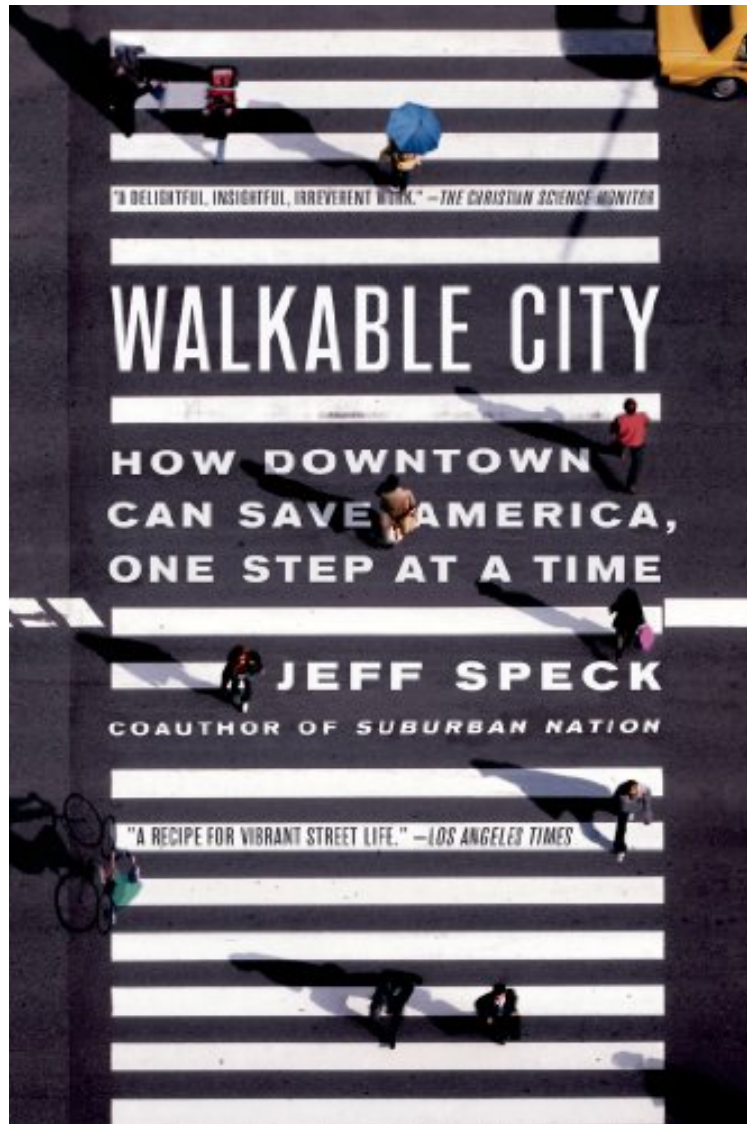


[Download free ebook] Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time

Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time

Jeff Speck

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Jeff Speck : Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Lots of clear thinking, very little religion
By Raoul Picante
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"; and what follows in the PBMP is, not surprisingly, focused on infrastructure to serve mostly a tiny "vehicular bicyclist" subpopulation. Meanwhile, the City planners have let years go by doing little to help update local planning policies and code to prevent the degradation and destabilization of the older, close-in, grid-patterned neighborhoods. This neglect goes on despite an active, smart and progressive community of neighborhood advocates who love their compact (by small city standards), "traditional" urban neighborhoods. The local planners still see "being against sprawl" as their core principle and their key task as holding in place an arbitrary "Urban Growth Boundary" line on a map. (A line that when it was originally created was a pretty seat-of-the-pants effort, not really based on much true planning). Speck, like many smart planners who've been paying attention for the past couple decades, has moved beyond attacking "sprawl," and focuses on "being_for_ walkability" and promoting methods that really work to accomplish meaningful goals. (I'm a supporter of _evidence-based_ growth management, just not "plan-by-the-numbers".) His work is packed with useful observations and citations. He isn't "anti-car," at all. He doesn't see all parking as "evil." And so on. And, he understands prioritization. Other 5-star reviews are accurate in their praise of the book's substance, as well as his writing style. If I had one thing I think would have made a really good book even better, it would be that his first Chapter be an expanded version of the section titled "It's the Neighborhoods, Stupid," in which Speck writes: "The transit discussion has of course included density since it began, but, until recently, it has been largely silent on neighborhood structure. This has been a huge mistake." The concept of "walkability" in this book is not only directly about walking, it's also about the kinds of neighborhoods that are great to live in. And thus, I hope Speck's observations and advice can help some of our local planners stop making that same mistake over and over again.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you care about your city (and its downtown), READ THIS! By Andre R. Wozniak 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.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Walk for Life By Babara Sliwinski Thank you Book TV for having featured Jeff Speck, author of Walkable City. The book brought back memories of growing up in a walkable city in mid-state New York in the 50's, 60's when a lot of us used our foot mobiles to get to school, places of worship and recreational facilities. Of course not many of us owned cars at the time so we had no choice but to walk, ride our bikes or use public transformation. Then the exodus to the suburbs began necessitating owning a car to get to some mega mall via a really awful 'arterial' roadways (effectively a speedway) which also blighted our neighborhoods. Getting cross town to shop at the new mall (good bye downtown stores) was fast but also dangerous. Of course socio-economic changes play a big part in any city's decline but the fact is some roadways contributed to the demise of a safe and livable neighborhood. Mr. Speck's book delves into these transformations and the need for city and state planners to effectively create roadways that serve neighborhoods effectively so they could be safe and livable. A walkable city can also do so much for our health and our dependence on oil lessened - it's a win win situation. We become communities and neighbors again when a city is deemed walkable and the roads safe. I think a lot of us are getting that message and Jeff Speck's is loud and clear about the rising new urbanism.

Jeff Speck has dedicated his career to determining what makes cities thrive. And he has boiled it down to one key factor: walkability. The very idea of a modern metropolis evokes visions of bustling sidewalks, vital mass transit, and a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban core. But in the typical American city, the car is still king, and downtown is a place that's easy to drive to but often not worth arriving at. Making walkability happen is relatively easy and cheap; seeing exactly what needs to be done is the trick. In this essential new book, Speck reveals the invisible workings of the city, how simple decisions have cascading effects, and how we can all make the right choices for our communities. Bursting with sharp observations and real-world examples, giving key insight into what urban planners actually do and how places can and do change, Walkable City lays out a practical, necessary, and eminently achievable vision of how to make our normal American cities great again.

From Booklist Speck, coauthor of Suburban Nation (2000), believes America has a problem; actually, lots of problems; 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 doesn't mince words about the roadblocks to walkability: "Traffic studies are bullshit." 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 Speck's spirited writing and no-holds-barred attitude. An engaging book with a

powerful message and achievable goals. --Sarah Hunter ldquo;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.rdquo; ?Planning magazineldquo;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.rdquo; ?Joseph P. Riley, mayor of Charleston, S.C.ldquo;City planning and urban development are phrases almost guaranteed to bore and confuse regular people. Which is weird, given that cities are the least boring places on earth. Fortunately, Jeff Speck is a deeply knowledgeable, charming, and jargon-free visionary, a profoundly pragmatic person brimming with common sense everybody can use to improve their own lives as well as their towns and cities. If Jane Jacobs invented a new urbanism, Walkable City is its perfect complement, a commonsense twenty-first-century user's manual.rdquo; ?Kurt Andersen, host of Studio 360 and author of True Believersldquo;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.rdquo; ?David Owen, staff writer at The New Yorker and author of Green Metropolisldquo;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.rdquo; ?Harriet Tregoning, founder of the National Smart Growth Networkldquo;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.rdquo; ?Paul Goldberger, Pulitzer Prizewinning architecture critic and author of Why Architecture Mattersldquo;With Walkable City, Jeff Speck demonstrates why he is among the most relevant and engaging writers on urban design today.rdquo; ?Ron Bogle, president and CEO of the American Architectural Foundationldquo;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.rdquo; ?Parris Glendening, governor of Maryland (1995ndash;2003) and president of Smart Growth America's Leadership Instituteldquo;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.rdquo; ?Christopher B. Leinberger, visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution and author of The Option of UrbanismAbout the AuthorJeff Speck, coauthor of the landmark bestseller Suburban Nation, is a city planner who advocates for smart growth and sustainable design. As the former director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts, he oversaw the Mayors' Institute on City Design, where he worked with dozens of American mayors on their most pressing city planning challenges. He leads a design practice based in Washington, D.C.