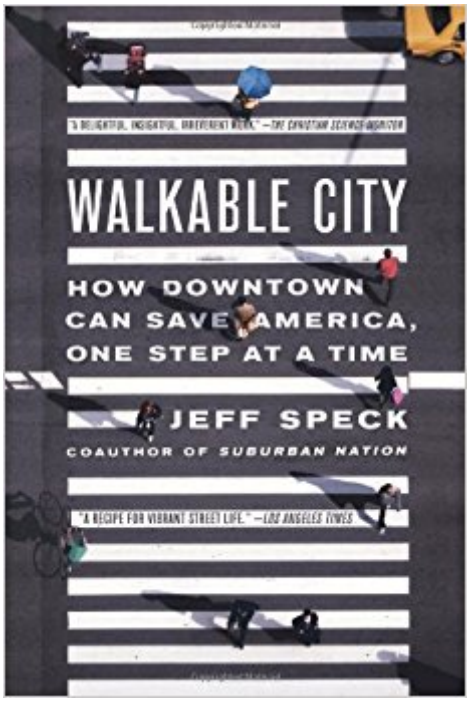
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Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step At A Time



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Synopsis

"Timely and important, a delightful, insightful, irreverent work . . . Should be required reading." Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Christian Science MonitorA Best Book of the Year according to Planetizen and the American Society of Landscape Architects

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Speck, coauthor of Suburban Nation (2000), believes America has a problemÃ¢â ¬â •actually, lots of problemsÃ¢â ¬â •that can be solved by improving walkability in our cities. Public health, sustainability, and even the lagging economy, he argues, can be boosted by making cities more friendly for pedestrians. Drawing on his background as a city planner and architectural designer, Speck lays out a 10-step plan for changing the way we build and think about our public spaces. The steps are wide-ranging, from planting more trees and narrowing roads to investing in well-planned public transit systems and designing visually interesting buildings. Speck is at times blunt and doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t mince words about the roadblocks to walkability: Ã¢â ¬Å“Traffic studies are bullshit.Ã¢â ¬Â• But he makes a clear and convincing case for the benefits of revitalizing our public spaces in favor of foot traffic. Walkable City, in addition to being full of information about city planning and progress, is a remarkably readable book and moves along quickly because of SpeckÃ¢â ¬â„¢s spirited writing and no-holds-barred attitude. An engaging book with a powerful message and achievable goals. --Sarah Hunter --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢â ¬Å“A delightful, insightful, irreverent work.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Christian Science MonitorÃ¢â ¬Å“If Jane Jacobs invented a new urbanism, Walkable City is its perfect complement, a commonsense twenty-first-century user's manual.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kurt Andersen, host of Studio 360 and author of True BelieversÃ¢â ¬Å“A recipe for vibrant street life.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Los Angeles TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“Refreshing, lively and engaging . . . Walkable City isn't a harangue, it's a fun, readable and persuasive call to arms.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Steven Litt, The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)Ã¢â ¬Å“Everyone interested in improving the quality of city life should read this book and heed its lessons.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢John Strawn, The Sunday OregonianÃ¢â ¬Å“Among the perennial flood of books on urban design in all its forms, this one stands out.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢John King, San Francisco ChronicleÃ¢â ¬Å“Walkable City is an energetic, feisty book, one that never contents itself with polite generalities. Sometimes breezy and anecdotal yet always logical and amply researched, this is one of the best books to appear this year. Speck deserves the widest possible readership.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Philip Langdon, Better! Cities & TownsÃ¢â ¬Å“Walkable City . . . will change the way you see cities.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kaid Benfield, The Atlantic CitiesÃ¢â ¬Å“Jeff Speck, AICP, is one of the few practitioners and writers in the field who can make a 312-page book on a basic planning concept seem too short . . . For getting planning ideas into the thinking and the daily life of U.S. cities, this is the book.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Planning magazineÃ¢â ¬Å“Jeff Speck's brilliant and entertaining book reminds us that, in America, the exception could easily become the rule. Mayors, planners, and citizens need look no further for a powerful and achievable vision of how to make our ordinary cities great again.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Joseph P. Riley, mayor of Charleston, S.C.Ã¢â ¬Å“Cities are the future of the human race, and Jeff Speck knows how to make them work. In Walkable City, he persuasively explains how to create rational urban spaces and improve quality of life by containing the number one vector of global environmental catastrophe: the automobile.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢David Owen, staff writer at The New Yorker and author of Green MetropolisÃ¢â ¬Å“Companionable and disarmingly candid, Jeff Speck perches on your shoulder and gets you to see your community with fresh eyes. He gradually builds a compelling case for walkability as the essential distillation of a vast trove of knowledge about urbanism and placemaking. The case he makes has you both nodding at the intuitive and seemingly obvious wisdom presented, and shaking your head at why those basic principles of fixing our cities have eluded us for so long.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Harriet Tregoning, founder of the National Smart Growth NetworkÃ¢â ¬Å“Jeff Speck understands a key fact about great cities, which is that their streets matter more than their buildings. And he understands a key

fact about great streets, which is that the people who walk along them matter more than the cars that drive through them. Walkable City is an eloquent ode to the livable city and to the values behind it.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Paul Goldberger, Pulitzer PrizeÃ¢â ¬â œwinning architecture critic and author of Why Architecture MattersÃ¢â ¬Å“With Walkable City, Jeff Speck demonstrates why he is among the most relevant and engaging writers on urban design today.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Ron Bogle, president and CEO of the American Architectural FoundationÃ¢â ¬Å“When I speak around the country, people ask me what is the first thing they should do to start their community on the path of smart growth. I will now say: Read Jeff Speck's Walkable City.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Parris Glendening, governor of Maryland (1995Ã¢â ¬â œ2003) and president of Smart Growth America's Leadership InstituteÃ¢â ¬Å“Truly a book that is so very needed, Walkable City moves theory into action. We now know we need to build walkable urban places for all sorts of economic, social, and environmental reasons. Jeff Speck shows how to do it in the same clear style we came to love in the classic Suburban Nation.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Christopher B. Leinberger, visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution and author of The Option of Urbanism

I bought this book to help support an independent study project I needed to complete for a college-level class designed around Edward Glaeser's "Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier." I knew the book would help me develop a strong and effective PowerPoint lecture for the class on my topic of walkable cities, but I had no idea how delightful it would be to read this book straight through from beginning to end as a form of pleasure. Nor did I realize how much I would learn overall about the basics of urban design. Although this book is focused on how to make cities more walkable, it really served the purpose of being an engaging introduction to the whole field of urban and city planning.After reading Speck's book, I now see my own lovely city and the many thousands that I've visited here and abroad over my life in a completely new light. This book gives me a context within which to understand why certain cities attract me and others do not. It is as if I now have a language to clearly understand cities for the first time. Honestly, you know how good it feels when you get eyeglasses for the first time and see what the world really looks like? Well, that's what this book did for me. I now see cities in a whole new light.I only wish at this book could be read by my mayor, all my city councilmen, all the citizens on our planning commission, and all the citizens in my community that have the power to vote on our city's major land use initiatives.This book is getting almost consistent five-star ratings. I can do little more than join in and whole-heartedly agree.

Really interesting discussion of the future of cities. Hopefully, ever city manager, mayor, council member and concerned citizen has picked up a copy for themselves and one for their friends. I heard Jeff speak in Miami and bought the book as a result of his presentation and thoroughly enjoyed it. He doesn't provide blueprints for cities to make themselves walkable as much as he offers steps you can take to advance toward the goal of becoming Portland. One of my favorite ideas: start with orange cones rather than costly construction to see if you draw people into areas before you unleash the city budget on transformation. Try little things repeatedly to see if you can develop something that sticks. Really easy read, and it was more enjoyable than I was expecting for a book on such a reasonably dry topic.

A truly fascinating book, Speck makes you question how the United States moved so far away from the more ideal reality of walkability. Not only does Speck succeed in making the case for walkability, he provides a clear road plan for how streets can be reclaimed and thus cities made to be safer, healthier, more vibrant and ultimately more equitable places for all Americans. The level of research and time that was put into this book shows and the comprehensive nature speaks volumes about the author and his drive to improve life in American cities. A must read for all people interested in urban planning, public health, economics, or any other subject relating to public life.

I live in Eugene, Oregon where planning is done by bumper stickers and "buzz word of the month."Our "Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan" has a single goal: "By the year 2031 Eugene will double the percentage of trips made on foot and by bicycle from 2011 levels."This pathetic statement isn't well-formed; it's a narrow "objective," not a "goal

Required reading for anyone interested in learning more about how streets and buildings function in a traditional neighborhood. Our motorist-first approach has been a grand experiment and it is time we take stock of the experiment's outcomes. Jeff Speck masterfully takes readers through why this topic is critically important, how it can be approached from many angles, and spells out design concepts while weaving in relevant data points as he goes.

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