

Functions and Challenges of New County-Based Regional Plan in Taiwan

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Abstract : A new, mandated county regional plan system has been initiated since 2010 nationwide in Taiwan, with its role situated in-between the policy-led cross-county regional plan and the blueprint-led city plan. This new regional plan contain both urban and rural areas in one single plan, which provides a more complete planning territory, i.e., city region within the county's jurisdiction, and to be executed and managed effectively by the county government. However, the full picture of its functions and characteristics seems still not totally clear, compared with other levels of plans; either are planning goals and issues that can be most appropriately dealt with at this spatial scale. In addition, the extent to which the inclusion of sustainability ideal and measures to cope with climate change are unclear. Based on the above issues, this study aims to clarify the roles of county regional plan, to analyze the extent to which the measures cope with sustainability, climate change, and forecasted declining population, and the success factors and issues faced in the planning process. The methodology applied includes literature review, plan quality evaluation, and interview with officials of the central and local governments and urban planners involved for all the 23 counties in Taiwan. The preliminary research results show, first, growth management related policies have been widely implemented and expected to have effective impact, including incorporating resources capacity to determine maximum population for the city region as a whole, developing overall vision of urban growth boundary for all the whole city region, prioritizing infill development, and use of architectural land within urbanized area over rural area to cope with urban growth. Secondly, planning-oriented zoning is adopted in urban areas, while demand-oriented planning permission is applied in the rural areas with designated plans. Then, public participation has been evolved to the next level to oversee all of government's planning and review processes due to the decreasing trust in the government, and development of public forum on the internet etc. Next, fertile agricultural land is preserved to maintain food self-supplied goal for national security concern. More adoption-based methods than mitigation-based methods have been applied to cope with global climate change. Finally, better land use and transportation planning in terms of avoiding developing rail transit stations and corridor in rural area is promoted. Even though many promising, prompt measures have been adopted, however, challenges exist to surround: first, overall urban density, likely affecting success of UGB, or use of rural agricultural land, has not been incorporated, possibly due to implementation difficulties. Second, land-use related measures to mitigating climate change seem less clear and hence less employed. Smart decline has not drawn enough attention to cope with predicted population decrease in the next decade. Then, some reluctance from county's government to implement county regional plan can be observed vaguely possibly since limits have be set on further development on agricultural land and sensitive areas. Finally, resolving issue on existing illegal factories on agricultural land remains the most challenging dilemma.

Keywords : city region plan, sustainability, global climate change, growth management

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020