Author: Alex Nelms

Topic: San Francisco Bay Area's Building Permits & Housing Crisis

Peer Review Assessment

1. Is the question clearly stated and well-motivated?

   The author clearly outlined that there is a problem of increasing house prices in San Francisco, due to a limited supply. The city has made it difficult to obtain building permits, so the author is investigating where permit approved construction is being done, and if that construction is helping with housing supply, cost of living, or is adding to gentrification.

   A secondary analysis is the author seeks to look at how long it take for a construction permit to be granted, and what factors go into how long it takes to be granted a permit or not.

2. Does the data analysis help you understand the context? Are the methods clearly defined?

   While the paper does not have data analysis yet, the methods of how to analyze the paper is clearly lined out. The author will collect permit data from the City of San Francisco, and will first visualize the trends of the permits, such as where are they being granted (i.e., specific neighborhoods), how long it's taking to be granted, cost of the project, etc. The author has also outlined that they will then assess the neighborhood features, such as census data, income levels, redlined areas, housing prices, transportation, etc… to assess a spatial correlation amongst the features and the permits.

   I'm really interested in this outcome, to see if building permits are issued quicker in gentrifying neighborhoods (rising house prices and income levels). I believe this analysis will work to answer thew question and see if permits are being issues only in higher priced areas, and therefore lowering the accessibility of affordable housing for potential buyers.

   Based on the above, and what the author intends to investigate, I think the data analysis does provide context to understand the problem statement and exploratory question.

3. Are the data and methods well-designed to answer the question? Any gaps? What would be a good extension for the analysis?

   The data and methods are clearly designed to answer the question. It seems like a textbook example of regression analysis, looking at the relationship of building permit lengths, in regards to spatial and socio-economic data. I think the gap comes to accessibility of the permit data from San Francisco and working with the permit API, and what the information the permit provides. It would be interesting to see if favoritism exists for building companies filed, or if the government official approving permits has an effect on the length.

I'm wondering if another extension could be if the size of construction project (i.e., the cost) plays a role in the approval time, and if that information is included in the permit data. I would think more expensive projects might be in more affluent areas, but I suppose it depends on the project.

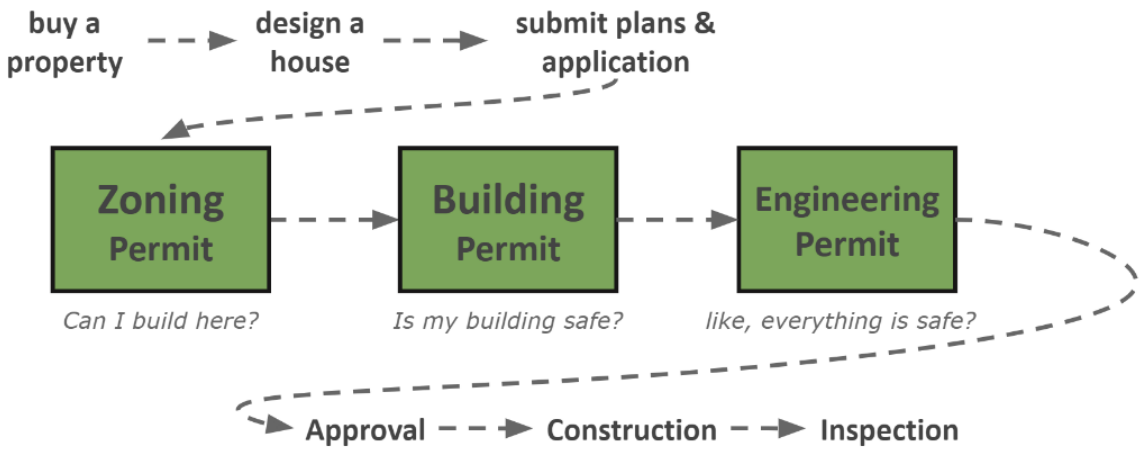
I think this is such a great use of spatial regression to assess building permit lengths.

4. What would be a good extension for the presentation?

   The presentation looks great, and really the only thing to add would be the data analysis of models.

   Perhaps one thing to dive deeper into is the resubmission rate. Are permits being re-submitted due to actual issues, or is this a delaying tactic employed by the city? I would hope that permits should be denied if engineering inspections fail, so is the engineering permit part of the building permit time as well?

   One more thing would be clarifying if the zoning permit, building permit, and engineering permit are all being considered into one permit application and time, or is the building permit the only specific part of this investigation, compared to zoning and engineering.



5. How is the structure of the paper? Any advice for structuring it?

   The structure is great, and follows the introduction, motivation/lit review, methods (data sets used part), results, and conclusions format of proper research papers. The last parts are in bullet form, but that provides a nice look into how the methods will be completed. I would recommend having all analysis (such as Initial Analysis) into a Results section