



New Logo, New Commitment to Impact

BACK IN THE BRONZE AGE, when I was a graduate student, the American Economics Association invited me to present a paper at their annual meeting. At the time, being a nonconformist, I was struggling over whether or not to appear in a suit and tie. My Ph.D. adviser provided some excellent guidance. “I’m not going to tell you whether to wear a suit or not, but consider whether you want the audience to remember what you say or what you wear.” It was a helpful reminder that if one has a message to deliver, it is best to package it in a way that improves the chances that it will be received and understood. In the end, I wore the suit and tie, and I recorded a useful lesson in the sometimes subtle, sometimes not-so-subtle interplay of form and content.

efforts to restore the native ecosystem that had existed under different land use patterns in the river’s watershed. We also started hiring journalists to write compelling narratives that connected our research and policy analysis to the people whose lives would be improved by better land use practices.

The redesign of *Land Lines* and our Policy Focus Reports are a small part of a larger effort the Lincoln Institute is making to disseminate our formidable arsenal of research and ideas more widely. An ongoing public outreach effort, clear and crisp, will facilitate the impact we want our work to have on policy and on people. In August, we launched a multiyear campaign to promote municipal fiscal health as the foundation from which local governments can deliver the goods and services that define a high quality of life for residents. Our researchers, staff, and partners are working across disciplines to elevate this important issue, while building new, cross-cutting efforts to address climate change and resilience; developing state-of-the-art scenario planning tools; and probing the nexus of land policy and water, or of land use and transportation.

This month, we are taking another step to disseminate our ideas more effectively by introducing a new Lincoln Institute logo, tagline, and mission statement:

Finding answers in land: helping to solve global economic, social, and environmental challenges to improve the quality of life through creative approaches to the use, taxation, and stewardship of land.

From time to time, think tanks like the Lincoln Institute need to consider whether they are packaging content in a way that draws people to read and use it. Over the last year, we have taken a careful look at how we present and disseminate our research and policy analysis. We started in January 2015 with a newly reimagined *Land Lines*, designed to make the magazine more compelling to a broader audience. Our first redesigned issue featured a dramatic aerial photograph of the Colorado River Delta, where a “pulse flow” released from upstream dams in 2014 allowed water to flow down its dry old path to the Sea of Cortez for the first time in decades, stimulating

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The logo retains the Lincoln “L” within a symbolic outline of a land section, with a more modern, open design that invites new audiences to discover our work. The tagline and mission statement make explicit what has always been true: that good land policy can help address some of the most vexing global challenges, such as climate change or poverty and financial stress in the world’s cities.

We are not reinventing the Lincoln Institute, but aiming to introduce our work to broader audiences and to clarify the threads that connect seemingly disparate topics, such as the link between land conservation and climate change mitigation. Our “refresh” will culminate later this year, when we launch our redesigned website, with a format that allows us to convey new narratives about how land policy can shape a better future for billions of people.

This issue previews two important new books that upgrade our presentation of subjects we have been probing for decades. In *A Good Tax*, Joan Youngman makes a clear, strong case for the property tax—the most important and least understood source of revenue for local governments. This magisterial treatment of a difficult topic is rendered in lucid prose by the Lincoln Institute’s chair of Valuation and Taxation. The chapter on school finance, featured in this issue, defends the tax that people love to hate in service of a public good that defines the fortunes

of future generations.

Nature and Cities—edited by Frederick R. Steiner, George F. Thompson, and Armando Carbonell, the Lincoln Institute’s chair of Planning and Urban Form—explores the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of ecological urban design and planning. With essays by New York City’s High Line designer James Corner and other leading landscape architects, planners, and architects around the world, *Nature*

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and Cities offers an erudite and visually captivating treatment of a topic that is urgent in the face of climate change and urban population growth.

As you will see, we will continue to serve our long-time partners and friends with rigorously researched and well-written content. But we also will expand the network of researchers, policy makers, and practitioners who will apply our research findings in ways that we can only imagine. Because in the end, our collective endeavor is to improve the lives of all who call this planet home. And we know that it all starts on land. □

