Municipal perspective to success in urban commercial development

Pia Pässilä & Seppo Junnila
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When is a urban commercial development a success?

There is a short answer…. (=Not known)

… But there is a longer answer that leads us to reflect on:

• Municipality’s role in the development projects
• The way how the development processes are conducted
Outline

Municipality context

Data and Methodology

Results & Implications

Future Work
Municipalities context in Finland

- 311 municipalities
- Land use and building & promoting trade and employment one of the main tasks
- Need to co-operate with private sector actors
- Need to serve citizen, ”public interest”
Primary data from interviews

➢ SIZE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

- 35 000 - 49 000: 4
- < 150 000: 6
- 50 000 - 149 000: 4

➢ PROJECT TYPE

- 8 SHOPPING CENTER
- 4 COMMERCIAL CITY CENTER
- 2 RENEWAL OF EXISTING DEPARTMENT STORES
The short answer

“There’s no way to tell really”

“If it is built, it is a success. If not, it has failed”.

“After all, if we just find a realizable solution, that’s already quite good.”
Succesfull development creates better city and service structure

- Connects with other development in the area
- Balanced commercial development
- Supportive of the partial masterplan
- Fits the scene, looks decent
- Lively city center, more/better services
Succesfull development creates happy citizen & partners

- No official complaint from citizen
- No negative comments in newspapers or social media
- No disputes with the partners, a smooth process
- Improved partnership and/or new partners found
These goals and aims are:

- Negotiated with the developer / builder in the planning phase (City and service structure)

- Observed during the planning phase and after the first steps of building phase (serving citizen and partners)

What happens when the developed area is in use?

"It’s a really big shortcoming that we cannot know"

We do not have any resources for exploring that

Well, in that point the person in charge is already working in another project, so…
Conclusion and implications

- Success cannot be really measured because the goals are evaluated before and during the planning phase, but not after.
- The current institutional model and resources for urban planning not supportive for reflective and continuous development.

- Could the development process be more dynamic and supportive to innovative solutions to meet the challenges of digitalization and sustainability?
Future work: Collaborative approaches to innovation

- Open innovation (Chesbrough 2003), co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004), and ecosystem approaches (Llewellyn et al. 2014) trends in private sector innovation research

- Collaborative ideas in public sector studies also emerging (Hartley, Sørensen, and Torfing 2013)
Future work: Collaborative approaches to innovation – useful in urban development?

➢ What are the main challenges in applying continuous collaboration in urban development from municipality’s perspective?

➢ Solutions in other countries?
Thank you!

Contact me: Pia.passila@aalto.fi

Aalto University
School of Engineering Sciences
Real Estate Business Research Group