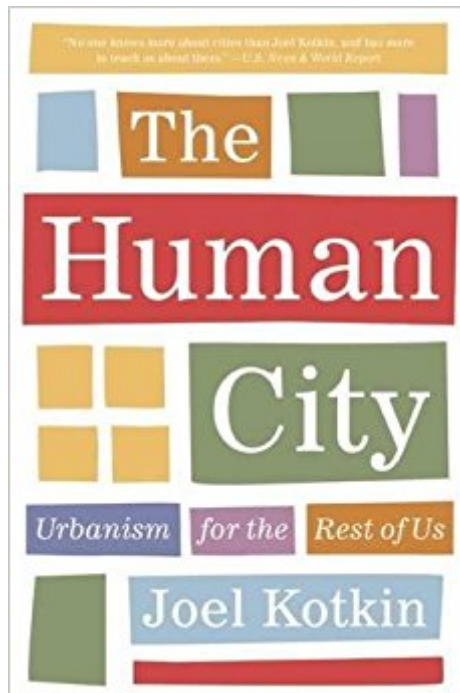




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# The Human City: Urbanism For The Rest Of Us



## Synopsis

"The Human City presents the most cogent, evidence-based and clear-headed exposition of the pro-suburban argument. . . . enriching our understanding of what cities are about and what they can and must become." —Wall Street Journal

Around the globe, most new urban development has adhered to similar tenets: tall structures, small units, and high density. In *The Human City*, Joel Kotkin's called "America's uber-geographer" by David Brooks of the New York Times questions these nearly ubiquitous practices, suggesting that they do not consider the needs and desires of the vast majority of people. Built environments, Kotkin argues, must reflect the preferences of most people — especially those of families — even if that means lower-density development. *The Human City* ponders the purpose of the city and investigates the factors that drive most urban development today. Armed with his own astute research, a deep-seated knowledge of urban history, and a sound grasp of economic, political, and social trends, Kotkin pokes holes in what he calls the "retro-urbanist" ideology and offers a refreshing case for dispersion centered on human values. This book is not anti-urban, but it does advocate a greater range of options for people to live the way they want at all stages of their lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Joel Kotkin's *The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us*; [Kotkin] weaves an impressive array of original observations about cities into his arguments, enriching our

understanding of what cities are about and what they can and must become. — Shlomo Angel, Wall Street Journal

— Kotkin argues that suburbs are where middle-class families want to live. . . . A city hostile to the middle class is, in Kotkin's view, a sea hostile to fish. — Alexander Nazaryan, Newsweek

[The] kinds of places that are getting it right . . . we might call Joel Kotkin cities, after the writer who champions them. These are opportunity cities . . . [that] are less regulated, so it's easier to start a business. They are sprawling with easy, hodgepodge housing construction, so the cost of living is low. . . . We should be having a debate between the Kotkin model and the [Richard] Florida model, between two successful ways to create posterity. — David Brooks, New York Times

Kotkin's premise focus[es] on the predictions made by some economists who believe suburbs are going to wither as more Americans return to the cities. He [says] those have been hasty reactions to the 2008 economic recession, and that humans' desire for spacious living remains strong. — Ronnie Wachter, Chicago Tribune

Joel Kotkin is Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University, Executive Director of the Houston-based Center for Opportunity Urbanism, and Executive Editor of the widely read website, NewGeography.com. He is the author of seven previous books, and a regular contributor to the Daily Beast, Forbes.com, RealClearPolitics, and the Orange County Register. His writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Washington Post, City Journal, Politico, and many more outlets.

I greatly appreciate Joel Kotkin book. I am citizen who volunteers to serve on the El Paso County Planning Commission. The City of Colorado Springs constitutes some 70% of the urbanized population in the County. I have been intuitively ambivalent about efforts to increase urban population densities. Many professional planners treat increased urban density as if it is a modern "Holy Grail". My wife and I live in a suburban setting, in one of 126 detached townhomes inside a gated community. I prefer not to maintain a yard and we enjoy the freedom to travel. Transportation is good and I can travel to the City's relatively small core in 15 to 20 minutes. All 4 of our adult children all live in a suburban setting with good sized yards and 2-car garages. It is a great place to raise children. Some people want to live in a higher density apartment or townhome. They like this life style. Joel used a heavily data-driven narrative to both validate my residential living choice and to help me to understand why others will choose something different. Joel insists that housing must work for the resident, not some planner or governmental official. Joel also exposes much commonly

accepted thinking as being unsupported by the data. This a good read for anyone interested in understanding the urban, suburban, and exurban dynamics. I recommend it very highly!

The general point of this book seems to be that cities are bad and suburbs are good. Kotkin's most widely publicized argument is that suburbia will protect us from plunging birthrates. However, Kotkin writes that (a) affluent nations are suburbanizing and (b) birthrates throughout the world (not just in affluent nations but even in not-so-affluent places like Iran and Morocco) have been plunging. If both (a) and (b) are true, obviously suburbanization has not prevented declining birthrates. Kotkin is right about one thing: families are being priced out of our most affluent cities. He therefore argues that children simply don't belong in cities. But it seems to me that one could just as easily argue that we should allow more urban housing to reduce housing costs, and thus make city living more affordable for those who want it.

Interesting examination of how and why people live in groups. Reading it reward your time and perhaps change your view of cities, why they exist, and where we're going.

A bit long and dry in presentation and long read. However, the discussion / review on the apparent impact cities have on people was interesting as was the identification that trendy city planning is not delivering what people really want in housing. The world wide same trends and same problems highlights the experts are floundering around without acceptable solutions. A good contribution to the cities for families or humans discussion. Thank you.

I watched Mr. Kotkin speaking about "The Human City" with Tucker Carlson and was very impressed. I'll order his book.

If you have an interest in how we should manage our growth and development then you should read this book. There are great insights on what makes a city livable for people of all income levels. I have friends and family who are not interested in the detail and I ask them to read the final chapter.

A must-read to understand cities in America.

Awful rant without any connection to real world. I was expecting to read a book that actually cared about producing better understanding of topics around human cities and instead got a crank.

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