**Examining the Need for a Navigation App to Enhance**

**Customer Experience at Metrotown Mal**

for

Ivanhoé Cambridge owner

of Metrotown Mall

by

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(potentially more to be added)

**ABSTRACT** (to be added)

**INTRODUCTION**

1. **Background on Metrotown Mall**

Metrotown Mall, located in Burnaby, Canada, is a large shopping center that opened its doors to the public in 1986 (Ivanhoé Cambridge, n.d.). The mall has undergone numerous renovations and expansions, including a major expansion in 2001, which added over 400,000 square feet of retail space (Tourism Burnaby, n.d.). Today, the mall features over 450 stores and is considered one of the largest malls in Canada.

Metrotown Mall's success is attributed to its strategic marketing and branding efforts, which position the mall as a destination for fashion and lifestyle shopping (Ivanhoé Cambridge, n.d.). Additionally, the mall has invested in events and experiences, such as fashion shows and art installations, to create an engaging shopping experience for visitors.

**B. Purpose of Report and Intended Audience**

Although Metrotown Mall has implemented information desks/stands and a website with a map to enhance the customer experience, some customers still face challenges in navigating the mall's vast size. The absence of a user-friendly app with a map accessible through mobile devices causes people to waste time searching for an information desk/stand or navigating the website on a phone browser, which can be inconvenient. Additionally, during peak times, accessing the information desks/stands can be difficult due to the continuous flow of people.

Accordingly, this report is intended to the owner of Metrotown Mall, Ivanhoé Cambridge with the purpose of assessing public opinion regarding the need for the development of a navigation app for Metrotown Mall to enhance customer experience. The report will assess the feasibility of developing a navigation app and provide recommendations for implementing new navigation solutions across Metrotown.

**C. Description of Data Sources and Methods of Inquiry**

Primary data for this report consists of the results of an online survey distributed on Reddit and Facebook groups among people who live in Greater Vancouver area. The survey was created on Qualtrics and consisted of eight multiple choice and ranking questions, which assessed comfort of utilizing current navigation resources around Metrotown. It also, assessed the demand for development of the Navigation app around the Mall. A total of eighty-eight survey responses were collected.

Secondary data for this report will be gathered through review of navigation practices in other malls across Canada. The purpose of this review is to examine and compare the strategies used by other malls across Canada to make customer navigation easier.

**D. Limitations of the Report**

There are three potential limitations to this report. First of all, the sample size of eighty-eight survey responses may not be representative of the entire population of Metrotown Mall visitors and may not accurately reflect the opinions and experiences of all visitors. Secondly, the report is limited in scope, as it provides recommendations on improving navigation across the Mall, however it does not access the financial costs of the app development. Lastly, there is a time constraint. The report was completed within a specific timeframe, which may have limited the amount of research and analysis that could be conducted.

**E. Scope of Inquiry**

Thisreport covers six main points of inquiry:

1. How large is the demand for an online app of Metrotown mall?
2. Are many people familiar with the locations of places at the Metrotown Mall?
3. Would having an app ease the shopping experience of the customers?
4. Would people spend less time at the mall if they know how to get from point A to point B?
5. Do people experience being lost at the mall?
6. How likely are individuals to refer to the app for navigation, rather than information desk/stand?

**DATA SECTION**

**A. Current Navigation Around Metrotown Mall**

Navigating a large shopping mall like Metrotown Mall can be challenging, but the mall has implemented several measures to help visitors find their way around. One of these measures is the information desk, which is located on the ground level near the Grand Court. The information desk is staffed by associates who can provide directions, answer questions, and offer other assistance. The associates are also equipped with mall maps and can provide visitors with information about the mall's stores, services, and amenities. Additionally, the mall's website has a built-in map for customers to access. However, it is not as detailed as it could be.

Moreover, Metrotown Mall also has at least one navigation stand per floor located throughout the mall. These stands display mall directories and maps, and some even have interactive touch screens that allow visitors to search for stores and services. The navigation stands are strategically placed near high-traffic areas, such as escalators and elevators, to make them easily accessible to visitors. Nevertheless, these information desks are occasionally out of service, which makes it harder for individuals to navigate the mall. Which results in customer being lost and frustrated as they lose time moving from point A to point B.

**B. Navigation Strategies at other Malls across Canada**

The comparison of Pacific Centre in Vancouver, Eaton Centre in Toronto, and West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton to Metrotown is done by analyzing their navigation strategies as described on their websites to evaluate the potential customer appeal of developing a navigation app for Metrotown.

Pacific Centre and Eaton Centre, both owned by Cadillac Fairview, have similar strategies for customer navigation. They do not currently offer a navigation app for their malls, and instead rely on information desks/stands and website maps to enhance the customer experience (CF, n.d.). These strategies are comparable to those employed by Metrotown Mall.

After analyzing the navigation strategies of West Edmonton Mall, which is the largest mall in North America, it was discovered that the mall does not have a navigation app (Wem, n.d.). Like other malls, West Edmonton Mall uses information desks/stands and maps on their website to assist customers with navigation. However, West Edmonton Mall has the most detailed map among all the malls reviewed. Thus, if Metrotown implements a navigation app, it will be the first mall in Canada to use such strategy to enhance customer experience.

**C. Analysis of Collected Data & Feasibility Discussion**

Data from eighty-eight surveys conveys that 62.03% of the individuals believe that it is hard to navigate Metrotown Mall, 30.38% of the respondents believe that its manageable and only approximately 7.59% believe that it is easy to navigate the mall (Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Assessing effectiveness of Navigating Metrotown Mall*

Out of the respondents, 45 mentioned that they have experienced getting lost at the mall before. On the other hand, 30 of them have never been lost while navigating the mall, and 13 respondents were unsure if they have ever been lost at the mall. The data shows that more than a half of the respondents do not feel comfortable navigating the mall, which results in them getting lost. As such, these individuals are more likely to refer to available resources for navigation.

*Figure 2. Assessing Helpfulness of Information Desks/Stands at Metrotown Mall*

In assessing the helpfulness of the navigation desks/stations at Metrotown, 58.02% of the respondents stated that the stands are not helpful at all (Figure 2). Whereas, 29.63% found them somewhat helpful, and only 12.35% stated that the stands are extremely helpful (Figure 2). In addition, it was found that utilizing the Metrotown Mall website for navigation purposed is the least popular option (Figure 3). 65 respondents have never used a website for navigating the mall, 8 respondents are unsure if they have ever used the mall and only 15 respondents used the website to navigate the mall (Figure 3).

These findings suggest that people might not know that there is a map on the website which can be used or that the map is not convenient enough. Similarly, as shown in Figure 2, although people do use information desks and stands, they do not find them helpful.

*Figure 3. Assessing the Usage of Metrotown Mall Website for Navigation*

Finally, the data results convey that 36 respondents would use a navigation app if provided by Metrotown, 24 respondents would consider using it and only 28 respondents are certain that they would not use a navigation app (Figure 4).

*Figure 4. Public Opinion Regarding Using a Navigation App*

**CONCLUSION**

**A. Summary and Interpretation of Findings**

The findings show that majority of the respondents found it difficult to navigate Metrotown Mall, with only a small percentage finding it easy. Moreover, a significant number of respondents reported getting lost while navigating the mall. The findings also suggest that while information desks and stands are available at the mall, they are not perceived as very helpful by most respondents. Similarly, the website map is not widely used, possibly because it is not user-friendly or convenient.

Most importantly, the majority of respondents expressed interest in using a navigation app if provided by the mall. Accordingly, it can be concluded that Metrotown Mall would benefit from developing a navigation app to enhance the customer experience, especially given that many respondents have had difficulty navigating the mall and have expressed interest in using a digital navigation tool.

1. **Recommendations**

The following are recommendations for enhancing customer experience at Metrotown Mall:

1. Developing a Navigation App: since majority of the respondents expressed interest in a navigation app, the mall should consider developing one to aid in customer navigation. This would be a first-of-its-kind initiative among the malls in Canada and could help set Metrotown apart from its competitors.
2. Install signage which would inform customers that there is an app that could be utilized for navigation purposes.

**REFERENCES**

(to be added)