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Land Use Innovation: Experiences in the Adoption of Land Use Policies to Promote Active Living

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Land Use Innovation:
Experiences in the Adoption of Land Use Policies to Promote Active Living

Jennifer Dill, Ph.D. • Portland State University
Deborah Howe, Ph.D. • Temple University
Study Aim

- Understand the process of local government innovation in land use policy related to active living
  - Motivations
  - Barriers
  - Resources

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Study Components

- Survey of best practices communities
- Survey of randomly selected jurisdictions
- Case studies of four innovative communities
- Interviews of innovative developers
Survey Methodology

- Best Practices Survey
  - Sample: Cities and counties with mixed-use zoning and new mixed-use projects built or underway
  - Response rate: 24% (53 of 221)

- Random Survey
  - Sample: Cities/Towns of population 25,000-200,000
  - Response rate: 29% (145 of 498)
Findings: Levels of Innovation

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Findings: Land Use Policies Adopted

- Allow or require mixed-use zoning: 84%
- Allow high density housing: 78%
- Zero lot line zoning: 68%
- Cluster zoning: 59%
- Allow accessory dwelling units: 55%
- Land dedication requirement for parks: 54%
- Development fees to support parks: 49%
- Designated Growth Areas: 39%

Legend:
- Currently in zoning code
- Currently amending code to include
- Considering
- Have not considered
- Considered, but did not adopt

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Findings: Land Use Policies Adopted

- Minimum densities: 35%
- Special zoning for TOD: 32%
- Density bonuses for senior housing: 31%
- Urban Growth Boundaries: 26%
- Density bonuses for affordable housing: 26%
- Inclusionary zoning for affordable housing: 23%
- Limiting auto-oriented land uses near transit: 16%
- Density bonuses for first floor commercial: 13%

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Findings: Parking Policies Adopted

- Allow shared parking: 86%
- Reduced Parking Requirements: 58%
- Eliminate parking requirements in certain areas: 40%
- Bicycle parking requirements: 38%
- Maximum allowable parking: 25%
- Incentives to reduce parking: 19%

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Findings: Design Policies Adopted

- Reduced setback requirements: 62%
- Requirements that buildings be oriented to the street and/or transit stops: 54%
- Limits on blank facades at ground level: 49%
- Street connectivity standards: 46%
- Requirements for ground floor or street level activity: 45%
- Reduced street width standards: 31%
- Incentives for LEED certification: 8%

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Findings: Motivations

- Top issues motivating adoption include
  - “Livability”
  - Economic development
  - Creating dynamic centers
- Plans and mandates play a role
- Higher population growth (1990 to 2000) → more land use and design policies adopted
- Better current economic health → more parking and design policies adopted
Findings: Motivations

- Physical activity not a major motivation, but...
  - Increasing importance in this past decade compared to 1990s and earlier
  - Associated with higher numbers of policies adopted
- Public health agencies are not playing a role in these policy discussions

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## Reasons for Not Adopting Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Somewhat + Very much</th>
<th>Very much a reason</th>
<th>Somewhat of a reason</th>
<th>Not a reason at all</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lack of planning staff time</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition from residents</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition from business community</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leadership from elected officials</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition from other organizations</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about such policies</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leadership from planning commission</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leadership from planning director and/or department</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources

- The most useful sources of information were:
  - Policies/language from other jurisdictions (top)
  - Consultants
  - Field visits (within and outside jurisdiction)
  - Professional conferences
Implications of the Findings

- Health and physical activity could become a more significant motivation
- Need to target elected officials
- External plans and policies can be influential
  - State-level planning mandates
  - Transportation plans (is there a role for HIAs here?)
- Planning departments need more resources
  - Sharing good examples may help (codes and site visits)
That’s all for now...

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