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10 Design your life to include more money, health and happiness with less stuff, space and energy.



David Friedlander, Oct 10, 2012

## My City is My Living Room

The real estate blog Curbed recently published a post entitled “Ten Hilarious Quotes About Living in ‘Micro-Dwellings (<http://curbed.com/archives/2012/09/24/ten-hilarious-quotes-about-living-in-microdwellings.php>)” “. The post is a collection of quotes from various publications that cites the way micro-dweller’s rationalize their small digs. There were quotes like “We don’t do closets” or “On Saturdays, if we both get work calls, one of us has to take theirs into the bathroom.”

Closet and privacy-free apartments notwithstanding, there were two quotes that struck us as more than rationalizations. They were “They consider the park their communal living room” and “The city as living room is key.” While it might sound silly to some, why can’t our cities (or towns) be our living rooms?

This concept is far from new. Visit most any European city and there will be a square, piazza, platz or one place that serves as the central congregating point for the city or neighborhood’s residents. It’s where people meet, shop and hang out—like Facebook, but different.

As many Americans find themselves migrating into cities, public-spaces-as-living-room are making a comeback. New York City is a prime example; the city has launched a number of public initiatives that have made the city into a great living room.



Union Square pedestrian plaza. Photo: DNAinfo/Olivia Scheck

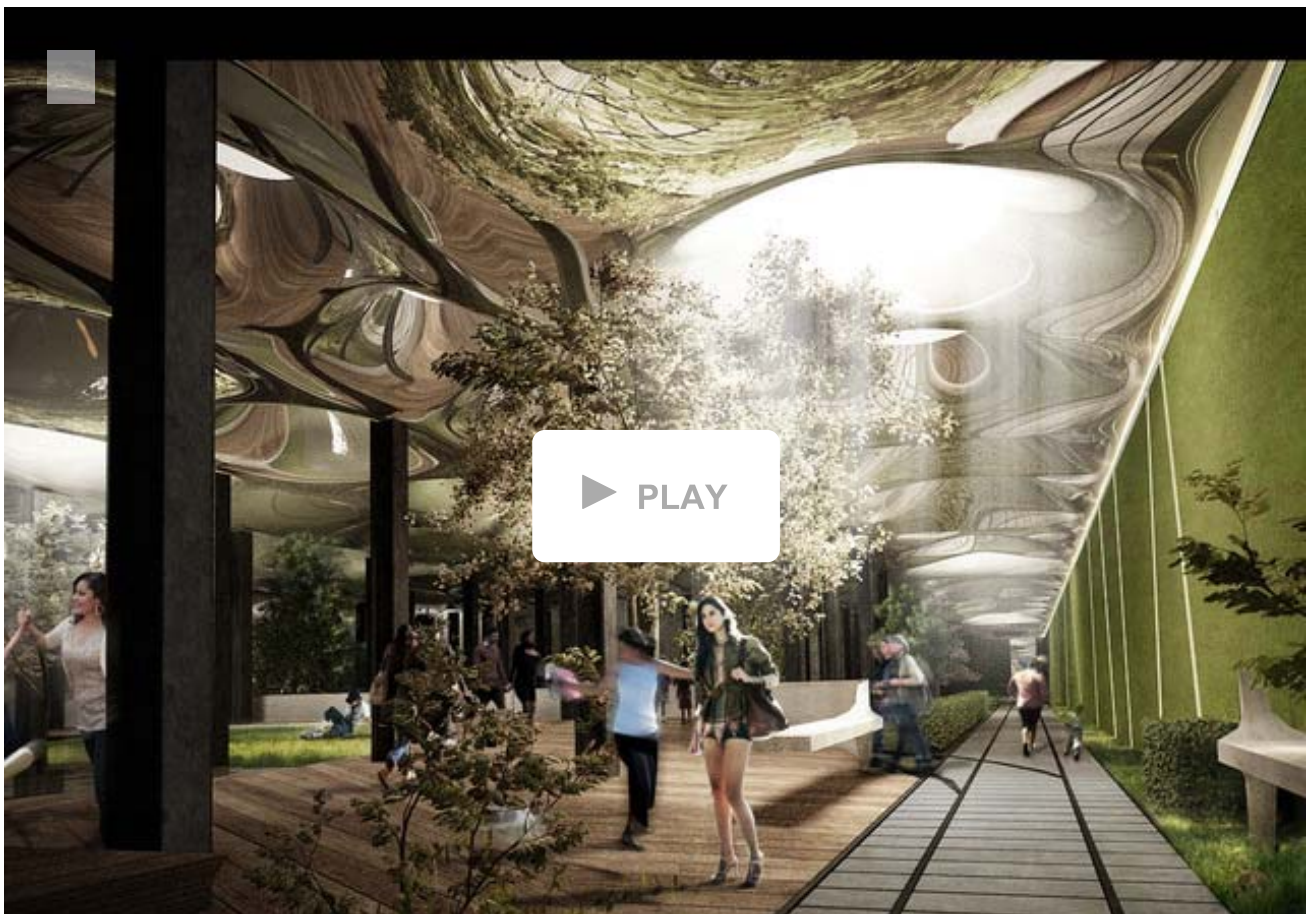
Several high traffic areas have been closed off to car traffic and turned into pedestrian plazas featuring tables, chairs, benches and greenery. The most notable is Times Square (pictured at top), but other squares such as Herald, Union and Madison are notable as well (and are used by more actual New Yorkers).

In its three short years, The High Line has become a huge hit with locals and tourists alike. The defunct elevated railroad-track-turned park features benches, gardens, an amphitheater and restaurants.



## NYC's High Line

In the more experimental realm, the proposed LowLine (<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/855802805/lowline-an-underground-park-on-nycs-lower-east-sid>), aims to create a subterranean park in NYC's Lower East Side. Right now it's more fantasy than reality, but with over \$155K of its \$100K Kickstarter goal reached, it may be less fantastical than we think. Check out the video below to see what it could look like.



Another experimental project is this year's winner of the ONE Prize (<http://oneprize.org/>) . The project, called Made In the Lower East Side (<http://www.oneprize.org/088.pdf>) (MiLES), takes empty storefronts and lots and, with the help of modular, rentable furniture, turns these unused spaces into classrooms, rehearsal spaces, dining rooms and other spaces that might be tough to fit in the small apartments many New Yorkers inhabit.



### MiLES Project

What's great about all these initiatives—unlike a coffee shop, for example—is they are not commercially driven. People can hang out at their leisure, just like their living room. What's not great—outside the MiLES project, which is yet to be realized—is they're mostly outside and don't do much for you in winter.

How do you use your city or town as a living room? And what great public spaces and initiatives near you let you do this? Let us know in our comments section.

Times Square image by Savulich/Daily News

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**SusanAChang** · 2 years ago

There is Riverside Park South and Pier 1 as well.

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**Christopher Tilley** — I agree, this makes so much sense. Last night I was cleaning my kitchen worktop, there's

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**David Friedlander** — oops. i'll correct that immediately. thanks

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**Heidi Schlegel** — I haven't been to it, but there's a similar store in Portland. I think it's an even swap for each clothing