Not everyone has equal or fair access to what the city has to offer. Factors such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and others influence the degree of access some people have to the good things that cities provide. This inequality of access has led to an important discussion of how human beings have a right to the city. Also, David Harvey, in “The Right to the City,” has argued that “The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is...one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights” (23). In the present discussion, I’ll compare the notion of the right to the city with that of the right of the city. I’ll argue for a particular conception of a city, one that treats the city as a unique type of ecosystem. As such, it includes living things as components. The city, I’ll argue, is better thought of as having rights, rather than as being a thing to which others have a right. In conceiving of a city in this way, the idea of fair access to what the city provides can be fleshed out in a more fruitful way than thinking of a city as “resource” to be used.

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