

TRENDY RETAIL, RESTAURANTS AND MIXED-USE TAKE OFF IN SEATTLE



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As the country emerges from a recession, core markets like Seattle are benefitting the most when it comes to retail growth. Not surprisingly, Seattle neighborhoods that have seen more residential development are also attracting the lion's share of new retail.

Downtown Seattle's Metropolitan Improvement District, which conducts pedestrian counts at 13 different locations in and around the Downtown area, reports a significant increase in overall foot traffic of about 13 percent. The site with the most significant year-over-year increase in pedestrian traffic was where the Denny Triangle and South Lake Union neighborhoods meet. This is also where Amazon has chosen to build its campus. This area continues to be a magnet for mixed-use projects tailored to the thousands of high-tech employees who want to live close to where they work and have access to retail, restaurants, transit and services all within walking distance.

Retail in mixed-use projects that caters to residents' basic needs is also important. Stack House, a recently completed 278-unit, mixed-use project in South Lake Union, will include a diverse range of restaurants, in addition to a small grocer. Bartell Drugs, also new to South Lake Union, opened a growler station (a 64-ounce glass jug that is filled with beer straight from the tap) that sold more than 300 growlers on opening day and continues to be wildly popular. Bartell's has also added a travel clinic where high-tech, life sciences and other global travelers can get advice on what immunizations are needed, as well as the shots themselves. The neighborhood has drawn popular national brands like Whole Foods and West Elm. These are mixed with vibrant service retailers that range from trendy eyewear and pet product boutiques to top home-grown fitness and yoga studios.

The 654-unit Via 6 is another recently completed mixed-use project that was designed to create a vertical neighborhood in the Denny Triangle. Its 16,000 square feet of retail includes an assembly hall with a coffee shop, restaurant, bakery and market — all owned by renowned chef, Tom Douglas. Via 6 also includes Velo Bike Shop, which sells and repairs bicycles and offers a membership club to Downtown cycling commuters.

Seattle's historic Pioneer Square neighborhood is undergoing a resur-

gence of activity fueled mainly by an abundance of new restaurants and food-related stores. The development of a new Downtown Seattle waterfront that will connect with this neighborhood, as well as a concerted effort by the Pioneer Square Alliance to target top restaurateurs has paid off. More than 20 new restaurants have opened in the past several months, including two by chef Matt Dillon, who was named the Northwest's best chef in 2012 by the James Beard Foundation.

It's clear that Seattle neighborhoods are exhibiting growth in the retail sector in their own ways, creating unique districts that respond to each area's niche market. As residential properties continue to emerge throughout the city, Seattle's vibrant mix of retail will respond to this through expanded growth and offerings.

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