



Module 3, Investigation 1: Briefing

Let's go to the mall

Background

This investigation examines why malls are located where they are.

You may have noticed that there are different types of malls. For example, strip malls may have several stores lined along a busy street or may be arranged around a shared parking area. Outlet malls usually have brand name discount stores in separate buildings with ample parking. Other malls have many stores under one roof surrounded by large parking lots. Often these malls are multilevel and very large. Over time malls have increased in size and in the range of goods and activities they offer. In addition to numerous retail stores, they may have food courts, movie theaters, skating rinks, video arcades, and other forms of entertainment. This type of large mall is the topic of this investigation.

Malls use a lot of land and stand out on the landscape. They are large enough to appear on aerial photos and satellite images. Malls affect other places in a community and encourage dependence on automobiles. Wherever malls are built, vegetation and wildlife habitat are lost.

Shopping malls are found in large and small communities and are a part of everyday life for most people in the United States. Studying mall locations helps us understand patterns of economic activity in our communities and applies ideas about geography to daily life.

Objectives

In this investigation you will

- describe why malls are located in some places and not other places, and
- explain why NASA scientists are interested in studying malls.

Procedures for the Investigation

You will consider different aspects of the locations of shopping malls and examine images gathered by NASA showing an area in Huntsville, Alabama. Complete Logs distributed by your teacher.



Module 3, Investigation 1: Log 1

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Assume that you want to build a large shopping mall in your community. You will need a big parcel of relatively flat land. If you did field work in the area, you might identify several suitable parcels of land. To aid you in making a site selection, here is a list of features which may be important to the location of a mall. Add any features you think are missing.

- a. A four-lane road or interstate highway
- b. A manufacturing area
- c. A residential neighborhood
- d. A neighborhood shopping area
- e. An elementary school
- f. A sewage treatment plant
- g. _____
- h. _____

Select from the list the three most important and the three least important features for the mall to be near. Give reasons for your answers.

Most important and why?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

Least important and why?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____



Module 3, Investigation 1: Log 2

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There are good reasons why things end up in different locations. Now that you have considered the best site for a mall, you may examine other facilities in our communities. In this Investigation Log you consider locations of certain **features** and various community **facilities**. What are the consequences of different land uses being near each other? For example, what are some possible positive and negative relationships of a stadium being near a residential neighborhood? A sample set of answers is provided for **stadium**.

Community Facilities	Features					
	Highway	Manufacturing	Shopping	Neighborhood	Elementary School	Sewage Plant
Stadium	Easy to get to events	Possible noise and competing traffic	Fans like shopping	Stadium too noisy for residents	Too much traffic	Odors distract fans
Airport						
High School						
Fire Station						
Hospital						



Module 3, Investigation 1: Log 3

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Figure 1: Huntsville, Alabama by day



Source: http://science.msfc.nasa.gov/newhome/headlines/atlanta/hsv_IR.gif

Examine the Huntsville image and identify which feature is most likely a shopping mall. Using the major roads for orientation and assuming that the top of the image is north, describe the location of the mall. Give reasons to support your choice.

Continue to examine the image of Huntsville and list what types of human-built features are in the vicinity of the mall.

Human-Built Features

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Natural Features

What are some natural features that you can identify on the image?



Module 3, Investigation 1: Log 4

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Now examine the Huntsville image with the land uses labeled (Figure 2). For each of the uses listed below identify **one advantage** and **one disadvantage** of being near the mall. A sample set of answers is provided for the movie theater.

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Movie theater	People shopping can easily go see a movie.	The mall and the movie theater compete for parking.
Auto dealership		
Residential area		
Strip mall		
Manufacturing area		
Restaurants		
Bank		

Discussion Questions

1. According to people in the Huntsville area, the Madison Square Mall was built before all of the other commercial facilities shown in the image. Why would restaurants, a bank, a hotel, movie theater, and car dealers move near a shopping mall? _____

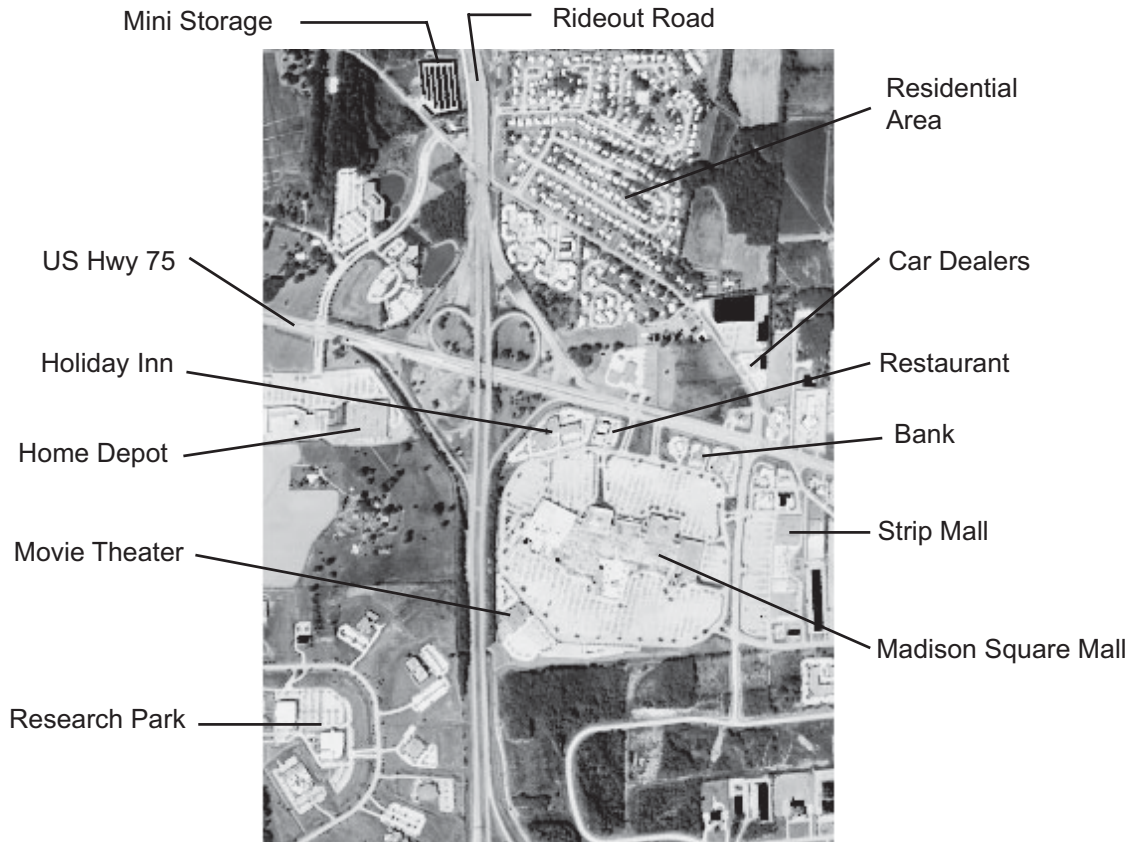
2. Would you want a new mall built across the street from your home? Why or why not?



Module 3, Investigation 1: Log 4

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Figure 2: Madison Square Mall and Surroundings



References

Geography for Life: National Geography Standards 1994

http://science.msfc.nasa.gov/newhome/headlines/essd08may97_1.htm

Background on Huntsville and features of the Madison Square Mall vicinity was provided by Blaine Adams, geography graduate student at Virginia Tech and native of Huntsville, Alabama