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Should Public Transit be Private?

A minor spat has broken out in the world of urban planning over public versus private financing of U.S. light rail lines.



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Should rail lines be funded by private companies?

[Christopher Leinberger](#), a real-estate developer and fellow at the Brookings Institution penned a recent Atlantic Monthly [piece](#) arguing that, at a time when U.S. cities are strapped for cash, private developers should invest in rail lines as a way to promote more dense development that encourages walking over driving. Mr. Leinberger's argument, in essence, is that since rail lines generally raise real-estate values then developers should (or at least would) pay for part of the infrastructure cost from which they benefit.

On the other side of the fence is [Yonah Freemark](#), who [argues](#) that that public entities are the best solution because cities/transportation districts have the leeway to plan for the long-term, they can use rail lines to redevelop blighted areas and because public transportation is better left in the public's hands.

Readers, what do you think?