

Can local civic engagement actually worsen inequality?



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How 'neighborhood defenders' and local government can worsen inequality

By Aaron Houck

One of the favorite mythologies of American politics is that local government is the closest thing we have to direct democracy. Community members—neighbors who know each other—gather to civilly deliberate about the issues confronting them. The ideal model is the New England town meeting.

Two recent books by political scientists (based at universities in New England) call this conventional wisdom into question. In *Hometown Inequality*, Brian Schaffner, Jesse Rhodes, and Raymond La Raja detail their findings that local governments fail to represent the ideologies and interests of the communities they govern.

And in *Neighborhood Defenders*, Katherine Levine Einstein, David Glick, and Maxwell Palmer report similar results, focused particularly on the implications for land-use policy.



How fast is Charlotte losing its trees? - The Charlotte Observer

How fast is Charlotte losing its tree canopy? No one knows

By Ely Portillo

Charlotte's losing three football fields a day worth of trees – or, at least, we were from 2012 to 2018. But after four more years of a torrid building boom, no one can say with any certainty whether that loss has accelerated, slowed down or remains unchanged.



Try the 'bucket of doom' to eliminate mosquitoes without harmful pesticides

By Ruth Ann Grissom

Bucket of Doom. A slasher movie from the 1970s? The latest season of Fortnite? No, but for many homeowners, it might be something equally thrilling – an effective, inexpensive and safe way to control mosquitos.



Data show Charlotte remains dangerous for pedestrians

By Ely Portillo

Here's another paradox from the COVID-19 pandemic: People drove less, but the streets got more deadly. That's especially true for pedestrians, a new report from Smart Growth America shows. "Dangerous by Design," the group's annual report highlighting pedestrian fatalities, shows that over 6,500 people were hit and killed nationwide while walking in 2020 – a 4.5% increase over 2019.





ICYMI: Charlotte plans bus service cuts amidst staffing problems

By Ely portillo

As the Charlotte Area Transit System continues struggling to fill bus driver positions, the agency could soon implement bus service cuts to deal with the shortage and create a more reliable schedule. CATS chief executive John Lewis says the agency is finalizing plans for "modifying our service levels to reduced service levels to be more in line with our manpower on a given day." That could mean less frequent bus service and longer waits for riders.

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