

NEO CANDO

In Practice

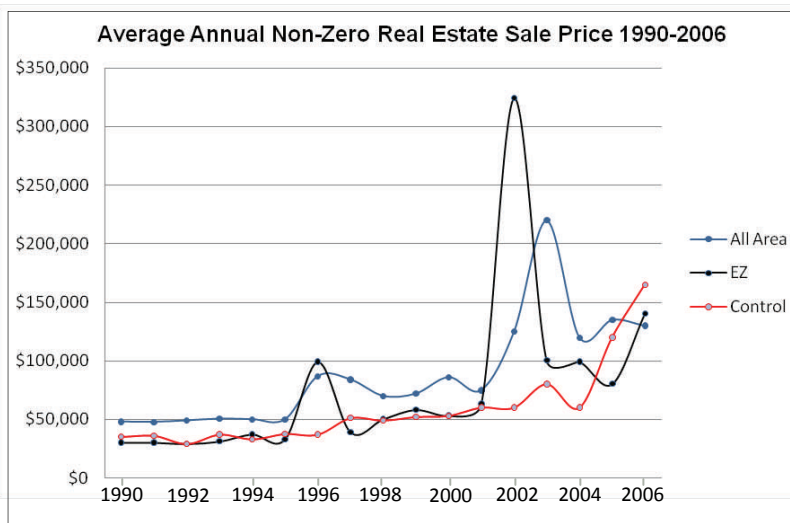
Evaluating economic development in Cleveland's urban neighborhoods

In *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, Fahui Wang of Louisiana State University argues that both job proximity and job accessibility need to be considered when studying or analyzing a community's disadvantaged neighborhoods, lack of employment, and rates of crime. While job proximity refers to distance from a job to a residential location, job accessibility encompasses a person's ability to overcome barriers to employment, including spatial barriers, transportation, congestion and competition for employment. Additionally, the author sought to associate the relationship, if any, between job access and crime and if there were any differences in this relationship when the data was broken down into economic crimes and violent crimes.

Mr. Wang utilized NEO CANDO to obtain a decade's worth of crime data at the census tract level for the City of Cleveland. The rates of homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, and auto theft were compared and evaluated to data defining job access from the Urban Transportation Planning Package (UTPP) and the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP). Mr. Wang found that being closer to jobs does not necessarily lead to improved job access for an individual due to the variety of other socioeconomic disadvantages of the neighborhoods studied. Additionally, the crime data provided by NEO CANDO showed a correlation between low levels of job accessibility and crime, resulting in Wang's findings that "poor job access represents another indicator of socioeconomic disadvantages and, collectively, explains intraurban variations in crime rates."

Richard Smith of The University of Michigan also utilized NEO CANDO data in his research on Cleveland Empowerment and Enterprise Zones. The Cleveland Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) was part of a two-phase federal initiative between 1995 and 2000 to create jobs in urban communities, specifically in the Midtown district near Cleveland State University, the Hough neighborhood, and the Fairfax neighborhood near the Cleveland Clinic. The first phase of the initiative included social-services block grants and section 108 economic-development loan guarantees while the second phase implemented a package of tax incentives for businesses that employed workers who worked and lived in the EZ/EC areas.

In the *Michigan Journal of Public Affairs*, Mr. Smith discusses which of the two packages of benefits involved in the designation of the Cleveland Empowerment Zone provided larger benefits for Cleveland's economic development by comparing commercial and residential real estate sale prices between 1990 and 2006. Non-zero real estate sales transfer data was retrieved from NEO CANDO and was analyzed using the Adjusted Interrupted Time Series Analysis (AITS).



Using the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office data obtained through NEO CANDO, Smith averaged the sales prices of residential and non-residential property in the EZ/EC and compared it to a control group. EZ/EC designation did not result in residential housing prices increasing within the Empowerment Community at the rate that was hypothesized.

However, Smith found that the EZ/EC designation resulted in a boost in average commercial and industrial property values and a decline in unemployment and poverty for the three affected Cleveland neighborhoods.

While the author notes the costs of Enterprise Zones, he ultimately concludes that the benefits of the EZ designation can be advantageous to a disadvantaged community if approached with a comprehensive strategic plan that emphasizes both the place and the people involved.

In 2007, two articles were published that analyzed job access and the effect of Enterprise Zones in Cleveland's urban communities. Both authors utilized data from NEO CANDO to assess the effects of economic development initiatives in the Cleveland area, looking at the relationships between residential and commercial real estate sales prices, crime rates, and job accessibility. The implications of this research are crucial for all policy-makers and practitioners in the community development arena.