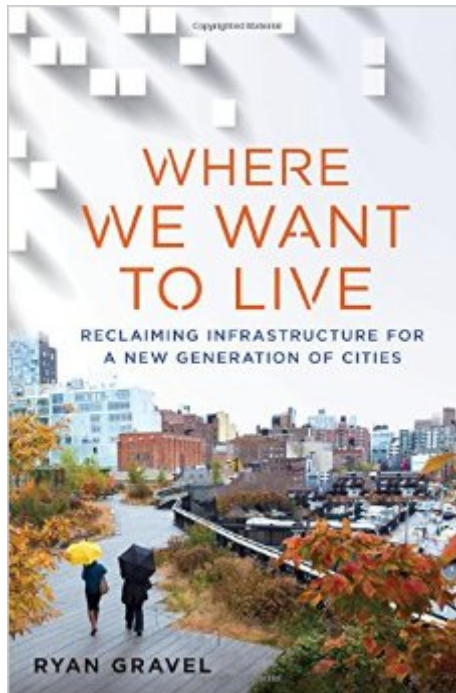


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# Where We Want To Live: Reclaiming Infrastructure For A New Generation Of Cities



## Synopsis

After decades of sprawl, many American city and suburban residents struggle with issues related to traffic (and its accompanying challenges for our health and productivity), divided neighborhoods, and a non-walkable life. Urban designer Ryan Gravel makes a case for how we can change this. Cities have the capacity to create a healthier, more satisfying way of life by remodeling and augmenting their infrastructure in ways that connect neighborhoods and communities. Gravel came up with a way to do just that in his hometown with the Atlanta Beltline project. It connects 40 diverse Atlanta neighborhoods to city schools, shopping districts, and public parks, and has already seen a huge payoff in real estate development and local business revenue. Similar projects are in the works around the country, from the Los Angeles River Revitalization and the Buffalo Bayou in Houston to the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis and the Underline in Miami. In *Where We Want to Live*, Gravel presents an exciting blueprint for revitalizing cities to make them places where we truly want to live.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A special thank you to St. Martin's Press and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review. Urban Atlanta designer, Ryan Gravel delivers a challenge to Americans *WHERE WE WANT TO LIVE*, Reclaiming Infrastructure for a New Generation of Cities ---his extraordinary vision to create a healthier and more satisfying way of life, by connecting neighborhoods and communities. We all have to embrace the change, work together and do our part "we can make a difference. As

Americans, we are disgusted at the metropolis sprawled before us, with communities moving further out in order to find affordable housing. Therefore, creating even more madness on the overcrowded highways. People are relying more and more on the automobiles to get around. By taking action through businesses, governments, nonprofits, citizen campaigns, grassroots leaders and developers working togetherâ€”will help create a more sustainable healthy, and equitable way of life for everyone. WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE will empower you and inspire to join the plan for changing decades of thinking, the old school way--an environment organized primarily around cars instead of people. We cannot sit back and expect someone else to shape the world on our behalf. Take action in the face of dramatic regional and cultural change, and build communities that we actually want to live in. To start the process, we all have to define what we want and start working together. From traffic, pollution, and sprawlâ€”mistakes of the past. Think resilient, connected, mobile, healthy, sustainable, economically thriving, and diverseâ€”talking points. Politics of change. Four positions: Start with small projects from political structure, stop the sprawl, redirect growth.

Ryan Gravel is one of the few living American architects/city planners who can legitimately be called a visionary. His 1999 master's thesis at Georgia Tech envisioned a streetcar loop inside the Atlanta city limits, to connect four separate railroad lines, mostly termed "belt lines" when they were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, because they formed a kind of belt around the central city. They lay only two or three miles in radius from the city center, and aside from one section in the northwestern part of the city, they were mostly abandoned. In fact, most parts were covered with kudzu vines and homeless encampments. By reviving these forgotten, neglected corridors, Gravel wrote in his thesis that "the Belt Line should accomplish more than just an improved system of public transportation. It has the potential to change the way we look at Atlanta." Instead of dividing neighborhoods, the old railroad tracks could reconnect "home and destination, rich and poor, black and white." Perhaps the city's problems could lead to its salvation. "Troubled by pollution and congestion, Atlanta can seize this chance to redefine itself," he wrote in his thesis. Gravel never expected his thesis to become reality, but that's exactly what is happening, and his original vision has expanded to include a walking-hiking trail and new parks. In this book, *Where We Want to Live*, Gravel briefly summarizes how the BeltLine (as it is now spelled) project came into being, initially through grassroots efforts that he helped to lead.

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