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**Sinopsis**

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Four-fifths of Americans now live in the nation's sprawling metropolitan areas, and half of the world's population is now classified as "urban." As cities become the dominant living environment for humans, there is growing concern about how to make such places more habitable, more healthy and safe, more ecological, and more equitable\_in short, more humane.

This book, edited by Rutherford H. Platt, explores the prospects for a more humane metropolis through a series of essays and case studies that consider why and how urban places can be made greener and more amenable. Its point of departure is the legacy of William H. (Holly) Whyte (1917-1999), one of America's most admired urban thinkers. He laid the foundation for today's smart growth and new urbanist movements with books such as *The Last Landscape* (1968). His passion for improving the habitability of cities and suburbs is reflected in the diverse grassroots urban design and greening strategies discussed in this volume.

Several premises underlie and connect the various topics discussed in the book.

Most Americans now live and work in metropolitan regions.

Contact with, and awareness of, nature is a fundamental human need.

Access to unspoiled nature beyond metropolitan areas is increasingly limited by distance, cost, traffic congestion, and tourist/resort development.

Urban ecology is not an oxymoron; nature abounds in urban places, if one knows where and how to find it.

Therefore, opportunities to experience nature within urban places must be protected and enhanced.

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Furthermore, protecting and restoring ecological services is often preferable to using technological substitutes.

Environmental education for all ages is critical to build support for such programs and to nurture a sense of ecological citizenship.

Some of the chapter contributors are recognized academic experts, while others offer direct practical knowledge of particular problems and initiatives. The editor's introduction and epilogue set the individual chapters in a broader context and suggest how the strategies described, if widely replicated, may help create more humane urban environments. Certain essays directly relate to Whyte's own interests, such as the design of city and regional open spaces, public attachment to city parks, and the use of zoning incentives to create public spaces. Other chapters discuss twenty-first-century dimensions of the humane metropolis that we assume Whyte would embrace today, including social and environmental equity, greening of brownfields, ecological rehabilitation of closed landfills, green building design, urban watershed management, and the idea of ecological citizenship.

#### Summary of Contents

Introduction: Humanizing the Exploding Metropolis

Part I: "The Man Who Loved Cities"

Part II: From City Parks to Urban Biosphere Reserves

Part III: Restoring Urban Nature: Project and Process

Part IV: A More Humane Metropolis for Whom?

Part V: Designing a More Humane Metropolis

Epilogue: Pathways to More Humane Urban Places

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Platt will present a lecture and sign books at the Institute on Wednesday, November 8, at 4:00 p.m.

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Included as a companion to the text is a DVD of a 22-minute film, also titled The Humane Metropolis, created by Ted White.