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Evaluating California local land use plan's environmental impact reports

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Abstract

Local land use planning has profound impacts on environmental quality; however, few empirical studies have been conducted to systematically measure local land use plans' environmental assessment quality and to identify the factors influencing it. This paper analyzes the quality of 40 Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) of local jurisdictions' land use plans in California. A plan evaluation protocol defined by five core components and sixty-three indicators is developed to measure the quality of local land use plans' EIRs. The descriptive results indicate that the local jurisdictions produce relatively good quality on its EIRs, but there is still much room for improvement. There are large variations in the quality of EIRs across local jurisdictions. The regression results further highlight three major factors that can significantly influence local land use plan's EIR quality: number of planners, plan updating ability, and development pressure.



Keywords

Environmental assessment; Environmental impact reports; Land use planning; Quality; Local jurisdictions; California

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