



# A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America

*Vishaan Chakrabarti*

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## **A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America** Vishaan Chakrabarti

In *A Country of Cities*, author Vishaan Chakrabarti argues that well-designed cities are the key to solving America's great national challenges: environmental degradation, unsustainable consumption, economic stagnation, rising public health costs and decreased social mobility. If we develop them wisely in the future, our cities can be the force leading us into a new era of progressive and prosperous stewardship of our nation. In compelling chapters, Chakrabarti brings us a wealth of information about cities, suburbs and exurbs, looking at how they developed across the 50 states and their roles in prosperity and globalization, sustainability and resilience, and health and joy. Counter to what you might think, American cities today are growing faster than their suburban counterparts for the first time since the 1920s. If we can intelligently increase the density of our cities as they grow and build the transit systems, schools, parks and other infrastructure to support them, Chakrabarti shows us how both job opportunities and an improved, sustainable environment are truly within our means. In this call for an urban America, he illustrates his argument with numerous infographics illustrating provocative statistics on issues as disparate as rising childhood obesity rates, ever-lengthening automobile commutes and government subsidies that favor highways over mass transit. The book closes with an eloquent manifesto that rallies us to build "a Country of Cities," to turn a country of highways, houses and hedges into a country of trains, towers and trees.

**Vishaan Chakrabarti** is the director of Columbia University's Center for Urban Real Estate (CURE). In March 2012, Chakrabarti became a partner at SHoP Architects, where he will be working on such projects as the Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn. An architect and planner, Chakrabarti has worked in both the public and private sectors: as a top executive at Related Companies; a director at the New York City Planning Commission; an associate partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; a transportation planner for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

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