

made, pointing out the larger, cumulative effects of development on landscape-scale open space and its many values. None of the four patterns are entirely unique to the West, however, and readers will find Travis' characterizations valuable for understanding development outside of the region as well.

Part three, "Shaping the Future Geographies of the American West," may be of most interest and use to practicing planners. Throughout the book, Travis argues that planning "has done little to mitigate the negative effects of rapid western growth; indeed planning in the West is mostly about encouraging and enabling growth and land development" (p. 177). In chapter 8, "Understanding the Challenge of Land Use Planning," he argues that traditional land use policies and planning practices are weakened in their ability to guide development by a number of factors, including plan implementation challenges, unbalanced growth management, lack of regional planning, and the need for state- and federally driven land use policies. None of these issues are new to planners. However, while readers may find more comprehensive treatments of each topic elsewhere, the concise overview does provide a suitably accessible synopsis, particularly in the context of planning in the West. The concluding chapter is more valuable. In a thoughtful manner, the case is made for doing "four big things" (p. 198) for shaping the future geography of the West. Included are compelling ideas on regionalism and western rural development codes. The discussion of the role of public advocacy in planning and planning support technologies is an especially significant contribution to the discourse of planning in the West.

Well organized and easy to read, *New Geographies of the American West* is an informative portrayal of the challenging land use planning landscape of the Western United States, especially the Interior West. Rich in examples and supporting maps and figures, the book should be found accessible by planners and the interested public, as well as scholars and students interested in its heavily referenced endnotes.

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## Community Development and Neighborhood Planning



*Designs on the Public: The Private Lives of New York's Public Spaces*

Kristine F. Miller. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2007. 200 pages. \$75, \$25 (paperback).

New York City's public parks and plazas are some of the most recognized and frequented sites in the United States. These icons draw us in with their physical features: Rockefeller Center's skating rink and Central Park's Boathouse immediately come to mind. But we are also attracted to the very publicness of these spaces. Consciously or not, we value opportunities to come together with strangers, whether watching a street performer or enjoying a coffee and newspaper over a shared table. *Designs on the Public* operates from the premise that public spaces are not only physical locations but also sites and subjects of social and democratic processes.

Geared toward social theorists, civil libertarians, advanced planning students, and enlightened policymakers, *Designs on the Public* laments our diminishing public realm. In this thought-provoking examination, Miller chooses six relevant case studies to show how design decisions and legal action limit our ability to freely mingle or express dissent in public space. While these spaces are public in name and intent, meaning they are legally obliged to remain open to all individuals and groups, each has been privatized in one form or another. Some are owned by the city but managed and policed by federal regulators or private forces, as with Times Square and Federal Plaza, while some are owned and managed by the city, such as City Hall Park, but only allow access subject to stringent permitting processes. Still others are owned and managed by the private sector but were constructed with considerable public funding, for example, Trump Tower, Sony Plaza, and IBM Atrium. Each space involves complex conceptions of property and publicity, supporting Miller's well-reasoned claim that public space is not fixed or constant, but rather is continually challenged, recast, and ultimately remade by a variety of actors.

Miller weaves her argument through detailed cases bookended by an enlightening introduction and epilogue. The introduction offers a rather unsettled normative definition of public space based on conceptions of citizenship and representation. She claims that public space must be open to democratic life and an "active public sphere," both difficult concepts to define or measure. In chapter 1, she explains how speech must have an audience to be effective or meaningful, describing recent and controversial attempts by officials to limit speech acts on the steps of City Hall, traditionally the site of popular protest. The next chapter shows how design and discourse worked together to define the meaning of Federal Plaza. Chapter 3 zooms out to discuss the redevelopment of the Times Square district. Miller claims that project's success relied on careful campaigns to

define the appropriate or desirable public for this world famous district. This chapter connects tenuously to the others, dealing less with architecture, urban design, and landscape and more with advertising and graphic design.

Chapters 4–6 examine spaces provided by private developers in exchange for bonus floor areas or other incentives. This use of private funds for public purposes introduces oppositional tensions: Owners must allow public access, but often give priority to profit margins and image formation over universal and robust civil liberties. Miller hits her stride here, and her discussions of Sony Plaza and Trump Tower are her most successful. A professor of landscape architecture, she delves deeply into the relationship between architectural design and human perception. She describes how images of opulence and extravagance, from Trump's pink marble atrium to Sony's exposed boardrooms, imbue these spaces with "connotations of wealth, luxury, and economic exclusivity" (p. 122). These aesthetic experiences frame the public by creating an insider/outsider mentality. We should feel honored to visit the centerpiece of Trump's empire or the showroom of Sony's technological mastery. Miller elevates privately owned space to the level of traditional public space, an important contribution given the increasing prevalence of these spaces in most large cities, for example, there are over 530 in Manhattan alone.

A major accomplishment of *Designs on the Public* is Miller's ability to weave a complex argument through six disparate cases related only by their location within America's largest city. The reader will appreciate her forthright prose and willingness to take a stance on important issues. She is at her best when articulating her position on relationships between environment and behavior: "design can limit a person's ability to decide what she would do in a space and how she would do it" (p. 40). Or when contrasting the physical and political, she maintains that regulatory changes are easier to enact and retract than physical changes, which runs contrary to traditional claims.

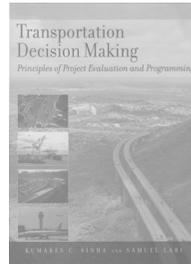
While never an explicit aim, Miller neither offers a clear normative definition of public space nor questions whether space can ever be considered public if its operation requires the exclusion of a less desirable group. Indeed, what is more public to one might be less public to another. The unmediated presence of homeless persons or loitering teenagers might turn off a potential user. This thorny conundrum deserves more attention.

Back cover copy promises that *Designs on the Public* "shows how design can reactivate public space and public life." The book falls a bit short here, offering some implicit direction but only one explicit suggestion, where Miller argues that "at a minimum Federal Plaza should include a large open area" (p. 43). We see her apparent advocacy for a more proactive design criticism when she quotes Sorkin as he blames the Times Square shortcomings on "our own failures to propose a better idea" (p. 65). As critics of the built environment, we are often guilty of falling into this trap. In order to produce more just spatial arrangements, we need to propose solutions, test ideas, and not be afraid to get it wrong.

Jeremy Németh

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## Transportation



### *Transportation Decision Making: Principles of Project Evaluation and Programming*

Kumares C. Sinha and Samuel Labi. John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, 2007. 576 pages. \$135.

**T**ransportation decisions have wide-ranging impacts on everything from air quality to land use patterns to water resources and wetlands. In *Transportation Decision Making*, Sinha and Labi compile a vast reservoir of knowledge and technique that transportation decision makers might use to identify and evaluate these diverse impacts as part of the decision making process. The authors define transportation decision making as "the evaluation of transportation projects and programs in the context of available funding" (p. xxi). Their goal in the text is "to fill the need to cover all key areas of transportation system evaluation" (p. xii). This ambitious goal is nearly achieved.

The text is organized into four sections, the first of which (chapters 1–4) provides an overview of the transportation decision making process. The authors define the project development process, identify the federal legislation that affects transportation decision making, introduce transportation system performance measures, discuss the critical process of estimating the demand for transportation, identify a variety of transportation costs, and introduce procedures used for cost estimation. These introductory topics provide the analytic and intellectual background for the examinations of specific impacts that are covered in the remainder of the book.

The second section (chapters 5–8) discusses what Sinha and Labi characterize as the tangible impacts of transportation. These tangible impacts include travel time, safety, vehicle operating costs, and a broader consideration of economic efficiency.

The third section (chapters 9–17) focuses on economic development, air quality, noise, wetland and water resource, visual, energy, land use, and social and cultural impacts. In these chapters, the authors introduce the presentation technique that they use throughout the remainder of the book. They define and discuss the key concepts for each transportation impact, then present a detailed, step-by-step methodology for identifying and evaluating the impact. They also introduce the reader to software or other tools that may be used in the evaluation process. Sinha and Labi close by discussing relevant legislation, mitigation measures, and additional reading materials. This framework found in chapters 5–20 provides clear structure to the voluminous information presented.

The fourth section (chapters 18–20) outlines the processes of multiple criteria analysis, discusses the use of geographic information systems and other information systems for transportation evaluation, and reviews the transportation programming process. Section four, thus, represents a logical conclusion for the material presented in the earlier sections.