

# Nature and Cities: The Ecological Imperative in Urban Design and Planning

Edited by Frederick R. Steiner, George F. Thompson,  
and Armando Carbonell



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**NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF 2016 BY THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**, *Nature and Cities* calls for the integration of nature in urban design and planning to make cities and urban infrastructure truly green, sustainable, and resilient. This richly illustrated collection of essays by leading international landscape architects, architects, city planners, and urban designers, suggests that ecologically based urban designs and plans have become economically and environmentally critical as the world urbanizes and the effects of climate change grow more severe.

The authors include a range of practitioners and scholars who build on traditions by leading thinkers during the last century such as Aldo Leopold, Ian McHarg, and Patrick Geddes and the premise of *Ecological Design and Planning*, also edited by George F. Thompson and Frederick R. Steiner.

Harvard professor Charles Waldheim summarizes advances in the emerging field of landscape urbanism, showing how New York City's High Line, designed by chapter author James Corner, and Chicago's Millennium Park transformed derelict infrastructure into public amenities that "convene community, catalyze development, and remediate environmental conditions for a newly conceived public realm." Landscape architect Kate Orff describes the restoration of oyster reefs in New York Harbor to purify water and create a living breakwater to mitigate sea level rise. And Susannah Drake calls for a U.S. infrastructure upgrade—a WPA 2.0—to

renovate failing highways and other public works so they soak up water and perform other ecological functions.

Each author in *Nature and Cities* offers a sense of direction, purpose, and model for how landscape architecture, architecture, and planning can "... be engaged in community life at every scale and in every city and town in the world," the editors write in the introduction. "This may well mean that a new generation of practitioners will need to become instruments of enlightenment and change in occupations still very much in need of such care: notably, engineering, transportation, utilities, agriculture, resource industries, and commercial development—which, with too few exceptions, remain behind the times.

"Imagine engineers embracing the tenets of ecological design and planning as they create roads, parking lots, interstates, impoundments, and other basic infrastructure. Imagine those engaged with municipal management as well as agricultural, industrial, transportation, and utility sectors abandoning single-purpose thinking. Imagine that."

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

Frederick R. Steiner is dean of the School of Design and Paley Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. George F. Thompson is the founder of George F. Thompson Publishing. Armando Carbonell is chair of the department of Planning and Urban Form and a senior fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

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