

11 of 29 DOCUMENTS

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Cato speaker tells Boise: A private streetcar is a better idea

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BOISE - Streetcars and light rail are expensive, don't promote economic development and aren't as economical as private cars, Randal O'Toole, who works with the libertarian Cato Institute, told a sold-out crowd of 70 people Wednesday.

The Idaho Freedom Foundation, a conservative free-market think tank, brought O'Toole to town to talk about Portland's streetcar and light-rail system.

He said Portland spends more of its transportation dollars on public transit than the number of riders would justify. Cities should let the private sector fill the need, if there is one, he said.

After the talk, Boise City Councilman David Eberle said O'Toole was entertaining and raised some valid issues like urban flight, user benefit and self-supporting bus systems, but Eberle said he was "deeply concerned" by "questionable facts" O'Toole used to bolster his assertions.

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