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Assessing Urban Sprawl Metrics and their Applicability to Chittenden County, VT

Abstract

There have been barriers to the adoption of a consensus definition of urban sprawl despite a large literature on the subject that acknowledge both its importance in producing negative social and environmental outcomes as well as its multi-dimensionality. This is the consequence of many unrelated disciplines researching the phenomena with their own methods and interests as well as the highly contextual nature of the phenomenon of sprawl itself. Consequently, this has hindered consensus over how to measure sprawl from a built form perspective leading to many approaches as well as various metrics explaining similar dimensions of urban sprawl. There have been various studies that have developed such metrics in an attempt to find significant relationships between built form and conventional outcomes that are expected from urban sprawl such as increased vehicle miles traveled. The aim of this talk is to present an assessment of what dimensions are typically measured with regard to sprawl, what particular metrics have been developed to measure those dimensions, and finally, what approaches and metrics seem appropriate for the measurement of sprawl in Chittenden County, VT.