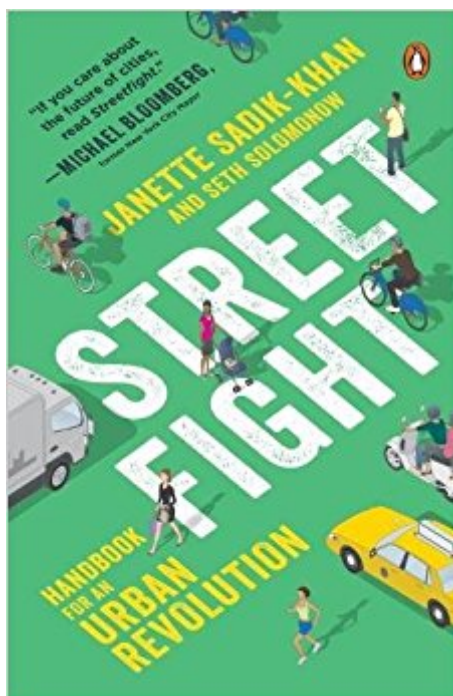


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# Streetfight: Handbook For An Urban Revolution



## Synopsis

Like a modern-day Jane Jacobs, Janette Sadik-Khan transformed New York City's streets to make room for pedestrians, bikers, buses, and green spaces. Describing the battles she fought to enact change, *Streetfight* imparts wisdom and practical advice that other cities can follow to make their own streets safer and more vibrant. As New York City's transportation commissioner, Janette Sadik-Khan managed the seemingly impossible and transformed the streets of one of the world's greatest, toughest cities into dynamic spaces safe for pedestrians and bikers. Her approach was dramatic and effective: Simply painting a part of the street to make it into a plaza or bus lane not only made the street safer, but it also lessened congestion and increased foot traffic, which improved the bottom line of businesses. Real-life experience confirmed that if you know how to read the street, you can make it function better by not totally reconstructing it but by reallocating the space that's already there. Breaking the street into its component parts, *Streetfight* demonstrates, with step-by-step visuals, how to rewrite the underlying "source code" of a street, with pointers on how to add protected bike paths, improve crosswalk space, and provide visual cues to reduce speeding. Achieving such a radical overhaul wasn't easy, and *Streetfight* pulls back the curtain on the battles Sadik-Khan won to make her approach work. She includes examples of how this new way to read the streets has already made its way around the world, from pocket parks in Mexico City and Los Angeles to more pedestrian-friendly streets in Auckland and Buenos Aires, and innovative bike-lane designs and plazas in Austin, Indianapolis, and San Francisco. Many are inspired by the changes taking place in New York City and are based on the same techniques. *Streetfight* deconstructs, reassembles, and reinvents the street, inviting readers to see it in ways they never imagined.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"No one has done more in less time to rewrite the future of New York's streets." **•Reclaim** "An inspiring read | The sort of book that should be read by every officeholder | But it is also a read for the rest of us. Anyone whose memory is longer than a New York minute who can remember when New York wasn't the pedestrian and bike friendly envy of cities the world over." **•The Huffington Post** "Janette Sadik-Khan is like the child that Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs never had: an urban visionary determined to reshape the streets of New York, but with an abiding concern for the health of neighborhoods and the safety of their residents. If you care about the future of cities, read **Streetfight**." **•Michael Bloomberg, former New York City Mayor** "Cities are where innovation, creativity and the unexpected happens, and Janette has helped make ours, New York City, safer, more livable and more profitable all at once. I watched these exciting changes happen, but the really interesting part is how she managed to implement these changes quickly and cheaply. That's where other cities can use this as a manual for change on issues like health reform, education and the arts. This, then, is not just a book about transportation." **•David Byrne, musician, artist** "This book is an urban epic as audacious as the changes Janette Sadik-Khan made to the map of New York City. She is a superhero for cities and an inspiration that streets built to human scale aren't impossible, but merely awaiting those who dare." **•Jan Gehl, Urbanist, architect, author** "To create safe and inclusive cities, being a visionary is not enough. You must also be an advocate, a communicator, a doer and, perhaps most importantly, a street fighter. Janette is that person and this is a book that provides the proof of the possible for citizens and their elected leaders everywhere." **•Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Bogota** "Sadik-Khan's work will serve as a guidebook to city planners and traffic engineers everywhere, and motivate disenchanted urban dwellers to urge local politicians to make their cities more liveable." **•Booklist** "[A] bicycle visionary." **•Frank Bruni, The New York Times** "Sadik-Khan manages to be equal parts Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses." **•New York Magazine** "If [Robert] Moses had owned a pink fingernail of [Sadik-Khan's] beguilement, he might have scored a bridge across the

Atlantic. *Esquire* “[Sadik-Khan is] an urban visionary who cuts through the gridlock. *Slate* “This is a feel-great read for those of us who love cities, especially as pedestrians and bicyclists. Along with local efforts, the book contains wonderful examples of national and global reclamation projects. The good news comes in daily as examples of successful street rebalancing projects continue to mount from all over the world, and advocacy groups that push for these changes grow and strengthen. . . . Fortunately for all of us, [Sadik-Khan] was wildly successful. *UrbDeZine* San Francisco

Janette Sadik-Khan is one of the world’s foremost authorities on transportation and urban transformation. She served as New York City’s transportation commissioner from 2007 to 2013 under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, overseeing historic changes to New York City’s streets—closing Broadway to cars in Times Square, building nearly 400 miles of bike lanes, and creating more than 60 plazas citywide. A founding principal with Bloomberg Associates, she works with mayors around the world to reimagine and redesign their cities. She chairs the National Association of Transportation Officials, implementing new people-focused street design standards that have been adopted in 45 cities across the continent. She lives in New York City. Seth Solomonow is a manager with Bloomberg Associates. He was the chief media strategist for Janette Sadik-Khan and New York City’s transportation department under Mayor Michael Bloomberg. A graduate of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Solomonow has written for The New York Times and his hometown newspaper, The Staten Island Advance. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. From the Hardcover edition.

The book lives up to its title. This book should be distributed to every civic leader in a community with > 100,000 people to sensitize them to current thinking. Provides many of the counter-arguments used by inertial (politicians/engineers), fearful (politicians/engineers) and angry (drivers) opposition to livable streetscapes. Easily the best book on this subject ever written, familiar and astute as the author is in the ways and interfaces between end-users, planners, designers, funding sources, election cycles and other political shenanigans. What a wonderful team she and Mr. Bloomberg made. I love the quote cited early in the book, "To plan is human, to implement, divine." Advocates of change should closely read this book to learn what hidden obstacles lay in their path and that are often kept concealed by city administrators to keep things in the indefinite "planning" phase so many municipalities find themselves in. One of the most profound insights is that waiting to build deep consensus is almost always going to result in retaining the status quo.

Politicians disinclined to action or any thing that costs a dime will, as a result, advocate cost free and wheel-spinning studies. The author was fortunate in having a strong, forward-thinking mayor and deputy mayor. This makes many of the actions described less-applicable to the rest of us facing either lukewarm support or downright opposition from leadership (surely the most common situation in the US). The book gives hope, though, and provides enough nuts-and-bolts information to be applicable to any community..., acceptance of this vision is remote in red-state and purple america, but if it can be done in NYC...,

Janette Sadik Kahn was Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Transportation Commissioner between 2006 and the end of Bloomberg's term in 2013. She was best known for throwing out the accepted engineering manuals, the "Manual of Traffic Control Devices" and the "Policy on the Geometric Design of Streets and Highways," (the Greenbook) both developed over the decades for rural highways. She also helped form the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) as an alternative to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). AASHTO is the publisher of the Greenback, and as the name suggests, is comprised of state department of highway officials. The system was structured that way in 1921: the feds tell the state DOTs what to do, and the states tell the cities what to do. The system was predicated on the assumption that city administrations were (and are) too incompetent and corrupt to run their own affairs. On the other hand, most state DOTs carry an implicit (and often explicit) bias: from a transport point of view, cities are irrational. They should go away. The job of the transportation planner and engineer to assist in that process. Suburbs are okay, but only a half-way measure. Total dispersal is the goal. The book is mostly a memoir, and a pretty good one. It's also a fairly good introduction to the philosophy behind the two NACTO guides, for bikes and for livable streets. My biggest complaint are the selective omissions. Khan, in the introduction, corrects a Bloomberg aide who describes the position as "traffic commissioner." "I'm the transportation commissioner," she corrects. Well, not so fast. At this time, NYC was embarking on the biggest transit project since BART, 45 years ago: the 2nd Avenue Subway Line. Not a word about it. Why? "Transportation Commissioner" doesn't run transit in NYC. Not surprising: not even Robert Moses was bold enough to take on NY Transit. And that still leaves out PATH, Long Island RR and the suburban bus lines (16?). Not mentioned is the fact that NY Transit is the largest bus system in North America without a single bike-on-bus rack. That's why she only talks about bus rapid transit: her definition of BRT is limited to the modified rights-of-way, not the bus operations. Go talk to transit about that. Similarly, her much heralded "pocket parks" in odd-shaped intersection triangles were found through an

inventory of sites to store snowstorm salt. There were some high profile exceptions (Times Square, the Flatiron Bldg.) but most were in old industrial/warehouse neighborhoods. Her "blitz 'em overnight" tactics worked because the building occupants were tenants, not owners, and didn't really care, except for the lost parking, which was often mitigated. When the condo boys move in, those odd lots will disappear or become walled off plazas. If you are mostly interested in the bikey stuff, great. But if you want some perspective, I highly recommend a 1965 book by Henry Barnes called "The Man With Red and Green Eyes." A small-town engineer from the sticks who works his way up to public works director in Denver gets the attention of the New York City Mayor in 1959, and is hired as traffic director to everyone's surprise: "who he?" He discovers a traffic nightmare. Resisting the calls of the daily newspapers to do something drastic, Barnes implements a series of odd-ball, cutting edge improvement, we would today call TSM. He makes every east-west street one way. He allows left turns only on signals. He installs the "Barns Dance," an all-red traffic signal phase just for pedestrians, letting them even cross diagonally. Oh, and the biggest single thing: "The first thing I did is get rid of those Godawful trolley buses and replace them with modern diesel buses." The more things change, the more they stay the same. Sorta.

Fantastic book about reclaiming our streets from being dominated so long by King Car and its many minions. This book has the problem(s) of 100 years of auto centric city planning clearly laid out but has easy to implement solutions to grab back our cities from Car dominance as well. The book is eminently readable as she shares true life experiences through wonderful story telling. A must read for everyone interested in the vitality and livability of cities.

I enjoyed her accounts of real world debates for improving Streets for bikes and pedestrians. If it can happen in New York it can happen anywhere. I recommend this book for any municipal civil or traffic engineer that is involved in Street design.

Wonderful book and if you want look at the youtube channel for more on Jeanette Sadik-Khan.

Detailed account of New York City's reclamation of street space for walking, bicycling, and bikeshare, including successful and less-successful public relations efforts. Not just for people who are fascinated with NYC (I'm not one). The author references bicycle and pedestrian projects in other cities, and the book will be a valuable resource for the cities and towns considering taking on similar fights.

Although it's written with a clear goal of deemphasising car traffic, it's clear that her interests are with the population at large. Anecdotes don't stand as evidence of success. Measures of safety, access and utilisation are more important. With that in mind, there's still room for emotion in her storytelling.

Informative read! Lots of great ideas for making cities more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

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