

Green Planning for Land Development

From Ideas to Implementation: Planning for Pocket Parks

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This study investigates how innovative ideas about park policy, planning, and design strategies have become reality. We analyze ten communities encouraging “pocket parks.” Pocket parks are a fairly new and somewhat contentious urban park typology, where small public green spaces are inserted throughout a community intended as a replacement for traditional private yard-like activities. In turn, this practice can allow for greater densities, increased walkability, and opportunities for access to micro-nature in urban places. Downsides to this park typology typically revolve around maintenance issues. Each of our sample communities is a mid-sized city in the United States. Through our case studies, we assess the practice of each municipality, tracing the origin of the dialogue leading up to the action. Specifically, we analyze historical content of official documents to trace the occurrence of change, and then follow-up by way of interviews with key personnel. Particularly, we are looking at the processes that foster progressive actions, by way of examining how these ten mid-sized US cities have created policy infrastructure which has led to the implementation of pocket parks. A better understanding of how innovative strategies evolve into implemented actions is important to both scholars and practitioners in most any field as a means of disseminating and implementing knowledge from research in an effective manner. The findings from this study are aimed to promote generalizable operative advocacy planning and design, not just for urban pocket parks, but most any inventive ideas intended for addressing urban affairs.

Integrating Ecosystem Services Analysis into Scenario Planning Practice: Accounting for urban forest benefits using i-Tree valuation in Central Texas

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Scenario planning is gaining momentum in the United States as an effective process for building consensus on long-range community and regional plans for the future. Additionally, the increasing availability of open-source software tools is improving the analytical capabilities of scenario planning practice. However, efforts to integrate more sophisticated information to help estimate important ecosystem services have thus far lagged in practice. This is problematic because understanding the tradeoffs of land consumption patterns on ecological integrity is

central to mitigating the environmental degradation caused by land use change and new development. In this paper we describe how ecosystem services values from the U.S. Forest Service's i-Tree analytic suite were integrated into the mainstream scenario planning software tool Envision Tomorrow to assess the benefits of public street trees and urban forest canopy cover for alternative future development scenarios. The tools are then applied to assess future development scenarios for a Central Texas demonstration community. We argue that the incorporation of these models represents a methodological improvement for scenario planning practice, offers a way to include ecosystem services analysis in mainstream land use planning processes, and serves as an example of how open-source software tools can potentially expand the analytical scope for community and regional planning, even in cases where community resources are limited.

The Effect of Urban Multi-Use Greenways on Crime

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Public urban greenways are corridors of open space typically on historic trail lines and other man-made features near rivers or streams. Planners propose public multi-use greenway trails with the expectation that community residents will experience an improved quality of life. Residents who live near proposed greenway corridors, however, often raise concerns including the potential for increased crime. The scholarly literature is void of rigorous investigation of the relationship between transitioning urban land use to active urban multi-use trails and crime. We use a panel data set from Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana, to examine that relationship over a period of time in which no public trails existed through the latest land use transition to public trails. The panel data structure during that time period is beneficial for at least two reasons. First, the direct effect of change in land use on crime can be examined. Specifically, the effect of converting land use to a multi-use trail on the variation of crime counts across relatively small areas is estimated. Second, some of the unobserved heterogeneity bias associated with approaches using cross-sectional data may be addressed. That is, panel estimates reduce the potential impact of unobserved attributes that may be correlated with the dependent variable (i.e., crimes) and one, or more, independent variables. Results of models, including a fixed-effects negative binomial model, show that multi-use trails do not increase crime levels.

Urban governance responses to global climate change

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This paper investigates the range of options available to localities to adapt to stressors imposed

by global climate change, with a focus on governance responses. To date, good governance has been considered as a "necessary but not sufficient" policy lever for inducing successful climate adaptation, with little formal study of how governance responses have been employed in this context and to which ends. This paper will present an analytical framework and typology of urban governance responses to climate change, taking a fresh look at existing cases of urban responses worldwide. The paper will conclude with a research agenda for further study.