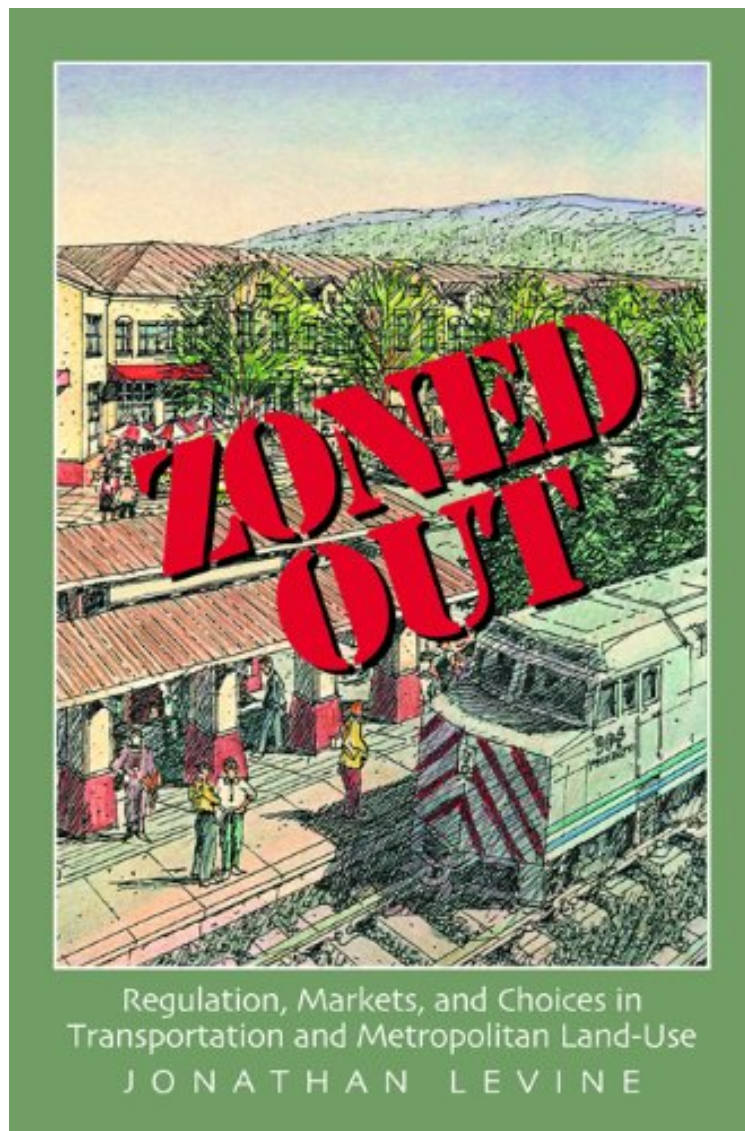


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Zoned Out: Regulation, Markets, and Choices in Transportation and Metropolitan Land Use

Jonathan Levine

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Jonathan Levine : Zoned Out: Regulation, Markets, and Choices in Transportation and Metropolitan Land Use before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zoned Out: Regulation, Markets, and Choices in Transportation and Metropolitan Land Use:

0 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Book PurchaseBy Charlotte P. LiuThe book is just what the profesor needed to teach his course. Thank you.25 of 27 people found the following review helpful. an eye-opener, one of the

best books I've read about sprawl

By Michael Lewyn

In addition to giving specific examples of how zoning has prevented infill development and compact development, Levine actually shows how these policies matter - that is, how zoning alters the market instead of mimicking it. For example:

- *Levine shows how rare infill is in single-family zones. Because local politicians rigidly prohibit any attempts to add new housing in already developed single-use zones, single-family neighborhoods are never transformed as a region grows. For example, in Massachusetts only 3 of 351 communities experienced a loss of single-family acres between 1970 and 1999. So as a result, landowners' only way of accommodating new housing demand is to build further out in suburbia.
- *Levine discusses surveys of developers showing that government regulation consistently forces them to make development less compact. 78% of developers responded that regulation was a "significant barrier" to more compact development. By contrast, only 35% cited financing as a barrier, and only 26% cited insufficient market interest.
- *Levine discusses a survey of renters and homeowners in Boston and Atlanta, asking them to make tradeoffs between space and transit/pedestrian-friendliness. He found that in more sprawling Atlanta, development is actually LESS likely to reflect consumer preferences than in more compact Boston. Among the 25% of people with the most pedestrian-oriented preferences, only 7% lived in the most pedestrian-friendly parts of the metro area (as opposed to 25% in Boston). And of that group, 38% of Atlantans lived in the MOST auto-oriented areas (as opposed to 6% of Bostonians). Why? Perhaps because there is little pre-auto stock in Atlanta- which means that thanks to Atlanta's anti-density zoning, pedestrian-friendly housing has never been built in large enough quantities to meet demand. By contrast, in Boston much of the housing stock was built before zoning, which means there is (or more accurately, was before the 2000s housing bubble) an ample supply of pre-auto housing available to meet demand for pedestrian-friendly development.
- *Levine demolishes the argument that smart-growth planners are forcing people into higher densities. He asserts that this is simply impossible: that planners can mandate high density, but developers can always avoid such a mandate by building elsewhere. By contrast, low-density mandates can't be avoided so easily: developers would rather turn a profit building to (low) allowable densities than not build at all, and low-density zoning is so widespread as to be unavoidable.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Refutes Dominant Myths about Zoning and Land Markets

By TransitStudent

This is an excellent, comprehensive refutation of the idea that the land use we have is a result of free-market choices. The author covers theory, law, and empirical evidence to prove this point that there are societal costs when we exclude people out from where they would like to live. A little bit of background in economics would prove helpful, but the author does such a good job explaining concepts that it is not necessary. It is especially important today because it forcefully counters the dominant narrative in planning and economics.

Researchers have responded to urban sprawl, congestion, and pollution by assessing alternatives such as smart growth, new urbanism, and transit-oriented development. Underlying this has been the presumption that, for these options to be given serious consideration as part of policy reform, science has to prove that they will reduce auto use and increase transit, walking, and other physical activity. Zoned Out forcefully argues that the debate about transportation and land-use planning in the United States has been distorted by a myth—the myth that urban sprawl is the result of a free market. According to this myth, low-density, auto-dependent development dominates U.S. metropolitan areas because that is what Americans prefer. Jonathan Levine confronts the free market myth by pointing out that land development is already one of the most regulated sectors of the U.S. economy. Noting that local governments use their regulatory powers to lower densities, segregate different types of land uses, and mandate large roadways and parking lots, he argues that the design template for urban sprawl is written into the land-use regulations of thousands of municipalities nationwide. These regulations and the skewed thinking that underlies current debate mean that policy innovation, market forces, and the compact-development alternatives they might produce are often 'zoned out' of metropolitan areas. In debunking the market myth, Levine articulates an important paradigm shift. Where people believe that current land-use development is governed by a free-market, any proposal for policy reform is seen as a market intervention and a limitation on consumer choice, and any proposal carries a high burden of scientific proof that it will be effective. By reorienting the debate, Levine shows that the burden of scientific proof that was the lynchpin of transportation and land-use debates has been misassigned, and that, far from impeding market forces or limiting consumer choice, policy reform that removes regulatory obstacles would enhance both. A groundbreaking work in urban planning, transportation and land-use policy, Zoned Out challenges a policy environment in which scientific uncertainty is used to reinforce the status quo of sprawl and its negative consequences for people and their communities.

'Far-reaching and paradigmshaking. . . Levine forcefully argues that the current framework in which both suburban sprawl and possible reform strategies are debated is badly skewed.' Urban Affairs

'Jonathan Levine forcefully demonstrates as groundless the belief that compact development must prove its transportation and other benefits before it is permitted as legitimate.' Anthony Downs, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

'Few books can show us something new in the well-explored territory of transportation, land use, and smart growth. Zoned Out . . . does just that.' Planners Library Newsletter, American Planning Association

About the Author Jonathan Levine is associate

professor and chair of the Urban and Regional Planning Program in the A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan.