Lincoln Institute Of Land Policy Presents Fall News Roundup

Growth in China, Land Use And Climate Change, and Taxes.

Cambridge, Mass (Vocus) October 22, 2007 -- The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, a think tank with a focus on the use, regulation and taxation of land, released its fall news roundup of tips and story ideas on urbanization in China, climate change and property taxes, among other topics:

- A new book published by the Lincoln Institute, *Urbanization in China: Critical Issues in an Era of Rapid Growth*, edited by Yan Song and Chengri Ding, examines the environmental, social, and economic challenges of China’s rapid growth. “The urban growth we’re seeing in China is at an unprecedented scale -- over the next 10 years, China’s urban population is expected to grow by 15 to 20 million people per year,” said Gregory K. Ingram, president of the Lincoln Institute and co-chair of the International Studies department. “The growth has huge implications for urban areas, land policy and the environment, while the massive migration from rural areas will have important consequences in those communities as well.”

- *The Emerging Role of Land Use in Climate Change* is the topic of a one-day symposium at the Federal Reserve Bank, Boston Nov. 1, sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Experts from around New England will address how smart growth policies and citywide climate action plans can achieve the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and greater energy efficiency. “At a time when climate change is more and more on people’s minds, our goal is to bring a sharp focus on the land use component of planning for global warming,” said Armando Carbonell, senior fellow and chair of the Department of Planning and Urban Form at the Lincoln Institute. The event is free and open to the public but registration is required. The Lincoln Institute is engaged in the climate change-land use connection, by convening big city planners to discuss climate action plans, and initiating research on how land conservation management and urban planning must adapt to the changing conditions brought on by climate change.

- Residents in many states continue to grumble about property tax bills, and elected officials are heeding the call to reform. But the property tax actually puts residents in the driver's seat in terms of the level of services they are willing to pay for. That was the theme of an op-ed essay by Joan Youngman, senior fellow and chair of the Lincoln Institute's Department of Valuation and Taxation, and visiting fellow Andrew Reschovsky, published recently in The Boston Globe. "We get the bill, and compare it with the local services we receive. If the comparison is unfavorable, we are motivated to restrict local spending and support local candidates who agree with that view. Linking additional local spending to local taxes is an important source of fiscal discipline," the authors wrote. The property tax continues to be a focus of Lincoln Institute research, including an upcoming Policy Focus Report on the use of property tax revenue to fund schools. In addition, a talk at Lincoln House Nov. 2 in Cambridge will address the dependence on property tax revenues in older industrial cities.

- They are the pillars of city life: the museums, libraries, colleges and universities, arts centers, sports facilities, and medical centers that provide employment and services purchasing, and in many cases a strong sense of identity and civic pride, in the nation’s cities. These urban “anchors” are increasingly working with municipal officials to accommodate mutual interests and grow in sync with residents in the neighborhoods where they are located. “Anchor institutions are economic engines, and cities and these institutions depend on each other,” said Rosalind Greenstein, senior fellow and chair of the Department of Economic and Community Development at the Lincoln Institute, which was a partner in the conference, “Urban Anchors in the 21st Century.” at the

- Community Land Trusts, where a private, nonprofit corporation retains the ownership of the land and removes the cost of land from the price of homes, have grown steadily as one strategy to provide permanently affordable housing, according to a survey by the Lincoln Institute. The survey drew responses from 119 CLTs providing 6,495 homes created for primarily very low and low-income families, with the units about evenly split between owners and renters. CLTs exist primarily in urban areas but also serve suburban and rural areas and small towns; most have less than 100 units. The first CLT in the United States, New Communities Inc., was established in 1968 in rural Georgia. While there were about two-dozen in the 1980s, growth accelerated in the 1990s and subsequently. Today CLTs are mostly concentrated in the Northeast (37 percent) and the West (29 percent), with the remaining in the Midwest (19 percent) and the South (15 percent). The survey findings are available in the July-August issue of the online column At Lincoln House.
Contact Anthony Flint at anthony.flint(@)lincolninst.edu for sources, experts and resources.

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Contact Information
Anthony Flint
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
http://www.lincolninst.edu
617-661-3016+116

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