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# Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space



## Synopsis

“...thoughtful, beautiful, and enlightening...”  
“Jane Jacobs’ This book will have a lasting influence on the future quality of public open spaces. By helping us better understand the larger public life of cities, *Life between Buildings* can only move us toward more lively and healthy public places. Buy this book, find a comfortable place to sit in a public park or plaza, begin reading, look around. You will be surprised at how you will start to see (and design) the world differently.”  
“Landscape Architecture

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A classmate in Architecture School recommended this book to me because I was particularly interested in the social qualities of Architecture. We always wonder why spaces either work or just do not. Jan Gehl has made a career of asking why and how people use space and then finding answers. This work takes into account human behaviors in relation to the built environment. Why do people sit where they do in a public park, why do we love the streets of Europe? In general the ideas and situations studied by Gehl are almost universally and eternally relevant. This is a must have for those serious about planning and creating truly enjoyable public spaces. I highly look forward to reading Gehl’s new work and recommend going to his firm’s website to see the work they have been doing since this was written. Amazing diagrams.

This book was first published in 1980. That the demand was so great that it needed to be reissued tells you something. The design principles aren’t surprising, 30 years out, but it’s lovely to have

them quantified. Real counts of how many people use a certain kind of space, and in what ways, with photos, bring to life many principles that I first read about in Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and give me arguing points against the great flood of "let's just widen the highway again" so-called planning that dominates my city and county governments. This book is wonderful: easy to read, and worth reading a second time.

This is a fantastic book, putting substance and quantitative research behind urban planning. It isn't about the art of urban design, but how spaces are actually used, why, and what designers can do to improve cities.

Gehl observes carefully, draws conclusions wisely, expresses himself clearly and simply. He leads the reader to ponder fundamental values in the building of homes and cities. He favors the human dimension and promotes human values as opposed to the monumental or merely decorative.

Few books - if any - have had a stronger impact on Scandinavian architecture and planning in recent years than this one has had. Jan Gehl, senior lecturer in urban design at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture in Copenhagen, has widely and extensively studied how people use public spaces and how planning and architecture encourage or discourage social activities and public life. His strong advocacy and detailed proposals for a humanistic approach to architecture, as presented in this book, is now available for the first time in English. --- from book's back cover

I've studied City Planning at university and this is the best book on the topic I've read. It is concise and brings up great points on how to "design cities for humans".

Nice little book. A good exploration of physiological aspects of urban design. The black and white images and drawings are excellent, really contribute to the concepts.

Anyone who calls him/herself an urban planner or urban designer needs to be familiar with the work of this author.

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