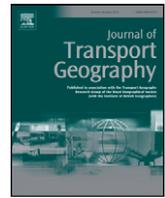




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## Book review

**Rail and the City: Shrinking Our Carbon Footprint While Reimagining Urban Space, 2014. The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, £24.95 or \$35.00 (Hardcover) ISBN: 9780262027809 \$25.00 (eBook) ISBN: 9780262325615**

Contributors to a growing literature on the topic of transit-oriented development (TOD) generally fall into two distinct groups – those that research the topic and those that are responsible for building it – practitioners. Architect Roxanne Warren, Principle of her own firm in New York City falls into the second group and shares her perspective in *Rail and the City: Shrinking Our Carbon Footprint While Reimagining Urban Space* (The MIT Press, 2013). Based on the research prowess of the publisher's university, my expectations going into this book were toward the research genre, but in fact Warren delivers a powerful case for TOD by drawing upon her knowledge as an architect. She mixes examples from her own global practice with support from a significant amount of published research, grey literature and media coverage.

The writing of this book is accessible and examples are useful to any students, local communities or sponsors of projects, especially when looking to draw upon best practices in how society can accommodate growth in a less carbon-intensive manner whilst injecting vitality into urban spaces. The chapters cover an array of topics, including perceptions of cities, parking, affordable housing, the history and features of different rail technologies, accessibility to rail stations, an examination of speed based on different settings, urban design for pedestrian and transit environments, climate change, energy use, markets, taxation and politics.

The variety of topics is indicative of not having a narrow set of research questions, which is more common of books in the practitioner genre. Instead, the author's main goal is to describe a changing paradigm, which

she defines as a shift toward rental housing and walkable communities and greater use of public transit. She concludes with recommendations to reduce automobile dominance through four interrelated steps, including: 1. Eliminating ubiquitous free car parking and changing minimum to maximum parking requirements, 2. Reversing road priorities currently given to cars, 3. Developing comprehensive transit networks on all geographic levels, and 4. Developing TOD in tandem with transit within existing urban areas.

While Warren's thesis and conclusions are not particularly new in comparison to other works in the literature, the value of this contribution is in details and examples. In every section the book is rich with case study examples and supporting research. Her perspectives as an architect engaged in urban design and land use and transportation planning gives the reader important evidence that shrinking our carbon footprint through walkable and transit-oriented community design not only hold much promise in creating a sustainable future, but implementing these ideals is achievable by any community across the globe.

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