

City Planning 642-001
Spring 2025, University of Pennsylvania
Paul R. Levy

Second Class

<https://centercityphila.org/bidclass>

CENTER CITY DISTRICT

1

First short paper: 4-5 pages,
Due February 10th.

Retail development opportunities: West or East Market St

This paper is based on your personal observation walking
either East Market or West Market Streets; **choose one**

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Option 1: Walk East Market Street from 6th to City Hall noting what you see as the strengths & weaknesses of both the pedestrian environment and the ground floor retail environment.

Then choose either to walk through the interior of the Reading Terminal Market or several blocks in the core of Chinatown (9th to 11th Streets, Arch to Race Streets.)

Then, **pick one of the most problematic blocks** of Market St. from 8th to City Hall & develop some preliminary recommendations:

- (a) short-term, easy to accomplish streetscape & façade improvements;
- (b) longer-term, harder to achieve redevelopment recommendations, based on what you found most successful in either Chinatown or Reading Terminal. Suggest too, how this first block could set a pattern for successive improvements on the street.

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Option 2: Pick any **two blocks** on West Market St *both sides*, between 15th and 19th & then pick the same two numbered blocks on West Walnut, *both sides*, and develop an improvement plan for **the two blocks on Market Street**, based on the lessons derived from the two blocks on Walnut Street:

- (a) short-term, easy to accomplish streetscape and façade improvements; and
- (b) longer-term, harder to achieve releasing or redevelopment recommendations, based on what you found most successful on the two comparable blocks on West Walnut Street. Suggest too, how these first blocks could set a pattern for successive improvements on the street.

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The city experienced on sidewalks & public places



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5

Jane Jacobs & vibrant city life; 1961



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6

How do you produce these conditions?
(pre- and post-Covid)



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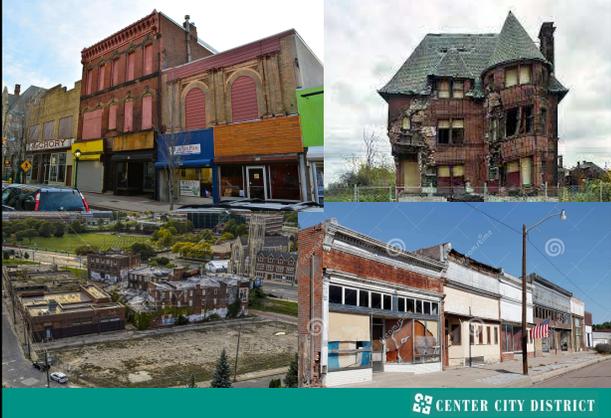
As opposed to these conditions?



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Extreme problem in places abandoned economically



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How to create places like this: Bryant Park



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As opposed to this
Empire State Plaza, Albany



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Jane Jacobs starts from the experience
of walking on city sidewalks



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How to create a successful urban street even on cloudy days: Antwerp



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“Bedrock attribute of a successful city is that a person must feel personally safe & secure on the street among strangers”



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“Public interaction without private commitment”



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A well-used street is a safe street



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“The public peace is not kept primarily by the police. It's kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls & standards among people themselves & enforced by people themselves.”



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But how do you create these conditions?



“You can't make people use streets they have no reason to use...”

The basic requirement (for success) is a substantial quantity of stores & other public places sprinkled along the sidewalks of a district; enterprises & public spaces that are used by evening and night must be among them especially.”

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#1: Frequent doors, openings create variety



19

Places of interest that pull you along



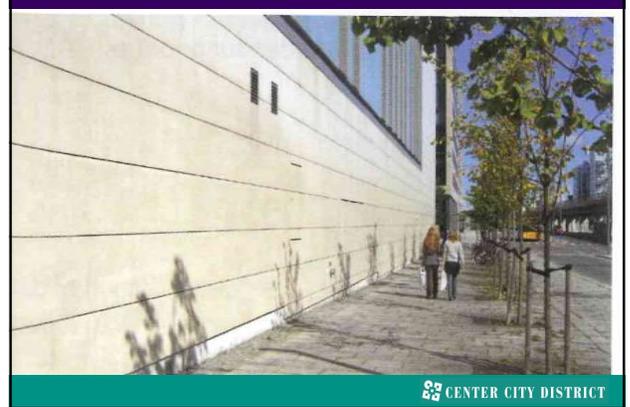
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Variety & continuity produce activity



21

Rather than blank & boring walls



22

Buildings designed to activate



23

Rather than deaden the street



24

Uses that generate high volumes of pedestrians



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Buildings that spill out onto the sidewalk



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....and put "eyes on the street"



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Celebrates formal role of NYC doorman



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Informal: shop owners who watch over the street



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Keep an eye on the sidewalk



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Much easier at the scale of pre-high rise, pre-auto cities
Visby, Gotland; Sweden



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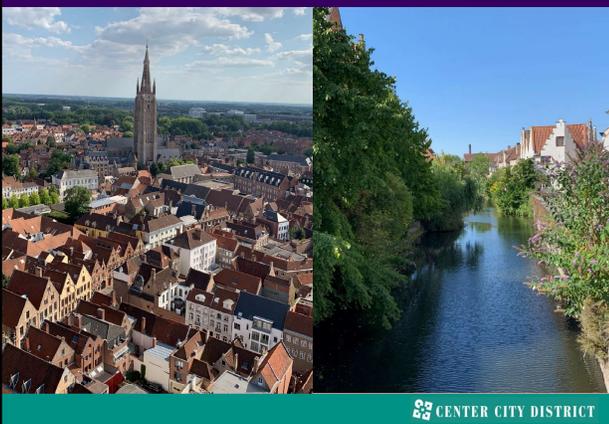
16th century place thriving as tourist destination



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Preserved, medieval city of Bruges, Belgium



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Curving walkable, human-scale lanes



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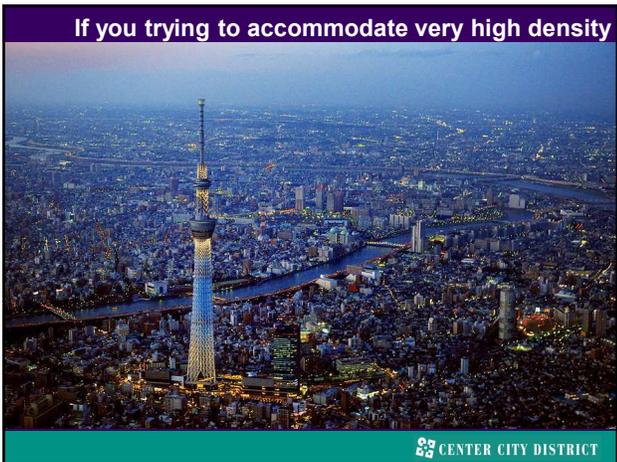
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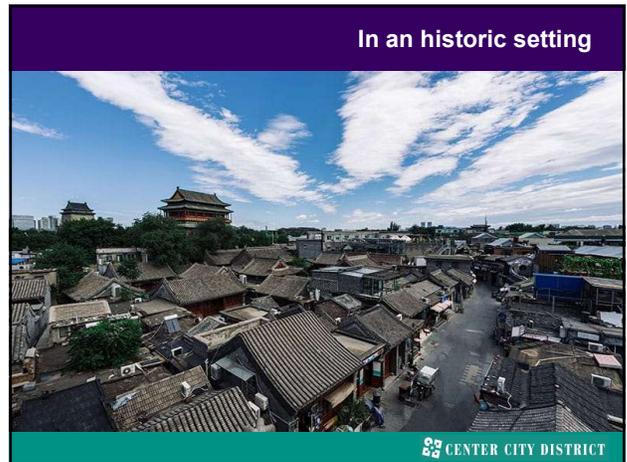
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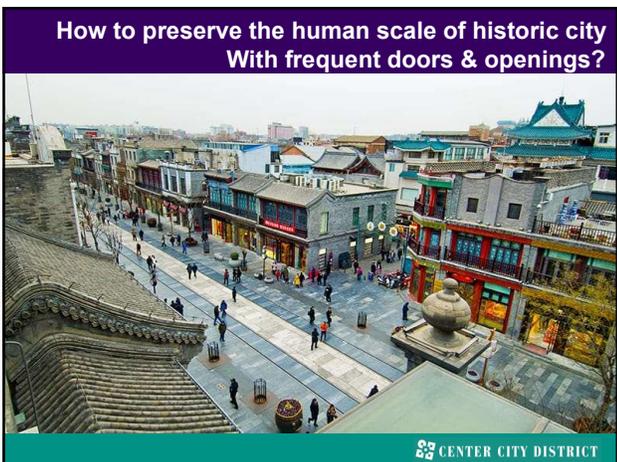
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Uses that generate activity by day
& not only at rush hour and lunchtime



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Like the single use traditional downtown



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Uses that generate activity at night:
Arts & entertainment



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Mixed primary uses: office, hotel & residential
Create foot traffic at different times of day



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Add an outpatient medical building



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& a hospital & get even more diverse foot traffic



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On campuses: classrooms, offices & dorms



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Evening classes



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Add hotel & bookstore & there are more reasons for people to be on the street, more diverse hours



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The more mixed, the better, but all upper floor uses....



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**Also need to get the ground floor right!
Primary mixed uses + frequent doors & openings on ground floor**



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It can be done



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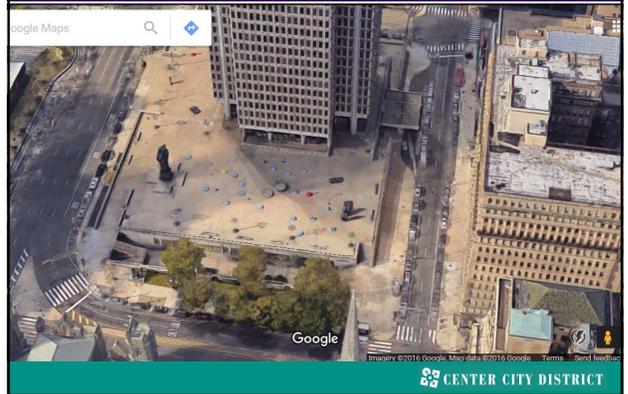
High-rise buildings 1960s-1970s on podiums



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Buildings separated from the street grid



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Architecture as fortress



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But even buildings that touch the sidewalk...



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How is the ground floor designed...



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....and how is it leased?



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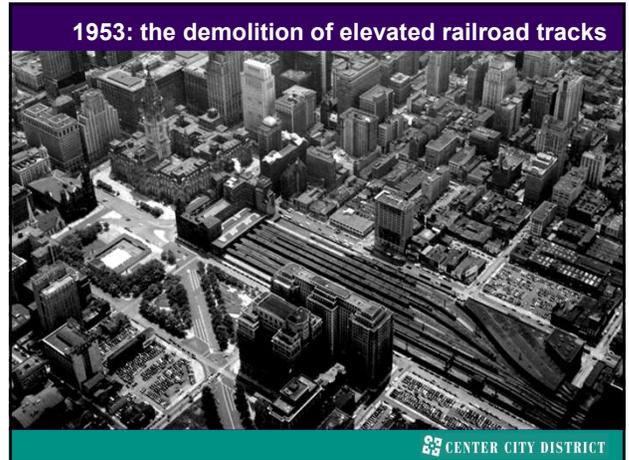
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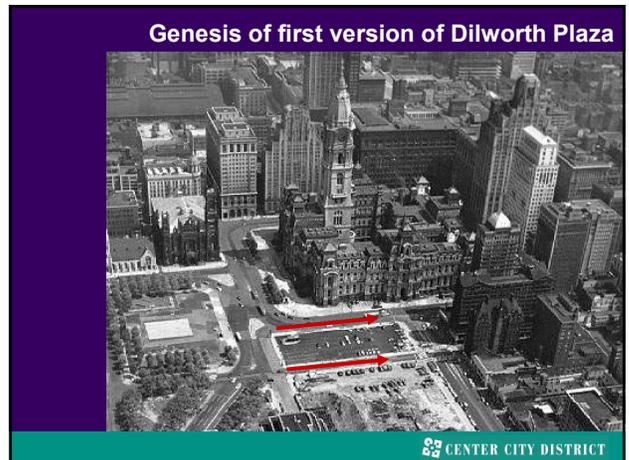
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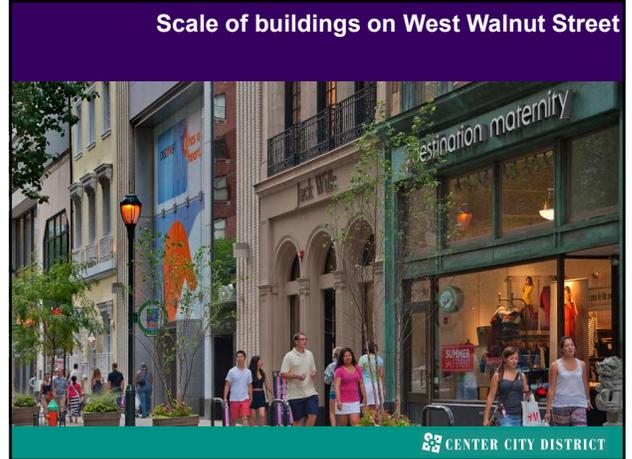
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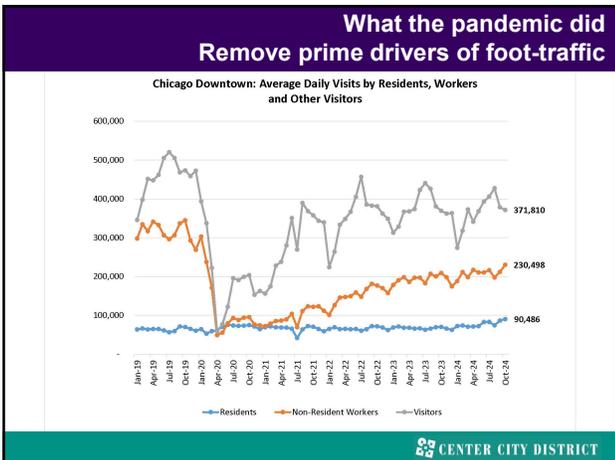
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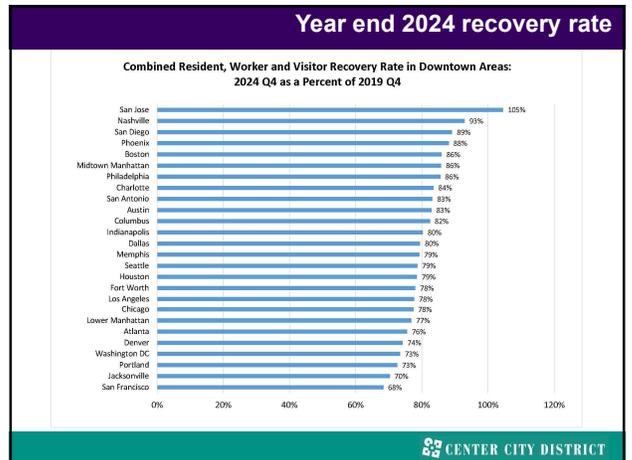
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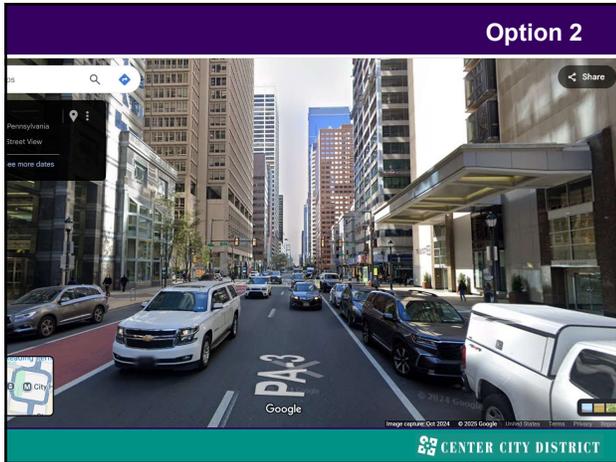
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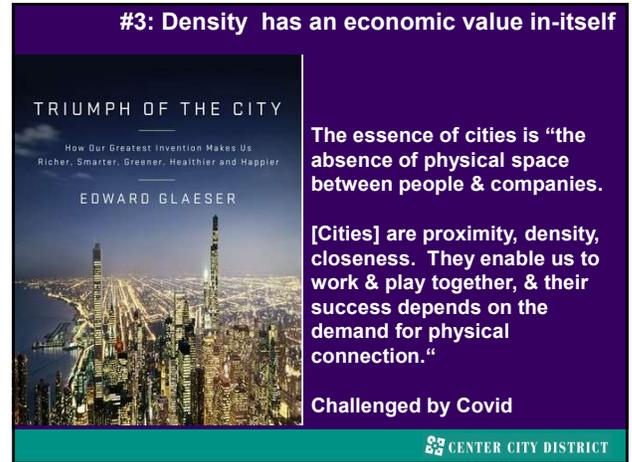
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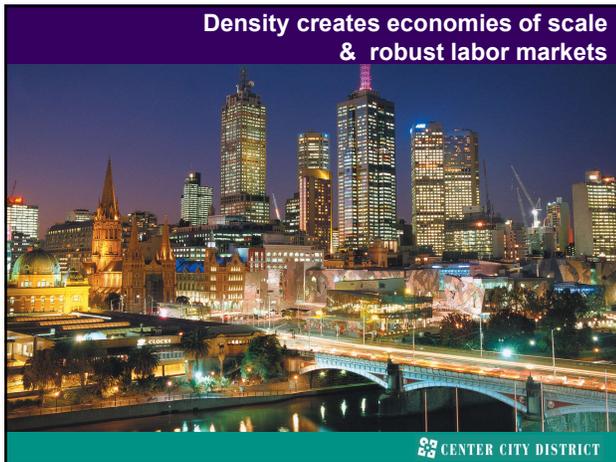
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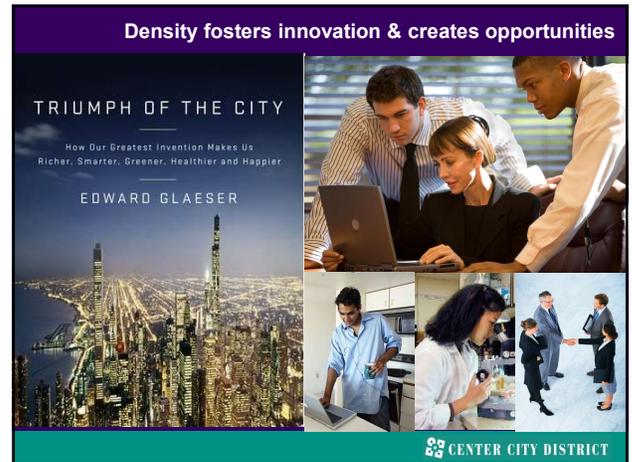
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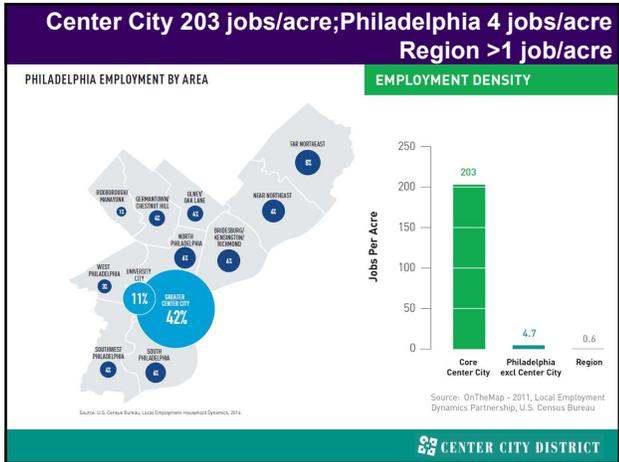
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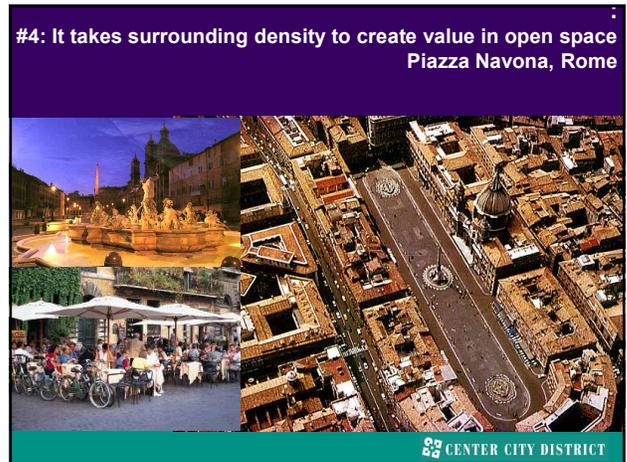
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Urban density is an economic driver

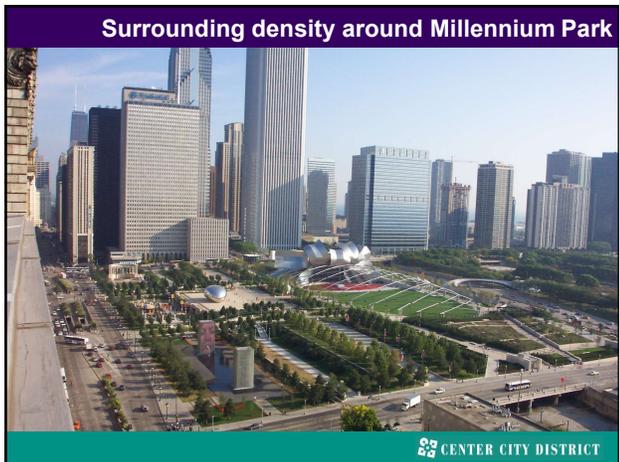
But also creates demand/need for public spaces

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Rittenhouse Square: Density + diversity of land-use



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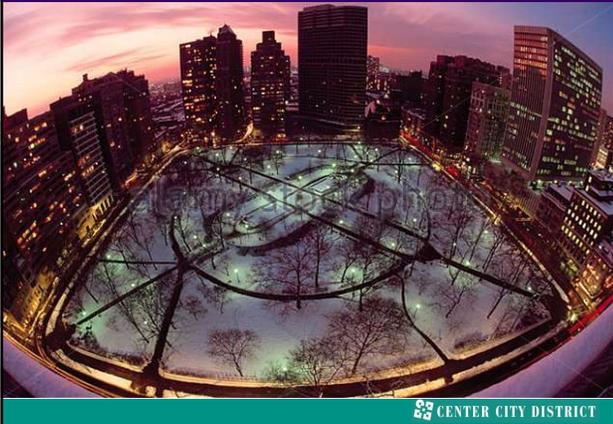
Design of places matters too
Multiple entrances provide ease of access



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Enable use of the park as a destination or short-cut



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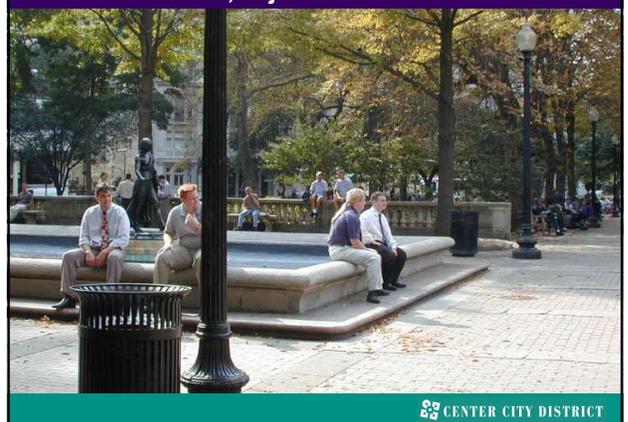
Ease of entry



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Because of diverse, adjacent land-use: office workers



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Bike messengers



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Construction workers & day-care providers



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Seniors & young children



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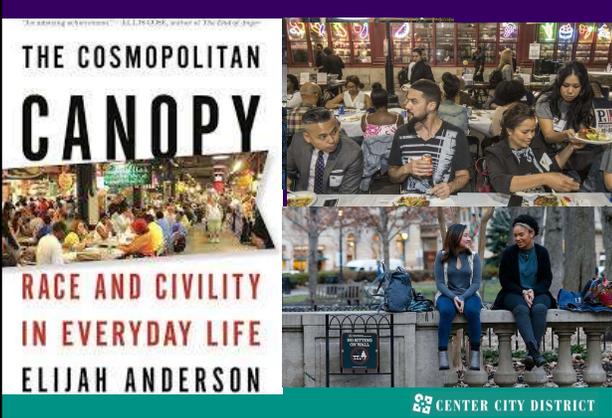
Friends & parents



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A place that seems to encourage diversity



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Plenty of places from which to watch other people



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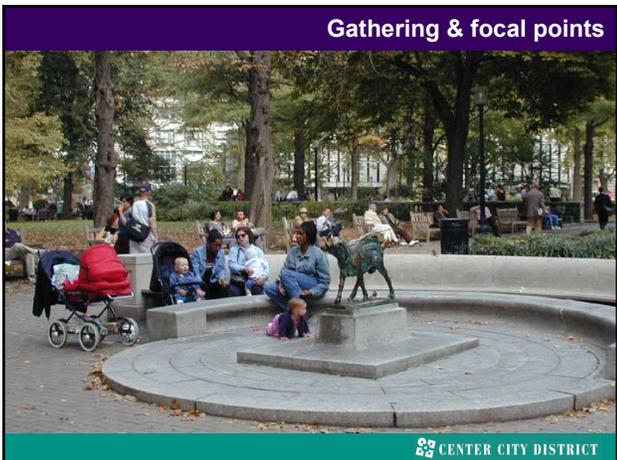
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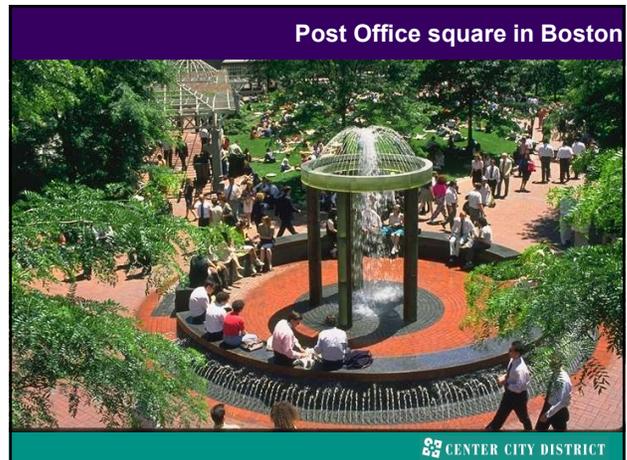
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Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade Signature urban objects



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Millennium Park, Chicago



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William Whyte focused attention on little details

The Social Life
of Small
Urban Spaces



William H. Whyte

The Conservation Foundation

**"It is difficult to
design a space
that will not
attract people
... what is
remarkable is how
often this has been
accomplished."**

William H. Whyte
Founder - Project for Public Spaces

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Great streets & places are created by paying attention to small details

**"You can't make people use
streets they have no reason to use**



The basic requirement (for
success) is a substantial quantity
of stores & other public places
sprinkled along the sidewalks of a
district; enterprises & public
spaces that are used by evening
and night must be among them
especially."

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great
American Cities*, 1961

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Celebration of intimately scaled streets



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#5: Getting obsessed with small-scale & incremental approaches to revival

Convention Centers, stadiums, aquariums, cultural centers, enclosed malls - these are about politics & development profitable for a few, not about developing local economies, enlivening downtowns, or stimulating revitalization.

Downtowns compete for these headline-grabbing, budget-straining projects, but overlook the actual complex cities in which they sit ... and detract attention from complicated, fundamental difficulties"

Roberta Gratz, *Cities: Back from the Edge*

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**Big is not bad,
It's only bad, if it's badly designed**



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Empire State Plaza, Albany



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Direct ramps from the expressway to the garage



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**40,000 state office workers never have to walk
in the plaza or on downtown streets**



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Auto entry



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**No surprise that the public spaces
are devoid of people
Combined with barren architecture**



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Right across street: historic state capital



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Large buildings can transform image of a city



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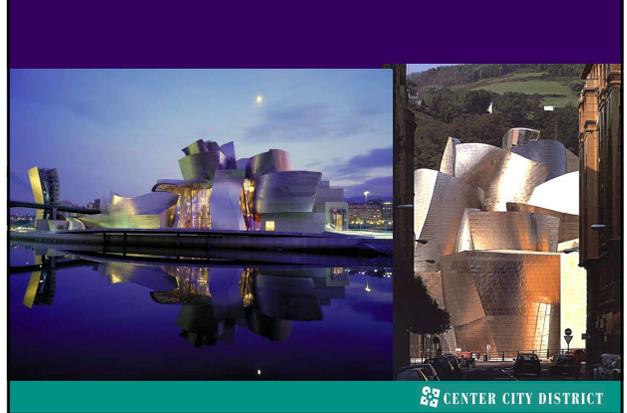
Iconic Sydney Opera house



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Guggenheim in Bilbao



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Transformed the surrounding environment



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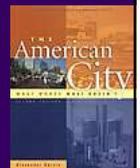
Large, but attentive to context

Any public facility can be successful as long as revenues exceed expenses.

But for a public facility to be *beneficial to the rest of the city*, it must attract a critical mass of customers and yet be located & designed so that their market requirements *can not* be fully accommodated within the facility.

Only then will customers have a reason to spend their money elsewhere.

Alexander Garvin,
[The American City: What works, What Doesn't](#)



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That what well-designed downtown ballparks do



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Downtown convention centers
Are supposed to achieve this



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And successful concert halls



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NYC Highline: a public spaces can also leverage
private development



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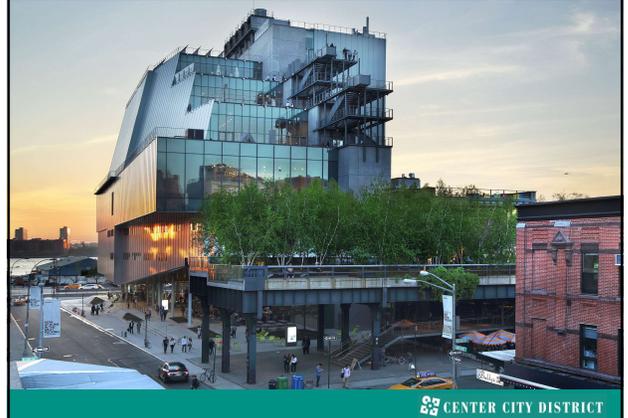
New housing



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The Whitney Museum



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Large, but attentive to context

Any public facility can be successful as long as revenues exceed expenses.

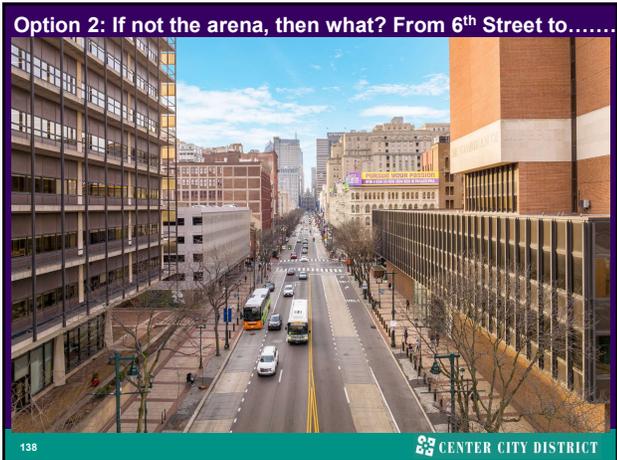
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Alexander Garvin,
The American City: What works, What Doesn't

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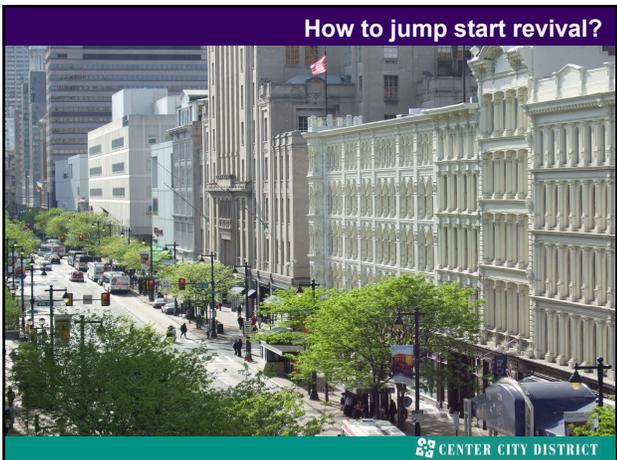
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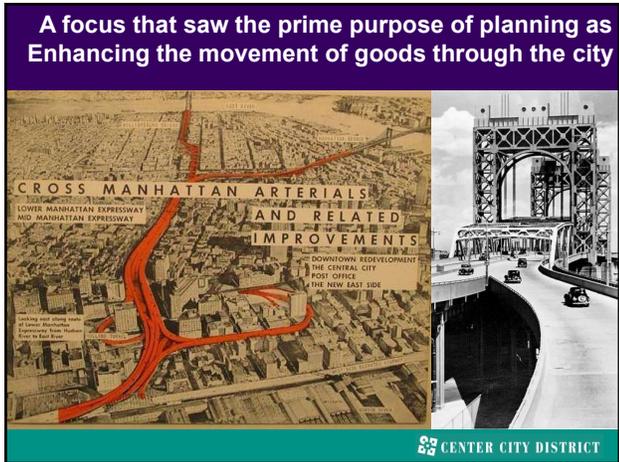


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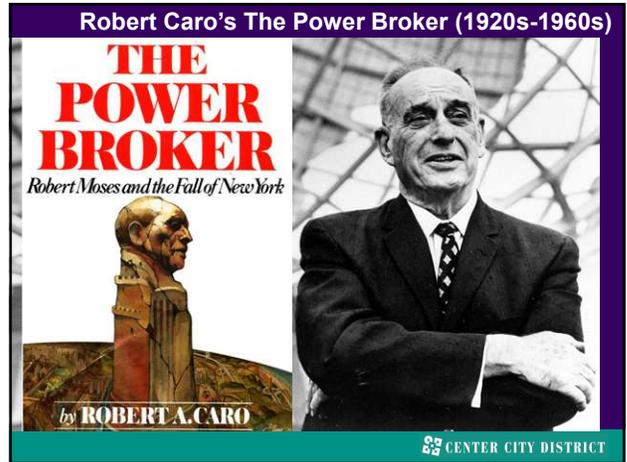
**Jane Jacobs was a reaction to Robert Moses:
Regional, top-down planning**

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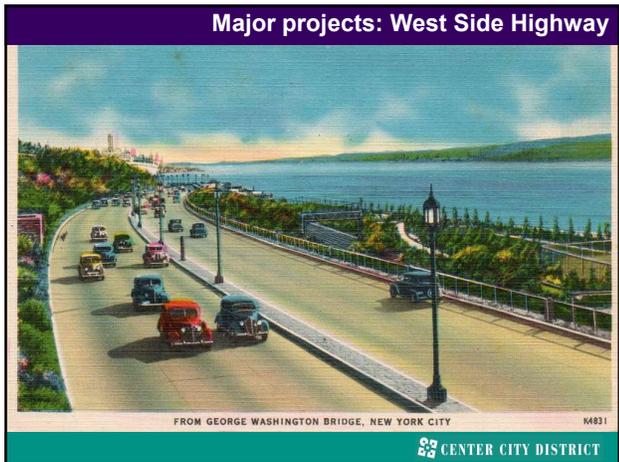
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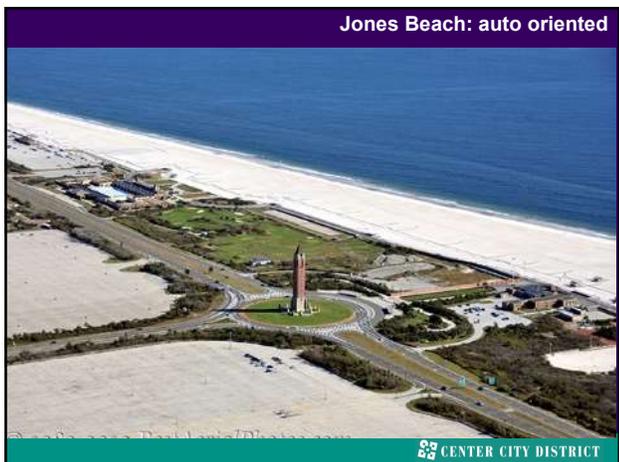
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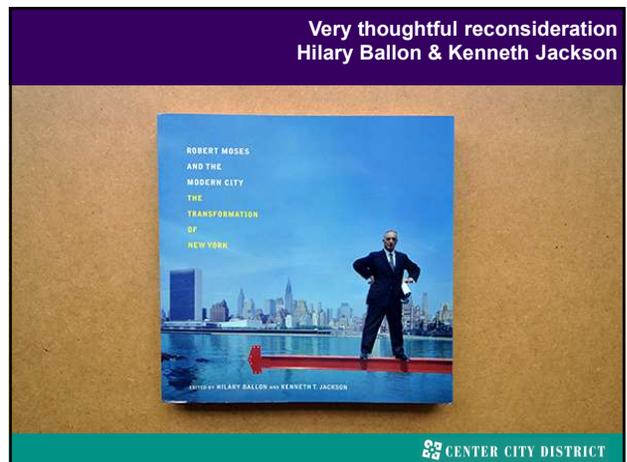
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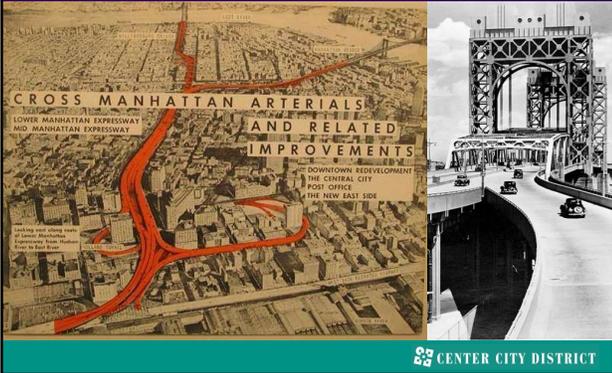


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Moses' view dominated city planning for almost 40 years



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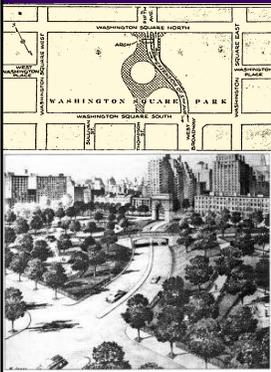
Paradigm shift: The battle over Washington Square



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Washington Square park

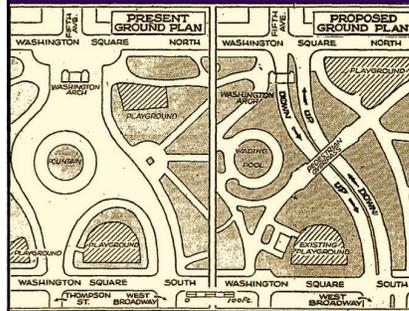


As Parks Commissioner in 1940, Robert Moses originally proposed to build a "double highway" through Washington Square Park

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1955 a new plan



In 1955, he proposed bisecting the park with a 48 ft wide highway.

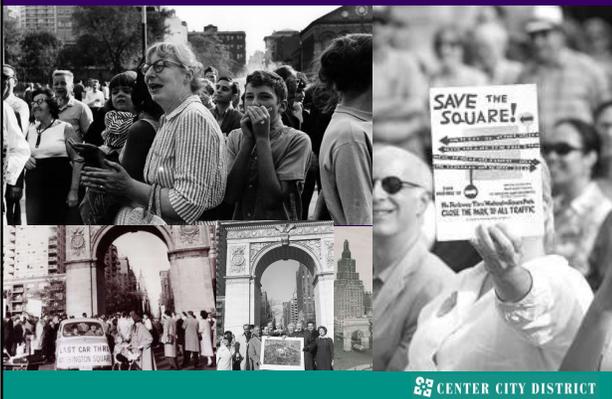
"Mothers and children, New York University students would be able to cross from one half of the park to the other by a foot-bridge thirty-six feet wide."

NY Times

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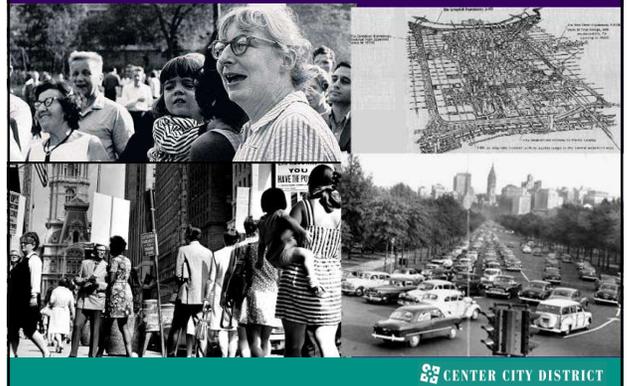
Where Jane Jacobs got her inspiration



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Challenged the image of the city as a system of regional roadways to move goods

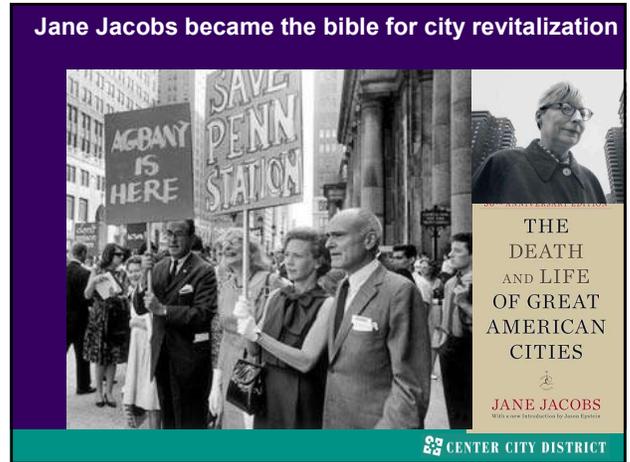


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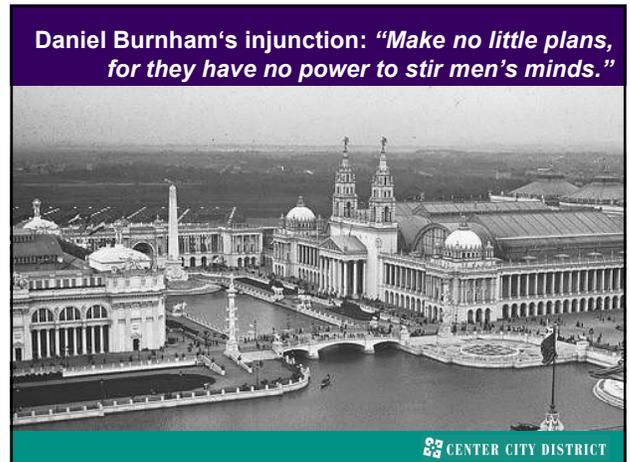
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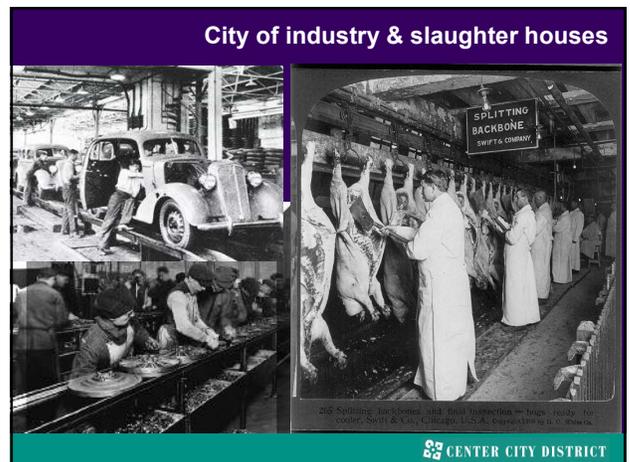
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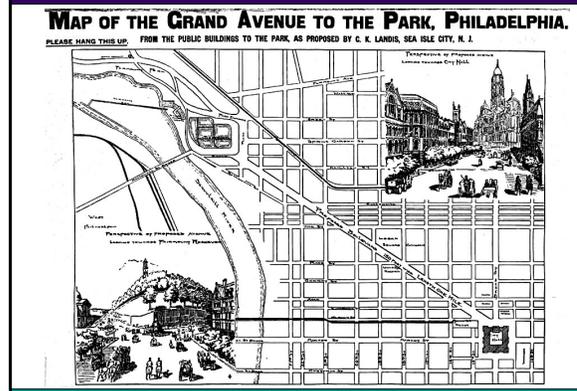
Benjamin Franklin Parkway: City Beautiful project



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The Parkway is a 19th century idea: 1884



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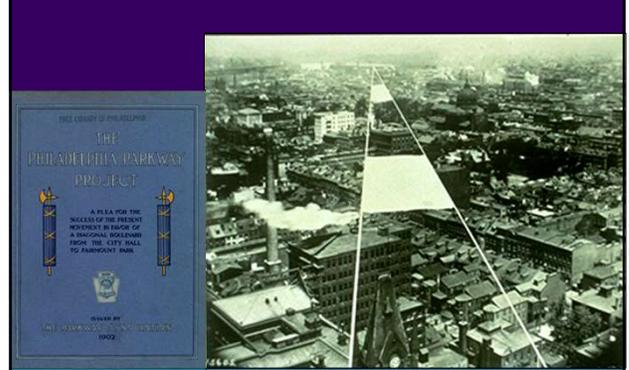
Alternative to smoke-filled messy density of the industrial city



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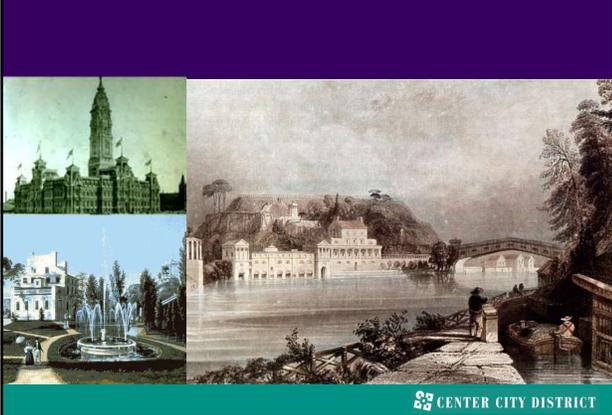
A line of desire through 1 mile of the city



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Connect the new City Hall to Fairmount Park



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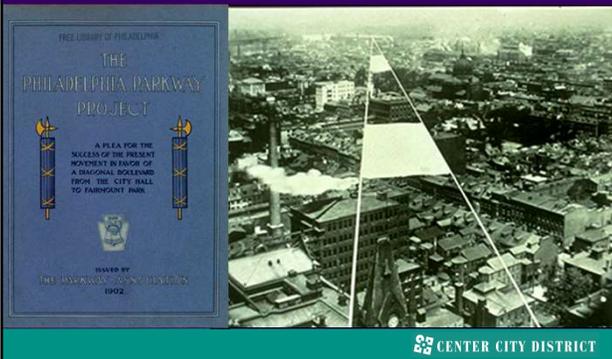
Influenced by Hausmann's Paris



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Involved demolition of 1,300 properties



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Large scenic boulevard; often devoid of sidewalk vitality



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Jane Jacobs a reaction to 1950s demolition



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Thinking Big was seen as the problem



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Discredited by destructive renewal projects



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But a lot of what we have inherited in cities



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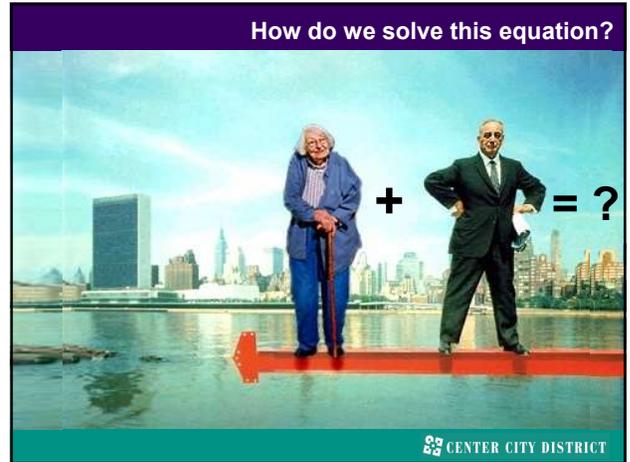
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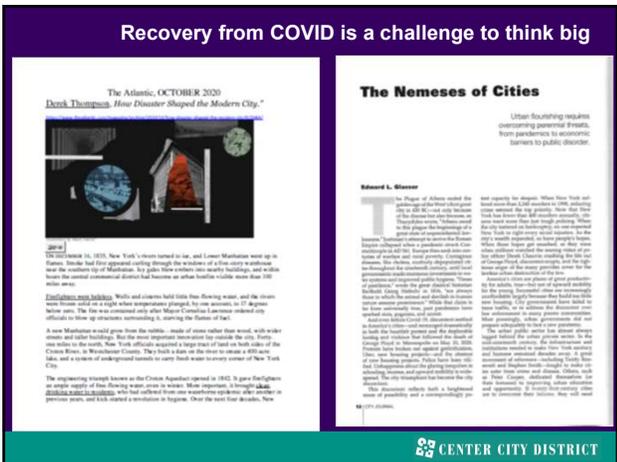
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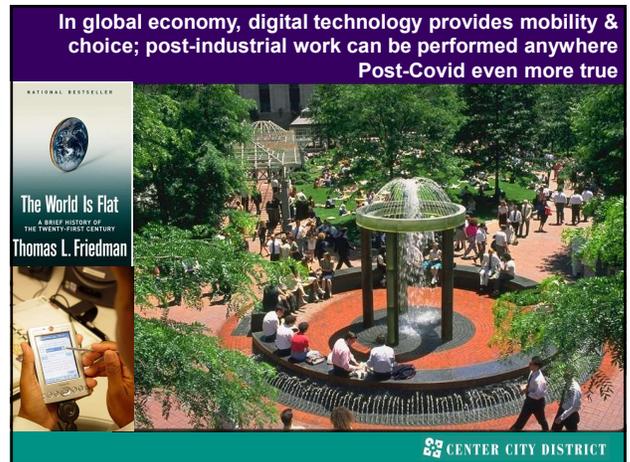
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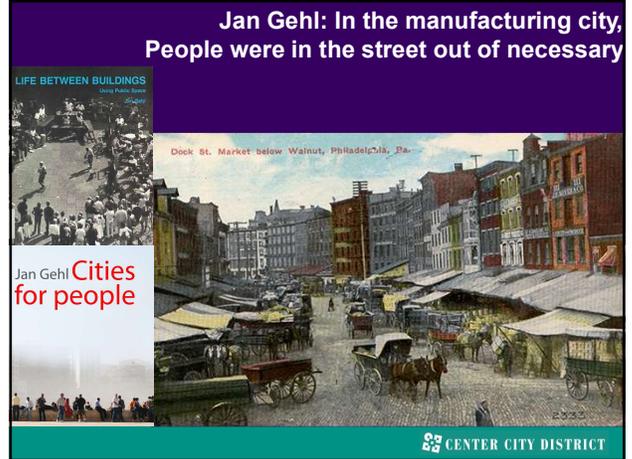
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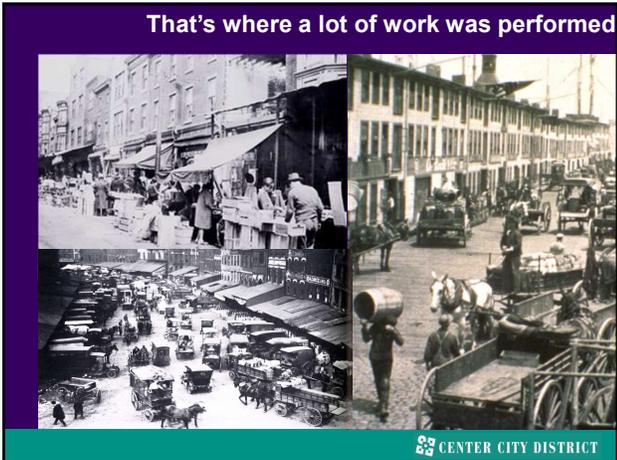
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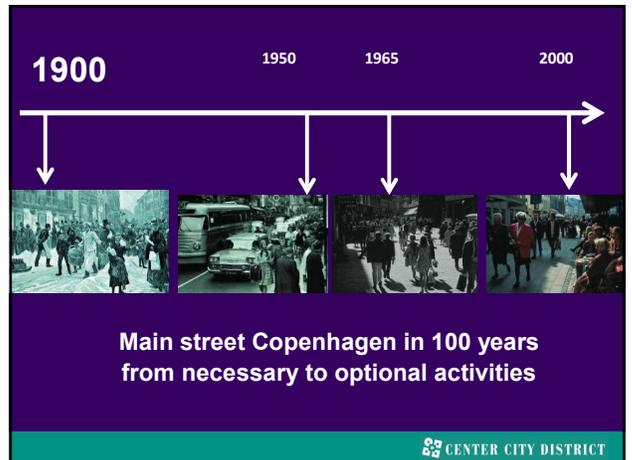
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The traditional city



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The invaded city



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The abandoned city



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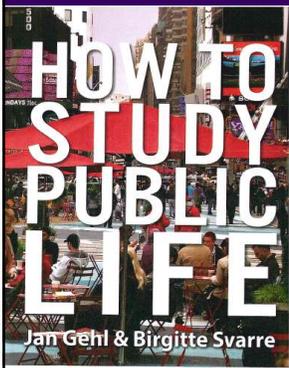
The reconquered city



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Jan Gehl, How to Study Public Life

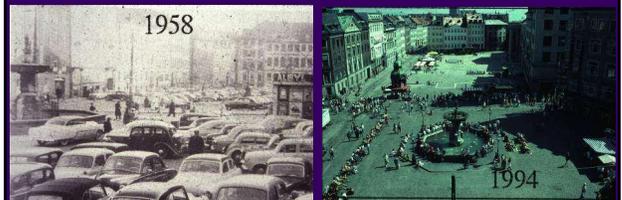


- Counting** Counting is a useful and easy method for counting people. It is simple, everything can be counted, which provides evidence for making comparisons and also allows different geographic areas to be compared.
- Mapping** Activities, people, places for meeting, and events can be plotted on maps to show the spatial distribution of activities and events. This is also useful before an activity and when the time passes. This is also useful before an activity.
- Tracing** People's movements tracks or walking a defined space can be drawn on the basis of movement or data of the activity being studied.
- Tracking** In order to observe people's movements over a large area or for a longer time, observers can observe them from a distance without their knowing it or their movements can be tracked by other means. This is also useful before an activity.
- Looking for traces** There are many other traces (such as litter in the streets, old papers on the ground, which show the general distribution of people). These traces can be explored through counting, photographing or mapping.
- Photographing** Photographing is an essential part of public life studies to document situations where data is not possible or where other methods have not been taken.
- Keeping a diary** Keeping a diary can register details and nuances about the interaction between public life and public space, which observations that can be compared and/or quantified.
- Test walks** Talking is well suited to observing the surrounding life can be done in less systematic, but the thing is that the observer has to choose between problems and solutions for city life in a given case.

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In 1962 all 18 squares were parking lots - now they are all people squares



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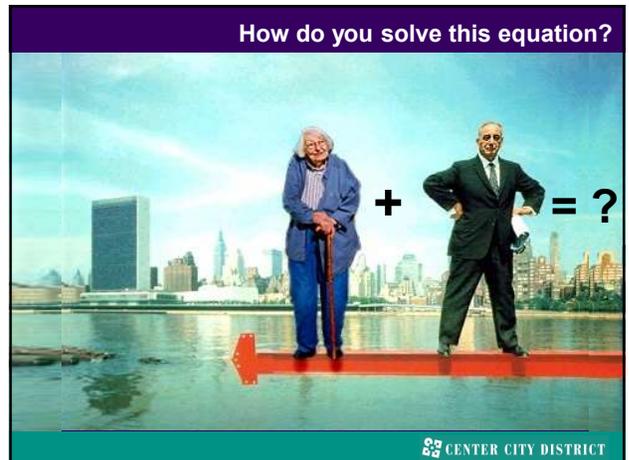
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