

Planners' Role in Creating Family Friendly Communities:

Action, Participation and Resistance

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Abstract

A national survey of planners conducted with the American Planning Association in 2008 assesses planners' attitudes about barriers and opportunities to creating more family friendly cities. The survey measured the extent to which planners promote the interests of families in zoning, housing, child care, transportation, recreation, urban design and public participation. Regression analysis shows that communities that have more action on the ground in support of families (e.g. affordable housing, child care, walkable streets) also engage families more in the planning process and include needs of families in site planning and zoning. Action can lead to community resistance, but resistance is lower in cities that have more positive attitudes about families with children. Resistance is higher in communities that are ignorant about how to address family needs, and in communities that specify family friendly goals in their comprehensive plans. This research suggests the key to real action is family participation and addressing family needs in site planning and zoning.

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Introduction

Increasing attention is being given to quality of life issues in US communities. However most of the attention is placed on services and amenities that appeal to the needs of young professionals and empty nesters - the “creative class” who are now recognized as an important human capital engine for the economy (Florida, 2002). The needs of families with young children are often overlooked leading to shortages of affordable family housing (Knapp et al, 2008; Obrinsky and Stein 2007), affordable quality child care (Anderson, 2006), and walkable streets and transportation systems designed to promote children’s independent mobility (Rudner, 2012; Gilbert and O’Brien, 2009; Woolcock and Steele, 2008).

Yet for communities to be sustainable, they need to retain residents across the whole life cycle (Warner and Baran-Rees, 2012; Ghazaleh et al., 2011). Research shows that communities that retain families with young children have higher economic growth (Reese, 2012). Demographic shifts promise a future labor shortage as baby boomers retire (Myers, 2007), and communities that retain families with young children will be better prepared to fill this gap. The question is: are planners helping to create more family friendly

communities? This paper uses survey data from a 2008 American Planning Association survey to explore planners' attitudes toward planning communities to meet the needs of families with young children. It explores how attitudes, barriers and family participation in the planning process contribute to concrete action on the ground to build more family friendly communities.

Literature Review

Internationally, UNICEF has given explicit attention to how to create more child friendly cities. In its 2004 Child Friendly Cities Guide, UNICEF emphasizes the role of youth participation in promoting improved environments for children (UNICEF, 2004). The Growing Up in Cities project of UNESCO (Driskel, 2002) and Child Friendly Cities work of UNICEF (Barlett, 2002; Riggio, 2002) have involved cities around the world in engaging children to help define and create urban environments that are more conducive to child welfare and development. Urban design and the physical environment are critical and can help promote a sense of safety, security, positive self esteem and agency (Woolcock and Steele, 2008). According to a 2008 national survey conducted by the American Planning Association (APA), "Family friendly communities are communities where families enjoy housing at affordable prices, child care, parks to play in, pedestrian pathways, quality public schools, and safe neighborhoods among

many other potential features that promote family well-being” (Israel and Warner, 2008). It is this intersection between planning, design and participation that forms the nexus of a child friendly city.

Why hasn’t the child friendly movement been more prominent in the US? One reason may be that much planning attention has been focused on young professionals and empty nesters – pre and post childrearing populations – as the engine of economic growth. Much planning attention has been directed toward building housing, parks and recreational services and cultural amenities that appeal to this group (Clark, 2004; Florida, 2002). Arts and culture have become key economic development strategies (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010; Christopherson and Rightor, 2009). Transit oriented development links housing and services with transit hubs, but typically this housing is two bedrooms or less – not designed for families with children (Downs, 2004). In fact, the growth in new urbanist, high density multifamily housing is not always affordable or focused on families (Knapp et al, 2008).

Another factor that may contribute to the failure to focus more broadly on the needs of families with children is concern over negative fiscal impacts. Cost of community services studies have shown residential development costs more to the local economy than it provides in tax revenue (due primarily to the educational costs for children) (American Farmland Trust, 2007). State and local government bear the primary burden for services to

the young whereas the Federal government bears the primary burden of services to the elderly (Edwards, 2010; Isaacs, 2009). Fear of the tax and service burden of children and youth (especially for schooling) can lead to zoning restrictions and community opposition to multi-family and affordable housing (Juergensmeyer and Roberts, 2007; Reynolds, 2004). Even among practicing planners, the American Planning Association 2008 survey found 53 percent agreed that most families do not generate sufficient tax revenue to cover the cost of services they demand (Israel and Warner, 2008). However, research on the fiscal impacts of multifamily housing challenges this view (Warner and Baran-Rees, 2012). Not only do apartments produce fewer children than single family homes, they often pay property taxes at higher commercial rates (Obrinsky and Stein, 2007).

A different attitude is emerging. In his recent book, Richard Florida (2008) argues that families with children should not be ignored. Cities need to retain young professionals as they begin family formation. Reese (2012) has shown that cities that support public services targeted to the needs of children and the “procreative” class experience stronger economic growth than those just focused on the needs of the “creative class.” Other economists have pointed to the strongly positive economic development impacts of investments in child care (Warner and Gradus, 2011; Morrissey and Warner, 2009; Warner and Liu, 2006) and preschool – arguing that

investing in kids is good economic development strategy (Bartik, 2011). The 2008 APA survey finds many practicing planners share this view; ninety-seven percent of respondents see families as “important to community growth, sustainability and diversity” and ninety percent believe “communities that keep people for whole lifecycle makes are more vibrant” (Israel and Warner, 2008).

Placemaking and branding are becoming important city strategies (Schneekloth and Shibley, 1995), and branding a community ‘family friendly’ is now not just a focus of bedroom suburbs, but an increasing concern of cities of all sizes. Over 40 percent of the APA survey respondents acknowledged that their cities brand themselves as ‘family friendly’ (Israel and Warner, 2008). The key, however, is to differentiate real action from simple branding.

What leads to real action on the ground? How much does awareness matter? Are planners aware of the special needs of families with young children? The 2008 APA survey found 43 percent of planners did not know if their community had an adequate supply of child care and only 5 percent had a child care plan. This lack of awareness stands in marked contrast to recent surveys of economic development professionals which show the majority recognize child care problems in their communities and are including child care in their economic development policy (Warner and

Prentice, 2013; Warner and Zheng, 2011; Warner, 2007; Nacker, 2005).

Indeed, the need to invest more in children has been championed by such powerful business groups as the Committee for Economic Development and the Federal Reserve Bank (CED, 2006, Rolnick and Grunewald, 2004). What drives this interest is recognition of the need for investment in early childhood education for workforce development. The challenge is to extend this interest to services that meet the broader needs of families – in housing, transportation, recreation and other services. Although the 2008 APA survey showed that planners were generally ignorant of child care needs, recognition of the needs of families with children was found in housing, transportation, and urban design (Israel and Warner, 2008). Housing is critical and communities need to provide a mix of affordable and multi-family housing as many families cannot afford single family housing (Rohe and Watson, 2007). Historically, transportation policy has focused on the journey to work – as if trip chaining to child care and transportation for children, were not important. But that is changing. Transit planners now recognize the trip chaining of parents (to child care work, grocery store and home) and are incorporating child care into transit hubs (Anderson, 2006, LINCC, 2008, Primerano et al., 2007; Woolcock and Steele, 2008; Gilbert and O’Brien, 2009). Planners are giving increasing recognition to pedestrian needs. The complete streets

movement recognizes the multiple roles a street plays in community life (Laplante and McCann, 2008).

Planners are also giving increasing attention to services. This includes siting schools together with other community services (transit, housing) (McDonald, 2010), analyzing children's use of parks (Loukaitou-Sideris and Sideris, 2010), encouraging cooperative use of recreational facilities between communities and schools (McCoy et al., 2011; Spengler, Young and Linton, 2007), creating public settings where children can mingle (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003), and devoting increased attention to child care (Warner and Prentice, 2013; Warner, 2006). Evidence suggests attention to housing, transportation and services needs to be integrated. A recent review of the Gautreaux housing mobility program in Chicago found that children's participation in activities decreased as a result of moving to outlying smaller communities in part due to lack of services (especially child and after school care), high cost and transportation challenges (Zuberi, 2010). Ensuring children's access to safe places to play, safe transportation (walking and biking) and services near their homes are key features of family friendly communities (Rudner, 2012; UNICEF, 2004) and can have a reduction effect on crime (Rukus and Warner, 2012).

Unfortunately, the public still often views children's services as NIMBY issues (Dear, 2007). Traffic, noise, security (especially for older youth

services) and tax cost (especially as it relates to schools) are the typical sources of NIMBYISM for children and youth services (Obrinsky and Stein, 2007; Dear, 2007). NIMBYISM was the most commonly cited barrier in the 2008 APA survey (71 percent of respondents) (Israel and Warner, 2008). Even child care centers have faced opposition due to traffic congestion and noise of children playing (Anderson, 2006). Research shows that when community members are educated and engaged in the process, NIMBYISM can be reduced (Dear, 2007). Including child and family needs in the comprehensive plan, and ensuring that site planning and zoning does not restrict uses such as child care, can also lead to reductions in NIMBYISM and more effective siting of community services (Gilbert and O'Brien, 2009; Obrinsky and Stein, 2007; Dear, 2007).

Can participation of families and youth in the planning process lead to approaches that are more amenable to families? The last thirty years have witnessed a burgeoning interest in participatory planning that attempts to incorporate the voices of all effected stakeholders into decision making (Healey, 1997; Forester, 1999; Reardon, 1999). More recently we have seen increased attention given to involving youth in planning (Woolcock and Steele, 2008; McCoy and Vincent, 2007; Frank, 2006; Knowles-Yáñez, 2005, Driskel, 2002). Youth can be involved in traditional planning processes or in special activities designed to involve youth in schools, summer programs,

transect walks and photo documentation or via charrettes and active community engagement (such as clean up days, wall murals, etc). Curricula have been designed by UNESCO (Driskel 2002), UNICEF (2004) and the Berkeley Center for Communities and Schools (McCoy and Vincent, 2007). Involving parents, especially of young children, requires attention to schedule, location and offering child care – something that only 12 percent of planners responding to the APA survey said their communities provided (Israel and Warner, 2008). Involving youth in planning practices can build self esteem and agency among the youth themselves (Woolcock and Steele, 2008) as well as provide new knowledge, promote innovative solutions and build democratic engagement at the community level (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster, 2003; Kudva and Driskell, 2009).

Using data from the 2008 APA survey, this paper offers a statistical test of the relationship between action on the ground to promote more family friendly communities and planners' attitudes, public resistance, the role of family participation, and the use of zoning and comprehensive planning. Based on the literature cited above, we build the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses:

- Planners who have more positive attitudes toward families and work in communities that brand themselves family friendly will engage in more action and face less resistance.
- Planners who work in communities with greater ignorance of the issues will face more resistance.
- Mid sized communities will engage in more action and show less resistance.
- Articulating the needs of families and children in the formal planning process (the comprehensive plan and site planning and zoning) will be associated with less resistance and more action.
- Involving families and youth in the planning process will promote action and reduce resistance.

Methodology and Data

A focus group was held at the American Planning Association national conference in Philadelphia in April 2007 with 20 practicing planners with experience in transportation, housing, economic development, disaster response, and child care. Focus group members came from across the country and included 17 practicing planners (APA conference attendees who chose to attend the session), as well as one APA staff member and two experts on child care and economic development planning.

The focus group focused on three questions: Why do families and children matter for the future of cities? What barriers currently exist to the creation of family friendly cities? What can planners do to make more family friendly cities? Ideas generated from this focus group were used to design a survey, conducted with APA of practicing planners across the US in the following year. The survey was developed with a team of experts from APA staff in the Planning and Community Health Research Center and leaders of the APA member divisions of Housing and Community Development, Women and Planning and various regional chapters. The survey consisted of three main categories: attitudes, actions, and barriers. The first set of questions gauged planners' attitudes about the importance of families to communities. The second section presented questions to benchmark what planners are currently doing to plan family friendly communities. Questions in this section covered: comprehensive plans, site plan and zoning regulations, housing, transportation, schools, child care, funding, and civic engagement. The final section focused on barriers to the creation of family friendly communities.

The web-based survey was advertized in March 2008 to APA members through an announcement in APA's Interact email (a semi-monthly e-newsletter sent to all APA members, through APA chapter newsletters and planning-related list-serves, and it was accessible through APA's website research page. To encourage participation APA offered survey participants

an iPod Nano and ten \$25 APA Planning Books gift certificates awarded by random drawing.

There were a total of 944 respondents. After cleaning the data for respondents who answered the entire survey, we were left with a sample of 741 respondents.¹ Of these, most were practicing planners in the public sector (63 percent), but respondents also included planning consultants (18 percent) and community advocates (4 percent) and others (developers, elected officials, etc, 15 percent) who act as planners in the city context. Respondents worked in a wide range of community sizes. Thirty-two percent worked in communities with a population between 10,000 and 50,000, 13 percent worked in communities under 10,000 population, 22 percent in communities between 50,000 and 150,000 population, and 33 percent worked in communities with population over 150,000. Because mid-sized communities may be more likely to address family needs, we differentiate those in the 10,000-50,000 population category (32 percent) in our regression analysis. We also differentiate those who worked in cities (44 percent) because we expect they will engage in less family friendly activities.

The survey asked planners if the community where they worked branded itself as family friendly. The survey defined family friendly as

¹ Some respondents just answered the questions regarding the I-pod nano drawing.

“communities where families enjoy housing at affordable prices, child care, parks to play in, pedestrian pathways, quality public schools, and safe neighborhoods, among many other potential features that promote family well-being.” Forty three percent of respondents reported they worked in communities that branded themselves family friendly. Although family friendly branded communities showed higher levels of action and family participation, they also faced more resistance (Israel and Warner 2008). We were interested in determining to what extent attitudes, awareness, family participation and inclusion of family concerns in formal planning documents affect real action on the ground to make communities more family friendly. We were also interested in what drives resistance and how action is related to resistance.

The survey had over 100 questions that were grouped into seven broad thematic categories. From the survey data, we determined if family concerns were addressed in the comprehensive plan, and we developed indices for our two dependent variables of interest: active resistance, and action on the ground, and for our independent variables of interest: attitudes, family participation, ignorance/lack of awareness, site planning and zoning. We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (with varimax rotation) on the component elements and confirmed these four dimensions were statistically distinct. Specific component questions, which comprise the indices and

factors, are described in detail below and in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Responses to the attitude questions were on a seven degree Likert scale (1-strongly disagree....4-neutral.....7-strongly agree). Responses to all other questions were either ‘yes, no, don’t know,’ or ‘often, sometimes, rarely, never.’ In building these indices, if the response was ‘yes’, ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ the answer was coded 1; and ‘no’, ‘rarely’, ‘never’ or ‘don’t know’ was coded 0. If the case had a missing response, it was coded as zero. Missing responses to component questions within individual indices were minimal, never exceeding 14 (1.9%) for any individual index component question.

Dependent Variables

Action on the Ground Index – This index has 34 elements and measures activities planners and their communities implement to support families (Cronbach’s Alpha = .804). See Table 1. Transportation related items top the list of actions – sidewalks, pedestrian pathways and streetscape improvements, bicycle lanes school transport and low traffic speeds all rank over 66 percent. This shows wide recognition of the importance of walkability and transportation sensitive planning for young children (Rudner, 2012; Gilbert and O’Brien, 2009; Woolcock and Steele, 2008). However, planning to address the trip chaining needs of families with young children is not widespread. Only 17 percent of respondents “consider the route to work

for parents (i.e. grocery stores and child care on primary transit paths) in transportation plans.” Housing and community services are critical for families and over half of responding planners report using public funds to support affordable housing, neighborhood parks, community facilities. Impact fees are most common for parks and recreational facilities. Three elements measure the extent to which planners work with schools to promote joint use or reuse for broader community centers, recreation or libraries (McCoy et al. 2011). Although school quality is critical for families with young children, schools typically operate in a sphere of their own and less than half of planners in our sample report collaborating with schools. The lowest support is found in actions that would help families with young children with their child care: “financial support for development and operation of child care centers” (14 percent), impact fees for “child care facilities and pre-K programs” (6 percent), “have a local child care plan” (5 percent). This may be because childcare is a service focused just on the very young, whereas, the other action elements could benefit the broader population as well.

Table 1 about here

Active Resistance Index – This index included 14 questions on regulatory barriers to family friendly communities and if the planner had faced efforts to block services for families in the community where s/he worked (Cronbach’s

Alpha = .744). See Table 2. The most common barriers faced were related to housing. Over two thirds of planners worked in communities which tried to block “multi-family, high-density housing,” faced “NIMBYism” or “developer driven development that does not prioritize family housing.” The services least likely to face resistance were libraries, parks and schools. Only 16 percent of respondents reported “business improvement districts and malls restrict teen gathering in your community.” Although our Action and Resistance indices are only weakly correlated ($r = .164$), we hypothesize communities that engage in more actions to promote family friendly communities will face more active resistance.

Table 2 about here

Independent Variables

Comprehensive Planning – The survey asked if the community’s comprehensive plan includes family needs in the goals and objectives statement, in the trends and existing conditions section, and in recommendations and action plan sections. Overall, 57 percent of planners report explicit reference to meeting family needs in their comprehensive plans. We hypothesize that communities that explicitly articulate family needs in their comprehensive plans will be likely to report more actions to promote family friendly policies and face less resistance.

Attitude Index– The attitude index included five questions measuring the extent to which planners expressed positive attitudes toward families with children (Cronbach’s Alpha = .624). Over 90 percent of respondents responded in the agree categories (5,6,7) that “families are important to community growth, sustainability and diversity,” “families represent a valuable consumer population,” and “communities that keep people for the whole life cycle are more vibrant.” Over three quarters agreed “families are the most likely population group to reinvest in community” and two thirds agreed, “the needs of families are similar to the needs of the elderly.” Factor loadings for each of these elements were greater than 0.5 except for the element on similarity to the needs of the elderly, which loaded at 0.438. See Table 3 for factor loadings. Planners’ responses to these attitude statements were more positive than expected. We hypothesize that planners with more positive attitudes will be more likely to report more action on the ground, and face less resistance.

Table 3 about here

Family Participation Index– This index included seven items related to family and youth participation in the planning process (Cronbach’s Alpha = .604). The most common ways in which communities support family participation are “running public meetings at convenient times for working families” (79 percent) and “running public meetings in facilities convenient

for working families” (73 percent) for working families. However, only 12 percent report “providing child care for public meetings.” Although it is common for communities to “have recreational facilities or activities for teens” (79 percent), only 40 percent “encourage youth participation in the planning process,” and only 25 percent “consider creating jobs for all age levels in economic development plans.” The heaviest loadings on this factor were for the elements most closely related to participation in the planning process – holding meetings in convenient times and locations and encouraging youth participation. Lower loadings (less than 0.5 but still higher than loadings for any other factor) were found for recreational facilities, providing child care and considering youth in economic development. We hypothesize that greater family participation in the planning process will lead to more actions to promote family friendly communities and lead to less resistance.

Ignorance/Lack of Awareness Index – We also developed an index of ignorance/lack of awareness of family issues. This index was built from seven questions (Cronbach’s Alpha = .840). The most commonly cited elements of this index are: “no financial support” to become family friendly (68 percent), “complexity of issue” (65 percent), “lack of voice for young families” (65 percent) and “insufficient political interest” (63 percent). Factor loadings for this construct were very strong – all near 0.7. We

hypothesize that communities where there is ignorance/lack of awareness will report less action to support families and face more resistance.

Site Planning/Zoning index– This index includes 21 items that measure if zoning and subdivision regulations advance the interest of families (Cronbach’s Alpha = .801). The Site Planning and Zoning index measures inputs (e.g. zoning guidelines) whereas the Action index (our dependent variable) measures outcomes and funding decisions that lead to implementation. Cronbach’s Alpha scores for both indices are robust, indicating high internal consistency. The most commonly cited elements are: “allow for mixed use” (92 percent), “open space/parks” (82 percent) and “mandate sidewalks” (82 percent). Other elements with over 70 percent positive response relate to parks and transportation: street connectivity, pedestrian needs and traffic calming. These design elements provide the mix of services children and young families need within the neighborhood or at a walkable scale to ensure access. Six elements in the index address housing – affordability, multi-family, accessory apartments and density bonuses. Four elements address child care and other community facilities and we find these are less commonly addressed than housing or transportation. Three elements address design and lighting guidelines to encourage neighbor interaction and safety. Factor loadings were highest for the elements related to physical design and walkability and were lowest for those elements related to

accessory flats and child care. These housing, community services and design elements are critical components of child friendly cities (Warner and Baran-Rees, 2012; Ghazaleh et al, 2011; Gilbert and O'Brien, 2009; Woolcock and Steele, 2008; UNICEF, 2004) but they are also the same kind of design guidelines that seniors need to age in place (Kochera et al., 2005). We hypothesize that more attention to family needs in zoning and site planning will facilitate more action on the ground and lead to less resistance because these elements will not be subject to conditional use permits, which can promote NIMBY reactions (Dear, 2007), but rather will be available 'by right.'

Analysis and Results

We are interested in the relationship between action and resistance and the role of family participation, branding, and various planning interventions. By definition, our factor scores have zero correlation with one another. The only significant correlations over 0.3 were action and site planning/zoning ($r = .492$), family participation and action ($r = .417$) and ignorance and resistance ($r = .470$). This suggests site planning/zoning and family participation play a key role in promoting action to support families, but ignorance and resistance are closely linked.

We ran two regression models to explore in more depth what characteristics lead to more action on the ground and more resistance.

$$(1) Y_{\text{Action}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{CompPlan}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{SitePlan}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{FamPart}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{Attitude}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{Ignorance}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{MidSizePop}} + \beta_7 X_{\text{City}} + \beta_8 X_{\text{FFBrand}} + \varepsilon_1$$

$$(2) Y_{\text{Resistance}} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_{\text{CompPlan}} + \alpha_2 X_{\text{SitePlan}} + \alpha_3 X_{\text{FamPart}} + \alpha_4 X_{\text{Attitude}} + \alpha_5 X_{\text{Ignorance}} + \alpha_6 X_{\text{MidSizePop}} + \alpha_7 X_{\text{City}} + \alpha_8 X_{\text{FFBrand}} + \alpha_9 X_{\text{Action}} + \varepsilon_2$$

Table 4 reports results for both models.

Table 4 about here

Action on the Ground – Six variables were significant predictors of action.

As expected, site planning and zoning contributed the most to action suggesting that specific, focused planning actions are most likely to lead to concrete action on the ground. Family participation was the next most important variable. These two results confirm the recommendations by UNICEF and others who argue attention to physical design and participation are the two most important features of family friendly cities (Gilbert and O'Brien, 2009; Woolcock and Steele, 2008; UNICEF, 2004). Curiously, family friendly branding, though positive, was of limited importance. While branding may be important, it is concrete planning efforts and participation that make a difference – more than branding.

Finally, we were surprised to find that mid-sized communities were less likely than larger communities to engage in action on the ground. We had hypothesized that mid-sized communities would be the most likely to be engaged in family friendly actions but further analysis of the variable shows action rises with population and the largest places do most. Since the 2000 Census, demographers have noted that singles and seniors are a growing group in the suburbs, and the percentage of families is rising in the cities (Frey and Berube, 2002). The higher level of action found in cities may be a response to this demographic trend. Our city variable confirms this.

Action is not related to comprehensive planning or positive attitudes but is weakly associated with ignorance/lack of interest. This was a surprise but on further consideration it makes sense. Attitudes and comprehensive planning may set the frame for future action, but they are not as immediately connected to action as site planning and zoning. This may explain why they do not achieve significance in our model of planning actions.

Active Resistance – We were especially interested in understanding what differentiates communities that face more active resistance to family friendly planning. Ignorance/lack of awareness is the most important factor in our resistance model. However, positive attitudes are significant in reducing resistance. We hypothesized that action would lead to resistance and found indeed that it does. Family friendly branding is also associated with more

resistance, which suggests the limited power of branding as a strategy. Comprehensive planning is associated with more resistance, but site planning and zoning have no effect. We had expected both comprehensive planning and site planning would reduce resistance, but comprehensive planning creates an opportunity for community input about goals. This creates a forum to express resistance. Once goals are agreed upon in a comprehensive plan, specific guidelines articulated in site planning and zoning can help reduce conflict and debate at the moment of project approvals. This may explain why site planning and zoning is not a significant predictor of resistance in our model.

These results suggest that planners need to focus on education to overcome ignorance by building community interest, identifying funding and places to start, and promoting involvement of families (recall these are the components in the ignorance/lack of awareness index). Addressing ignorance and lack of awareness will have the most impact on reducing resistance. We also find that cities face less resistance, which suggests that when family friendly plans are linked to broader services of interest to all ages, resistance is less. This offers promise for multi-generational planning approaches (Warner and Baran-Rees, 2012; Ghazaleh et al., 2011).

Indirect Effects

We note that action leads to resistance and it is possible that some of significant predictor variables in the action equation have an indirect effect on resistance even though their direct effects were not significant. We ran Sobel tests with bootstrapped confidence intervals (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) and confirmed mediating indirect effects through action on resistance were significant for all of the significant variables in the action model except ignorance (but ignorance has a strong direct effect on resistance). Family participation and site planning and zoning do not directly affect resistance but they do have positive indirect effects on resistance via the mediator variable, action on the ground. Family friendly branding has a similar positive indirect effect on resistance. Mid-sized cities have a negative indirect effect on resistance due to the fewer actions in which they engage. Cities, by contrast, due to their larger number of family friendly actions, have a positive indirect effect on resistance. This may be counterbalanced by the negative direct effect cities have on resistance. See Table 5.

Table 5 about here

Our models have confirmed most of our theoretical predictions. Family participation and site planning and zoning – the specifics of planning – are the keys to action. Ignorance/lack of knowledge is the key to resistance.

Action also leads to resistance but it is ameliorated by positive attitudes. See figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Cities engage in more action and mid-sized communities do less. These results came as a surprise but reflect the changing nature of cities – as young professionals seek to stay in cities as they form families, cities are beginning to respond to their needs. Mid-sized communities, long considered the most amenable places for families, appear to be losing some ground to the cities. These results show that planners see their communities responding to the changing demographics – a positive sign that family friendly planning is possible as demographic needs shift.

Conclusion

Nurturing the creative class has dominated many local planning agendas over the last decade (Clark, 2004; Florida, 2002). While this focus has provided municipalities with a new air of excitement, it has often resulted in downtown development without the amenities required to retain families as they have children. Families with children bring communities a unique combination of economic vibrancy and stability (Reese, 2012) and are a critical component for communities who wish to retain residents across the life cycle (Warner and Baran-Rees, 2012). Family friendly planning efforts

bring the needs of this constituency into the broader planning process to ensure that the needs of residents across the life cycle are taken into account.

As with any paradigm shift, moving the mindsets of planners and community leaders toward planning for families with young children (the ‘procreative class’ as Reese terms them) has come with challenges. The dynamics behind these challenges have been the focus of the current study.

Planning is a continuous process. Action stimulates resistance, but over time, resistance may decline as family friendly planning becomes more accepted. The key for planners is to do what they do best – conduct site planning and zoning, ensure family participation in the planning process and address the challenges of ignorance by helping communities identify where to begin. Ignorance may promote resistance but it does not stop action. Ironically, comprehensive planning, because it encourages public debate about values, can generate more resistance than more detailed site planning and zoning. These results suggest planners should pay more attention to family participation and site planning/zoning to get real action. Although branding is important, it matters less than family participation and specific site planning and zoning to motivate action on the ground. These results suggest a recipe for success in promoting more family friendly communities.

Mixed use, affordable housing, walkable streets, nearby services, opportunities for civic engagement are all features that children need and

these are actions that planners understand how to take in communities. This kind of innovative action needs to be taken not just in larger cities, but in mid-sized communities that may be falling behind in addressing family needs. Planning for family friendly communities also will help address a broader need to plan for multiple generations (Ghazaleh et al., 2011) as the actions children need for better communities in which to grow up are similar to the actions needed to promote aging in place (Kihl et al., 2005; Kochera et al., 2005). While traditionally mid-sized suburbs have been considered the most family-friendly, our analysis suggests cities are now giving more attention to the needs of families with young children. If cities are to retain young families, this is the kind of action they need to promote.

Our analysis of planners' responses to the APA survey shows that addressing the needs of families is a challenge well within the skill sets and authority of planners. But our analysis also suggests two challenges on the horizon. Much family friendly planning is based on physical design, but smaller communities face the special challenge of built environments characterized by sprawl. This makes it difficult to address the walkability, transit and access to service features that are important to family friendly design. Second, services, which are unique to children (such as child care), are receiving the least attention from planners. New models of service integration that recognize the potential of common needs across the

generations while still giving attention to the special needs of families with young children are required.

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Table 1: Action on the Ground Index

	% Yes
Maximum Index Value=34	
Mean: 14.17 Std. Dev. 5.42	
Promote a variety of housing types/prices	67
Promote cooperative housing	19
Adequate supply of 2+ bedroom apartments and homes	45
Special services for homeless families with children	32
Promote transit-oriented development (TOD)	45
Policy for low traffic speeds in residential neighborhoods	69
Promote alternatives to privately owned vehicles	35
Considers parent route to work in transportation plans	17
Kneeling busses	58
Sidewalks	96
Pedestrian pathways	84
Walk to school program	53
Bicycle lanes	76
Free transportation to school	66
Family transit passes or child rates	36
Planners work to improve school quality	34
Planners collaborate with school board to reuse school buildings	31
" " site new schools	46
" " co-locate schools with park/rec areas, libraries and community centers	44
Adequate supply of quality, affordable child care	21
Provide financial support for development/operation of child care facilities	14
Maintains data on child care location, cost, enrollment, and hours	18
Has a local child care plan	5
Impact fees to subsidize child care facilities/pre-k programs	6
Impact fees to subsidize additional public school classrooms	22
Impact fees to subsidize park/rec facilities	46
Impact fees to subsidize community centers	17
Impact fees to subsidize transit	16
Routinely use local, state, or federal funding to support child care	21
" " affordable housing	58
" " neighborhood parks	58
" " community facilities	53
" " road, streetscape, curb, or sidewalk improvements	80
Use tax increment financing to finance projects that support families	30

N=741

Source: Author Analysis: APA Family Friendly Planning Survey, 2008

Table 2: Active Resistance Index

	% Yes
Maximum Index Value=14	
Mean: 5.12 Std. Dev.: 2.80	
Regulatory barriers to family friendly	45
Development not prioritizing family housing	67
NIMBYISM barrier to being family friendly	70
Block multi-family housing	76
Block mixed used development	54
Block affordable housing	65
Block child care facilities development	21
Block neighborhood grocery stores	20
Block schools	15
Block public libraries	6
Block parks/playgrounds	13
Block recreation or teen centers	20
Block sidewalks	23
Business improvement districts/malls restrict teens	16

N=741

Source: Author Analysis: APA Family Friendly Planning Survey, 2008

Table 3: Factor Loadings and Component Elements

	Factor Loadings After Rotation			
	Attitude	Ignorance Lack of Awareness	Family Participation	Site Plan/ Zoning
Attitudes				
Families important to community growth, sustainability and diversity (97%)	.77	.02	.12	.03
Family needs similar to elderly with respect to physical planning (64%)	.44	.08	-.06	-.01
Keeping people for whole lifecycle makes communities more vibrant (90%)	.57	.09	.07	.06
Families are a valuable consumer population (96%)	.73	.00	.12	-.04
Families most likely to reinvest in community (time, money, civic engagement) (78%)	.73	.01	.02	.03
Ignorance/Lack of Awareness				
Lack financial support to becoming family friendly (68%)	.05	.69	.19	.10
Challenged by complexity of family friendly issues (65%)	.01	.72	.18	.05
Unaware of what is required to begin (56%)	.01	.73	.01	.00
Lack of authority on family friendly issues (53%)	.05	.69	.05	.01
Lack of voice for young families (65%)	.11	.71	-.05	.05
Insufficient political interest (62%)	.08	.73	-.13	-.02
Lack of community interest (57%)	-.01	.70	-.10	.00
Family Participation				
Provide child care for public meetings (12%)	.04	.05	.47	-.02
Meetings held at convenient times for working families (79%)	.04	.04	.60	.06
Run public meetings in facilities convenient to working parents (73%)	.04	.01	.64	.06
Encourage youth participation in planning process (40%)	.04	.01	.50	.21
Organize family events such as reading festivals and environmental awareness events (64%)	.03	.02	.46	.11
Have recreation facilities or activities for teens (79%)	-.02	.03	.36	.20
Economic development plans consider creating jobs for all age levels (25%)	.05	-.01	.41	.09

Table 3 (cont)

	Attitude	Ignorance Lack of Awareness	Family Participation	Site Plan/ Zoning
Site Planning and Zoning:				
Affordable housing (39%)	-.13	.00	.25	.33
Multi-family housing (66%)	-.03	-.07	.20	.50
Family-sized housing (2+ bedrooms) (60%)	.14	-.08	-.03	.32
Accessory apartments by right (25%)	.02	.07	.05	.26
Accessory apartments by special permit (35%)	-.03	.018	.13	.19
Open space/parks (82%)	.04	.07	-.05	.58
Transportation choices (43%)	-.03	-.06	.23	.46
Siting community facilities (48%)	.04	-.05	.15	.48
Family child care homes by right (35%)	.11	.10	.00	.30
Family child care homes by special permit (47%)	.02	.17	.12	.32
Siting child care centers (41%)	.07	.08	.13	.29
Allow for mixed use (92%)	.01	.10	.18	.41
Provide density bonuses (60%)	-.04	.08	.16	.44
Require parks/playgrounds (71%)	-.04	.00	-.14	.53
Mandate sidewalks (82%)	-.02	.00	-.15	.65
Require street connectivity (77%)	.02	.08	-.03	.64
Site plan reviews consider pedestrian needs (76%)	-.06	.02	.18	.59
Design guidelines facilitate interaction between neighbors (54%)	.00	-.08	.17	.59
Lighting guidelines address/promote safety (62%)	-.04	-.06	.17	.52
Street furniture on main streets to facilitate “eyes on the street” (37%)	.02	-.07	.31	.41
Traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods (73%)	-.04	-.17	.20	.28

N=741 Factor loadings after Varimax Rotation

(Numbers next to text for each component represent percent yes)

Source: Author Analysis: APA Family Friendly Planning Survey 2008

Table 4: Regression Results: Effects of City Characteristics and Planner Attitudes on Family Friendly Planning

	Action on the Ground			Active Resistance		
	Unstan Beta	Stan Beta	Stan Error	Unstan Beta	Stan Beta	Stan Error
Action Index				0.075	0.144	0.022
Attitude Factor	0.230	0.043	0.148	-0.179	-0.064	0.089
Comprehensive Planning	0.019	0.002	0.327	0.455	0.080	0.197
Family Participation Factor	2.141	0.395	0.154	-0.181	-0.065	0.104
Ignorance/Lack of Awareness Factor	0.329	0.061	0.148	1.272	0.455	0.090
Site Plan/Zoning Factor	2.471	0.456	0.155	0.070	0.025	0.108
Population 10,001-50,000	-1.262	-0.109	0.318	-0.007	-0.001	0.194
Branded Family Friendly City	0.813	0.074	0.313	0.410	0.072	0.190
Constant	1.621	0.149	0.304	-0.397	-0.070	0.187
	13.510			3.805		

Adj. R Squared=0.45

Adj. R Squared=0.26

N=741

Bolded numbers significant at $p < .05$

Source: Author Analysis: APA Family Friendly Planning Survey, 2008

Table 5: Sobel Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect of Significant X Variables Through Action on Resistance (5000 resamples)

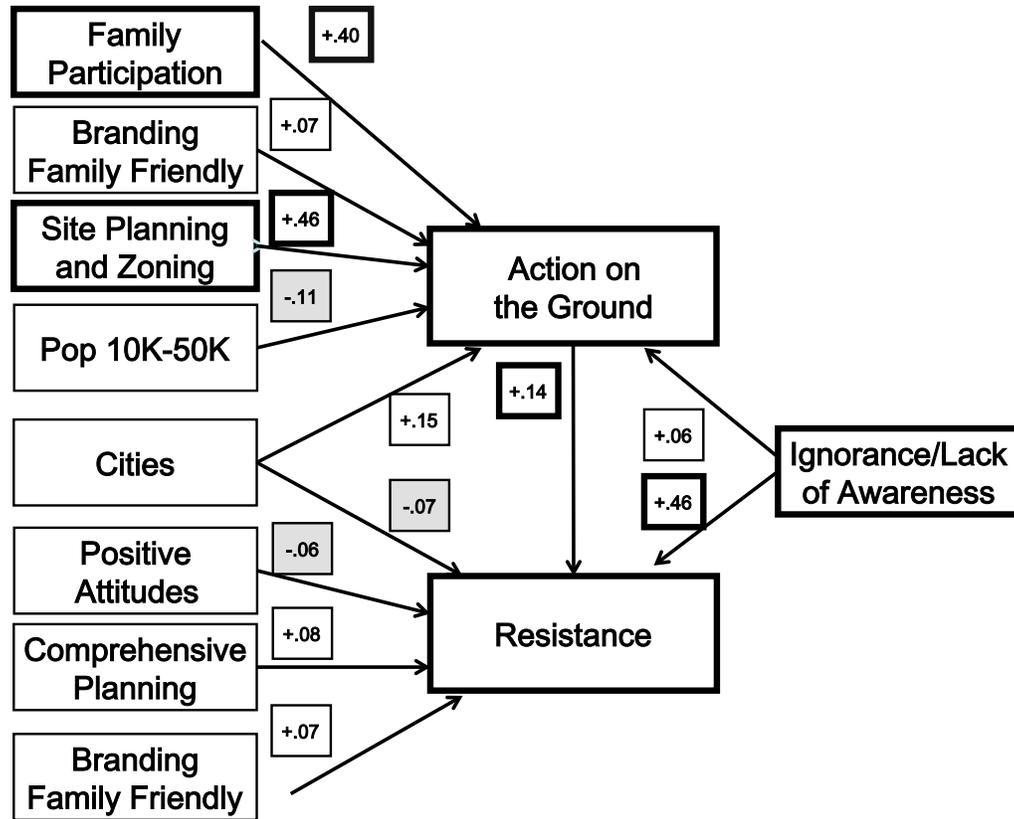
X Variables	Mean	SE	Bootstrap Confidence Interval 95%	
			Lower Limit/	Upper Limit
Family Participation	.2225*	.0489	.1267	.3206
Ignorance	.0186	.0154	-.0088	.0522
Site Planning	.1881*	.0584	.0735	.3048
Branded Family Friendly	.1724*	.0553	.0729	.2904
Pop. 10,001-50,000	-.0940*	.0418	-.1850	-.0232
City	.2877*	.0704	.1600	.4329

N=741

* significant at $p < .05$

Source: Author Analysis: APA Family Friendly Planning Survey, 2008

Figure 1: Pathways to Family Friendly Action and Resistance



Standardized betas, significant at $p < .05$. Variables with direct and indirect effects shown on left hand side. Variable on right hand side has only direct effects.

Source: Author Analysis, APA Family Friendly Planning Survey 2008.