INTRODUCTION

Shopping centers or malls, which originated in the 1960s, are a collection of at least 20 businesses and services with a minimum of 5,000 square meters of retail space. They are designed, created, and maintained as a single unit and provide a diverse selection of items to stimulate consumption. Without a doubt, in a world where time is a precious commodity, these retail complexes will have to adapt and turn themselves into appealing poles that serve as a showcase for innovation.

Thus, their success in regaining their footing is predicated on a hybrid mix of digital technology based on the connection linked to actual physical surroundings to enhance the shopping and buying experiences that maximize the integration of commerce and leisure. Similarly, captivating the customer entails a more restrained external architecture with a solid regional connotation that blends in with its surroundings. To this end, these factors should contribute positively and sustainably to the customer’s well-being.

Authors addressed concerns regarding the most critical aspects affecting the appeal of shopping centers (Mara & Alemán, 2012). The importance placed on assortment and commercial variety, the variety of establishments, franchises, and chain branches, as well as the attractive offer of leisure and catering, which is a significant factor of commercial attractiveness, is consistent with research conducted by numerous scholars (Rayner et al., 2003; Paul, 2015; Kuwata, 2016). According to these studies, the issue of shopping malls constructed in the late 1980s and early 1990s is prominent. How can they refresh themselves and maintain their attractiveness while attempting to implement the most creative concepts?

The city, according to historian Henri Pirenne, is the «daughter of business.» (2014). This remark implies an «evident connection» (Lemarchand, 2008), a «tight connection» (Dugot, 2010), between economic and social activity, commerce in major cities, that has significantly increased and diversified in recent years as a result of innovative characteristics.

Creativity was confined to technology characteristics; nowadays, commercial innovation is mostly non-technological (Dupuis, 2002; Choukrour, 2012). The latter is focused on marketing innovations such as new shop ideas or formats, new items, services, packaging or packaging, a new customer interface, and new promotion or loyalty programs.
For a lengthy period, less developed nations were characterized by fragmented markets, with the individual shop serving as the decision-making unit. No chain retailers could form a coordinated distribution system (Huang & Sternquist, 2007).

Today, these nations' retail landscapes are undergoing dramatic transformations, including the fast modernization of the retail sector via the building of contemporary shopping complexes.

This industry has numerous advantages; it is a true social melting pot (all backgrounds, socio-professional categories, and origins) and one of the social pillars, employing a population with few or no qualifications, young and predominantly female. This profile is particularly vulnerable to underemployment.

The image of shopping centers is gradually becoming more prevalent, as customers become more discerning and want to visit more beautiful and well-maintained retail complexes. Thus, management recognized the need for renewal and diversification to retain traffic.

Historically centered on interior design, shopping malls are increasingly open to the outside world to become self-contained living places. Seducing clients has become critical, and this may be accomplished via a more appealing building design with a solid regional meaning and connections with its surroundings.

In a culture where time is becoming an increasingly essential notion, individuals have free time yet feel as if they do not have enough. This sense of time squandered is mirrored in customer behavior, resulting in decreased shopping frequency and time spent shopping. In 1980, the average amount of time spent in a shopping mall was 90 minutes; now, it is less than 50 minutes. (Bondue, 2004)

In this regard, small businesses are also losing market share to commercial centers, owing to increased home motorization and the widespread participation of women, both of which contribute to a high degree of shopping mobility and even peregrination on an agglomeration-wide scale. (Bondue, 2004).

As the image of shopping malls grows more ubiquitous, owners, managers, and operators have recognized the need for innovation to increase patronage. Individuals are increasingly voicing their opposition to being regarded as customers and wish to get joy from the purchase process. Their increasingly complicated and demanding requirements extend far beyond the commercial offer (Alvarez, 2001).

To this end, the future of shopping centers is predominately about comfort and pleasure, and a renewal of the commercial offering from an aesthetic standpoint or adaptation to consumer demand is therefore, more than necessary, as consumers will flock to these centers primarily to be entertained or indulge in their favorite leisure activities.

The Family Entertainment Center is becoming fashionable, an idea pioneered by Americans a few years ago. Futuristic design, a strong connection between business and leisure, and a proliferation of services all contribute to the fact that these enclosures of the newest generation are actual centers of life.

The primary goal of this diversification is to increase consumer loyalty by providing landmarks and simplifying their everyday life. The grouping of various activities is not purely commercial, and it guarantees cumulative visitor attendance to energize the retail complex and transform it into a destination.

The scientific component of this study aims to elucidate the notions of innovation and appeal, bearing in mind that shopping malls are first and foremost places of residence before they become a commercial draw for an increasingly disloyal and impatient clientele. This topic of commercial innovation poses numerous questions: How do consumers in Algeria’s shopping malls (in the case of Ritej mall Constantine) perceive commercial innovation? What are the implications of these consumers’ perceptions of innovation for their behavior? To what extent are customers willing to accept a new product or service?

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Development of a Multi-Criteria Decision-Support Tool for Retail Innovation**

To stay competitive in today’s market, commercial enterprises must continually enhance their goods, minimize the danger of design mistakes, and boost their chances of success via the innovations they envision.
Commercial Innovations as a Necessary Reinvention in Light of Consumer Expectations

Undoubtedly, commerce is one of the few areas that have fostered the creation of “local theories of innovation.” It is believed that approaches based on commercial contexts are beneficial for studying innovation in all its manifestations and finding specific paths to success. Recognized as a source of competitive advantage, innovation transforms the commercial sector into a strategic issue (Reinartz et al., 2011). Thus, to address corporate innovation, the current research focuses on the multi-criteria decision support method’s capacity to lead thinking toward a collection of viable or conceivable alternatives.

This multi-criteria decision support study tool is based on a system for evaluating actions against a family of criteria using preference dimensions. These criteria are critical since they enable the modeling of various solutions. This analysis is defined first by the selection of criteria, which results in the identification of the best action or actions, followed by sorting, which involves assigning the alternatives to previously defined categories, and finally by order, which arranges them according to equivalence classes consistent with the preferences of the decision-maker.

Commercial innovation in the context of use leads to identifying four consumer-perceived dimensions: service innovation, product innovation, idea innovation, and technology innovation.

This article covers four aspects: in the first dimension, the primary features of service innovation are discussed as reflected by the service supplied, which contributes to a desire to please more demanding and new clients. Indeed, the consumer/salesperson interaction is seen as the “front office” at the point of sale, with workers’ behavioral and relational abilities serving as the “front office.” From this vantage point, they serve as the foundation for the outlet’s reputation and image and the guarantee of consumer loyalty.

In a second dimension, defined by-product (brand) innovation, the study has used a media-interface strategy that aims to establish standards comparable to the brand, which is viewed as a sign of quality and a source of customer trust.

This study enables to express the conceptual innovation (environmental dimension) via architecture, design, forms, and atmosphere, both inside and outside the enclosures. Taxonomy of innovation configurations and logic was confirmed via a series of case studies gleaned from the interviews.

Finally, the article demonstrates that technological innovation is conceptualized as a physical aid to users. Similarly, it is seen as a means of facilitating connection (through the internet) and, lastly, attracting a youthful clientele hooked to Information Communication Technology (ICT).

To better understand which innovative, creative strategy to adopt today to successfully offer an experience to tomorrow’s customers, prospecting and confrontation of actions should be conducted. A list of space-related criteria would be conducted: access to public transportation, site accessibility, the number of parking spaces, the appearance of green spaces and urban furniture, the diversity of the commercial offer, and the exterior and interior architecture.

This is accomplished by a poll performed in February 2019. It was based on a representative survey of 1,000 persons aged between 15 and 70. To ensure sample representation, quotas on the total population questioned were created based on the following criteria: gender, age, socio-professional category, region of residence, and size of the metropolitan area of residency.

This work aims to understand Ritedj mall Algeria’s perception of innovation and the development strategy that aims to optimize its commercial performance through the decomposition of the dimensions considered according to the derived criteria that will be used in the analysis.
Commercial Innovations as a Necessary Reinvention in Light of Consumer Expectations

Survey

To ascertain customers’ perceptions of innovation at the Ritej mall, a questionnaire survey was administered to shops (100 questionnaires), managers (20 questionnaires), and a representative sample of the customer population (880 questionnaires) likely to be attracted by the shopping center. The sample size was 1000 surveys, with 44% of respondents being women and 56% men between the ages of 18 and 70. A non-stratified random sampling is used to pick the clientele, which is accomplished by our presence at the mall and distributing questionnaires by hand. The questionnaire took approximately ten minutes to complete. Two phases of the surveys were undertaken (Saturdays and one day during the week).

However, because of the high number of usable questionnaires collected, the study enables us to create a fairly realistic portrait of respondents on two significant topics: their opinion of innovation in shopping centers and its impact on consumer behavior.

Context of the Study

Currently, Ali Mendjeli is a new metropolis with a population of 500,000. Ali Mendjeli was considered a dormitory town related to its home city Constantine for around twenty years. Among these commercial structures, the Ritej mall, which is more imposing, punctuates the site’s architectural epannage.

To minimize the impact on the environment, this six-floor structure is located directly across from the University and opens up to its direction.

The Ritej mall, located in the western part of the new city Ali Mendjeli, is integrated into the urban fabric and is planned as a new generation of a multi-service center devoted to the tourist.

Opened in April 2016, the complex consists of 6,000 square meters of structures on six levels (basement, ground floor, ground floor + three above stories) and around 14,000 square meters of outdoor gaming and parking areas with 600 parking places.
Figure 2. Location of the Ritaj mall in the city of Ali Mendjeli (Source: Office of architecture Hammou Dziri Hammou (HDH), 2020).

According to the director of the mall, the mall averages 17,000 daily visitors but may reach 25,000 on weekends and 30,000 during holidays and vacations. Eventually, its region is projected to receive 8 million visitors per year (2019). The Ritaj mall's attractiveness will bring additional consumers to the city. Indeed, this endeavor is a reaction to the development of lifestyles and the emergence of new ways of consumption. It was designed to be a livable environment. The commercial offering is exceptional, with over 300 shops, including 12 worldwide brands, providing customers with all they need for everyday living or other purposes.

Figure 3. Plan of the underground level and floor (Source: Office of architecture HDH, 2020).

With a rectangular footprint of 95 m x 75 m and a checkerboard layout of its galleries, the Ritaj mall is split into four big sequences that are placed around an atrium and are dedicated to upmarket, youthful ready-to-wear, leisure, and family eateries.

The first series, which is located in the basement, contains the supermarket, numerous warehouses, and technological facilities. On the mezzanine level, the second sequence depicts the reception area, which includes four telephone service locations. It is a gathering place or leisure space where people may unwind, rest, and have fun. As for the third sequence, it is characterized by the first, second, and third floors dedicated to shopping malls with more than 300 shops.

Figure 4. Ground floor and first floor plan (Source: Office of architecture Hammou Dziri Hammou, 2020).
Finally, the fourth sequence is enhanced by enticing restaurant services that transform the shopping center into a site of life and envy, not to mention the fact that the tea rooms and restaurants are the center’s principal source of revenue.

Figure 5. Plan of the fourth floor (Source: Office of architecture Hammou Dziri Hammou, 2020).

Ritej mall’s architecture combines glass and clean concrete to produce a modern, urban, and vibrant design on a human scale. It seeks to establish a strategic foothold in the city.

Figure 6. Typical section of the different levels illustrating the services of the Ritej mall (Source: Office of architecture Hammou Dziri Hammou, 2020).

A bus service serves the area. Public transportation users represent the majority of visitors to the retail mall, although practically all of the center’s customers arrive by vehicle.

However, despite the retail center’s youth, the parking lot’s lack of growth is regretful. There is minimal foliage, and the vertical and horizontal signs are in poor condition.

Figure 7. Volumetric composition of the Ritej mall and the main façade (Source: Office of architecture Hammou Dziri Hammou, 2020).

Figure 8. Distribution of Ritej mall stores by sectors of activity (Authors, 2021).
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

According to the study, which surveyed 1,000 consumers, 40% of respondents prefer to shop for clothing at the mall, primarily because it enables them to try on and compare items.

Additionally, respondents underlined the social component (sharing a time with numerous people) of shopping at the mall, which was mentioned by 20% of respondents. 10% value the convenience of combining shopping with other leisure activities, such as dining out.

15% of respondents, on the other hand, are more likely to shop in a mall in order to save money and take advantage of discounts. 5% denotes convenient parking and special amenities.

Overall, the research demonstrates that although economic considerations are important, convenience seems to be a deciding factor for customers when it comes to choosing a shopping center over scattered stores. The mall’s concentration of items is mirrored in the 10% of respondents who value the ability to take the product home rather than looking in many places.

To get a better understanding of visitor expectations, the survey discovered that 65 percent of consumers are female, with an average age of 25 to 60 years. 25% of visits are with family, 40% with friends, and 15% with children.

The resultant analysis showed that 15% of respondents are between the ages of 15 and 25 and like shopping at the Ritej mall. On the other hand, they are relatively impervious to stores and markets.

The center’s exploitation by the 25 to 40-year-old age group, which accounts for 35% of the panel, expresses their desire to have fun while shopping and frequenting places of conviviality and sociability. In an environment where entertainment spaces are scarce, the mall becomes the playground of youth in search of trendy places conducive to all kinds of encounters.

They account for 35% of the panel, are elderly (40–60 years old), and have significant budgetary restrictions. They prefer small businesses (vegetable and fruit markets) along major thoroughfares. The elderly (60 years and over) account for 10% of the sample of customers who favor local businesses. They are culturally and economically affluent and have negative attitudes regarding shopping at huge retailers.
The Ritej mall is more popular with women than males, with an average age of between 15 and 40. During the week, families and children are scarce.

To have a better understanding of the mall's visitors and future consumers, 45 percent of visitors patronize neighborhood businesses (55 percent in the mall). 50% of mall patrons attend at least once a week, 25% once a month, and 15% sometimes. For 60% of tourists, an average visit to the mall lasts between one and two hours.

Among the other perks mentioned by respondents is the social factor (spending a moment with numerous people while shopping), which was mentioned by 35% of respondents. 30% value the ease of combining shopping with other leisure activities, such as eating out.
Commercial Innovations as a Necessary Reinvention in Light of Consumer Expectations

Figure 17. Reason for frequenting the mall (Authors, 2020).

Figure 18. Means of transportation used (Authors, 2020).

Figure 19. Origins of the people attending the mall (Authors, 2020)

Table 1. Degree of client satisfaction with the multi-criteria decision support criteria (Authors, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation barriers</th>
<th>Degree of customer satisfaction in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation of the Ritej mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The atmosphere at the mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to the mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of the mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Access and exit from the parking lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animation of the children’s area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior organization of the stores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility and legibility in the horizontal and vertical circulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior atmosphere: lighting, covering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage: computer graphics</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety: fire doors, ventilation system, emergency stairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity in the commercial, cultural and leisure functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Façades: Materials, texture, colors, decorative elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautification of exterior spaces</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mall participates in the economic and social life of the city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort and pleasure of purchase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational behaviors of the vendor/customer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advice and tips dedicated to the choice or use of products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clever organization of the store with optimal positioning of the goods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the internet an ally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection of the center with its customers</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commercial Innovations as a Necessary Reinvention in Light of Consumer Expectations

Figure 20. Degree of customer satisfaction in % (Authors, 2020).

Commercial Innovation’s Aspects Concerning Customer Expectations

The poll findings have helped us get a deeper understanding of how shoppers perceive innovation in retail malls. Four consumer-perceived characteristics of commercial innovation have been defined: service innovation, product innovation, idea innovation, and technology innovation.

Service innovation was regarded as a dimension related to the shopping center understudy, and two characteristics of service innovation were identified. The service supplied is seen as a criterion of innovation since it offers a variety of offerings that contribute to a desire to please more demanding and new clients. Ritej mall’s creative nature is attributable to establishing a daycare facility.

The consumer/salesperson interaction, centered on the staff’s particular attention and the control of the quality of the welcome provided to the client, is seen as a critical component of commercial innovation in Algerian shopping complexes.

Product (and brand) innovation has also been highlighted in its product dimension, even though product enhancement remains undeveloped in Algeria, where the informal market dominates mass distribution. It is observed via the media that the new generation of customers has developed certain expectations in this area. They are aware of what is going elsewhere in the West and seek standards comparable to the brand, which is seen as a sign of quality and a guarantee of customer trust.
In recent years, we've seen the brand relegated to a secondary role in the commercial sector, where the seller's reputation sufficed to provide credibility to his wares.

**Conceptual advancements (physical dimension)**

Ritej mall is a significant invention in the Constantinian environment. The research of the mall's physical qualities reveals that it is considered creative by respondents in various categories, including architecture and design firms. The Ritej mall’s originality is also apparent in the environment it creates by blending various colors inside the mall with the brightness of the windows, a feature to which Algerians are quite sensitive.

Finally, the Ritej mall seems to be a destination for shoppers looking for a place to unwind but who do not usually purchase.

**Technological Advancement**

Algeria's business environment is being transformed by ICT. Respondents in their remarks highlighted three applications of technology parks:

1. Technology is envisioned as a physical aid through escalators and elevators (vertical relationship between levels).
2. Since technology is viewed as a tool that facilitates connectedness (the internet), customers appreciate the ability to access the internet for free when visiting Ritej mall.
3. Technology is a technique of recruiting an ICT-addicted youthful consumer.

The examination of visitors' replies reveals that the major influence of the Ritej mall's perceived innovation is the feeling of connection created by the mall’s experience. These attachments are classified according to the kind of goods bought and the purchase location. Attachment to a bought product is commonly characterized as “a permanent and irreversible emotive bond with the brand that displays a sense of belonging” (Lacoeuilhe, 2000, p. 66). On the other hand, site attachment is characterized as “a positive, long-term emotional and identity-based connection between a consumer and a particular place of consumption, with variable degrees of intensity” (Debenedetti, 2006).

These two register seem to offer responders a sense of appeasement, relaxation, well-being, and even pride.

Of well-being and even pride among responders. Consequently, they are ready to suggest their preferred establishment and its goods to other customers.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study have theoretical ramifications. This work's first contribution is to have improved knowledge of the idea of perceived innovation in the Algerian setting. Earlier studies have emphasized a technical view of innovation; however, consumer perception is a critical factor that might explain an invention's success or failure. Four variables of perceived innovation at the Ritej mall Constantine have been identified using a multi-criteria decision support approach: service innovation, product innovation, idea innovation, and technical innovation.

Thus, this study sheds light on the nature of innovation in the Algerian context and contributes to a better understanding of prior studies (Reynold et al., 2007; Reinartz et al., 2011). This prior study demonstrated how innovation might be used in the marketing mix (Fassio and Koleva, 2009).

The Ritej mall is surrounded by automobiles via observations, interviews, and customer surveys. Any hierarchy is unattainable due to the absence of separation between constructed volumes and the automobile domain. The discontinuity of the two parking spots, their clustered entrances and exits, and the declivity of their platforms all confuse and bother visitors since the parking is intended to be the center’s initial impression. The two parking places have become strangling jams.

The two parking lots are currently congested. There is often no room for pedestrians, even though most guests arrive by automobile. There are no safe pathways in the region.

Today, just applying cement on a surface is insufficient. The visitor must be able to readily enter and exit the retail complex, get access to the entrances, and locate his automobile without feeling oppressed or uncomfortable. These are all factors that contribute to a customer's appeal.
Parking lot designers emphasize herringbone parking, which facilitates parking and trunk loading. Sometimes it is essential to sacrifice a few parking places to improve traffic flow. The turnover rate will be increased, and the parking capacity will finally be increased.

The retail center's exterior environment is devoid of roads, sidewalks, plazas, benches, water features, green spaces, and trees to provide shade. The trash trucks are immediately in front of the guests’ eyes. The Ritej mall has three opposed entrances, and navigating between them is tedious and dangerous.

Outside, children’s games are located in a confined location that mixes gaming and light consumption: creameries and bakeries. This area is situated between the Ritej mall structure and the arrangement of the parking lot.

In actuality, the facility lacks relaxing rooms and children's play facilities. On the mezzanine level, only the center hall (atrium) is utilized as a venue for leisure and gatherings.

Green space is a need for these sorts of institutions. To provide shaded places, the tendency is to grow trees across the parking lot. The greenery is employed to help control traffic flow and contribute to the facilities' aesthetic identity.

To make centers more enjoyable, visitors’ comfort must not be overlooked. This is mirrored in the way places are furnished (benches, advertising panels, etc.). They must provide various services both inside and outside the building to be the perfect cradle for children and relieve parents of continual stress. Lighting should not be overlooked; the difficulty is to use warm, vibrant colors and to expand the sources to cover a larger area. Similarly, signage is critical for ensuring the flow of information and for consumers’ comfort to minimize misunderstanding.

In Algeria, the integration of new energy into retail malls via photovoltaic panels is starting to take shape. Customers benefit from this system because it covers parking spots, shielding them from rain and intense summer heat. Consumers no longer want to shop in dimly lit, sterile box shops.

By considering these factors, innovation in retail malls is finding a home. These centers are designed to be living environments that merge seamlessly into their surroundings, and these centers are intended to be true living spaces well integrated into their surroundings. They should strive to establish themselves as a new destination by providing a multifunctional environment conducive to various leisure activities, meetings, exchanges, and mixing, thus fulfilling the true social function of a destination par excellence.

While e-commerce is a relatively new phenomenon, it evolves at a breakneck pace. Thus, comparable modifications in the development of shopping malls are not ruled out as a result of the growth of competition in the distribution of products and services, and lifestyles. As a result, retail complexes anticipate benefiting from the digital game from local marketing to growing a client base using social media sites to persuade customers.

Creating a database for each consumer that is refined by name, age, socio-professional category, and other declarative information becomes critical to offer tailored advertising. These consumer groups will be awarded points and coupons based on their distribution and sales volume.

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CONCLUSION

This exploratory research aimed to profile the Ritej mall’s users and investigate the factors that contribute to its appeal to improve its commercial performance, refresh, diversify, and innovate it. It is believed that the divergent paths taken by perceived innovations will have a significant impact on the future of these institutions in a developing nation.

This work has demonstrated, utilizing a multi-criteria decision support method, that the deconstruction of numerous socioeconomic and environmental variables into technical, technological, social, organizational, and informational criteria provides a basis for business innovation.

Findings demonstrate unequivocally that a shopping center’s creative nature is assessed in terms of shopping convenience, product variety, and marketing efforts to attract the largest number of customers. Thus, to stay current and retain patronage, these future shopping malls will be a location that serves the practical demands of people’s lives while also meeting their sociability needs.

Additionally, the recent economic crisis associated with covid19, the advancement of information and communication technologies, and the consideration of environmental issues are compelled to alter purchasing habits and consumption patterns, necessitating the emergence of a new commerce organization based on innovation.

This innovative commercial problem is relevant for land use planning and commercial urbanism. Thus, it is a necessary component of a city’s existence, balancing commercial organizations’ economic interests, planners’ concerns, and consumer happiness. They do so by portraying the impression of a thriving city while giving services to tomorrow’s clients.

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