

Episode 15:

Welcome to Gilded Garbage Can, a podcast dedicated to defogging the image that is San Francisco.

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It's Presidents' Day and I hope you are off celebrating somewhere away from the filth and despair that is San Francisco. For me, it's just another workday, and an opportunity to talk to all of you, my amazing listeners, about the many things that are just cuckoo with this town.

Before we tackle our topic du jour, I'd like to give a big thank you to those of you who have taken a minute to leave a comment on our site – gildedgarbagecan.com. Oh, and an even bigger thank you to the bots who have tried to leave comments, all of which made it safely to the spam file. Here are just a few comments of late:

L writes, "Love this so far! I need so many more rants of our Gilded Garbage Can, San Francisco. Expose away!"

Dirk states, "I'm listening!" and adds a smiley face.

Alderotes writes, "Awesome. Looking forward to future posts. Truth to haze!"

SEO Service, likely a bot, says, "Awesome post! Keep up the great work!" + a smiley face.

Naturally, if a bot says something nice, I'm going to let that one through.

Now that we've done that, it's time to dive right into our subject: Bikes and bike lanes in San Francisco. I promised last time we'd hit this topic and here we are. Before I begin, it's important to address some givens when it comes to bike mentality or philosophy or whatever in this city. There are just some truths that must be acknowledged here such as the fact that there is in San Francisco, a bicycle lobby that exists for one reason: To see every car eliminated from the city. And when they make the argument of bike good, car bad, they love to point to Copenhagen as an example of a city that blossomed into utopia because of strict limits on cars and an abundance of bikes. I've got news for that lobby – Copenhagen was a utopia long before bikes arrived, so there. Also, Copenhagen isn't a turd-filled, homeless paradise with out-of-control vandalism, and buses that run chronically late and are filled with disrespectful riders.

Copenhagen boasts a much better standard of living generally for all of its residents. Sure, it's expensive, but people aren't forced to sleep in doorways because of ridiculous rents coupled with a political platform that says, its humane to let the homeless be homeless. In Copenhagen

tourists don't have to worry that stream of liquid on the sidewalk as possibly being human urine.

The reality is, Copenhagen nails the basics – something San Francisco fails to do at every turn. So, before the two-wheel crowd goes saying that adding a ton of bikes to the city will make it like Copenhagen, I say think again...it won't.

So, now that we've talked about Copenhagen, let's talk about bikes. What is the issue with bicycles?

First, the city is doing business with companies that are installing these rent-a-bikes everywhere, many in places that just don't make sense. Seriously, no one in the Inner Richmond is going to hop on a bike and peddle over to Civic Center, so the 6 parking spaces they decommissioned on 9th Avenue sit, filled with bikes that never get used. Dumb.

In areas where people do use these public bikes, they just leave them everywhere, and often times obstruct the sidewalk, which is certainly not pedestrian friendly.

Then there's the problem of bike lanes. Someone at City Hall has decided that the best place to put bike lanes is smack dab in the middle of traffic...not along the shoulder of the street but wedged between parked and moving vehicles OR as a sort of number 2 lane on multi-lane streets. The way they've laid these out, makes it really dangerous for bicyclists. But hey, the city has installed these cute little traffic signals...that everyone ignores, especially the bicyclists.

Next, the city isn't flat, so bikes are really only practical in certain areas...they are not an effective mode of transportation city-wide, so stop trying to convince yourself and others that they are a viable alternative to motor-powered transportation.

And face it, it's really tough to do any decent shopping while riding a bike – impractical at best, but whatever – if the city doesn't want cars, I can just drive across the bridge and do my shopping in Marin.

Like what you heard? Didn't like what you heard? Go to GildedGarbageCan.com and leave me a comment. Also be sure to check out GildedGarbageCan, all one word, on Instagram.

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