

CUSTOM CONTENT

Public-Private Space in Mixed-Use Development



The Jackson, 30th Street, North Park

As San Diego's urban landscape continues to densify and housing remains sparse, developers, architects, and engineers alike are turning to mixed-use projects as a means of enhancing property value and functionality while restoring value to the community. These mixed-use projects are becoming more prevalent as property markets shift and expand towards more urban environments. Principal David McCullough, of San Diego-based McCullough Landscape Architecture, has played an important role in the design and development of several of these landscapes.

David, his wife Catherine and their two children, Molly and Will, live in North Park, a historic mixed-use community. It was once a lightly populated suburb that has since transformed into a more urban, lively, burgeoning neighborhood which is home to distinctive shops, contemporary bars and restaurants, dynamic public schools, and private residences all within walking distance of one another. For David, mixed-use isn't simply a project, "It's a neighborhood, a community, and perhaps most importantly home to families and individuals who live, work, and play within their community." For mixed-use communities like North Park to remain viable they must provide residents with common areas and popular venues that enable them to better connect with their neighbors as well as their neighborhoods. With two mixed-use developments in construction located on Mississippi St. and El Cajon Blvd, steps away from one another, and another in the early design phase on 30th St., McCullough weaves beautiful landscaped spaces into plazas, paseos, and shared open spaces designed to attract locals

who live and work nearby.

David notes that parks, although recognized as a source of enjoyment, belonging, and ownership, are largely absent from mixed-use developments altogether. It's imperative that in mixed-use developments public spaces do not recede as private development expands. Communities need to find new and innovative ways to reconcile and integrate public and private spaces in this new development trend. Parks integrated with retail, commercial, residential, and industrial space can be a way of creating a seamless boundary between the different uses. A public space may therefore be more activated because it is drawing from such a mix of uses. These spaces also tend to be better managed when supported by the private entities. These open spaces are more suited to, and function better for, their communities if they co-exist alongside commercial entities and serve the needs of all the surrounding community. In this type of space, the needs of the neighborhood are more likely being met, and are less likely to be seen as traditional parks and open spaces. For example, Maggie Daley Park in Chicago, a public-private partnership, effectively identified there was a need for community uses such as an ice skating rink, bicycle rental shop, climbing, and miniature golf facilities. This park is a great addition to the City of Chicago and a must-see destination.

Not only will mixed-use parks attract consumers, making commercial spaces more profitable and enjoyable, but the income they generate will actively fund maintenance and other park-related expenses that publicly owned-and-operated parks must do without.

Submitted by

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