

Now Available — American Urbanist: How William H. Whyte's Unconventional Wisdom Reshaped Public Life

Richard K. Rein shares William H. Whyte's life and wisdom as it evolved over five decades of research, writing, and advocacy.

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A pioneer of people-centered urban design, William H. Whyte dedicated his life to creating more welcoming, vibrant cities. Across his wide-ranging career, Whyte fought urban sprawl, re-wrote zoning codes to make privately-owned public spaces more accessible, and inspired a new generation of urban designers. As the pandemic has seen sidewalks become mini-restaurants and pedestrians reclaim roads, "Holly" Whyte's work is essential.

In "[American Urbanist](#): How William H. Whyte's Unconventional Wisdom Reshaped Public Life," newly available in paperback, journalist [Richard K. Rein](#) shares Whyte's life and wisdom as it evolved over five decades of research, writing, and advocacy. Whyte helped reshape the American landscape, including his work revitalizing New York's Bryant Park and advocating for the preservation of forests and farmlands around the country.

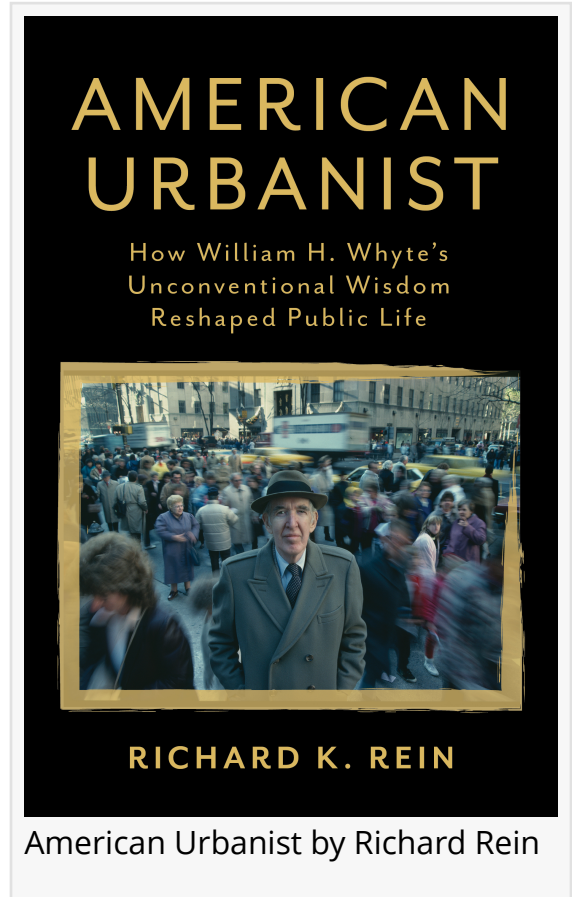
“

A marvelous new biography.”

The New York Times

This engaging biography traces Whyte's life, from serving as a WWII Marine intelligence officer to writing about the dangers of “groupthink” in the bestselling, seminal book “The Organization Man.” These early experiences formed his razor-sharp assessments of how the world actually worked—not how it was assumed to work. Whyte went on

to help shape the rising environmental movement, spur change in New York City's zoning laws, and tirelessly advocate for the importance of public spaces within cities.



"We need the kind of curiosity that blows the lid off everything," Whyte once said. Whether tackling the issue of suburban sprawl or studying what made some downtowns dead while others bustled with activity, Whyte called for urban design decisions to be based on observed experience. He believed that engaged and informed laypeople, not just experts, could be part of the decision-making process. Whyte's wide-ranging work has changed how people think about cities and suburbs, urban planning, protecting open spaces, and more.



"American Urbanist" is a revealing look at how a man without formal training in architecture or urban planning challenged the status quo and influenced many up-and-coming urban designers. Whyte's life encourages anyone to approach the urban landscape with curiosity and to ask thoughtful, bold questions about how to create more livable cities.

After a reporting career that included stops at "Time Magazine" and "People," Richard K. Rein launched a nationally acclaimed weekly newspaper, U.S. 1, that helped the Princeton-Route 1 corridor in central New Jersey become more than an "edge city." Rein now serves on Princeton Future, a nonprofit that encourages sustainable urbanism in his hometown.

"A marvelous new biography." —"The New York Times"

"In American Urbanist, journalist Richard Rein tells the story of William H. Whyte's particular genius and why it exercises an enduring influence on American life." —"The Wall Street Journal"

"An excellent examination of [Whyte's] work and advocacy." —"American Conservative"

"American Urbanist: How William H. Whyte's Unconventional Wisdom Reshaped Public Life"

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