

# Contemporary Issues in Local and State Government: Transportation, Redistricting and Sustainable Municipalities

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The first issue of this, the thirteenth volume of the *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy*, brings together a state case of congressional redistricting and two articles that focus on case examples of contemporary issues in local government. The three articles are followed by a special to the journal on diversity, equity and fairness, as well as a book review on the role of communities and schools in shaping civic life and voter turnout.

The opening article by Dewey M. Clayton's focuses on state-wide government, and the case of congressional redistricting in Texas. In particular, Clayton highlights the role of the courts in addressing the redistricting concerns that lead to partisan and racial gerrymandering. Clayton concludes by raising the potential issues in the court's decisions mid-cycle redistricting.

Next, Sarmistha R. Majumdar's article examines sustainable development efforts in Denton, Texas and how the local government has incorporated an innovative method of producing biodiesel from waste cooking oil. The case of Denton also highlights the public-private partnerships efforts to become less dependent on outside energy sources by fostering sustainable development practices which lead to the creation of biodiesel.

The article by Catherine Estis and Johnny Gilleylen, Sr. highlights how the lack of affordable transportation significantly affects the poor living in the inner city from accessing the "emerging job markets." Estis and Gilleylen take the case of Jackson, Mississippi to exemplify the role of transportation access, concluding with specific considerations for local government in developing transportation policies for linking job access and low-income communities.

The first three articles have, through specific cases, exemplified contemporary social policies at the local and state level. The fourth article, a special contribution to the journal, by Kathe Callahan, raises critical questions in the context of citizen participation. Specifically, Callahan asks, “To what extent are we achieving diversity, equity, and fairness in public participation?” Callahan’s discussion also examines the role of public policy, institutional design and “civic skills” in public participation. This issue concludes with a review by Gregory K. Plagens of a 2006 book on how schools and communities shape civic life of citizens who may or may not “turn out the vote.”

We would like to thank again are committed editorial board and journal staff for their continued work, which has allowed us to begin our thirteenth volume of the *Journal of Public Management of Social Policy*. We would also like to thank the contributors for this issue, who considered this journal as an outlet for their research.