

CONCEPTS

Mixed-Use Facilities



When focus is on place, the design connects community.

To understand the appeal and current predilection of mixed-use facilities, it is critical to understand the concept of Placemaking. This integrated thinking views a place in its entirety, rather than focusing on isolated components. It's a way of design thinking that is community-driven, dynamic, and valuing function before form. The Project for Public Spaces defines a great place with four components: sociability, uses and activities, access and linkages, and comfort and image. FTCH knows this type of public space cannot be measured by design alone, it must function as a vital community resource.

The mixed-use facility movement is practiced in urban communities and, when designed effectively, tied specifically to Placemaking. These facilities provide dense, pedestrian-friendly spaces, encouraging neighborhood and sustainable practices. The prevalence of these facilities in Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan, alone points to an evolving emphasis on urbanism that promotes walkable neighborhoods containing necessary housing, shopping, working, and dining; therefore, 24/7 use of the same space.

An important component of mixed-use facilities includes a shared street philosophy, comprising wider sidewalks and narrower lanes for vehicles, with no curbing to define the difference between the two. Traffic generally moves slower and pedestrians take precedence. Sustainability initiatives are met through reduced resident vehicle use and health is promoted through walking and bike riding in spaces designed to function for community interaction and foot traffic for local businesses. The shared street philosophy helps create inclusive, connected communities.

As the places where we work and live move forward, the focus must be on community. The critical impacts of compact, mixed-use facilities yield economic and social benefits for the next generation. FTCH's team of experts will help you evaluate and determine the best option for your community, ensuring the focus remains on people and place.

For more information regarding mixed-use facility design, contact [Bob Pomeroy, AIA](#).

