



Let's Get Real Here

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At first glance, like many other readers, I thought Moss Gropen's cover story was some sort of joke or funny take on cycling and alternative transit in San Diego. But, no, Gropen really set out to challenge those "hipster cyclists" (his words), who he tells us are mostly younger, liberal and backed by "city planning types" who, in Gropen's world, are going to turn the 21st Century into a place where, heaven forbid, city dwellers stop using cars and actually walk, bicycle or ride alternative transit, and maybe lower greenhouse gas emissions, and help address climate change. Can't let that happen, so Gropen cherry picks three "experts" carefully chosen from the libertarian, right wing-influenced Cato Institute, the conservative Reason Foundation (funded by the Koch brothers), and one anonymous online commentator in the U-T newspaper!

Let's get real here, Moss, starting with your subtitle: "The Case for Car-Centric Planning." Hello? As if car-centric planning is a new thing? The entire 20th Century, indeed the core of the city planning profession in the United States over the last hundred years, has been nothing but car-centric planning!

Check out the master plan of every major U.S. metropolitan area: zoning for suburbs, freeways, shopping malls and sprawl. We are at the very beginning of a new century in which the overwhelming consensus is that we need a new model — one that is driven by sustainable development, compactness, new forms of transit, new ways of living.

To cite statistics about cycling at the dawn of a new era is disingenuous to say the least. And then quote two hand-picked commentators who claim cyclists are "smug" ("like vegans!")? Really? And that San Diego has "forlorn buses" with their "handful of riders who appear old, crippled and poor." Hey, Moss, ever hear of Bus Rapid Transit? It's the cutting edge of transit technology that has already changed the way millions travel around cities across the planet. It's slowly catching on in the U.S., in cities like Portland, Denver, and Las Vegas, though you kind of left that part of the story out.

Your article reads like a screed to scare San Diegans about evil government and socialist city planners who are going to take their cars away from them by creating more space for cycling or transit that will only be used by those "hipster bikers" who

you think should just stay in “rural hippie enclaves of college towns like Davis, California and Ames, Iowa” and let San Diego remain a city of freeways and horizontal sprawl. Dream on.