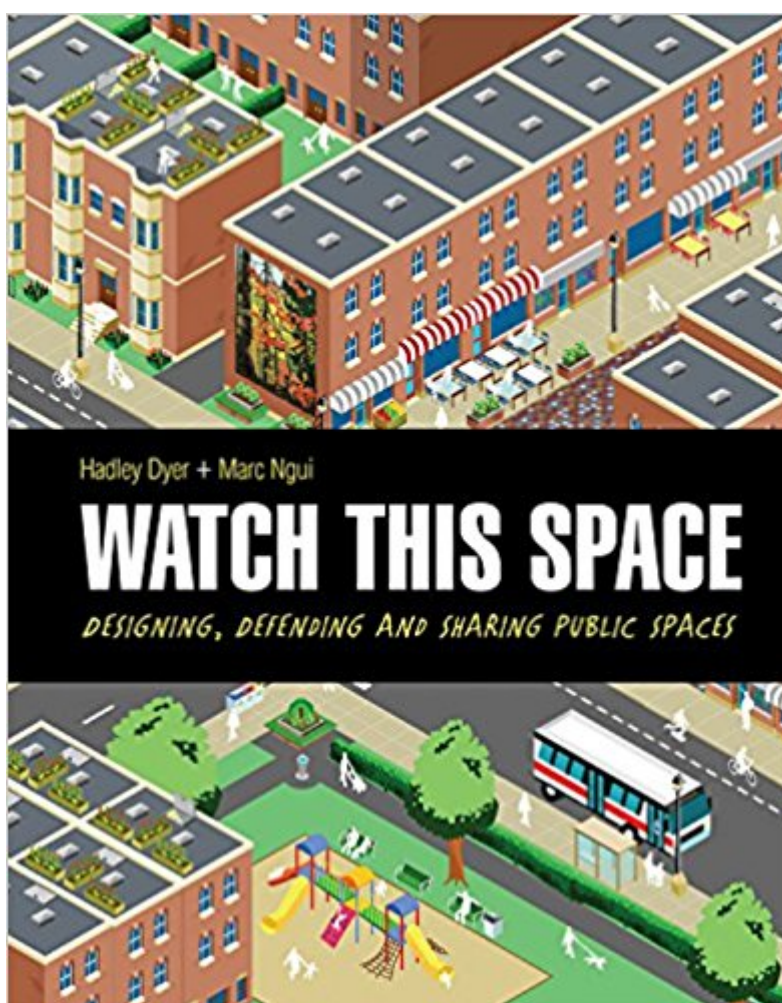


The book was found

# Watch This Space: Designing, Defending And Sharing Public Spaces



## Synopsis

This unique and timely book introduces youth to what public space is, why it is important and how best to use it. It also underscores the need to create, preserve and protect public space. Readers will learn what makes successful public spaces work, the ins and outs of sharing and designing them, the issues surrounding teenagers in public spaces and much more. *Watch This Space* answers the question, Why is public space important? It's important because this space belongs to all of us.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up "This book knocks you over the head with its message that public spaces are a valuable part of every community, be they urban, suburban, or rural and that's not necessarily a bad thing. That teenagers are the intended audience is surprising for a book on this topic, and the authors do an excellent job of defining public spaces, providing the historical context for them, and enumerating exactly why young people should care. The writing is contemporary and relevant, offering up real examples at every turn that represent the best and worst of public spaces around the world, such as comparing the success of two different city parks, one in Philadelphia and one in Rotterdam. By providing plenty of information, the authors encourage teens to advocate for themselves, take to the streets, as it were, and become involved in both the design and use of public spaces. The format of the book and the illustrations, in particular, are engaging and informative, complementing the text without overwhelming it. Pair this in booktalks or displays with

titles on city parks, skateboarding, city murals, and/or Frederick Law Olmsted for an intriguing look at spaces open to all.â”Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

â”What if cities and towns invited teens to help create spaces where they can feel like they belong?â” • â”Is the Internet a public space?â” • With provocative questions and an informative, casual tone, this heavily illustrated title addresses a rare topic in books for youth: city planning and public spaces. From basic definitions of public space, Dyer moves on to ethical questions about safety and privacy, art and beautification, and community-friendly design elements of publicly owned spaces. Throughout, Dyer uses personal anecdotes and global examples, from Peoplesâ”™ Park in Berkeley, California, to Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, Egypt, to emphasize the impact of public spaces around the world. Dyer frankly acknowledges that many public spaces seem to have been planned and regulated by adults who suffer from ephebiphobia, or â”fear of youth,â” • and she encourages readers to rally their communities for more teen-friendly areas designed just for them. With engaging digitally rendered artwork, interactive exercises, and numerous questions for discussion, this wide-ranging title invites teens to think about and help shape their communities, now and in the future. Grade 10. --Gillian Engberg

A really unique book on an overlooked subject, I found this really interesting. Besides just making me aware of "public spaces," I really enjoyed reminiscing about my own time as a teen riding my bike everywhere and meeting friends at the park. This has lots of relevant information, including why public spaces are important for teens, (Unlike adults, teens don't have their own private retreats. Parks, libraries, beaches and gardens give someplace to go, without adult interference, which is actually important because when you're there, you're sorting out who you are and how you fit in. You're becoming part of a community.)ways to get involved, plus really cool public places around the world. For an in-depth review and interview with the author, go to my boo-review web site [ChildressInk](#).Kim ChildressBook EditorGirls' Life MagazineChildressInk

Hadley Dyer and Marc Ngui, a pair of Canadians, have taken this idea and made it accessible to a younger audience. *Watch This Space: Defending, Designing, and Sharing Public Spaces* is a non-fiction, fast-paced, and engaging read directed at teenagers that seeks to highlight how important it is to have safe spaces in the world where teens can interact with one another and with all members of society. The book is colorful and quick to connect to, and it serves a great purpose in

defining what a public space is and why it is important for teenagers to care about these things. A quick overview of the history and intricacies of designing public spaces was quite interesting: when I was a teenager, there weren't a lot of mall restrictions, for example, but the authors highlight how many malls have implemented rules meant to keep teenagers out or from congregating. Dyer and Ngui repeat throughout, though, that malls AREN'T public spaces; rather, they serve as an example of what a public space should be for teenagers: appealing, spacious, well-lit, and inviting to partake in any number of safe activities. In addition to defining and illustrating the history of public spaces, this book gives teenagers a list of HOW to get involved with their communities. There is a do-it-yourself activity in designing a space, as well as a list of places where teenage input is valued (including things like the public library's teen advisory board). Be aware, though, there is a definite bias in this book, and that bias is against the American life style. That's not to say there is a bashing of it in any way, but as a reader I was quick to sense that there was the belief that the American mode was inadequate and there was little work in improving it. I don't necessarily believe that, though some of the points made were valid -- a lot is also overlooked in the progress America has been making in developing public spaces in a suburban-dominated country. *Watch This Space* is a book that would be a fantastic book discussion choice. It can be read quickly and discussed in one session. I think teens would get easily fired up about this and could easily become motivated to get involved in their worlds. A good book talker can sell this one without problem. I think there is a real opportunity to pique the interest of socially conscious teens who may be coming back asking for some of the titles of books by well-known sociologists quoted throughout. The book is a worthy title for adults to read, too, especially those who work with teens or think that teens are often forgotten about in our world -- you, too, may be motivated to be their advocates.

This would make an excellent text book used in conjunction with the sandbox version of *The Sims* or a sandbox version of an architectural application in teaching kids about public space for sociology, art and history. Couldn't get my teens to care one whit about it as something to read in their free time, though, that's why I think it makes a great homeschool or traditional school supplement especially if used as inspiration for a thematic unit--in that light, it's pretty cool. The suggested age is for 9-12, but I think the 12-Up range will also find this book of use, again, as a main text book or study aid.

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