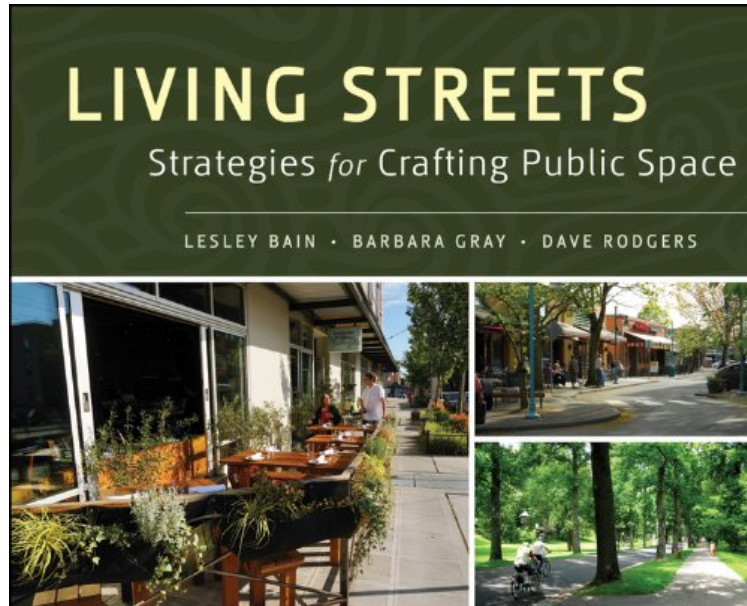


(Read download) Living Streets: Strategies for Crafting Public Space

Living Streets: Strategies for Crafting Public Space

Lesley Bain, Barbara Gray, Dave Rodgers
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Lesley Bain, Barbara Gray, Dave Rodgers : Living Streets: Strategies for Crafting Public Space before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Living Streets: Strategies for Crafting Public Space:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Should jump-start the push for better pedestrian environments
By Clair Enlow
In the history of cities and civilizations, "street" and "place" are almost synonymous. Resident or visitor, the name and the character of the street you're on says you are somewhere -- or not. And there's a lot at stake: quality of life, property values, attractive neighborhoods and the health and prosperity of whole cities. Living Streets is a hugely important and timely book about how to make streets into recognizable and pleasant places. It's useful to anyone wanting to create or share a vision for improving a street--planners and policy-makers, activists, urban designers and property owners interested in improving their neighborhood. The first step to good streets is recognition that there are many more claims on the right-of-way than there is space to fill them. But there is little public understanding of the claims for other functions or competing uses on streets. Living Streets is a tool for negotiation -- and transformation. Late 20th century development in American cities effectively shuns people on foot or on two wheels in the public right-of-way. In competing with other claims, vehicular traffic has an unfair advantage because in the numerical standards and formulas for traffic capacity and level of service, the only thing that counts is speed. The fewer cars, the faster they can move, and the higher the "level of service." But what really counts for pedestrians is almost the opposite. The more of them on a street, the safer and more attractive it is for other pedestrians. To be really alive, streets favor complexity over simplicity in design. Combining uses wins over strict separation. Above all, qualitative features must be emphasized as much as quantitative formulas. That's what Living Streets does. It outlines three overarching goals for city streets. They are: mobility (defined much more broadly, to include modes like bicycling and walking as well as motor vehicles); place making (all the elements, from art-work to the perception of safety, that make streets attractive and memorable); and natural systems (new ways of integrating plantings and storm

water management for environmental benefit and enjoyment) True to its authors' roots in the Pacific Northwest, *Living Streets* blends environmentalism with urbanism. We know that banishing cars -- and creating pedestrian malls -- can result in great pedestrian environments. But it is rarely the right solution for blighted streets or an abandoned Main Street in the US. It was widely tried in the 1960s and 70s, as the book recounts. Some of these decisions were reversed, because without traffic passing right by their doors, small retail business withered. There just weren't enough pedestrians living in the vicinity to populate the streets. The ideas in *Living Streets* are flexible enough to apply incrementally as well as broadly. There will never be a perfect mathematical equation or a "one-size-fits all" approach for any right-of-way, and this book does not provide one. For instance, parking -- and ways to include it in the mix of uses -- is discussed. But you can't use the book to determine exactly how much there should be, and where. Every street is part of a larger network, one in which the distribution of uses, and the character, evolves over time in response to laws, standards, design and investment. Paving the way for lots of pedestrians works better in cities that have already learned how to do mixed-use zoning well, and are well on their way to achieving an 18-hour community in some neighborhoods. By outlining the important elements in any urban street, *Living Streets* should jump-start the entire process of revitalization and urbanization.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Street SmartsBy KCMY biggest issue with *LIVING STREETS: STRATEGIES FOR CRAFTING PUBLIC SPACE* is the price. On it costs a hefty \$67. True, it's a hard cover, but at that price you'd expect color plates throughout -- or, at the very least, in half of the photographs' cases. Instead, you get drab black and white pictures, start to finish. That said, they're plentiful at least, and the book itself has its value, so, if you're passionate about urban solutions to livable streets, the price may, in the end, be inconsequential to you. Authors Bain, Gray, and Rodgers tackle such issues as right of way and making people the focal point and priority in urban centers. The chapters in the book treat topics such as mobility (people to places via space that supports not only mass transit but walking and biking) and inviting nature into the city. No, that's not an oxymoron. Anyone who has watched plant life force its way through sidewalk cracks knows that Mother Nature and urban centers are less antithetical than they first appear. People want a natural feel and all the beauty of plants and shade while enjoying the conveniences of city life. It is as much a priority as mobility, and an aesthetic consideration that impacts the "mood" and "temperament" of residents who populate the area. After a brief look at policies ("Strong public sector policies result in the kind of actions from the private sector that achieve public goals"), the book shifts to typologies (e.g. residential streets, green streets, alleys, main streets, thoroughfares, shared-use streets, and festival streets) first and case studies second. These concrete examples complement the theories of public planning nicely. For this, the authors look at Mint Plaza (San Francisco), Nord Alley (Seattle), Central Annapolis Road (Prince George County, MD), 78th Avenue (Mercer Island, WA), and Barracks Row (D.C.), among others. Each case study is framed with the same sub-sections. You get a little context (history, also abetted with some before/after photography), a little vision, a little process, some solutions, and finally info on funding, maintenance, and -- most helpful -- lessons learned (sometimes the hard way). Reading along, you see that each city and targeted area is unique, even when similarities abound. Cultural, historical, and political elements play a hand no matter where you go. Still, with this information in mind, you'll be more of a "player" if you choose to "be the change" (or at least to help it along) in a city or urban area that you love. Thus, if it educates you and helps your activist/citizen-friendly efforts, you'll owe the book a debt of gratitude, crazy price or not.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting ideasBy sanoe.net "*Living Streets*" is a no-frills, but nonetheless, well laid book for anyone who aspires to city or town planning to make public spaces more livable. While it is clearly geared towards professionals, the content is accessible to anyone who is interested in promoting ways to make their area a place in which public areas are welcome to the public. That may sound redundant but with the examples shown in the book, it does become clear that some places are designed to be more inviting than others with walkways, bikeways, city gardens, etc. Book has a history of the 'living street' movement, what highlights it, what is the reality of it, how to plan for it, etc. Pictures are all in black and white and some are older which gives the book a bit of a retro feel to it (and why I knocked it down a star). But overall, it is the content that matters. Accessible and understandable with good ideas for all. It isn't a book that I would normally pick up but I will be sharing it at our next association meeting because I can see some good ideas in it even for the place where I live.

The only book of its kind to provide an overview of sustainable street design Today, society is moving toward a more sustainable way of life, with cities everywhere aspiring to become high-quality places to live, work, and play. Streets are fundamental to this shift. They define our system of movement, create connections between places, and offer opportunities to reconnect to natural systems. There is an increasing realization that the right-of-way is a critical and under-recognized resource for transformation, with new models being tested to create a better public realm, support balanced transportation options, and provide sustainable solutions for stormwater and landscaping. *Living Streets* provides practical guidance on the complete street approach to sustainable and community-minded street use and design. Written by an interdisciplinary team of authors, the book brings insights and experience from urban planning, transportation planning, and civil engineering perspectives. It includes examples from many completed street design projects from around the world, an overview of the design and policy tools that have been successful, and guidance to

help get past the predictable obstacles to implementation: Who makes decisions in the right-of-way? Who takes responsibility? How can regulations be changed to allow better use of the right-of-way? *Living Streets* informs you of the benefits of creating streets that are healthier, more pleasant parts of life: Thoughtful planning of the location, uses, and textures of the spaces in which we live encourages people to use public space more often, be more active, and possibly live healthier lives. A walkable community makes life easier and more pleasant for everyone, especially for vulnerable populations within the larger community whose transportation limitations reduce access to jobs, healthy food, health care, recreation, and social interaction. Streets present opportunities to improve the natural environment while adding to neighborhood character, offering beauty, providing shade, and improving air quality. If you're an urban planner, designer, transportation engineer, or civil engineer, *Living Streets* is the ultimate guide for the creation of more humane streetscapes that connect neighborhoods and inspire people.

"A chief purpose of *Living Streets* is to encourage designers to see streets as "more than just places to drive." The book explores how intelligent street planning can create good places for living, working, and playing; strengthen community interaction; encourage healthier ways of life; develop local economies; and promote urban patterns that are less dependent on fossil fuels." (Better! Cities Towns, September 2012)

About the Author
Lesley Bain, AIA, LEED, is an architect, urban designer, and Principal at Weinstein A|U Architects + Urban Designers LLC. Lesley has played prominent roles in many of Seattle's urban design efforts including pedestrian planning, station area development, campus planning, and incorporating transportation into neighborhoods. Barbara Gray is an urban planner with eighteen years of professional experience in community design and transportation planning. She currently manages the Transportation Systems Design and Planning group for the Seattle Department of Transportation. Dave Rodgers, PE, LEED, is recognized nationwide as being at the forefront of innovative sustainable design. He is a Principal at SvR Design Company.