Trees, Retail & Shopper Response

taking care of business!

A Research Review
& design possibilities

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people & trees - deep connections!
- Inner City Business Districts
- Small Town Business Districts
- Freeway & Roadside Communities
- Athens GA Case Study
- Strip Malls & Roadside

5 studies

Sponsors:
National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council - USDA Forest Service
National Main Street Program
National Scenic Byways Research Center
many local partners!
“low maintenance”

now, why would this tree look ill?
• Research Questions:
  trees and visual quality?
  trees and consumer behavior?
  trees and product pricing?

• Methods:
  mail out/in surveys
  national or local sample
  residents/nearby city residents

- Methods –
  surveys
  mailing across selected districts
  person-to-person contact
  interviews
Image Categories (sorted by ratings)

Pocket Parks
mean 3.72
(highest)

Full Canopy
mean 3.63

Enclosed Sidewalk
3.32

Intermittent Trees
2.78

Scale: 1 = not at all, 5 = like very much, 26 images
No Trees
mean 1.65
(lowest)
(high - 3.72)

Survey Scenarios
Streetscape and Canopy Differences
1. Place Perceptions

Place Character
Products & Merchants

higher ratings for scenario with tree canopy
2. Patronage Behavior

- travel time, travel distance
- duration of visits
- frequency of visits
- willingness to pay for parking

*increased market range & potential*

Visit Length

![Graph showing visit length](image)
3. Product Pricing

- higher willingness to pay for all classes of goods

- 9.2% higher in districts with trees (12% in large cities)

**trees & consumer spending**
1. Place Perceptions
   • Place Character
   • Interaction with Merchants
   • Quality of Products

2. Patronage Behavior
   • travel time, travel distance
   • duration & frequency of visits
   • willingness to pay for parking

3. Product Pricing
   • higher willingness to pay for all types of goods
   • higher in districts with trees – 9-12%

anthropology of consumer behavior

Place Marketing

Relationship Marketing
Trees make a retail “experience”

Place Marketing
- More expensive to recruit new customer than to retain established customer
- Trust, quality, loyalty

Trees & District Image
- Product and business quality
- Higher price willingness-to-pay
Small Malls

Preferences and Scenarios

Small Malls (strip malls)

1: Mixed Screen, mean 3.18, 0.91 sd
2: Ordered Trees, mean 3.09, 0.78 sd
3: Shrub Edge, mean 2.35, 0.96 sd
4: No Vegetation, mean 1.39, 0.83 sd

Preference ratings
1-5

mean
1.39

mean
2.35

mean
3.09

mean
3.18
Small Malls (strip malls)

- Mall Having Trees
  - Amenity: much higher
  - Business Quality: higher
  - Positive Merchants: higher
  - Wayfinding: much lower

Product Pricing
- Willingness-to-pay
  - 8.8% more

Wolf, Arb & UF, 2009
funding by ISA Tree Fund
Design Details

Trees in Retail Business Districts

Bell Town District, Seattle, WA
Double row trees, Conifer plantings

Edmonds, Washington
Planning Guidelines for Trees and Retail Business

Pacific Northwest Chapter
International Society of Arboriculture

Info@pnwisa.org
Human Dimensions of Urban Forestry and Urban Greening

Featuring research on people's perceptions and behaviors regarding nature in cities.

Research Director
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