

## Focus Mixed-Use

# Connectivity is the catalyst for activating mixed-use project

It's no secret – a recent trend of commercial real estate is moving toward mixed-use development. This trend creates places for people to live, work, play and connect. People seek a lifestyle of ease, convenience and a sense of belonging. Creating a place that promotes these values is the goal of mixed-use development. One of the primary tools to a successful mixed-use project is the effective use of connectivity. Connectivity is a cohesive design intent and serves as a catalyst for activating a mixed-use development. The foundational principles of connectivity should be grounded in pedestrian, vehicular, architectural and environmental systems and how they interrelate and function to create an experience.

■ **Pedestrian connectivity.** This is the framework that connects people to uses, gathering spaces and to each other. The single most important element to a mixed-use development is the user. Therefore, it is vital that users have a safe, efficient and enjoyable way to navigate the mixed-use project. The organization of the pedestrian framework and the relationship within the overall development establish a pattern of interrelated walking paths, sidewalks and other pedestrian connectors, providing a safe connection from one use to another. Activity zones situated along pedestrian paths such as fountains, seating places and public art serve as areas where people connect with each other and develop lasting memories of the experience that will draw them back time and time again.



**Jim Shipton,  
ASLA**  
Senior vice president,  
CLC Associates Inc.  
Denver

hicular and pedestrian interaction through a hierarchy of streets creates a directional identity for the project. Enhanced crossing zones and pedestrian sidewalks provide safety for pedestrians where roadways and walkways meet.

■ **Architectural connectivity.** This creates cohesive elements that aesthetically unify built forms and define the identity and character of a project. The use of appropriate size and massing creates a human-scale environment that is comfortable and proportionate to the user's perception. Articulation and variety in materials provide an identifiable character for the project that connects it to the region.

■ **Vehicular connectivity.** This effectively connects both internal and external roadway systems, providing efficient circulation for the project. Ease of access to the development is essential for the optimal experience, as is the appropriate quantity and location of parking. Planned vehicular

■ **Environmental connectivity.** It is essential to study and understand site and contextual environmental systems to fully integrate environmental connectivity into a project. These include innovative applications of topography, storm-water systems, climatic conditions, indigenous vegetation and open space so as to further enhance the cohesiveness of a project.

### The foundational principles of connectivity should be grounded in pedestrian, vehicular, architectural and environmental systems

Today, a large component of our culture demands a lifestyle rooted in ease, convenience and a sense of belonging. It is critical that designers and developers are in tune to the desires of our society by incorporating the foundational elements of connectivity into their mixed-use projects. These fundamentals will successfully create places that will foster memorable experiences, human interactions, and provide a sense of place within the community, ultimately creating a successful project that users will return to again and again.

*Kurt Prinslow ASLA, vice president, Rob Snelling, senior project manager, and Justin Hay ASLA, project designer, all of CLC Associates, contributed to this article. ▲*