

## **Two Models of Land Use Education Pedagogy (47)**

*Dr. John Warbach, Dr. Soji Adelaja, and Wayne Beyea*

Topic Area K. Land use policy making, effectiveness, alternatives, and consequences (impacts)

Authors: Dr. John Warbach, Professor, Associate Director of the Planning & Zoning Center at Michigan State University and Assistant Director of the Land Policy Institute; Dr. Soji Adelaja, John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Land Policy and Director of the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute; and Wayne Beyea, Statewide Coordinator of the Michigan State University Citizen Planner Program.

While most people around the world deal with land use issues on a daily basis, there is little understanding of the land use decision making process. The lack of such understanding is perhaps more problematic in the United States where decision making is decentralized to local units of government. The public needs to be more familiar with the important issues of land use change, what constitutes sustainable land use, and how to be effective leaders of land use policy reform.

Planners represent a professional group that is trained in the rudiments, formalities, theories and practices of planning, zoning and land use management and they are an important infrastructure for implementing land use policy reform. They must work with local officials in the field who have little or no training in land use in implementing sustainability oriented programs, smart growth initiatives, strategic growth programs, and land use leadership. Our survey of university planning curricula indicates that university-trained planners often have little integrative experience to be optimally effective. They are also offered few leadership skill development opportunities while training to be planners. (Birch, "Practitioners and the Art of Planning," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 20: 407-422, 2001.) (Baum, "Teaching Practice," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 17:21-29, 1997.)

Communication gaps therefore exist between professional planners and local planning officials with whom they must partner (Warbach, et al, "Overcoming Impediments to Smart Growth," Michigan State University-W.K. Kellogg People and Land Program Funded Study, 2004). In order to close these gaps and rectify the limitations of current professional planning education and outreach offerings, two land use educational curricula were developed, one for an academic land use/natural resource student audience who will eventually become professionals; and the other for local planning officials with whom they will interact. These complementary approaches employ specific pedagogy to meet learning objectives and needs.

This paper focuses on land use education. It discusses the two educational curricula mentioned above, and explores how these two innovative land use teaching/course curricula offerings provide a model for more rational local and regional land use decisions in comparison to existing educational and curricula offerings. The theory, scope, structure, technology, costs and outcomes of development of the first educational curricula, a hybrid (classroom face-to-face with online components) academic course in Land Use Change and Decision Making, based on integrative

and asynchronous learning pedagogy is described. The same information is discussed for the second curricula, the Citizen Planner Program (focused on local officials), which began as a distance learning offering and evolved into a wholly online educational opportunity. Citizen Planner, and its related credentialing program Master Citizen Planner, have directly impacted over three thousand local officials in Michigan. The projected evolution of both curricula is described, along with U.S. trends in local planning official education. The methods used to measure local impact of the educational offerings are also explained by summarizing the results of research methods (survey, exam, focus group and interview).