

FOOD HALLS CONTINUE TO GROW IN POPULARITY

Through careful curation, the concept can certainly endure, with the key to success being in the developer's ability to tailor the experience to the local community and provide inspiring food, design and architecture.

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Seed Market Food Hall has an array of indoor and outdoor options.

SAN MATEO, CA—A mixed-use transit-oriented development, Passage at San Mateo, designed by [MVE Architects](#) takes a unique approach to public/private space, incorporating local art and architecture into all aspects of the design. Another key component of the site is the Seed Market Food Hall (sensory experience in entertainment

and dining) that capitalizes on the food hall phenomenon that is so prevalent in many parts of the country.

Pieter Berger, associate partner of MVE Architects, and Mark Manguera, president and placemaker, [Paradigm Coast Group](#), recently discussed this phenomenon in the second of a [two-part exclusive](#).

GlobeSt.com: How do you use innovative design to solve for common complaints about food halls, such as crowded spaces, lack of ambience, overwhelming amount of choices, etc.?

Berger: There are many in which innovative design can enhance the food hall experience. At Seed, for example, we are focusing on creative space planning and providing a full range of seating options. Creating a design to solve common complaints of any hospitality experience starts with looking through the eye of the consumer and operator. The common challenge in any social market place is space. Space includes many aspects of the overall experience, which

encompasses both the back of house and front of house experience, each of which will consume a minimum and standard amount of space within the project such as a kitchen, storage, seating for customers and so on. By understanding the fundamentals of culinary operations and its demands on each space, we are able to paint a clearer picture of how to create an outstanding experience for everyone to enjoy.

Additionally, there has been a very conscious effort at Seed to allow for a variety of seating options, which has contributed to the unique design. The seating arrangements and options can make or break a food hall experience. For this reason, we have designed a vast array of indoor and outdoor options, large social tables for family-style gatherings, private tables, bar tops, low seats, viewing options, etc. Our goal is to provide the setting, space and ambiance that best accommodates the consumer.

GlobeSt.com: What types of projects offer the ideal location for food halls and why?

Manguera: From downtown urban areas to suburban landscapes, there are many opportunities for food and market halls to thrive and live within each community. Critical to the success of a food hall is the creation of an organic bridge to become part and parcel of the local community early in the development process. This is key to understanding and supporting the current and future demographic needs.

At a quick glance, urban sites are much easier to identify as ideal food hall locations. However, in the proper suburban context, a food hall can become the social nucleus of a community and that is what we are aiming to achieve at Seed. The Seed location is adjacent to transit, class-A office, single-family homes and multifamily residential (approximately 1,600 apartments within walking distance). This presents an ideal location in a suburban context, providing the critical mass necessary to sustain a food hall at breakfast, lunch and dinner, both during the week and on weekends.

GlobeSt.com: What do you see for the future of food halls? Is the concept here to stay? Or do you foresee some kind of evolution?

Berger: The popularity of food and market halls are on the rise, and through careful curation, the concept can certainly endure. The key to the success of the food hall will be in the developer's ability to tailor the experience to the local community and maintain its authenticity by providing inspiring food, design and architecture. To achieve this, work must start early in the

development process to engage the city, community and demographic. This is the approach we have taken for Seed and Passage. Early collaboration with the city of San Mateo together with California Coastal Properties and MVE has resulted in great friendships and bonds with the community.



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SOME MIXES HIT ALL USE NEEDS

The mixed-use transit-oriented development, Passage at San Mateo, is surrounded by retail including a market hall and class-A buildings, and adjacent to a Caltrain station, with the ability to reduce traffic by 25%. GlobeSt.com learns in this EXCLUSIVE.

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With class-A buildings and adjacent to a Caltrain station, Passage is comprised of 35,000 square feet of retail.

SAN MATEO, CA—As the tech industry continues to shape the landscape of Silicon Valley, the region continues to churn out new development. Some projects hit the mark and some lack vital components.

One mixed-use transit-oriented development, Passage at San Mateo, is filling the gap for many unmet needs within this region. The project designed by [MVE Architects](#) takes a unique approach to public/private space with a passage throughout the site, incorporating local art and architecture into all aspects of the design, down to the signage.

Surrounded by class-A buildings and adjacent to a Caltrain station, Passage is comprised of 935 units and 35,000 square feet of retail, with the ability to [reduce traffic](#) by 25%. The Depot coffee shop will act as a mobility hub that will feature a pickup and drop off location for UBER/Lyft and Google, and is near the site for the recently introduced city bike share program.

The current plot hosts an array of retail vendors, some of which will be incorporated and redesigned into the plan. Another key component of the site is the inclusion of the Seed Market Food Hall, which is an abbreviation for “sensory experience in entertainment and dining” that capitalizes on the food hall phenomenon that is sweeping the nation.

Pieter Berger, associate partner of MVE Architects, and Mark Manguera, president and placemaker, [Paradigm Coast Group](#), recently discussed this phenomenon in the first of a two-part **exclusive**.

GlobeSt.com: What factors are influencing the continued popularity of food halls within new developments? What does this say about the needs of today's consumer?

Manguera: The different factors influencing the rising popularity in food and market halls in new development start with the natural curiosity of social discovery and the idea that people desire to live in exciting and authentic places.

Food halls or market halls have long been around for years. Starting in countries such as Spain and Asia, the collection of culinary experiences in one place brings the local community together. In America, the birth and evolution of food courts and farmer's markets have crossed paths and become today's epicenter of culinary exploration for both the consumer and restaurateur. This is a centuries-old idea that is gaining new popularity influenced by social media, popular culture and societies seeking the next tasty innovation and mind-blowing food concept. Today, market and food halls continue to serve as the community gathering place, with the addition of showcasing new local concepts and community favorites that in turn attract new residents to the area.

Further, good halls are a great calling card for new developments. They help build the brand and image for the development, set it apart from its competitors, provide a built-in social hub, and create the all-important Instagram moment that immediately establishes the authenticity of a place. While a standard mixed-use community tells a great story utilizing restaurants and retail, a mixed-use community featuring a food hall elevates this by offering a choose-your-own adventure. What this indicates is that the modern person seeks an ever-evolving kaleidoscope of culinary treats and experiences. And this is precisely what we hope to deliver at Seed Food Hall and Passage at San Mateo.

GlobeSt.com: What aspects make food halls different from the more traditional food courts or cafeterias usually found in malls, museums, office buildings, etc.?

Berger: There are many aspects that differentiate the food courts of yesteryear to today's rise in market places, all of which stem from the different lifestyle drivers of today's consumer. For example, today's marketplace takes into consideration a combination of non-traditional

communal workspaces and social dining areas, locally curated food and beverage options, and farm-to-table, accessibility and connectivity to public transit, sustainable design and operations, elevated design and architecture, well thought-out family and kid-friendly environments, five meal considerations versus the traditional three-meal operation; fully incorporated, intuitive, and seamless technology; all packaged together with the fundamental notions of hospitality and customer service.

At Seed, we are focusing on the considerations above, highlighted by authentic and amazing food, and architecture. Immense effort and thought went into the overall design to reflect the California Modern aesthetic featured in the local neighborhood and made famous by Joseph Eichler in the 1950s and 60s. Special design considerations like this set Seed apart from traditional food courts, establishing authenticity and creating a distinct style.