



## Terra Incognita: Vacant Land and Urban Strategies (American Government and Public Policy)

By Ann O'M. Bowman

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Boon or blight? Ann Bowman and Michael Pagano define "vacant land" broadly, to include everything from brownfields (environmentally contaminated land) through trashed lots and abandoned buildings to greenspace (parks, community gardens, etc.). *Terra Incognita* takes a fresh look at what they believe can be the ultimate urban resource. Beyond the common studies of the influence of market forces, it explores how these areas are affected by the decisions of local governments, and then shows how vacant land can be a valuable strategic asset for localities.

*Terra Incognita* derives from what?until now?has been the lack of substantial information about the amount and the diversity of urban vacant land. This book is based on an unprecedented survey sent to all U.S. towns with a population greater than 50,000, and contains data previously unavailable. Three cities were studied in greater depth for detailed case studies: the greater Phoenix and Seattle areas and Philadelphia-Camden. A number of other cities are cited frequently, including Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Oklahoma City, among many others.

Identifying the fiscal, social, and development imperatives that drive the decisions local officials make about using vacant land, Bowman and Pagano pay particular attention to the varying dynamics of sales, property, and income taxes, and conclude with a model for making strategic decisions about land use based on a city's priorities.

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## **Editorial Review**

Review

"*Terra Incognita* is in many ways the ideal kind of planning book. It's brief; it deals with an important but little-examined aspect of urban life; and it suggests practical ways to improve it."? *Planning*

Review

"An absolutely first-rate piece of work . . . presents a powerful but easily comprehensible model for understanding the complex strategic interactions of land development possibilities, alternative sources of tax revenue, and urban political economy."?Evan McKenzie, associate professor of political science, University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*

Language Notes

Text: English, German

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