

with public places functioning as oases. While some persons seek out settings in which to relax, others gravitate toward physical and social challenges, active engagement with the public place and its occupants including interaction with others, shopping, participation in street life, and vigorous encounters such as sports, wading, and jogging. Other challenges can be found in places that support discovery, enabling opportunities for new experiences, new vistas that excite, educate, and delight.

This array of human needs, which no doubt could be supplemented by others, also should include opportunities for pure joy and fun, qualities missing from many places. The descriptions provide clues as to why some sites are filled whereas others are empty. Functionality, the usefulness of a site, provides a simple explanation of its success. But needs alone are not a sufficient reason for vitality. There are other qualities that constrain or facilitate open space experiences, and the different uses and rights of users of areas are essential ones.

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