

# Sprawling for Reelection: The Public Choice of Low-Density Development <sup>\*</sup>

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## **Abstract**

Local officials choose if and how to permit new development. We argue that the structure of federal infrastructure grants, which typically cover a share of a project's up-front costs, allows myopic officials to raise tax revenues in the present while deferring maintenance costs to their successors. Officials can maximize immediate revenues by approving low-density expansion. Consistent with this mechanism, we find evidence that cities constrained by political or topographical boundaries have higher tax rates and higher municipal debt.

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**1 Background**

**2 Results**

**3 Conclusion**

## A Appendix Tables and Figures

## B Appendix One

## C Appendix Two