communities like Praja.in and several other NGOs have already undertaken research studies showing the large demand of commoners in developing Commercial Street into a car free zone.

The Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) organized an open house session in February 2011 on “Urban Infrastructure and Connectivity to Bangalore” and again pressed the need of pedestrianisation of major commercial hubs and encouraged urban planners to gear up. While the blame game continues between the traders and concerned authorities, a majority of the people thronging the street would strongly favour pedestrianisation.
Low frequency and overcrowding make the public transport system less desirable.

- Poor basic amenities make life in the city difficult.
- With parks being the favorite hangout for children, there is much demand for more parks and other play spaces in each locality.
- Safety is a major concern due to the high level of traffic in the roads.
- Children are hooked on television and internet due to non-availability of spaces to play and safety issues (both perceived and actual).
- The city is not at all friendly for differently-abled children.
- The implementation of various policies to make the city more livable for children needs to be ensured.
- The stakeholders would like to see Bangalore become a clean and safe city with more greenery and open space.

With safety and lack of public space being major concerns, a team from ESAF and HealthBridge had a discussion with The Commissioner, Directorate of Land and Urban Transport (DULT), and decided to conduct a baseline survey on Commercial Street and explore the possibilities of making it a pedestrian-friendly street.

The total length of the street is 459 meters, with a one-metre wide area specifically demarcated for pedestrians. However, the footpath level merges with the road and most of the time cars are parked on the footpath, leaving pedestrians no choice but to abandon the footpath and walk instead on the main road. Continuously moving vehicles on the street makes it dangerous for people, especially the elderly and children.

Implementation of pedestrianisation on this small stretch would attract more people than currently visit the street, as we can see from the experience of cities around the world and from the 'Walking Plaza' in Pune. It would enable the people to have a healthy environment free from vehicle pollution, and would increase safety of the shoppers. It would also mean more opportunity for enjoyable outings by family members and friends without worry about the safety of children and others.
2.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Commercial Street is located in the Central Business District (CBD) of Bangalore city and has traditionally been a shopping paradise for anyone who visits the city. In recent years, Commercial Street transitioned from a mixed-use area to a business centre. In the process, and furthered by rapid motorization, the street lost its charm while paving the way for automobile-dependent customers. As the city is trying to reclaim spaces for people, this street is an obvious choice for a target, as people love to throng and spend their leisure time shopping, together with family and friends. Commercial Street would benefit from becoming a pedestrian-only zone by providing greater access to the local stores, greater pedestrian safety, and creating a vibrant and social setting within the city, with all the resulting economic benefits.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

To identify the possibility of converting Commercial Street into a ‘Pedestrian Only Street’ by conducting a situational and perception analysis with an array of stakeholders of the street.

2.3 PERSONNEL

HealthBridge provided the technical and financial support for the study. Ms. Sandhya Suresh, Project Manager, was directly responsible for implementation and Ms. Manju George, Project Officer, and Ms. Amruta T Baichwal, Project Executive at Bangalore, conducted the study.

2.4 DESIGN

As part of the study, both primary and secondary information were collected. Purposive sampling was used to conduct the study. The primary targets were merchants and visitors to the street. A purposive sample is a non-representative subset of some larger population, and is constructed to serve a very specific need or purpose. The original intention was to study visitors to Commercial Street. However, the study was then adapted to focus on mall users rather than visitors to Commercial Street. The reasons for this change were two-fold. A previous study with similar objectives was conducted with over 900 visitors to Commercial Street in the year 2009, and it was felt that there would be little value added to survey customers again after so short an interval. Findings of the same study are used in this paper for further discussion and analysis. In addition, the merchants of Commercial Street indicated that they were fearful of losing customers to the malls. So it was decided that a better use of resources would be to interview mall customers to find out what appeals to them about the mall experience and to learn more about what might make them shop at Commercial Street.

2.4.1 Study Area

The Commercial Street study area is defined as the section of Commercial Street between J umma Masjid Road and Kamaraj Road. This area is located in Ward 110 and has street-level merchants of all classes, including a mix of retail and wholesale stores, services, and restaurants.

The current layout of Commercial Street is that there are one metre-wide, poorly maintained sidewalks along both sides of the street; the stretch is 459 meters long from J umma Masjid Road to Kamaraj Road. Street parking is permitted on either side of the street on alternative days with specially demarcated areas for the physically challenged near the entrance on the left side; for VIPs, space is allotted opposite to Commercial Street Police Station. Commercial Street is a one-way street.

Commercial Street is very well connected to public transit. The street is accessible from Shivaji Nagar bus depot from both directions, at an approximate distance of 550 m, as shown in Figure 7. That is, the street is a mere 6-7 minute walk from Shivaji Nagar Bus Terminus. The street can be reached from two different directions: one from Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital and another from the side of St. Mary’s Church. The terminus provides services to all parts of the city.

Figure 7 Route map to C. St from Shivaji Nagar Bus Depot
Data collection for this study involved two surveys administered from 21 – 30 March, 2011: 1) A survey of merchants with ground-level businesses along Commercial Street, and 2) a survey of shoppers who visited malls in and around Commercial Street.

There are 270 shops on either side of the street with 144 shops on the left side and 126 shops on the right side of the street. Out of these 270 shops, all the merchants were contacted 3-5 times until they had responded to the interviewer by agreeing or not agreeing with the survey. In total, 125 merchants agreed to participate (a response rate of 46%). The participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

2.4.2.2 Visitors’ Survey
Initially a survey of 1,000 shoppers on Commercial Street was planned. However, given that a survey was already conducted in 2009 with customers on the street, the research team decided to redirect their energy to focus on customers who were going to the nearby mall rather than to Commercial Street. This choice reflects consideration of the merchants’ view on the recent addition of mall culture in the city which has resulted in a drastic change in their business. The study conducted by Das et al (Poorna Learning Center) was reviewed and the findings are included in this report.

2.4.2.3 Mall Intercept Survey
The Mall Intercept Survey was conducted with 385 shoppers who visited the malls around Commercial Street during the period 20.06.11 - 29.07.11. Despite a high rate of refusal, we were finally, after many hours of persistent effort, able to interview 385 shoppers. Malls included Safina Plaza, Infantry Road; Sigma Mall in Cunningham Road; and Garuda Mall in Richmond Road. Data was collected in the following way:
- As there are fewer shoppers earlier in the week, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday were chosen as the data collection days.
- Every person was asked for his willingness to join the survey.
- Those who showed interest in participating were interviewed; in some cases they filled out the survey form themselves as they did not feel comfortable being interviewed.

2.4.2.4 Identifying Parking Areas
The mapping exercise was conducted for both two wheelers and four wheelers in and around Commercial Street. Such an exercise gave important information about the parking spaces available around Commercial Street and the distance from them to Commercial Street.

The following is the survey area for parking; it represents a 400 meter walking radius around Commercial Street (5 minute walk):
This chapter presents the findings of surveys conducted with merchants, with visitors who have visited malls during the survey period, and of mapping done to get an overview of the parking spaces available in and around the street. Also given is a detailed perception about the visitor’s view on pedestrianisation of the street done by Das, 2009 on Commercial Street.

Description of Merchants of Commercial Street

The majority of merchants (57%) have operated for 10 years or less. However, five percent of the respondents were on the street for more than 100 years and 14% have 51 to 100 years of existence. The street contains all kinds of shops including clothes, shoes, jewellery, eateries, hardware and home furnishing stores. Diversity makes the street attractive for a family outing as it could meet the needs of all age groups. Almost half of the establishments interviewed were clothing stores (49%) with shoes and jewellery stores making up another 14% and 10% of merchants respectively.

![Figure 9: Duration of establishment on Commercial Street](image)

The majority of merchants (57%) have operated for 10 years or less. However, five percent of the respondents were on the street for more than 100 years and 14% have 51 to 100 years of existence.

![Figure 10: Percentage of Business by Type](image)

Figure 10: Percentage of Business by Type

Description of Customers

As part of the survey, merchants were asked details about the customers they serve. Figure 11 shows the number of customers the merchants serve on average on a weekday and on a weekend. Figure 12 shows the hours of the day that the merchants consider their peak selling times.

![Figure 11: Number of Customers Reported by Merchants on an Average Weekday and Weekend Day](image)

Figure 11: Number of Customers Reported by Merchants on an Average Weekday and Weekend Day

![Figure 12: Peak business hours](image)

Figure 12: Peak business hours

Finally, merchants were asked what percentage of their clients parked on Commercial Street (Figure 13).

![Figure 13: Percent of Merchants by Percent of Customers parking on Commercial Street](image)

Figure 13: Percent of Merchants by Percent of Customers parking on Commercial Street

Interestingly, 45% of merchants surveyed believe that the majority of their customers park their vehicle on Commercial Street. This seems highly unlikely given that the majority of...
merchants indicated that 4pm to 6pm were their peak hours and there are only 87 parking spaces in total on Commercial Street. However, it does explain why the merchants are so concerned about parking. An additional 19% of merchants were not sure as to where their customers were parking.

**Attitudes toward Pedestrianization**

Merchant opinions about turning Commercial Street into a pedestrian-only street as it tells us what information (and misinformation) is known by the merchants about the benefits of such an action. And, information about their opinion will help inform future strategy. We know from other international and national examples that merchants are almost universally against the idea to start. We wanted to find out how entrenched such opinions are in the merchant group on Commercial Street. The survey asked if such an action would impact their business (Figure 14, and if so, would it positively impact or negatively impact their business (Figure 15).

![Figure 14: Merchant Opinion about Whether Pedestrianization Impacting their Business](image)

![Figure 15: Merchant Opinion about how their Business would be impacted](image)

Unsurprisingly, these two figures clearly depict that the merchants have a poor opinion about what pedestrianization would do to their business. More than three-quarters believed that their business would be affected while 18% claimed that it would not affect their business. When asked in what way it would impact their business a full 76% (almost all of those indicating it would be impacted) said they would see a decrease in the number of customers. Only 3% of merchants are saying that it would increase their customers.

In order to better understand merchant concerns, the surveyor asked open ended questions to find out why they believed that making the street pedestrian-only would reduce their number of customers. Merchants felt that a reduction in parking would prevent their customers from reaching the street. When asked for more details, merchants indicated that Commercial Street caters to an “elite class” that may not want to walk down from the Army Ground (where there is plentiful parking). They also suggested that their customers are not willing to share the same bus with“an ordinary average person who comes to the street for just walking around or for window shopping.” The merchants further said that the failure of the earlier attempts to pedestrianize the street was because of the parking. They indicated that customers began to shift to malls where people are able to easily access parking facilities, where shopping trolleys allow them to take their purchased goods right to their car, and where all purchases can be done in one place.

The jewellery shop merchants were particularly vocal in their opposition to the pedestrianization idea as their customers carry a lot of money. They suggested that these customers cannot walk along the street before or after their shopping from jewelry shops. However, again, it seems unlikely that every customer to the jewellery shops is able to park on the street given the less number of parking spaces available on the street. However, the concerns of the merchants are clear and they indicated that a pedestrian-only street would definitely affect their business. One of the leading jewellers stated that they already have plans to move off the street because their customers do not have ample car parking on the street and, as a result, their business suffers compared to their other branches.

Finally, some of the merchants raised concern that if the street is completely pedestrianized it will be difficult to ensure safety of women customers. However, it is difficult to understand how this might be the case as pedestrian-only streets are frequently filled with people, an important feature of a woman-friendly space.

In addition to finding out about why they felt pedestrianization would negatively impact their business, we wanted to find out if merchants understood the potential benefits of such an action.

The majority of merchants could not mention any possible benefit. Out of the remaining, a quarter felt that a pedestrian-only street would increase their business (10%), make it safe for pedestrians (5%) and reduce pollution(1%) and create visibility improvements (1%)

The survey also sought to find out if merchants would be willing
to both test the idea of a Car-Free Day by organizing a trial event (Figure 17) and whether or not they thought the street ultimately had the potential to become pedestrian-only (Figure 18).

![Figure 17: Merchant Willingness to Celebrate a Car-Free Day on Commercial Street](image)

We found the results of this question surprising given the strong feelings against pedestrianization. While more than half (58%) of the respondents were against the idea, a significant number of merchants (38%) were ready to try it for one day. However, they also remarked that their association office bearers were against the idea.

![Figure 18: Merchant Opinion about the Possibility of C. St Being the First Pedestrian-only Street in Bangalore](image)

As depicted in Figure 19, the majority (80%) of the merchants think that Commercial Street is safe for pedestrian. They suggested that this is the case as no collisions have been reported. However, 10% of merchants indicated that the street is not safe. We believe this may be an area of future education. We found the results of this question surprising given the strong feelings against pedestrianization. While more than half (58%) of the respondents were against the idea, a significant number of merchants (38%) were ready to try it for one day. However, they also remarked that their association office bearers were against the idea.

![Figure 19: Pedestrian safety on Commercial Street](image)

Again, the results of the question as to whether the merchants were for and against the idea of seeing Commercial Street as a potential first pedestrian-only street in Bangalore were surprising. As the figure reveals, nearly three quarters said that the street does not have the potential. However, 26% indicated that they were in favour. This suggests that there is potential to shift merchant opinion. But much work would be needed, including the improvement of infrastructure facilities, before it could be realized.

Commercial Street Improvements

Lastly, we wanted to find out if the merchants had any suggestions about what makes the street more customer-friendly, irrespective of turning the street pedestrian-only (Figure 20).

![Figure 20: Merchant Suggestions for Customer-Friendly Street](image)

As Figure 20 shows, nearly half of the merchants (51%) had no concrete suggestions as they felt Commercial Street, by itself, attracts people and thus needs no change. Others felt that better infrastructure such as a proper drainage system, absence of garbage would be helpful (20%), and a multi-level car parking facility on the street itself (20%) would improve the street.

Conclusion

Not surprisingly, the majority of merchants of Commercial Street are against making the street pedestrian-only. This was entirely expected. However, the survey does give us further information about how we might proceed with creating a pedestrian-only street. Given that 38% of the merchants were willing to try a pedestrian-only day, this suggests that there is potential to shift merchant opinion if it is planned and implemented properly.
3.2 Visitors’ Survey By Das et al.\(^2\)

As part of the project, we were originally going to conduct a visitor survey in order to identify how customers arrive at the street and their interest in making the street pedestrian-only. Prior to our survey, we discovered that a survey of over 900 visitors on a Sunday in January 2009 by Das et al. Rather than repeat a survey that had already been conducted recently, we decided it would be better to conduct a survey with mall goers and summarize the Das et al. for this report.

**Description of Visitors**

Das et al. counted the number of visitors and found that on a Sunday between 5 and 7 pm, 9,200 people entered the street by foot or automobile. They asked these visitors how they arrived on Commercial Street (Figure 21).

![Figure 21: Visitor’s Mode of Arrival on Commercial Street](image)

These results show that, despite merchant beliefs that everyone arrives to the street by vehicle, most people arrive at the street by walking. Only 26% of the visitors actually drove on the street itself. And, it should be noted, that most of these people were being dropped off and immediately becoming pedestrians. For those visitors that walked to the street, there were many possible ways that they could have arrived in the area around Commercial Street. So, the Das et al., team further inquired as to the mode of travel for those that indicated they walked to the street (Figure 22).

![Figure 22: How Visitors who Walked to Commercial Street Arrived to the Area](image)

Even though most people arrived by foot, those people were still driving to the area with 57% arriving in their own vehicle. When asked, these visitors indicated that they parked on Kamaraj Rd., or at the Shivajinagar bus stand. People who arrived at the street on foot said they did not mind parking their car elsewhere and walking to the street.

**Description of Commercial Street**

As part of the Das et al. study, the project team analysed the amount of space allocated to pedestrians, moving vehicles and parked cars. Despite the fact that the street is not a thoroughfare and therefore serves no function in terms of acting as a transportation link, only 32% of the road space is available to pedestrians. Automobiles (cars and two-wheelers) carry only 24% of the people coming in, but take 68% of the road space.

Having 68% of the road space is used for parking, seems a poor use of space given that only 24% indicate that they arrived to the street by car. In addition, only 2% of visitors can park on the street itself\(^3\). Allocating 42% of the available space to only 2% of the visitors seems like a gross injustice.

**Visitors’ Opinions**

Das et al., wanted to find out if visitors were supportive of Commercial Street becoming pedestrian-only (Figure 24).

![Figure 23: Road Space Allocation](image)

The majority of visitors were supportive of a pedestrian-only Commercial Street. Of the total number of shoppers, 70% would prefer a pedestrian-only street and of the people walking into the street, 92% would prefer a pedestrian-only street.

**Conclusion**

The results of the Das et al. study clearly point the need for Commercial Street to become pedestrian-only in a 2 hour period over 9200 people visited the street. This high level of pedestrian volume in itself justifies creating a pedestrian-only area. In addition, it is grossly unfair to have 42% of space allocated to car parking that serves only...
2% of the customers who visit the street. Finally, the results of the survey clearly show that people would be supportive of creating a pedestrian-only street.

### 3.3 Identifying Parking in the Surrounding Area

Parking was identified in and around Commercial Street to understand the current level of available parking.

**Car Parking**
- Commercial Street: 86 cars, 1hr = Rs 10/-. Max 2hrs/Rs 20/-.
- Differently able have exclusive space for 3 cars, which probably not used often by many
- Safina Plaza Road: 68 cars
- Dickenson Road: 65 cars
- Army Parking: Left-side shop owners 5 or max 8 space for customer (Total 70 cars), Right side: 165 cars with 8 for army people
- Near Shivaji Nagar Bus Stand, Dispensary Rd, J umamasjid Rd, Bowring Hospital Rd, Kamaraj Rd towards Frazer Town

**Two wheeler Parking**
- Dispensary Road: 530
- Safina Plaza: 68 on road, 80 near the complex, next to plaza, left side towards Commercial Street: 50
- On Commercial Street: 1st Cross, Mariamma Cross Rd- 30, 4th Cross, J jewelry St-77 and 5th Cross- 97
- Ibrahim Sahib St: 468
- Near Shivaji Nagar Bus stand, J umamasjid Rd, Bowring Hospital Road, parallel to Ibrahim street and around Commercial Street.

Briefly, there are nearly 400 car-parking slots at a time in and around the Commercial Street at a time. There are an additional 1500 two-wheeler parking spots. The 81 spaces on Commercial Street make little difference in the overall parking available. If vehicles were no longer parked on Commercial Street, then visitors would have ample walking space, making it much safer especially for children and the elderly, but also far pleasant and more convenient for all. Significantly, one can fit far more people into a street when there are no cars entering; the potential for increase in business is thus tremendous, as is illustrated at any fair or mela, where thousands of people can enter a small street and businesses boom.

In a nutshell, we have ample car parking and two wheeler space available in and around C. St. apart from C. St. Also the space identified by Praja.in as part of their initiative to make the street pedestrianised also available in RBANM’s ground is 350 m away from the street. This location is hardly 4 minutes walk to the street. The people who require assistance or do not want to walk for 350 m can be made to avail the facility of pick up and drop to and fro from the street to RBANM’s ground.

As this facility is a convenient option for people, the entire street can be made free for Pedestrianisation. This will definitely ease the concern of vehicles and people also will have more space to walk leisurely, safety is taken care and probably children have fun on the street which generates much more interaction with different kinds of people.

### 3.4 Mall Intercept Survey

The merchants who were surveyed as part of this study expressed concern about losing clients to local malls. They believed that ample parking was a leading factor in people choosing malls. However, the Das et al. study showed that people who visit Commercial Street do not mind parking in the surrounding area. Given the concerns regarding losing customers to malls, the project team felt it would be better to interview mall goers and find out what appealed about a mall environment, what they liked about Commercial Street, whether they would support a pedestrian-only Commercial Street and what improvements they would suggest. The mall intercept survey was carried out in three malls in and around Commercial Street, consisting of Garuda Mall, Sigma Mall and Safina Plaza. Efforts were made to visit the malls on different days and at different times in order to get a more representative sample.

**Description of Visitors Surveyed**

A total of 385 mall visitors were interviewed in June and July of 2011. It proved to be extremely difficult to get visitors over the age of 30 to agree to participate in the survey. In addition, it was easier to get women to agree to participate. Table 1 outlines the age and sex of those who participated in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of the person</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>302</td>
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<td>30-44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Age and sex of respondents

One possible explanation for such a high percentage of 15 to 29 year olds is that many of them are college students who have their schools/colleges near to the mall. In addition, a number of people in this age category are employed in different software firms and they meet with friends especially during weekends. Cinemas, play stations and the wide range of different eateries in the mall attracts people and makes a comfortable space for them to spend time.

**Malls and Commercial Street**

The respondents were asked how often they visited Commercial Street and how often they visited the mall (Figure 25).
In hindsight it would have been helpful to have respondents also pick the most important advantage to them as that would have given us an idea as to the relative importance of each of these features.

When asked about the shopping experience on Commercial Street, car parking was indicated as a concern (Figure 28).

Figure 25 show that despite respondents being intercepted at the mall, they also still visit Commercial Street. Although these visits do occur less frequently, a large percentage still visits Commercial Street regularly. When asked where they preferred to shop, 35% of respondents said malls, 23% said a shopping street and 15% said they liked both (Figure 26).

However, what is also important to note that almost half of the respondents indicated that the street was too crowded and had too much traffic. Little wonder that this is identified as a problem when so little space is afforded to the pedestrian. In addition, many positive attributes were identified with respondents. When little above half marks C. St as the best place of window shopping, additional attributes also supports the social interaction and time spent together; be it with family or friends. Thus the street can be vouched for the qualitative time spent together with your dear ones and at the same time shopping can be made as memorable experience. This can be made much more exciting when they do not have to really worry on the moving vehicles, space lost due to car parked on the street or the little changes in infrastructure such as facilities for basic amenities made available etc. When asked about why Commercial Street is losing its charm, people also indicated that it was too crowded (Figure 29).

Clearly, better parking facilities are an issue for mall goers. However more than half of the respondents suggest they support malls due to other advantages like variety of facilities under one roof, hygienic food with an array of choices, and basic amenities like drinking water, wash rooms, plenty of space and infrastructure to sit and relax. The cinemas in the malls also are a popular place for people to spend time with family and friends.

In Figure 26 shows the preference of the shoppers. Respondents indicated they preferred shopping malls (34%) shopping streets (23%) and both shopping malls and shopping streets (15%). Respondents were also asked what it was about the mall experience that they found appealing (Figure 27).

With the cars being parked on Commercial Street, there is hardly any space for the shoppers to move comfortably and therefore it makes the street congested and crowded. Car parking was again identified by 53% of the respondents and an interest follow-up survey would be to find out what makes the distance between the available spaces seem far. A less than 5 minutes walk is not a far distance. It may not be the distance but the
quality of the pedestrian environment that makes the walk seem unpleasant and therefore “too far”. This should be explored in a future study. In addition, lack of protection from the weather and lack of facilities for both children and the elderly were identified as a concern. Finally, the fact that 46% of the respondents indicate that the street is unsafe is very troubling. Regardless of any plans to pedestrianize the street, improving the safety on the street for visitors should be a priority.

Support for Pedestrian-Only Commercial Street

The mall visitors were asked if Commercial Street should be made pedestrian-only (Figure 30).

More than half of the respondents felt that there is no alternative parking space nearby. It would be interesting to know through further study if the respondents are aware of all the parking facilities that are located in the area around Commercial Street. It is possible that people are unaware of their options and are aware of the insignificant number of parking spaces the street itself actually provides. Also, 50% indicated that they were not interested in walking from the parking spaces that were available. One third of the respondents (38%) suggested that this clearly shows that mall shoppers believe that Commercial Street should be made pedestrian-only. Interestingly, this number was higher than the visitors to Commercial Street. What this result also suggests is that it is not the parking on the street itself that is an issue. If people wanted to be able to park on the street the number supporting a pedestrian only street would be much lower. Rather, this result suggests that additional parking many be needed in the area surrounding Commercial Street.

It is very important to note that 65% of the respondents indicated that a pedestrian-only area would keep them safe from vehicles. Again, this is contrary to the opinion of the majority of merchants that Commercial Street is safe. In addition, the respondents suggested that a pedestrian-friendly street would be accessible to all so, it would be safe for young and old alike to walk and shop. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents believe that such an initiative would enhance socialization. Over 56% commented on lesser pollution levels once the commercial street becomes a pedestrian-only area.

In addition to finding out what the respondents believed were the benefits, we also wanted to find out why the 25% did not want a pedestrian-only Commercial Street (Figure 32).

More than half of the respondents felt that there is no alternative parking space nearby. It would be interesting to know through further study if the respondents are aware of all the parking facilities that are located in the area around Commercial Street. It is possible that people are unaware of their options and are aware of the insignificant number of parking spaces the street itself actually provides. Also, 50% indicated that they were not interested in walking from the parking spaces that were available. One third of the respondents (38%) suggested that this clearly shows that mall shoppers believe that Commercial Street should be made pedestrian-only. Interestingly, this number was higher than the visitors to Commercial Street. What this result also suggests is that it is not the parking on the street itself that is an issue. If people wanted to be able to park on the street the number supporting a pedestrian only street would be much lower. Rather, this result suggests that additional parking many be needed in the area surrounding Commercial Street.

Finally, respondents were asked if they were interested in participating in a Car-Free Day (Figure 33) and if so, what suggestions they had for making the day a success (Figure 34).

The majority of the people (65%) is ready to celebrate the occasion and would like to know the changes a car free day will bring to the street and the city. Since this is a new kind of initiative in India, probably people are not accustomed to the idea...
The respondents had many great suggestions including organizing local food counters, children’s play areas, and other amenities to attract more visitors. In addition, 51% felt that raising awareness of social issues would be a good idea. For those not interested in celebrating Car Free Day, the reasons included not being interested in the celebration (18%), and because it may fall on a working day (9%). A less significant number report that they prefer to use the car and hence will not join the celebration.

Improvements to Commercial Street

In order to provide valuable information to the merchants of Commercial Street, we asked the mall visitors if there were changes or improvements that should be made to Commercial Street (Figure 35).

Forty-four percent of respondents feel that better pedestrian facilities such as safety and ease in the mobility of the pedestrians could change the situation. The other requests included were rest rooms, drinking water facilities, more variety of affordable eateries, street benches, clean and safe streets and car free street, and more branded shops. Thirty-three percent requested more car parking on the street. Unless businesses were removed, this would be impossible. Interestingly, almost the same number 29% requested that parking be removed from the street altogether.

Conclusion

Almost 49% of the mall shoppers found the street too crowded and 34% of respondents felt that shopping experience on C. St is not pleasant experience due to high pollution owing to the passing vehicles. Although parking was clearly a concern, there is little evidence to suggest that removing the spaces on the street itself will have much of an impact. In addition, issues related to maintenance, lack of proper basic amenities such as toilets and water, and the polluted environment caused by so many vehicles needs to be addressed in order to enhance the perception of the street as a place to visit. This clearly shows that once these factors are taken care of, the streets can be made an attractive point for the people in the city as well as the tourists. Given that 51% felt that the place has both local and branded goods to offer for the shoppers, making it attractive, suggests there are opportunities to bring mall shoppers back to Commercial Street.
Commercial Street, once upon a time a true ‘Shoppers Paradise’, has become the victim of modernization as most of the traditional shops have been replaced with branded shops selling garments, jewelry, leather accessories etc. The charm of meeting people from all walks of life coupled with enhanced opportunities for socializing is slowly getting eroded as the footpaths are encroached upon by cars which queue up to occupy all the space. With hardly any space left for the pedestrians to walk safely, there seems to be lack of planning in terms of ensuring that Commercial Street sustains its title as ‘Shoppers’ Paradise’.

The research done by Das et al. (2009) reveals that, to satisfy the desire of 2% of people for car parking on the street, 98% of pedestrians are facing various difficulties such as no proper walking space and safety issues because of the moving vehicles. The mall culture is spreading quickly in Indian cities, where shoppers can enjoy not only shopping but eating out, games for children, and other entertainment. In the face of such competition, the age-old spaces provided by Commercial Street are rapidly becoming outdated. (The malls are popular also because they are free of cars is rarely noted.) The merchants also feel that they are losing business due to the springing up of malls in and around the street, and feel that parking space is a major deciding factor for their business.

The study done with merchants and visitors on Commercial Street as well as in the malls in and around Commercial Street has shown that car-parking facilities are an important, though by no means exclusive, feature for getting more business. In fact, there is little evidence to suggest that parking on the street is necessary at all. While shoppers have identified the car parking facilities available in the malls as a key feature, they also highlighted other issues such as better pedestrian facilities, more eateries, and basic amenities. These facilities make the shopping a pleasant experience. Another important advantage to malls is that they serve as one-stop facilities for all family members whereas Commercial Street predominantly caters to those seeking clothing, shoes, jewelry and other accessories for women and children. Here men have to do their shopping separately and hence Commercial Street is not a family destination for shopping.

The research conducted at various malls in and around the Commercial Street finds that 15-20 year olds spend more of their leisure time in shopping malls as it serves as a multi-purpose venue in contrast to the shops in Commercial Street. However, it is important to note that mall visitors continue to go to Commercial Street despite the stated advantages of the mall. This suggests that there continues to be something appealing about the street that can’t be achieved at a mall.

Apart from the facilities available in the mall, safety, which is a major concern for all the age groups, is much greater in the mall whereas in Commercial Street, pedestrians almost literally have to fight for space and safety. While merchants were confident in terms of the safety of the pedestrians, citing “lack of reported collisions” as the basis for their beliefs, potential customers were concerned. As the Das et al. study rightly pointed out, there is an unjustifiable amount of space being dedicated to automobiles and this puts pedestrians in danger, regardless of the number of reported collisions.

Fifty-five percent of mall shoppers believe that Commercial Street has its own charm as a place which speaks of the bygone era where most of the elderly population of today might have spent good times earlier and should not be made a victim of new malls. The participants believed that it is time for a coordinated effort to revive the ‘shoppers’ paradise’. Research done by Das et al. found that 70% of shoppers prefer to see the street as a Pedestrian Friendly Street. The number is even higher, 90%, for people walking in the street. Those interviewed felt that if we could take care of the crowds and remove the parking spaces from the street, it would be a heavenly place for shoppers and Commercial Street could retain the old charm even in the midst of globalization and urbanization. People suggested a few issues to address such as easy access to the area, better pedestrian facilities, more eateries and basic amenities.

While people strongly feel that making Commercial Street car-free street could definitely improve the status of the street as Pedestrian Friendly Street (75%), the merchants are against the idea. They fear loss of business, which is an expected response among merchants even as experiences across the world continue to give an entirely different result. Across the world, people have protested under the pretext and assumption that they are going to lose their livelihood, but once they experienced the benefits of a car free street, in fact these people who demonstrated against it becoming carfree are soon converted, becoming supportive for the same and even taking credit for making their street pedestrian-friendly. International experience supports the view that pedestrian-only zones in locations like Commercial Street would encourage more independent movement, active play amongst children and safety across the age groups. Less land occupied for parking and roads would mean more space available for greenery and for opportunities to socialize across caste, age and communities.

Merchants stated that they get more customers on weekends, especially during the evening hours of 4-9 pm. These are precisely the timings typically used to pilot pedestrian-friendly streets and walking plazas. People could greatly enjoy their shopping experiences and family outings during weekends if the environment could provide for all the members in the family, with a safe and hassle-free area where children can do their own creative activities.

It may be helpful to point out that while it is important to obtain people’s opinion about the kinds of facilities they would like, it
PEDESTRIANISATION OF COMMERCIAL STREET

does not make sense to ask people to engage in urban or transport planning, for instance, by saying how wide they would like sidewalks or streets to be, whether streets should be one- or two-way, and how many parking spaces they would like. What it does make sense to ask is the sort of conditions they would like to see, e.g. lower pollution, less noise, more safety, and more places where children can play and people of all ages can socialize, and so on. The expertise of urban and transport planners can then facilitate the choosing of solutions that will address people’s felt needs. Similarly, one does not approach a doctor with a request for specific medicine or treatments, but rather with symptoms. The training of the doctor leads him or her to suggest an appropriate treatment. So too with urban and transport planning; those with expertise know of the likely results of various measures, information that is not available to the average citizen.

While initial experiments with making the street carfree could be initiated on days like International Car Free Day on Sept 22nd, a challenge emerges as people are really interested to feel and know the experience (65%), whereas merchants are skeptical about their business during those hours and hence less supportive for the celebration (37%). However, those who object to the idea can be educated as to the experiences of other countries, highlighting the great success that pedestrian streets enjoy in city after city around the world.

Although the majority of the people supported the car free street or Pedestrian Friendly Street, they have underlined some prerequisite conditions on the street to make it an enjoyable and safe experience. The authorities have to look into the issues of better pedestrian facilities with a road free of potholes, areas for children to play, more eateries and facilities such as drinking water, trash disposal, and rest rooms. Such changes could make the street safer and provide opportunities for better interaction among people, thereby leading to more connected and vibrant communities.

As Pune Cantonment Board (PCB) mentions, much planning was needed after the army commander declared his intention to implement his decision on making MG Road a walking plaza. It took almost one year to make the decision a reality, during which there were several rounds of brainstorming sessions with local councilors, shopkeepers and citizens, and a lot of groundwork. Elaborating further, the Chief Executive Officer of PCB, Mr. Bhaskar Reddy, says, "We improved the conditions of the M G Road as well as of the neighboring roads. The role of private-public partnerships was crucial, and the beautification of the Tarapore Road (which runs adjacent to the M G Road) is an example. Parking space around M G Road was augmented with pay and park schemes; footpaths, lighting and re-surfacing of the road was then done to make the stroll pleasant for citizens."

As is evident from the findings of the study, shoppers are eager to support programs to make Commercial Street a pedestrian-only zone. With shrinking public spaces in urban areas, places like Commercial Street could lead to enhanced sociability and community mingling if adequate measures are taken to improve the conditions for visitors to the street. Such a trend would bring more business to the merchants as the number of people visiting Commercial Street would increase over time.
Based on the research findings, the following recommendations have been made to the Directorate of Urban Land and Transport and to the authorities of Municipal Corporation of Bangalore to develop Commercial Street into a pedestrian-friendly zone by making it car free:

- Commercial Street should be made a car free street with alternate arrangements for car parking in the neighbouring areas.
- The conversion could begin on a trial basis, making it pedestrian friendly for a few hours on week days and later extending it to weekends. The eventual results should be a completely pedestrian-friendly street free of motorized vehicles.
- A network should be formed with different stakeholders to work through the various steps needed for the conversion.
- Various awareness programs should be organized targeting different stakeholders, including government departments, pedestrians, and merchants.
- A children’s play area should be created on the street to engage them while their elders shop.
- The safety of pedestrians should be the primary priority of the concerned authorities.
- Local healthy food establishments can be developed, including street stalls.
- In order to facilitate access by the elderly, children, those of different abilities, and bulk purchasers, pick-up and drop-off facilities should be provided in the premises close to the nearest bus/auto-rickshaw stand.
- Goods delivery to the shop can be made either in the morning or in the night before/after business hours.
- In promoting the idea of a pedestrian-only street, it could be useful to create an exhibit containing photographs of pedestrian streets in other cities along with artists’ renderings of a pedestrian-only Commercial Street. To make the exhibit interactive, people could be asked to draw and write up potential activities and other amenities that could be provided if more space were made available by removing the cars.
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- “Year on, walking plaza on MG Road shows no signs of revival": http://www.indianexpress.com/news/year-on-walking-plaza-on-mg-road-shows-no-s/553557/
Liveable Cities Phase II - Bangalore
Pedestrianisation of Commercial Street Stakeholder and Situational Analysis
Respondents: Shopkeepers/Merchants located in Commercial Street

Shop Name and No. ____________________________
Year of Establishment __________________________

1. Type of business/merchandise
   a. Clothes
   b. Restaurant/Bakery
   c. Shoes/Leather items
   d. Jeweler
   e. Artifact
   f. Grocery
   g. Electronics
   h. Any other, please specify

2. On average, about how many customers visit you on a weekday and on a weekend?
   (A) Weekday:
   a. Less than 25
   b. 25-49
   c. 50-99
   d. 100-199
   e. 200 or more
   (B) Weekend:
   a. Less than 25
   b. 25-49
   c. 50-99
   d. 100-199
   e. 200 or more

3. When do you usually find heavy rush of people on Commercial Street?
   a. From 10 am to 1 pm
   b. 1 pm to 4 pm
   c. 4 pm to 9 pm
   d. Throughout the day

4. What percentage of your customers or clients would you estimate drive to Commercial Street and park in the area? ________ %

5. Do you think Commercial Street is safe for Pedestrians?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Can't say
6. If Commercial Street was changed to be a pedestrian only street; will it affect your business?
   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐
6.1. If yes, in which way?
   a. Customer/clients will decrease ☐   b. Customers/clients will increase ☐

7. Will you like to test 'a day' when no cars will be allowed on the commercial street?
   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐
7.1 If yes, then would you like to celebrate Bangalore Car Free Day on September 22nd 2011?
   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

8. Will you support in making Commercial Street as the first, 'only pedestrian' street in Bangalore?
   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐
8.1 If Yes, Why

8.2 If No, Why

9. What are your suggestions for making Commercial Street more safe and visitor friendly?
   
   
   
   

Thank you for your time!

Name of the surveyor: ________________________________ Date and time: ___________
APPENDIX 2

Liveable Cities Phase II - Bangalore
Pedestrianisation of Commercial Street Stakeholder and Situational Analysis
Mall Intercept Survey

Name of the mall:

1) Age of person:
   a) Less than 15  □
   b) 15 to 29  □
   c) 30 to 44  □
   d) 45 to 60  □
   e) Above 60  □

2) Gender:
   a) Male  □
   b) Female  □

3) How often do you visit malls in a month?
   a) Rarely  □
   b) Once  □
   c) Twice  □
   d) Thrice  □
   e) 4 times  □
   f) More than 4 times  □
   g) Others (Specify)

4) How often do you visit Commercial Street in a month?
   a) Rarely  □
   b) Once  □
   c) Twice  □
   d) Thrice  □
   e) 4 times  □
   f) More than 4 times  □
   g) Never  □
   h) Any other (specify)

5) Where else do you shop?
6) What is the difference between Commercial Street and Mall shopping experience?  
(Tick all the options applicable in both the columns)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malls</th>
<th>Commercial Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)  Better parking facility</td>
<td>Not enough parking space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)  Different facilities under one roof</td>
<td>Best place for window shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)  Availability of high end products</td>
<td>Availability of both local and branded goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)  Best place to spend time with friends</td>
<td>Too crowded/ Heavy volume of traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)  Hygienic food counters</td>
<td>No cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)  Exclusive (Poor usually don't use the Malls)</td>
<td>Inclusive (Mixed group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)  Good/ Clean basic amenities</td>
<td>Poor basic amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)  Not environment friendly</td>
<td>Polluted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I)  Any other (please specify)</td>
<td>Any other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Do you think Commercial Street has lost its appeal as a shopping area with the introduction of malls? 

a) Yes ☐  

b) No ☐

7.1. If yes, why? (Tick all the options applicable)

a) Too crowded ☐ 

b) Not enough space for parking/walk from far away ☐

c) Less safe due to moving vehicle ☐

d) No child friendly infrastructure ☐

e) Unfriendly conditions during hot sun, rains etc ☐

f) Poor facilities and ambience for elders & children. ☐

g) Any other (specify) __________________________________________

8) What would most likely influence you to visit Commercial Street more frequently? 
(Tick all the options applicable)

a. Better pedestrian facility ☐

b. No parking on the street ☐

c. Easy access- through different modes of public connectivity ☐

d. More eateries ☐

e. Better basic amenities such as rest rooms, drinking water etc ☐

f. More space for parking on the street ☐

g. More branded shops ☐

h. Any other (specify) __________________________________________
9) Do you think Commercial Street should be made car free in order to make it pedestrian friendly?
   a) Yes ☐  b) No ☐

9.1 If Yes, then why (Tick all the options applicable)
   a) To be accessible to all including disabled, children and elderly ☐
   b) To have safety from moving vehicles ☐
   c) To enhance community interaction/socialization ☐
   d) To have lesser polluted environment ☐
   e) Any other (specify) ____________________________

9.2 If No, then why (Tick all the options applicable)
   a) Cannot walk the distance ☐
   b) Cars parked on Commercial Street do not interrupt the pedestrians ☐
   c) No alternative parking spaces nearby ☐
   d) Business loss for merchants ☐
   e) Inconvenience for old people, children and physically challenged ☐
   f) Any other (specify) ____________________________

10) September 22nd is International Car free day; will you celebrate Car Free Day at Commercial Street on September 22, 2011?
   a) Yes ☐  b) No (Specify the reason) ☐

10.1 If yes, what are your suggestions for making the day a success?
   (Tick all the options applicable)
   a) Children Play Area ☐
   b) Games and competitions (face painting, mehendi etc...) ☐
   c) Performance arts ☐
   d) Local food counters ☐
   e) Local art ☐
   f) Awareness programme on various social issues ☐
   g) Any other (specify) ____________________________

Thank you for your valuable time and comments!

Name of the Surveyor: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
### Table No 1  
Age and gender of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Commercial Street at the turn of the 20th Century: the life of a bygone era</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Commercial Street (1910)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Commercial Street (1990)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Crowded Commercial Street with pedestrian and vehicles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Piazza San Marco, Venice: One of the world’s great public spaces</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cars parked on both sides and on footpaths</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Route map to C. St from Shivaji Nagar Bus Depot</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Parking area for C. St</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Duration of establishment on Commercial Street</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Percentage of Business by Type</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Number of Customers Reported by Merchants on an Average Weekday and Weekend Day</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Peak business hours</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Percent of Merchants by Percent of Customers parking on Commercial Street</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Merchant Opinion about Whether Pedestrianization Impacting their Business</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Merchant Opinion about how their Business would be impacted</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Merchant Opinion about the Benefits of a Pedestrian-Only Street</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Merchant Willingness to Celebrate a Car-Free Day on Commercial Street</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Merchant Opinion about the Possibility of C. St Being the First Pedestrian- only Street in Bangalore</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pedestrian safety on Commercial Street</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Merchant Suggestions for Customer-Friendly Street</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Visitor’s Mode of Arrival on Commercial Street</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>How Visitors who Walked to Commercial Street Arrived to the Area</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Road Space Allocation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Visitor’s Preference for a Pedestrian-Only Commercial Street</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Respondents visiting per monthly place</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Visitors preferred shopping areas</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Respondents Reasons for Visiting the Mall</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Commercial Street shopping experience</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Respondents’ Reasons for Commercial Street Losing Charm</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mall Visitors’ Opinion about Pedestrian-Only Commercial Street</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Benefits of a Pedestrian-Only Street identified by Respondents</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Why 25% of Respondents did not want a Pedestrian-Only Commercial Street</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Respondents Willingness to Participate in Car-Free Day</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Respondents’ Suggestions for Car-Free Day Celebration</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Mall Visitors’ Suggestions for Improving Commercial Street</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some cases, automobiles or more particularly delivery trucks may be allowed access at certain hours, but to be truly pedestrian, motorized vehicles cannot be allowed. Some pedestrian streets do allow for bicycles as long as the cyclists move slowly and carefully, respecting the priority of pedestrians.

http://editthis.info/wcd/World_Carfree_Day
http://www.mobilityweek.eu/
http://www.slideshare.net/das_gv/commercial-st-survey-report
http://www.slideshare.net/das_gv/commercial-st-survey-report
http://www.slideshare.net/das_gv/commercial-st-survey-report

At the time of this study, there were only 81 parking spaces on Commercial Street. The project team ascertained that the average number of passengers in a car was 2.75. This amounts to a maximum of 219 people who would have been able to park on the street. There were 9200 visitors during the two hour period on Sunday. This amounts to 2% of the visitors being able to park on the street.

Multiple responses
Multiple responses
Based on the 45% who felt C. St has lost charm due to malls, multiple responses
Based on 75% who thinks that C. St should be made car free street to be a pedestrian friendly street, multiple responses
Based on 25% who thinks C. St should need not be car free street to make pedestrian friendly, multiple responses
Based on the 65% who are interested in celebrating car free day on Sept 22nd, 2011, multiple responses

Multiple responses
http://www.slideshare.net/das_gv comercial-st-survey-report

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