

## Malls are due for a mixed-use makeover?

Mixing other uses with a mall has been the exception until now. Expect it to become the rule, says one advocate of mixed-use development. Yaromir Steiner, founder and CEO of Columbus, Ohio-based Steiner + Associates, addressing October's ICSC Conference on Mixed-Use Development, in Chicago, said the mixed-use town center concept has gone from novelty to normality in about two decades. Current economic conditions have put the brakes on most kinds of development for now, but when conditions allow, developers, financiers, tenants and even municipalities will once again pursue mixed-use town centers. The developers of these centers will build on the ideas that have evolved over the past 20 years, Steiner said. "Open air is essential, drivable streets connected to the local street grid are important, and public spaces are the anchors of the projects."

"Municipal planners will not only support such projects, [but] in some cases they will require them," he said. Moreover, he said, the

nonretail components of such mixed-use developments will probably increase in the future, into the range of 30 to 40 percent of the total investment—maybe even more than half. "It's been established that all of the other components—apartments, hotel, office—do better in concert with the retail component," he said. Legal and financial separation of the components might be necessary, however, to get financing for the entire project, he said. Developers may have considerably more experience with mixed-use town centers than before, but that does not mean the projects will be any easier going forward, he said.

Mixed-use town center developers will need a more holistic view of their business in the future, as did the "early developers who created distinct places, such as J.C. Nichols [creator of Country Club Plaza, in Kansas City, Mo.] and Addison Mizner [father of Boca Raton, Fla.]. Renaissance developers will be needed." **SCT**