

LINCOLN INSTITUTE OF LAND POLICY

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FIRST MAJOR EVALUATION OF SMART GROWTH POLICIES IN U.S. SHOWS MODEST GAINS IN FIGHT AGAINST SPRAWL

Big challenges for states aiming for more compact growth, protection of open space, expanding transportation choices and housing affordability, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy report finds

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (May 29, 2009) – States with smart growth policies achieved success in areas such as protecting open space and expanding transportation choices, but no state was able to make gains in all the major objectives of smart growth, according to a new report by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

[*Smart Growth Policies: An Evaluation of Programs and Outcomes*](#), the first major evaluation of smart growth policies in the United States, analyzed how four states with statewide smart growth programs -- Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, and Oregon -- performed in promoting compact development, protecting undeveloped land, providing a variety of transportation options, maintaining affordable housing, and achieving positive fiscal impacts.

The study found that no state did well in all five performance measures, although individual states succeeded in one or more of their priority policy areas. Maryland consumed less land per new resident, and was successful in protecting natural resources through its land preservation programs and state funding for the purchase of farmland conservation easements. New Jersey's affordable housing policies that responded to state supreme court decisions slowed house price escalation and encouraged rental and multifamily housing production. Oregon's commitment to urban growth boundaries helped reduce development on farmland in the Willamette Valley and encouraged commuters to use transit, walk, or bike to work.

Some smart growth states failed to achieve objectives in policy areas, such as providing affordable housing in Oregon and Maryland, and promoting compact urban growth in Florida.

The study also looked at four other states without formal statewide smart growth legislation: Colorado, Indiana, Texas, and Virginia. Colorado, with no statewide smart growth program, outperformed some states with such policies by supporting local government actions to pursue effective land use planning within a regional context.

"The message is clear: achieving smart growth is possible, but states must remain focused on all five of these key policy goals of smart growth," said Gregory K. Ingram, president of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and co-author of the report.

Although the evaluation of smart growth programs concentrates primarily on statewide performance from 1990 to the early 2000s, the findings and recommendations will be useful for formulating growth management policies in today's context of high energy costs, historic housing market volatility, and increasing pressures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many smart growth objectives are precisely the outcomes posited to address these current challenges facing state and local policy makers.

The report recommends that policy makers must articulate the means of achieving smart growth objectives and specify implementation mechanisms and not just declare objectives; use a variety of regulatory controls, market incentives, and institutional policies coordinated at the

regional scale; and take account of interactions among policies and coordination across relevant agencies.

The report also concludes that the successful implementation of smart growth programs requires a credible and persistent commitment from different levels of government. In addition, improvements in measurement and collection of data, particularly related to environmental quality and public finance, are needed to better monitor program performance, and more evidence is needed about the nature of interactions among smart growth policies—particularly those related to land use, transportation, and housing affordability.

Smart Growth Policies: An Evaluation of Programs and Outcomes was designed to evaluate whether selected states achieved the stated objectives of their smart growth policies, typically spelled out in legislation. The study also referred to the widely disseminated 10 Principles of Smart Growth. <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp?res=1280>.

The report is based on an analysis of empirical evidence, using data from the US Census, Census of Government, Natural Resources Inventory, and many other sources, in a two-year effort involving 21 contributors: Robert W. Burchell, director and professor, Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Armando Carbonell, senior fellow and chair, Department of Planning and Urban Form, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Timothy S. Chapin, associate professor and chair, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; Thomas A. Clark, professor and chair, Department of Planning and Design, and director, Center for Sustainable Urbanism, College of Architecture and Planning, University of Colorado Denver; Casey Dawkins, associate professor, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech, Alexandria, Virginia; William R. Dolphin, director, Research Computing, Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Beth Goodman, planner, ECONorthwest, Eugene, Oregon; Yu-Hung Hong, fellow, Interdepartmental Programs, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and visiting assistant professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Keith R. Ihlanfeldt, professor of economics, DeVoe Moore Eminent Scholar, and director, DeVoe Moore Center, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; Eric D. Kelly, professor, Department of Urban Planning, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana; Gerrit Knaap, executive director and professor, National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland; Rebecca Lewis, PhD research assistant, National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education; Timothy MacKinnon, research associate, Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey; Stuart Meck, director and faculty fellow, Rutgers Center for Government Services, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Terry Moore, vice president, ECONorthwest, Eugene, Oregon; Robert G. Paterson, associate professor and director, Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Rachael Rawlins, adjunct lecturer, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Frederick Steiner, dean, School of Architecture University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Allan Wallis, associate professor of public policy, School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado Denver; and Ming Zhang, associate professor, Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin.

To download the full report, including the executive summary and case studies of all the states in the analysis, click [here](#). To arrange an interview with Gregory K. Ingram or any of the contributors, please contact Anthony Flint at anthony.flint@lincolninst.edu. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is a leading resource for key issues concerning the use, regulation, and taxation of land.

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