

# Sharing your reading: finishing off Speck

The Bethlehem Gadfly | Sharing your reading, Walkability and Bikeability | September 10, 2019

*(7th in a series about sharing your reading)*

*(and also relates to walkability)*

*If you aren't reading, you may not be thinking. If you aren't reading, you may not be growing. What are you reading these days? How about sharing with us? Gadfly invites you to share a few clips of your reading — with or without comment — or a few thoughts from your reading pertinent to the Gadfly project of the good conversation about Bethlehem that builds community.*

Notes from the back of the RCN bill envelope Gadfly used as a page marker for Jeff Speck's, *Walkability Rules* (2018):

- “Where nobody walks, nobody supervises the public realm, and nobody gets to know their neighbors.”
- “It is only when we are outside of vehicles, and relatively safe from them, that the bonds of community can form.”
- “In well designed neighborhoods, the most convenient playground is no more than a five-minute walk away.”
- “City leaders . . . ask the wrong question about parking, which is, ‘how can we have enough of it?’ Nobody seemed to be asking the proper question: ‘how can parking be planned, provided, and managed to help cities thrive?’”

— Think about bus routes. Are there places the buses can't take us but should? Gadfly thought about recreation areas. Should we have a bus that goes to Sand Island, for instance?

— “Bus frequency is key to ridership.” Every 10 minutes is comfort zone. Gadfly's bus to work was every half-hour. It did feel a strain. “Removal of uncertainty [by more frequency] makes the wait more bearable.”

— Gadfly thought the bus rides themselves uncomfortable. Buses should be “more focused on hospitality than efficiency.” Wow!

— “Two-way [street] reversions are sweeping the nation.” Center? Linden? Always talk, no action.

— More timely bus service to New York? Phila? — how's regional bus service from North St garage working out?

— “The more lanes a street has [or the wider it is], the more it feels like a highway.” Why is West Broad Street so broad? It's a mini-MacArthur road situation. Could anything interesting be done there for beauty, for walkability? Something in the center?

— Speck cites Wyandotte St — the way the traffic pattern there killed the shops along the east side. Sad. Anything to be done?

— “Biking popularity is primarily a function of biking investment.” Gadfly knows the City has tried things over the years. Not much success?

— Gadfly idea: if we wanted to nudge a resurgence in biking, how about a program starting with kids biking to school where possible. Would mean protected lanes etc from neighborhoods to the schools. Let's say a mile radius from William Penn.

- “Creating car-free streets and zones in our towns and cities must be a goal and even a priority if we truly value walkability.”
- “A great pedestrian mall lets you sit down for a drink while the children roam.”
- the “pedestrian scramble” intersection — Wheee!
- “Put street trees almost everywhere.”
- street trees: “almost always central to making sidewalks safe, healthy, comfortable, and sustainable.”
- Thinking about trees/sidewalks made Gadfly think about streets in his childhood neighborhoods that were interesting to walk because of outside displays of wares. Pedestrians would stroll and linger. Has that kind of thing disappeared?
- “Park Day” — 3rd Friday in September — that would be September 20
- “people around the world reclaim parking spaces for humans, transforming what would normally be automobile storage places into places for hanging out.”
- What the word bankrupt means to developers: “I’ll make less money than I promised my investors.”
- “Pedestrians demand to be entertained.”
- “Exposed parking structures and blank walls must be kept away from would-be walkable areas.”

— ” public artwork can be a great remedial tool for salvaging problem areas from . . . ‘the great blight of dullness’.”

— “Active facades provide the street with interest and energy.”

— “Most retail facades should have some sort of awning. The goal is to blur the distinction between the shop and the sidewalk.”

— Got Gadfly thinking of unused or underutilized public spaces — and Payrow Plaza came to mind. Cf. what the Health Dept Kristen Weinrich just did with that as recently reported here. Any other spaces come to mind that could be enlivened?

Wow! Gadfly thought a lot, grew a lot from reading Speck. Tip o’ the hat to Tony Hanna again for the recommendation.

What’s in your wallet, er, home library or on your bed-stand?