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Make public spaces work for the property and community by Kirk

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Make public spaces work for the property and the community. Urban properties are notorious for windswept plazas with waist-high planters, possible public art and well protected water features. Shopping centers are only notorious for parking lots and islands. Shelters from the weather and

even something as simple as benches are missing almost everywhere. And public bathrooms are nowhere to be found. Pedestrians are likely to move through and over the open space without lasting experience, entertainment, excitement or relaxation. Opportunities are abound for enhancing these spaces and making them work for the property while also working for the community. Scale and scope are necessarily dependent on the resources of the site and the improvements. However, employees, clients, customers and their friends and families are going where the public spaces are accessible, inviting and fun. Follow them.

Some improvements are nominal in cost and maintenance but make a major impact. Some are logically cost effective. Some are significantly costly in construction and maintenance. Some are significantly profitable for the property. All might enhance marketability and defer economic and functional obsolescence, and improve sustainability of the property. If the property is relevant and attractive for longer, the property is more sustainable and healthy. The public space as a livable and living entity makes for a more fluid neighborhood which has direct impact on the properties that benefit from a robust neighborhood and public space.

Benches, chairs, tables and lounges keep people happy and well rested. Food trucks, carts, and kiosks keep them well fed and watered. Pop-ups and blanket peddlers make for a dynamic streetscape, always changing. Street performers dancing, singing, playing, tumbling and juggling bring smiles to passersby. Plugs and water for recharging your devices and yourself, watering and splashing. Screens for news, music, art and ads bring culture to the masses. Sheds, awnings, shade trees and umbrellas for shelter. Checkers, chess, bocce and hopscotch. Barbecues, fire pits, picnic tables and sand boxes. Stretching posts, jungle gyms, slides, swings and monkey bars. Fountains, falls, wading pools and ponds. Trees, shrubs, flowers and herbs. And public bathrooms!

There's nothing really new here. It's the standard model in many European city centers. Much of this is already occurring in dribs and drabs and more will continue to be created as we change how we look at the public space. If ignored or neglected, properties will slip competitively, rent and occupancy, and decline in sustainability.

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