

# San Jose Mercury News

## Letter: Don't look to Portland

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A recent letter to the editor ("Follow Portland's lead on growth boundaries," Dec. 23) suggested that we in Vacaville "look to Portland, Ore." and follow their example. I strongly suggest that readers and city officials carefully read an article by Randal O'Toole of the Cato Institute, Policy Analysis No. 596, "Debunking Portland, the City That Doesn't Work"

According to O'Toole: "Residents of the Portland area are not as enthusiastic about the region's planning process. Recent elections reveal that most citizens are upset by the unaffordable housing, traffic congestion, increasing taxes, declining urban services, and disappearing jobs that have resulted from the plans." The plans resulted in a diversion of funds from essential urban services to expensive transit and land-use projects.

In his analysis, O'Toole debunks several popular myths relating to the success of Portland's land-use planning rules, investments in transit projects, reduced auto use, urban sprawl, etc. Please read it for yourself.

He summarizes: "Portland's planning process was conceived by ideologues who disliked the automobile and wanted to preserve all of Oregon's abundant open space no matter what the cost. It was endorsed by politicians who refused to believe, or simply ignored, predictions that it would hugely increase congestion and housing costs. And it was manipulated by a cabal of politically connected businesses seeking to divert the flow of tax dollars into their own pockets."

Let's not make the same mistakes here.

One of O'Toole's suggestions was that voters dissolve Metro, the regional planning agency, and return planning functions to local governments. I second that.

He concludes, "People who want to see their regions remain affordable, uncongested, and livable should look at Portland only as an example of how not to plan."

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*Vacaville*