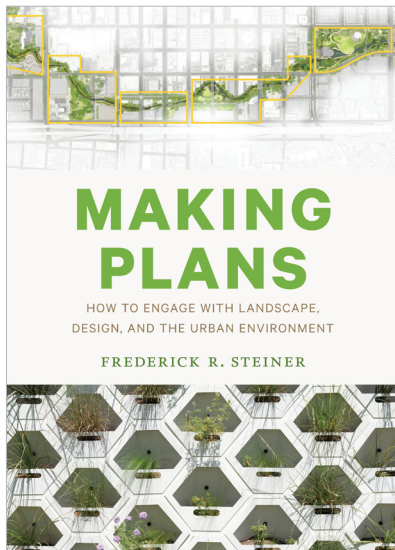


Making Plans

How to engage with landscape, design, and the urban environment

Author: Frederick R. Steiner

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“Humans are plan-makers” is the opening statement by the author Frederick R. Steiner, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, USA. In this work, he aims to explain the city plan-making process by addressing the planning procedures and applying them in a practical case study.

The 196-page publication begins with an introduction of famous public figures who changed the course of history. Steiner’s use of Martin Luther King’s famous quote “I have a dream” encourages readers to plan in a better way. He also uses Austin, Texas, USA as a case study to analyze several key topics related to planning on two different scales: the urban planning scale (city of Austin) and the urban design scale (UT Austin campus). The first of eight chapters introduces the city of Austin, Texas in order to explain the planning legislation system in the USA. The following chapters describe the process of public participation meetings, discuss how they are organized, and outline several key visions of the future. Steiner’s lesson is that, first, planning is a complicated process. Second, planning does not consist of irreversible decisions but is a continuous and evolving process. Third, the more active citizens participate in the planning development, the more democratic and creative it becomes.

Using two different urban landscape scales for the planning design process, the author not only strengthens his argumentation but also presents a coherent explanation of the different aspects of the planning process. However, the title is a bit ambiguous; since the book is about planning and legislation, it is neither about how to design or draw landscape plans nor is that the aim of the writer. On the contrary, ‘making plans’ is a broad term that includes much more than just plan-making; public participation and political and environmental impacts are all concepts that are also equally considered. Despite its title’s ambiguity, the text’s use of simple language makes it pleasant and easily accessible for the uninitiated planning learners to understand and apply its practical framework to the planning process. It also contains analytic illustrations like tables, coloured maps, diagrams and pictures, adding more clarity to the text. Moreover, an inspiring quotation appears at the beginning of each chapter, carefully selected to motivate the readers to read through the whole chapter. Nevertheless, the publication is not for experts in the field, since it lacks unexpected events that can happen during the process. However, professionals may find it useful as an introduction to a successful planning example, especially if they had not studied or worked with the US planning legislation system before.

This book is recommended to those interested in landscape and urban planning who need an introduction to the planning design process. Its step-by-step structure and explanation of the process are for individuals who are likely to become plan-makers.