

From Zec to Vec: Using Property Tax Assessments to Monitor the Economic Landscape, by Tony Vickers, London, UK, Convener of The Progressive Forum, Henry George Foundation of Great Britain.

A property's value consists of two parts: the land or location value and that of man-made developments on the site. Like the natural protrusions on the topographic landscape, the value of buildings and other structures obscures the underlying landvaluescape. But whereas in the tangible 3D (three dimension) world, it is the land that remains constant while man's efforts change the silhouette, land values change subtly all the time while values of structures degrade gracefully.

The author's background in computer-aided defence geographic support has led him to study the potential uses of a "Landvaluescape Visualisation" tool in postgraduate research at Kingston University, London, England. A prototype uses real property data from Lucas County, Ohio. It has attracted interest from government and property market agencies in Europe.

The main area where the analysis and display of land values is seen to have important potential uses is in the monitoring of urban planning and development policies. The main problem is in justifying (continued on page 16)

the systematic continuous assessment of land values, separate from gross property values, in an efficient and accessible manner.

The underlying assumption is that there is such a thing as Landvaluescape, equivalent to Landscape. By placing the "z" in a conventional 3D geospatial model with V (the rental value per unit area of land, with or without "improvements" on it) the reality of Landvaluescape is revealed. This equates to the use of weather maps to reveal real but intangible atmospheric geospatial phenomena.

The paper describes the current state of global practice assessment and land value mapping. Plans to develop and validate applications for a generic computer-aided tool for Landvaluescape modeling will be outlined and some philosophical, legal and practical issues emerging will be presented. Special attention will be given to the potential use of the tool in assessing tax and compensation cases associated with environmental impacts of development.

A whole new field of study, christened Ecomorphology by the author, is in prospect. The question posed in his research is: is it worth it?

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