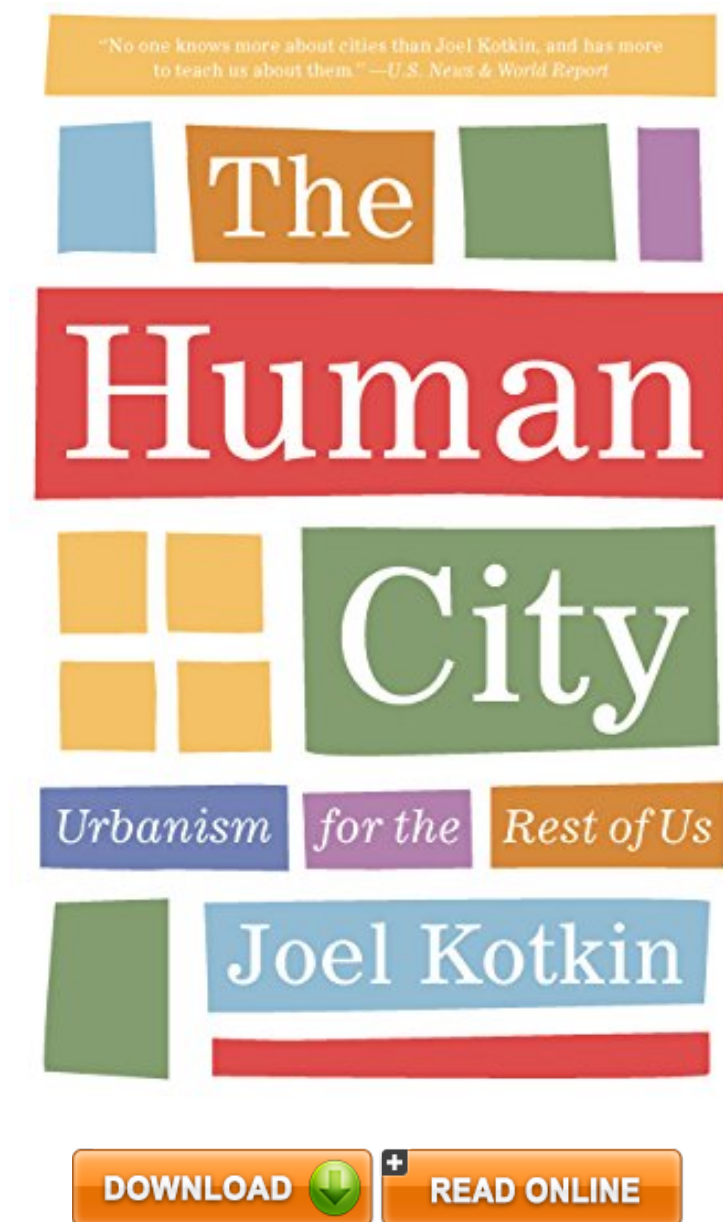


[FREE] The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us

## The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us

Joel Kotkin

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**Joel Kotkin : The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. City Planning with a Generous HeartBy JaneyVeeI live in a small city in the Northern Rockies. Anti-family/ anti-single-family-homes/ anti-middle class/ cars-are-evil urban planners are currently in control. This book is a welcome counter-argument. Joel Kotkin cogently reaffirms the obvious: the purpose of a city (and, I would argue, of a whole society) is to preserve natural resources while constructing a human-built environment that enables individuals to live flourishing lives and promotes healthy family life. Like our generous Founders, we should show intentional concern for "our posterity."He points out that, through a lifetime, each

individual and family passes through life stages. As we change, the places we call "home" are likely to change as well...from parental home, to college dorm, to shared apartment, to childless couple condo, to a detached house with a yard, to an empty nest, to an assisted living facility. Truly inclusive city planning needs to be open to all sorts of residential preferences if people are to live and flourish in urban environments. I'm very grateful to Joel Kotkin for writing this book. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. There is nothing wrong with pragmatic housing.

By Jim El greatly appreciate Joel Kotkin book. I am citizen who volunteers to serve on the El Paso County Planning Commission. The City of Colorado Springs constitutes some 70% of the urbanized population in the County. I have been intuitively ambivalent about efforts to increase urban population densities. Many professional planners treat increased urban density as if it is a modern "Holy Grail". My wife and I live in a suburban setting, in one of 126 detached townhomes inside a gated community. I prefer not to maintain a yard and we enjoy the freedom to travel. Transportation is good and I can travel to the City's relatively small core in 15 to 20 minutes. All 4 of our adult children all live in a suburban setting with good sized yards and 2-car garages. It is a great place to raise children. Some people want to live in a higher density apartment or townhome. They like this life style. Joel used a heavily data-driven narrative to both validate my residential living choice and to help me to understand why others will choose something different. Joel insists that housing must work for the resident, not some planner or governmental official. Joel also exposes much commonly accepted thinking as being unsupported by the data. This a good read for anyone interested in understanding the urban, suburban, and exurban dynamics. I recommend it very highly!

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. ... of this book seems to be that cities are bad and suburbs are good.

By Michael Lewyn The general point of this book seems to be that cities are bad and suburbs are good. Kotkin's most widely publicized argument is that suburbia will protect us from plunging birthrates. However, Kotkin writes that (a) affluent nations are suburbanizing and (b) birthrates throughout the world (not just in affluent nations but even in not-so-affluent places like Iran and Morocco) have been plunging. If both (a) and (b) are true, obviously suburbanization has not prevented declining birthrates. Kotkin is right about one thing: families are being priced out of our most affluent cities. He therefore argues that children simply don't belong in cities. But it seems to me that one could just as easily argue that we should allow more urban housing to reduce housing costs, and thus make city living more affordable for those who want it.

"The Human City presents the most cogent, evidence-based and clear-headed exposition of the pro-suburban argument. . . . enriching our understanding of what cities are about and what they can and must become." —Wall Street Journal

Around the globe, most new urban development has adhered to similar tenets: tall structures, small units, and high density. In *The Human City*, Joel Kotkin—called “America’s uber-geographer” by David Brooks of the *New York Times*—questions these nearly ubiquitous practices, suggesting that they do not consider the needs and desires of the vast majority of people. Built environments, Kotkin argues, must reflect the preferences of most people—especially those of families—even if that means lower-density development. *The Human City* ponders the purpose of the city and investigates the factors that drive most urban development today. Armed with his own astute research, a deep-seated knowledge of urban history, and a sound grasp of economic, political, and social trends, Kotkin pokes holes in what he calls the “retro-urbanist” ideology and offers a refreshing case for dispersion centered on human values. This book is not anti-urban, but it does advocate a greater range of options for people to live the way they want at all stages of their lives.

Praise for Joel Kotkin’s *The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us* “[Kotkin] weaves an impressive array of original observations about cities into his arguments, enriching our understanding of what cities are about and what they can and must become.” —Shlomo Angel, *Wall Street Journal*