



# **VISIONS OF EDEN: ENVIROMENTALISM, URBAN PLANNING, AND CIT (URBAN LIFE & URBAN LANDSCAPE)**

*R. BRUCE STEPHENSON*

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Since the turn of the century, the opportunity to design a city nestled in a subtropical garden has attracted the nation's preeminent planners to St. Petersburg. The most ambitious plan was developed in 1923 by John Nolen, who believed that an interconnected system of preserves and parks would enhance the city's development and attract tourists for generations. His initiative failed miserably at the polls, however, because it threatened the conflicting notion of paradise held by hundreds of investors, who were profiting from the greatest real estate boom in the nation's history and feared that planning would curtail speculation. As Stephenson points out, a half century would pass until a series of ecological disasters in the 1970s finally compelled city officials to adopt an environmentally sound development plan that reflected Nolen's original vision. Stephenson carefully explores St. Petersburg's slow awakening to ecological responsibility - to the importance of designing a community that meets both human needs and economic demands. As the debate over the "New Urbanism" moves forward, this book will serve as a useful guide for those who will plan, build, and inhabit the cities of the twenty-first century.

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