



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Free lecture initiates discussion about more walkable city streets *'Towards a More Walkable Scranton' will be held December 12*

(SCRANTON, PA) — Scranton is taking its first step towards a more pedestrian-friendly city, and community leaders invite members of the public to walk through the process with them.

Scranton Tomorrow will host a free lecture titled *Towards a More Walkable Scranton* featuring guest speaker Jeff Speck, on Wednesday, December 12, at 6 p.m. in the Kane Room of Leahy Hall at The University of Scranton. Mr. Speck is a city planner, urban designer and author of *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time* and the newly-released *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*. A booksigning will immediately follow the lecture.

After his friend Charles Jefferson, a local real estate developer, gave Scranton City Councilman Wayne Evans a copy *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time*, Mr. Evans was inspired to share the book with other community leaders. “When I read the book, I had dozens of ‘aha’ moments that I couldn’t get out of my head, and I thought ‘we must find a way to make this happen in Scranton, and make it happen in downtown,’” Mr. Evans said.

Mr. Evans is particularly interested in the correlation Mr. Speck draws between walkability and increasing commerce, and how the concepts outlined in the book could be implemented in Scranton. These concepts include creating narrower lanes, reversing one-way streets to make them two-way, and improving walkability and pedestrian safety. “When people visit a city like Savannah, Georgia, or Charleston, South Carolina, or Austin, Texas, they may ask ‘why did I like it so much?’ and they find it’s because these cities are walkable. They don’t even realize what’s taking place. They just know that they can walk from point A to point B, and feel safe, and enjoy the experience and that’s what I think we’re trying to make happen here,” Mr. Evans said. This discussion is especially timely because the City of Scranton will conduct a transportation study in 2019 to assess walkability, pedestrian safety, on-street parking, feasibility of bicycle lanes, and adding more trees.

Towards a More Walkable Scranton is designed to increase awareness about the economic, environmental, and epidemiological benefits of creating a more walkable city. Mr. Speck will offer insight into what makes walking useful, particularly as it applies to land-use, zoning, transit, and parking policies and practices. He’ll also explore how to create a safer walking environment by delving into topics such as vehicle speeds, block sizes, widths and geometries, curb protection and cycling facilities.

(more)

Participants will learn about the elements of a comfortable and interesting walking environment through discussion of spatial definitions, height-to-width ratios, vegetation, building facades and public art. In addition, Mr. Speck will discuss the General Theory of Walkability: in order to be truly walkable, built environments must make walking useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting.

Towards a More Walkable Scranton is presented by the Greater Scranton Board of Realtors and Lackawanna County. Contributing sponsors include: the Architectural Heritage Association (AHA), Maloney Law, P.C., Jefferson-Werner, LLC, and The University of Scranton.

Advance reservations are requested, but not required, by Monday, December 10. To make reservations, contact Liz Baldi at lizbaldi@scrantontomorrow.org or 570.963.5901. For more information, visit www.scrantontomorrow.org, Scranton Tomorrow on Facebook, and <https://www.jeffspeck.com/>.

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About Jeff Speck, AICP, CNU-A, LEED-AP, Honorary ASLA

Jeff Speck, principal, Principal, Speck & Associates LLC, is a city planner and urban designer who advocates internationally for more walkable cities. As Director of Design at the National Endowment for the Arts from 2003 through 2007, he presided over the *Mayors' Institute on City Design* and created the *Governors' Institute on Community Design*. Prior to his federal appointment, Mr. Speck spent 10 years as Director of Town Planning at DPZ & Co., the principal firm behind the New Urbanism movement. Since 2007, he has led Speck & Associates, a boutique planning firm that specializes in making American downtowns thrive.

With Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Mr. Speck is the co-author of *The Smart-Growth Manual* and the “modern classic” *Suburban Nation*, which the *Wall Street Journal* calls “the urbanist's bible.” His book, *Walkable City* – which the *Christian Science Monitor* calls “timely and important, a delightful, insightful, irreverent work” – was the best selling city-planning book of 2013-16. His latest book is *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*. Mr. Speck’s TED talks and YouTube videos have been viewed more than 3 million times.