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The Impact of Local Supporters on Smart Growth Policy Adoption

Lenahan O'Connell

Problem: To succeed, the smart growth movement must be active at the local level. However, little is known about the movement's composition and effects.

Purpose: This research aims to identify who pursues smart growth at the local level, what types of smart growth policies are being adopted, and the impact of supporters on the types of policies adopted.

Methods: Using surveys I conducted with planning and development officials in 202 cities and other data, I estimate regression models predicting the effects of local activism and other possible influences on the number of smart growth, land preserving, and inner-city redevelopment policies these cities adopted.

Results and conclusions: I found that (a) as the number of types of groups promoting smart growth increases, cities adopt more smart growth policies; (b) the supporters of smart growth have more impact on the adoption of land preserving policies than on the policies associated with inner-city redevelopment; and (c) cities in states that require comprehensive planning adopt more smart growth policies.

Takeaway for practice: Politics prevents many cities from adopting comprehensive smart growth policies, though state laws that mandate comprehensive planning at the local level appear to encourage them. Planners can build support for smart growth by inviting environmental groups to the table and by devising smart growth policies that encourage both land preservation and inner-city densification.

Keywords: growth regulation, smart growth, environmental activism, comprehensive planning, local politics

According to the American Planning Association (APA, 2002), smart growth "refocuses a larger share of regional growth within central cities, urbanized areas, inner suburbs and areas that are already served by infrastructure. Smart Growth reduces the share of growth that occurs on newly urbanizing land, existing farmlands and in environmentally sensitive areas" (p. 1). Thus *smart growth* can be defined as having two main thrusts: promoting denser development and protecting agricultural and wild land from development.

Although interest in smart growth is a national phenomenon with prominent advocates (APA, 2002; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, & Speck, 2000), to be successful, its goals must be advanced by supporters at the state and local levels (Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001; Gillham, 2002; Steel & Lovrich, 2000). As a result, outcomes may differ markedly among localities. Downs (2005) argues that few local governments will pursue the full range of smart growth policies, predicting instead that local actors will champion different policies depending on their interests. He also maintains that there is great public resistance to urban growth boundaries and increased residential density, though these are cornerstones of smart growth. Glickfeld and Levine's (1992) study of 14 growth management measures in California found none designed to increase residential density, and several, such as large lot requirements and limits on building permits, that would prevent such increases.

As Downs (2005) argues, approaches to smart growth can vary. In practice, smart growth may emerge as a bundle of discrete policies to reach one or both

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of the land protection and denser development smart growth goals. For this research, I chose eight policies commonly referenced by smart growth advocates (Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, & Speck, 2000; Gillham, 2002). The five land preserving policies are: (1) an urban growth boundary; (2) a program for the purchase of development rights; (3) a program for the transfer of development rights; (4) zoning policies designed to encourage smaller lot size; and (5) policies designed to encourage transit oriented development. The three inner-city redevelopment policies are: (1) policies to encourage infill or brownfield development; (2) policies to encourage reinvesting in or rehabilitation of existing buildings; and (3) zoning policies to permit mixed use development. These policies manage development rather than stopping it.

Since previous research indicates that growth regulation is decided by the local political process (Glickfeld & Levine, 1992), I surveyed planning and development officials in 202 cities to understand in more detail what leads to the adoption of local smart growth policies. I identify: (a) the relative frequency with which certain likely types of supporters and opponents of smart growth appear in local smart growth debates; (b) the relative frequency with which eight different smart growth policies are adopted; and (c) the impact of local supporters and opponents on policy adoption.

The next section discusses the literature on some of the factors contributing to growth regulation at the local level, including the likely antagonists in the conflict over growth policy. It also presents hypotheses about which economic, social, and political factors promote the adoption of smart growth policies at the local level. I then present my research methods and my findings. I conclude with what implications my findings have for local conflicts over smart growth policy.

Explaining Growth Regulation

Studies seeking to explain the adoption of growth regulation at the local level have looked at one or more of four sets of explanatory factors: (1) the presence of local supporters; (2) the relative proportions of college-educated residents in the cities under study; (3) the existence of state laws encouraging cites to adopt comprehensive planning; and (4) evidence of local desires to defend against perceived threats to property and neighborhood values. This last factor includes reactions to recent population growth and the desire of Whites and homeowners to defend property values by excluding minorities and low-income people. Like other forms of growth regulation, it is possible that any of these four factors could contribute to the adoption of smart growth policies at the local level; this study will include measures of all four in addition to some control variables.

Numbers of Types of Local Supporters and Opponents

Conflict over growth regulation is common at the local level (Bridgeland & Sofranko, 1975; Clark & Goetz, 1994; Donovan & Neiman, 1992; Judd & Swanstrom, 1998; Princtl, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1978; Stone, 1989). The real estate and development industries benefit from the development of land and often oppose growth regulation, seeing it as a threat to their economic interests (Downs, 2005; Feagin & Parker, 1990; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Warner & Molotch, 1995). But other actors may also oppose growth regulation: unions and other organizations representing construction workers; the local newspaper; banks and financial institutions; neighborhood associations; and groups promoting the property rights of owners, among others (Feagin & Parker, 1990; Judd & Swanstrom, 1998; Stone, 1989).

Support for growth regulation can arise from many sources, including neighborhood activists and environmentalists (Barkan, 2004; Princtl, 1994; Clark & Goetz, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1978). But it can also come from many of the same entities that on some occasions oppose growth regulation, like local politicians, the local newspaper, neighborhood associations, and business and civic groups (Bogart, 1993; Danielson, 1976; Staley, 1999). A variety of ad hoc environmental and smart growth organizations can be expected to enter the public debate to demand local smart growth policies.

The literature suggests that organized opposition to unregulated growth contributes to the passage of growth control measures at the local level. Princtl (1994) concluded that grassroots organizations were instrumental in gaining passage of growth management provisions. Clark and Goetz (1994) found that 26% of the cities they studied had antigrowth groups, and these had a significant impact on the type of growth strategies adopted in those cities. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis (H1): As more types of actors promote smart growth at the local level, the community will adopt more smart growth policies.

College Graduates

A number of studies locate the social roots of growth regulation in the more educated sectors of the community (Barkan, 2004; Chapin & Connerly, 2004; Clark, 1994; Clark & Goetz, 1994; Clark & Inglehart, 1998; Glickfeld & Levine, 1992; Green & Fleischman, 1991; Inglehart,

1995; McDonald & McMillan, 2004; Portney, 2005; Wassmer & Lascher, 2006). The college-educated are more likely to create and participate in civic groups and organizations (Putnam, 2000), particularly those devoted to environmental protection and historic preservation (Barkan, 2004; Protash & Baldassare, 1983). A higher density of voluntary associations in a community is associated with greater environmental activism. In addition being more likely to be ideologically committed to environmentalism, more highly educated people are more likely to have the skills and resources to organize opposition to unregulated growth (Inglehart, 1997). This leads to my second hypothesis (H2): As the percentage of a community's population possessing a college degree increases, the community will adopt more smart growth policies.

State Involvement in Growth Management

By 1992, 13 states had policies calling for comprehensive land use planning at the local level (Burby & May, 1997).[1] It is possible that such mandated comprehensive planning fosters the local enactment of smart growth policies. Dawkins and Nelson's (2003) research suggests as much, finding that state growth management programs promoted central city housing development, a goal of smart growth. Carruthers (2002) found that state-mandated comprehensive planning promoted urban density. Clearly, research on the impact of local politics on smart growth must control for the effect of such state laws. This leads to my third hypothesis (H3): Communities in states with laws requiring local comprehensive planning will adopt more smart growth policies.

Smart Growth as a Reaction to Change

The adoption of smart growth policies may also be a response to growth. Many have observed an association between rapid growth and calls for growth controls as residents react to disruption associated with accommodating an influx of new residents (Baldassare & Protash, 1982; Donovan & Neiman, 1992; Glickfeld & Levine, 1992; Protash & Baldassare, 1983; Wassmer & Lascher, 2006). However, Logan and Zhou (1990) and Baldassare and Wilson (1996) found that rapid growth is not significantly associated with the adoption of growth controls.

Homeowners more than renters, and White homeowners more than others, seek ways to maximize local property values (Babcock & Bosselman, 1973; Ihlanfeldt, 2004). Chapin and Connerly (2004) found that Whites and homeowners were more supportive of growth management than other groups. This suggests that pursuing smart growth may reflect a desire to exclude minorities and low-income families, even though Nelson et al. (2004) found that urban containment policies such as urban growth boundaries reduced economic and racial segregation.[2] This leads to my fourth hypothesis (H4): A city will adopt more smart growth policies if its population has grown recently, if it has a higher percentage of owner occupied housing units, and if it has a higher percentage of residents who are White.

Two Types of Smart Growth Policies

Using APA's definition of the two main objectives of smart growth from the beginning of this article, I group smart growth policies into two broad categories: *land preserving policies* and *inner-city redevelopment policies*. I make this distinction because I expect most supporters of smart growth to be interested in only one of these aims (Downs, 2005). Local governments normally pursue inner-city redevelopment, especially in downtowns, to spur investment and to generate additional tax revenues, not to reduce greenfield development (Downs, 2005; Orfield, 1998; Rusk, 1999). Inner-city redevelopment is financially more advantageous to local governments than greenfield development, as it tends to produce a relatively small demand for additional services, especially schools, the most costly of local services (Judd & Swanstrom, 1998). In addition, evidence suggests that downtown housing is in demand in many places, making downtown redevelopment economically viable (Lucy & Phillips, 2006). Given the financial motivations, cities are more likely to embrace smart growth policies aimed at inner-city redevelopment than those aimed at land preservation.

This leads me to expect that without strong local support for smart growth, policies that promote land preservation to protect green space (e.g., urban growth boundaries) will be less prevalent than policies to promote inner-city redevelopment (e.g., programs encouraging rehabilitation and infill development), which may have support for other reasons. Thus, my fifth and final hypothesis (H5): Local supporters of smart growth will be more important to the adoption of the land preserving policies than to the adoption of inner-city redevelopment policies.

The literature also supports controlling for city size, which is positively associated with the enactment of growth control measures (Glickfeld & Levine, 1992). Large cities tend to encounter more complex problems when coordinating transportation and development. It also seems wise to control for income because, as the literature suggests, cities with more high income residents will be more supportive of environmental protection policies (Clark, 1994).

Research Methods

Survey

In October 2003, I mailed surveys to one planning official in each city of 50,000 or more in all 13 states Burby and May (1997) found to have policies that called for comprehensive land use planning at the local level by 1992.[3] To allow me to compare cities in states with requirements for local comprehensive planning to those in states lacking such a requirement, I also sent a survey to one planning official in each city of 50,000 or more in 13 other states chosen at random from the remaining 37.[4] In its policy guide on smart growth, the APA recommends comprehensive planning as a component of smart growth planning. My approach allows me to assess whether state requirements for comprehensive planning are associated with the adoption of more smart growth policies (my third hypothesis).

I sent surveys to a total of 340 cities. Of those, 202 (59%) returned usable surveys in November and December of 2003. To increase the response rate, I followed the Dilman (1978) method, recontacting them in November and early December to encourage them to cooperate. I also checked and found that the cities for which surveys were returned closely resembled those from which I received no response.[5]

The respondents who filled out the surveys were planning and/or economic development officials who I identified by using their cities' websites. If a city website did not identify a director of planning, I mailed the survey to the director of economic development. Survey respondents reported being employed by the city where I contacted them for an average of 11.8 years. This substantial length of service suggests they would be quite knowledgeable about growth regulation in their cities. I surveyed individuals whose titles indicated that they had significant responsibility for coordinating planning activities in their cities and would therefore be able to describe and evaluate the various smart growth efforts their cities had undertaken. I focused on the methods used to manage growth inside a single city and did not ask respondents to comment on areas outside the cities where they were employed. With one knowledgeable person queried in each city, I consider each survey response an accurate representation of that city's planning situation on the matters covered by my questions.

Identifying the Dependent Variables: Smart Growth Policies

In the survey, I asked each respondent whether their city had adopted eight common smart growth policies listed previously. For purposes of analysis, I divide the eight policies into two types discussed earlier: land preserving policies and inner-city redevelopment policies. The survey asked respondents two things which are germane to this study about each of the policies: (1) Did their city have the policy or program? (2) If yes, did the state mandate that the city have it?

Measuring Independent Variables

To test my first hypothesis I asked survey respondents to "Place a check mark next to each group that has supported growth regulation to limit sprawl in your city" for eight categories of actors who are potential supporters of smart growth policies. The survey also asked respondents to "Please place a check mark next to each opposition group that has actively opposed smart growth policies in your city" for 10 categories of potential opponents. For each city, I then totaled the number of categories respondents identified as supporters and the number of categories identified as opponents.

To test my second and fourth hypotheses, I used 1990 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994a) for the surveyed cities to obtain percentage of the population with a college degree, percentage of housing units owner occupied, and percentage of the population White. To test the fourth hypothesis I also used the percentage of population growth for these cities for the period 1980–1992 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994a). I used data from these years rather than from more recent time periods because I wanted to test hypotheses about influences on policy adoption, which required that the hypothesized influences exist before the policies. My pretest revealed that survey respondents could not give the dates that their cities' policies were passed, so I assumed that most were passed after their states passed comprehensive planning requirements. In most cases, this was 1992 at the latest, giving cities at least 10 years prior to my survey in which to add smart growth policies. Although some smart growth policies may have been adopted before 1992, land preserving smart growth policies in particular are relatively recent. For example, according to Glickfeld and Levine's (1992) study, urban growth boundaries were the only one of the smart growth policies in this article then in use in California.

The Appendix contains descriptive statistics for all the variables.

Findings

The Smart Growth Movement at the Local Level

Table 1 suggests that the smart growth movement is very active at the local level. The survey listed groups and

organizations frequently mentioned in the literature as supporting smart growth. On average, the respondents indicated that in their cities 2.88 of these different types of actors supported growth regulation. Table 1 shows that elected officials were most frequently mentioned as supportive (in 57.1% of cities), closely followed by other environmental groups (53.4%), smart growth groups (45.1%), and neighborhood associations (43.6%). Local newspapers were cited as supportive by 33.8% of the respondents. Business groups (16.8%) and nonbusiness civic groups (25%) were cited less frequently. Respondents were also asked if any other parties not on the list were active supporters. Only 12.3% said other types of actors had been active in their city.

The respondents were much less likely to identify opponents. On average, they mentioned only 1.13 opponents. Thus, the ratio of supporters to opponents was slightly more than 2.5 to 1. This could be a product of the nature of the opposition, which tended to be more concentrated in the real estate and development industry.

Predictably, I found developers and real estate interests to be active opponents of smart growth policies (in 33.2% of cities). Although construction unions sometimes oppose growth regulation, groups representing workers were not very active. While elected officials were present in the debate, they were less likely to be mentioned as opponents (15.4%) than as supporters (57.1%). To a lesser extent, the same was true of local newspapers. Perhaps the most surprising finding is the role of property rights organizations, which were mentioned more often (in 20.3% of cities) than individual owners of property (9.4%) or even neighborhood associations (11.4%). It appears that smart growth has galvanized opponents as well as supporters. Just as proponents rally around environmental organizations, opponents appear to be creating groups dedicated to the defense of individual property rights. In fact, there was a significant correlation ($r = .30$, $p = .000$) between numbers of types of supporters and types of opponents in individual cities.

Table 1. Groups of actors by the percentage of surveyed cities in which they were reported to be supporters or opponents of smart growth policies.

	Percentage of cities in which respondents reported actors to be	
	Supporters	**Opponents**
Elected officials	57.1	15.4
Local newspaper	33.8	5.0
Neighborhood associations	43.6	11.4
Business groups	16.8	10.4
Smart growth groups[a]	45.1	—
Other environmental protection groups[a]	53.4	—
Nonbusiness civic groups[a]	25.0	—
Developers and real estate interests[b]	—	33.2
Property rights organizations[b]	—	20.3
Groups representing workers[b]	—	1.5
Banks and financial institutions[b]	—	2.0
Organizations of property owners[b]	—	9.4
Other	12.3	4.5

Notes:

a. Not listed as a potential opponent on survey.

b. Not listed as a potential supporter on survey.

The Prevalence of Land Preserving and Inner-City Redevelopment Policies

Table 2 indicates that among the policies I inquired about on the survey, cities were more likely to adopt those that promote inner-city redevelopment than those that preserve open space. Only 27% reported an urban growth boundary and 20% reported a plan for the transfer of development rights. Even fewer (12%) had a policy for the purchase of development rights. However, despite the frequently remarked upon (and presumably entrenched) public opposition to dense living and public transit, 62% of cities were encouraging building on smaller lots and 56% were promoting transit oriented development. Support for smart growth policies designed to promote living in or rebuilding older, denser neighborhoods appears to be greater. Thus, 78% had policies for infill development or brownfield redevelopment and 77% had programs for rehabilitation of older buildings. Policies for mixed use were most popular (88%).

Table 2 also shows that the vast majority of local smart growth policies were not products of state initiatives; for example, although 62% of cities had policies for smaller lot size, only 2% of cities said these were mandated by their states. Of the eight policies, urban growth boundaries were most likely to have been adopted in response to a state mandate, but this was still the case in only 7.5% of the cities. Apparently, 20% adopted urban growth boundaries by local initiative. In sum, the average city had adopted 4.1 smart growth policies. Of these, approximately, 1.8 were land preserving policies and 2.3 were inner-city redevelopment policies.

The Impact of State Comprehensive Planning Requirements

Table 3 shows that cities in states with comprehensive planning mandates are significantly more likely to adopt land preserving policies. Specifically, they are significantly

Table 2. Percentage of surveyed cities with eight smart growth policies, and percentage required to have them.

Smart growth policies	Percentage of cities surveyed that have adopted this policy	Percentage of cities surveyed that are required by state mandate to have this policy
Land preserving policies		
An urban growth boundary	27.5	7.5
A program for the purchase of development rights	11.5	1.5
A program for the transfer of development rights	20.4	3.9
Zoning policies designed to encourage smaller lot size	62.2	2.0
Policies to encourage transit oriented development	56.0	4.0
Inner-city redevelopment policies		
Policies to encourage infill or brownfield development	77.9	6.0
Policies to encourage reinvesting in or rehabilitation of existing buildings	71.4	5.6
Zoning policies to permit mixed use development	88.0	2.5

more likely to have urban growth boundaries, policies for the transfer of development rights, zoning for smaller lot size, and policies for transit oriented development.

It is possible that some cities may have been responding to state policies enacted after 1992. To explore that possibility, I used APA's (2002) study of state initiatives to encourage better planning to look at the 13 states lacking mandated comprehensive planning in 1992. The 13 states with mandated comprehensive planning by 1992 had an average of 2.02 land preserving policies and 2.33 inner-city redevelopment policies. Of the 13 states I studied that were without mandated comprehensive planning in 1992, 6 states changed their policies to encourage smart growth and 7 states did not. The responding cities in the states that changed had 1.36 land preserving policies and 2.40 inner-city redevelopment policies. The cities in the states that did not change had 1.27 land preserving policies and 2.46 inner-city redevelopment policies. These differences

Table 3. Percentage of surveyed cities with eight smart growth policies by whether state has a comprehensive planning requirement.

Smart growth policies	Percentage of surveyed cities with listed policy in states with		*t* of difference
	comprehensive planning requirement	no comprehensive planning requirement	
Land preserving			
An urban growth boundary	32	18	2.20*
A program for the purchase of development rights	13	9	.64
A program for the transfer of development rights	25	12	2.19*
Zoning policies designed to encourage smaller lot size	67	53	1.94*
Policies to encourage transit oriented development	65	40	3.61**
Inner-city redevelopment			
Policies to encourage infill or brownfield development	76	82	−1.04
Policies to encourage reinvesting in or rehabilitation of existing buildings	69	75	−.85
Zoning policies to permit mixed use development	89	86	.56

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

are not significant. Thus, post-1992 changes in state laws mandating comprehensive planning appear not to have affected the adoption of the eight policies discussed in this article.

Regression Analyses

Table 4 shows the frequency with which cities responding to my survey adopted different numbers of smart growth policies, land preserving policies, and inner-city redevelopment policies. I used these numbers of smart growth policies adopted in each city as dependent variables, creating regression models to predict them with the independent variables discussed earlier. The results of these three Poisson regressions are shown in Table 5.

The Poisson distribution is a discrete probability distribution which assigns probability to nonnegative integers (0, 1, 2, etc.). The parameter lambda (λ) is the mean and moves the entire distribution to the right (higher values) when it becomes bigger, and to the left (but not beyond zero) when it becomes smaller. Poisson regression estimates the effect of independent variables on lambda. A positive coefficient increases the mean and moves the distribution right, in the case of my model, to bigger numbers of policies. A negative coefficient decreases the mean and moves the distribution left. There is no equivalent to R^2 in this type of model, which is nonlinear. However, the coefficients can be interpreted as marginal impacts on the estimated average number of policies, because lambda is also the mean (Long, 1997).

Two of the models shown in Table 5 reach statistical significance: the one predicting all eight policies and the one predicting the five land preserving policies. The model predicting the inner-city redevelopment policies did not reach significance and none of the independent variables was a significant predictor of the number of redevelopment policies.

The same five independent variables reach significance when the dependent variable is the number of all smart growth policies adopted and when it is the number of only the land preserving policies adopted. Because the results show that the independent variables predict the number of land preserving policies, but not the redevelopment policies, I use the results from the model predicting the five land preserving policies to evaluate my hypotheses.

My first hypothesis, linking numbers of types of supporters to number of policies adopted, was supported. In fact, the number of types of supporters is the second most significant predictor of the number of land preserving policies adopted. Four other variables were significant predictors of the number of land preserving policies: required comprehensive planning (the most significant), percentage of college graduates, city population, and median income. Thus, my second hypothesis was also supported as the percentage of college graduates was positively associated with the number of smart growth policies adopted, although only for land preserving policies. It was clearly not significant for inner-city redevelopment policies. The results also support my third hypothesis, that state-mandated comprehensive planning would be a positive influence on numbers of smart growth policies.[6] But again, this was significant for predicting the number of land preserving policies, but not for predicting the number of inner-city redevelopment policies. My fourth hypothesis, that smart growth policies might be adopted in order to slow growth and racial change,

Table 4. Number and percentage of cities by number of smart growth policies adopted.

	By number of total policies		By number of land preserving policies		By number of redevelopment policies	
Policies adopted	**Cities**	**%**	**Cities**	**%**	**Cities**	**%**
0	4	2.0	36	18.0	8	4.0
1	11	5.5	55	27.5	29	14.5
2	22	11.0	52	26.0	49	24.5
3	34	17.0	40	20.0	114	57.0
4	42	21.0	10	5.0		
5	44	22.0	7	3.5		
6	28	14.0				
7	10	5.0				
8	5	2.5				
	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100

was not supported. Although the effects of the percentage of White and the percentage of homeowners variables were in the expected direction, they failed to significantly predict the number of smart growth policies in any of the equations. My fifth hypothesis, anticipating that land preserving policies would be more readily explained, was also supported. As noted, there were no significant predictors of the inner-city redevelopment policies, a result that suggests that cities adopt them to attain economic objectives.

Median income was a significantly negative predictor, meaning cities with higher incomes adopted fewer land preserving policies. This may be a function of the sample, which contains many midsize cities from midwestern and southern states, where incomes tend to be lower, and may also show that the positive relationship with education, which is correlated with income, has already been controlled for. It is also possible that some of the wealthier cities favor large lots and are less opposed to sprawl for that reason.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The planning and development officials who completed the survey collectively depict smart growth as a social movement in which a variety of types of actors participate at the local level. Besides elected officials, those most likely to enter the local political process to advocate smart growth are environmental groups, smart growth groups, and neighborhood associations. Newspapers and politicians are far more likely to support than oppose smart growth policies. The presence of elected officials and various activists groups gives rise to an interesting question for further research: Which emerges first, politicians seeking an issue to campaign on or activist groups representing potential voters?

Overall, the respondents reported more types of supporters than types of opponents. The opposition appears to be led by realtors, developers, and groups representing

Table 5. Poisson regression models predicting number of adopted smart growth policies in surveyed cities.

	Model 1: Predicting total number of smart growth policies[a]			Model 2: Predicting number of land preserving policies[b] only			Model 3: Predicting number of inner-city redevelopment policies[c] only		
Independent variables	**Coeff.**	**S.E.**	***z***	**Coeff.**	**S.E.**	***z***	**Coeff.**	**S.E.**	***z***
Constant	0.964	0.285	3.38***	–0.955	0.45	–2.15*	1. 201	0.373	3.23
1990 population (millions)	0.496	0.245	2.02*	0.827	0.36	2. 36*	0..211	0.345	0.61
1980–1992 % population growth	0.001	0.001	0.05	–0.001	0.040	–0.04	–0.001	0.000	–0.07
1990% population with college degree	0.011	0.005	2.12*	0.018	0.007	2.45*	0.004	0.007	0.67
1989 median family income ($ thousands)	–0.014	0.006	–2.32*	–0.022	0.009	–2.43*	–0.007	0.008	–0.89
1990% housing units owner occupied	0.004	0.005	0.75	0.014	0.008	1.80	–0.004	0.006	–0.69
1990% White	0.162	0.201	0.81	0.450	0.321	1.40	–0.060	0.258	–0.23
Number of types of opponents	–0.003	0.026	–0.10	–0.012	0.001	–0.30	–0.007	0.034	0.21
Number of types of supporters	0.066	0.018	3.61***	0.104	0.027	3.81***	0.044	0.025	1.40
Comprehensive planning required (1) or not required (0) by 1992	0.207	0.087	2.37*	0.543	0.14	3.94***	–0.039	0.115	–0.34
N	190			190			190		
Likelihood ratio χ^2	44.75			59.89			9.90		
p of χ^2	<0.001			<0.001			0.359		
Pseudo R^2	.058			.096			.017		

Notes:

All coefficient estimates are unstandardized.

a. Cities could have from 0 to 8 smart growth policies.

b. Cities could have from 0 to 5 land preserving policies.

c. Cities could have from 0 to 3 inner-city redevelopment policies.

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

property rights. Supporters appear to play a significant role at the local level, as the number of types of local supporters had more effect on policy adoption than the other variables in the regression analyses. The number of types of opponents was not significant. Another indicator of the importance of local activism is the relatively minor impact of state mandates on the adoption of these policies by cities. According to the respondents, fewer than 10% of smart growth policies were adopted in response to a state mandate.

The survey results also imply that Downs (2005) may have underestimated the public's willingness to endorse residential density. The percentage of surveyed cities with growth boundaries is twice that reported in Glickfeld and Levine's (1992) study of California. Moreover, 56% of respondents reported that their cities had policies for transit oriented development and 62% had zoning policies designed to encourage smaller lot size.

Yet, from the regression analyses, it can be inferred that smart growth supporters have their greatest impact on the adoption of measures to protect land from development. They have less impact on the tendency to adopt policies for intensifying land use at the center. This is in keeping with the observation that inner-city redevelopment is sought for economic and tax-base expansion, as well as environmental protection.

Future research can investigate the impact of the adoption of smart growth policies on development patterns. One recent study found that growth boundaries were associated with central city revitalization (Nelson et al., 2004), while another concluded that policies favoring transit oriented development promote density and infill (Cervero, 2006). My research finds that local activism, pro and con, can be expected to shape the adoption of the policies themselves.

Implications for the Planning Process

Cities in states with comprehensive planning requirements were significantly more likely to adopt smart growth policies, especially the land preserving policies. This finding is plainly in line with the APA's assumption that smart growth builds on comprehensive planning and suggests that smart growth advocates should call for comprehensive planning mandates in all the states. Whether such mandates will promote higher density development and land protection requires further research.

The findings of this study also fit well with recent thinking on the role of the public in the planning process. Effective planning combines technical expertise with the pursuit of the public's values and concerns (Hopkins, 2001; Innes, 1996). This makes the planning process a social and political activity (Forrester, 1999). Now that support for unregulated growth has eroded, a variety of groups are demanding a new, more regulated, approach to development (Purcell, 2000). Planners can improve the planning process by working with these groups and the constituencies they represent (Checkoway, 1986). Such cooperation can also help realize the APA's ethical commitments to public participation and environmental protection.

Taken together, the results are consistent with Innes' (1996) three-step approach to working with the public: (1) establish stakeholder groups; (2) bring them into the discussion; and (3) look for broad principles upon which to build a consensus. In addition to demonstrating a connection between the participation of stakeholder groups and the adoption of smart growth policies, my findings also support Innes' assertion that public participation works best when it identifies broad principles (like commitment to higher density development and protection of green space in the case of smart growth) and allows stakeholders to then choose specific policies in accord with the principles. Most cities surveyed had adopted five or fewer of the eight smart growth policies I inquired about. Indeed, only five cities, including Portland, OR, had all of them. The lesson for planners is straightforward: Bring the stakeholder groups into the planning process and let them select, after due deliberation, the policies they deem appropriate. Portland's comprehensive approach to smart growth is but one of many. The opportunity to choose from a menu of policies can facilitate consensus building. It also encourages the vote-trading among stakeholders advocated by Hopkins (2001).

Who should be invited to participate? This research suggests that groups with an environmental focus are especially significant in the quest for smart growth policies. They may bring a broader, less parochial vision of the public interest than the neighborhood groups that are immediately impacted by planning decisions. Inviting environmental groups to participate is one way to follow Hopkins' (2001) advice: "Induce participation that is likely to increase cognitive capacity by advantaging ideas and perspectives otherwise disadvantaged by formal institutions" (p. 250).

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Notes

1. These state laws aimed to curb urban sprawl, but most did not call for specific smart growth policies. Oregon's statute calls for urban growth boundaries, the only instance of a state requiring one of the smart growth policies discussed in this article (Carruthers, 2002).

2. This could be because urban containment policies, unlike many other land use policies, do not seek to reduce the supply of multi-unit rental housing. (Knapp, 1985; Pendall, 2000; Nelson, Dawkins, & Sanchez, 2004).

3. These are: California, Colorado, North Carolina, Oregon, Hawaii, Florida, New Jersey, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, Georgia, Washington, and Maryland.

4. These are: Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Virginia, and West Virginia.

5. I compared secondary data for the 202 cities that responded to the survey to that for the 138 that did not respond, as well as to a third group of all of the nonresponding cities except Los Angeles. I found that the responding and nonresponding cities are very similar in average income, percent White, and percent of the population with a bachelor's degree, but the mean population of the nonresponding cities (155,105) is substantially larger than that of the responding cities (128,411). This gap is explained by the nonresponse of Los Angeles. Without Los Angeles, the average population for the nonresponding cities drops to 130,617.

6. It also appears that states with comprehensive planning mandates develop less land for each new resident. I used data from the National Resources Inventory (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2000, 2003), to divide the increase in state population between 1992 and 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994a, 2007) by the increase in developed land over the same time span. I found that states with comprehensive planning mandates added 2.22 residents per new developed acre compared to 1.27 residents per new developed acre for those states without mandated comprehensive planning. However, a comparison of the mean new residents per new acres developed in the two types of states did not reach significance ($t = .996$, $p = .354$).

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Appendix. Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Regression Analyses

	Mean	S. D.	Minimum	Maximum
1990 population	139,179	231,670	33,181	3,485,398
1980–1992 % population growth	29.1	54.8	−26.0	587.7
1990 % population with college degree	22.4	10.6	3.9	71.2
1989 median family income ($ thousands)	37,963	10,203	18,874	81,289
1990 % housing units owner occupied	56.2	11.9	21.8	88.9
1990 % White	74	20	00	98
Number of types of opponents	1.13	1.46	.00	9.00
Number of types of supporters	2.88	2.19	.00	8.00
Comprehensive planning required (1) or not required (0) by 1992	.64	.48	.00	1.00
Number of land preserving policies	1.77	1.29	.00	5.00
Number of inner-city redevelopment policies	2.33	.89	.00	3.00
Number of total smart growth policies	4.10	1.53	.00	8.00