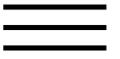


Comparing the attitudes of local residents, planners, and developers about preserving rural character in New England.

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Comparing the attitudes of local residents, planners, and developers about preserving rural character in New England

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Abstract

Rural areas across North America are experiencing unprecedented residential development that negatively impact the rural character that attracts new residents to these areas in the first place. This study looks at the three groups that influence residential sprawl in rural areas on the urban fringe: planners, homebuilders, and local citizens. This study in rural New England included both written surveys in the form of a photo-questionnaire, as well as interviews with planners and homebuilders about their attitudes toward development and open space preservation and their perceptions of rural character. Scenes of both traditional and innovative rural areas were used to elicit participants'™ perceptions about the type of development, which they consider to be compatible with rural New England. The results of the survey showed many similarities between the three groups, but in some cases the "œexpert" planners revealed a more

limited view of compatible development than did either local residents or homebuilders. Furthermore, homebuilders indicated that experimentation with innovative subdivision design was discouraged by current local planning laws. This study has planning implications for those interested in preserving rural character through innovative subdivision design, as well as reveals new insights into what attracts people to move to rural areas.



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Keywords

Landscape perception; Rural planning; Residential satisfaction; Rural character; Attitudes toward planning-planners; Homebuilders; Local residents

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Robert L. Ryan is an Associate Professor at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts, Amherst where he teaches courses in landscape planning, research methods, and environment and behavior studies. He holds a PhD in Natural Resources (Environment and Behavior

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