

False Promises: The Smart Growth Lies

False Promises

- High Density will reduce traffic congestion..... Density INCREASES traffic congestion
- High Density will reduce pollution..... Density concentrates pollution where the people are
- High Density will reduce cost..... Building UP costs more for each story
- High Density will reduce your commute time..... Commute times are longer due to congestion
- High Density will give us affordable housing..... No, it costs more to build
- High Density will let you walk to the store The nearby store is small and costs more

The Reality

False Claims

- Mass transit saves energy..... Not compared to a small car
- Mass transit reduces pollution..... Buses pollute many times more than cars
- Mass transit saves time..... Look at a transit schedule
- Mass transit saves money..... Transit costs about 3 times that of driving.
- If we copy Europe, we will switch to transit..... 82% of person-miles is by car in Europe
- Automobiles are massive subsidized..... They aren't, transit is.
- Light rail causes development..... Its the subsidies (otherwise why give subsidies)
- Light rail is safer than cars..... Light rail kills at 2-3 times the rate of cars
- A light rail line can carry as many as a 10 lane freeway..... Not compared to a single lane of buses
- False Claim: GM Destroyed the Streetcar Industry Streetcars couldn't compete with cars.

The Reality

Planner's Beliefs

- People want high density..... Do you?
- People desire a 5 story apartment building nearby..... Do you?
- People desire a skinny house down the block..... Do you?
- Transit Oriented Developments reduce congestion..... Congestion increases by hugely increasing people.

The Reality

Some Facts

- The downtown Portland economy is heavily subsidized with tax dollars from the rest of the city
- The school enrollment in the Portland School District declines while the suburban districts can hardly keep up with enrollment growth
- Over \$20 million in property taxes are abated to encourage development. (Annual figure)
- Over \$60 million in urban renewal area property taxes are kept in the urban renewal districts while the rest of the city has to pay for their basic services. (Annual figure)
- Portland is starting to subsidize housing for people who make more than the median family income.
- Portland is cutting back police due to lack of money.
- Portland is losing housing afford ability.
- Portland recently had the nation's worst increase in traffic congestion.
- Portland almost had the shortest school year in the country.
- Light rail has a death rate 2 1/2 times higher than cars.
- Streetcar costs 6 1/2 times the cost of driving
- Portland sells land to developers below its real value.
- Major employers leaving the city.
- Trimet likes to brag about their tremendous increase in ridership, but compared to population growth, they gained only 1% over the last full decade for which census data is available (1990-2000). At that rate they will have half of us out of our cars in only 500 years.
- Trimet's reported ridership numbers are actually boardings, not people, so if you transfer to get to work, you count as two boardings each way for a total of four boardings in one round trip to work and back.