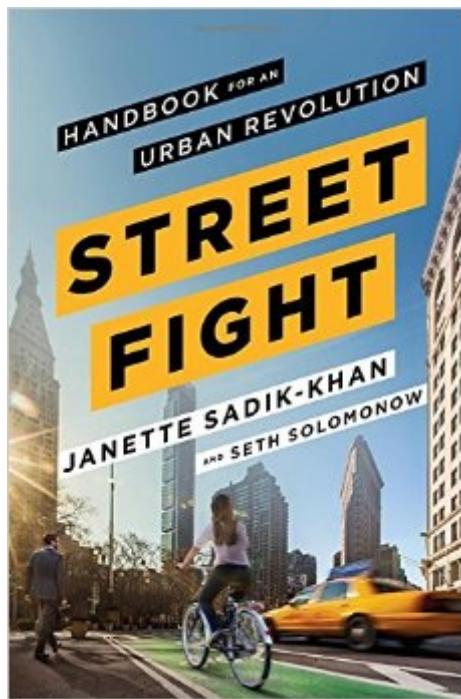


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Streetfight: Handbook For An Urban Revolution



Synopsis

An empowering road map for rethinking, reinvigorating, and redesigning our cities, from a pioneer in the movement for safer, more livable streetsAs New York Cityâ™s transportation commissioner, Janette Sadik-Khan managed the seemingly impossible and transformed the streets of one of the worldâ™s greatest, toughest cities into dynamic spaces safe for pedestrians and bikers. Her approach was dramatic and effective: Simply painting a part of the street to make it into a plaza or bus lane not only made the street safer, but it also lessened congestion and increased foot traffic, which improved the bottom line of businesses. Real-life experience confirmed that if you know how to read the street, you can make it function better by not totally reconstructing it but by reallocating the space thatâ™s already there. Â Â Â Breaking the street into its component parts, Streetfight demonstrates, with step-by-step visuals, how to rewrite the underlying âœsource codeâ• of a street, with pointers on how to add protected bike paths, improve crosswalk space, and provide visual cues to reduce speeding. Achieving such a radical overhaul wasnâ™t easy, and Streetfight pulls back the curtain on the battles Sadik-Khan won to make her approach work. She includes examples of how this new way to read the streets has already made its way around the world, from pocket parks in Mexico City and Los Angeles to more pedestrian-friendly streets in Auckland and Buenos Aires, and innovative bike-lane designs and plazas in Austin, Indianapolis, and San Francisco. Many are inspired by the changes taking place in New York City and are based on the same techniques.Â Streetfight deconstructs, reassembles, and reinvents the street, inviting readers to see it in ways they never imagined.

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Customer Reviews

The book lives up to its title. This book should be distributed to every civic leader in a community with > 100,000 people to sensitize them to current thinking. Provides many of the counter-arguments used by inertial (politicians/engineers), fearful (politicians/engineers) and angry (drivers) opposition to livable streetscapes. Easily the best book on this subject ever written, familiar and astute as the author is in the ways and interfaces between end-users, planners, designers, funding sources, election cycles and other political shenanigans. What a wonderful team she and Mr. Bloomberg made. I love the quote cited early in the book, "To plan is human, to implement, divine." Advocates of change should closely read this book to learn what hidden obstacles lay in their path and that are often kept concealed by city administrators to keep things in the indefinite "planning" phase so many municipalities find themselves in. One of the most profound insights is that waiting to build deep consensus is almost always going to result in retaining the status quo. Politicians disinclined to action or any thing that costs a dime will, as a result, advocate cost free and wheel-spinning studies. The author was fortunate in having a strong, forward-thinking mayor and deputy mayor. This makes many of the actions described less-applicable to the rest of us facing either lukewarm support or downright opposition from leadership (surely the most common situation in the US). The book gives hope, though, and provides enough nuts-and-bolts information to be applicable to any community..., acceptance of this vision is remote in red-state and purple america, but if it can be done in NYC...,

This book brings to mind an earlier tome called *The Pedestrian Revolution*, where the argument for car-free zones is shown to be feasible and profitable. However, *The Pedestrian Revolution* was written 40 years ago, a time when living in the city wasn't the vogue. Much of Janette Sadik-Khan's *Street Fight* has to do with modern issues of overcrowding and high fuel costs. Not all of her examples are from NYC; she includes Medellin, Colombia, as an example of non-automobile services. That unfortunate city, better known for cocaine, now has cable cars and escalators to get people up the hills. Instead of a two hour bus trip down the winding mountain roads, it's a ten minute walk to the cable station, twenty minutes down to the city, and a ten minute bus ride to work. Medellin sits at the bottom of a valley, so more cars would equal more smog (like LA, Santiago De Chile, Beirut, Mexico City, etc) and even if the cars go electric, who can afford one anyway? The cable cars and escalators are an alternative to moving everyone to

Ã¢Âœaffordable housingÃ¢Â• in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Sadik-Khan explores the no-car solutions worldwide, and outlines the benefits; you get less smog, shorter commutes, lower fuel costs, decreased traffic, and if you increase the landmarks, navigation becomes easier. She also discusses the many sacrifices to me made, such as when 1st Avenue in Manhattan got a bike lane. The Avenue, once a five-lane road, is reduced to only three car lanes; one for bikes, one for buses, and three for cars. While cars end up with fewer lanes and parking, sheÃ¢Â™s not terribly sympathetic; most of the cars on 1st Avenue are commercial, and few New Yorkers can afford a car anyway. The author devotes a chapter to the anti-bike lane people, such a TorontoÃ¢Â™s mayor Rob Ford (given his girth, he could use a bike) and doesnÃ¢Â™t turn them into villains. Not everybody wants to ride, like the grocery magnate John Castimatides, who has the money to get driven to work daily, and like Rob Ford, would benefit from a few rides. Sadik-Khan does, however, criticize the anti-bike people with regard to their attitude to casualties. When a cyclist gets run over, theyÃ¢Â™re likely to say Ã¢Âœhe deserved it,Ã¢Â• but when a cyclist hits a pedestrian, theyÃ¢Â™re up in arms. The earlier book by Jane Jacobs is mentioned in Street Fight, along with the changes that did not happen as a result. Robert Moses becomes the villain in this book, because it was Moses that pushed for car accommodations and not pedestrians. Maybe this book is really about the change from the city-to-suburb-to-city change in todayÃ¢Â™s world? Perhaps the number of young people putting off marriage influences the desire to live in cities? This book is one of several pro-urban arguments that have hot the bookshelves in recent years, the most recent one of which was Never Built Los Angeles. It turns out that LA had many planned neighborhoods proposed in the 1950Ã¢Â™s, all of which had a rail link, and none of which were taken seriously. But given 30 years of Ã¢Âœthe freeway is a parking lot,Ã¢Â• maybe itÃ¢Â™s time?

This is a great book. Anyone who likes New York, and anyone interested in how cities really work, will love it. The author combines a street-savvy approach to politics with a genuine commitment to making the city a better, safer and more efficient place. She is courageous and smart. ItÃ¢Â™s compelling, and inspiring.

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