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Plots and Ploys

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Stop Right There

Landfills, casinos and power plants are the most unpopular types of development in the U.S., according to a recent survey conducted by the Center for Economic and Civic Opinion at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

The first-time survey, commissioned by the Hingham, Mass.-based Saint Consulting Group, which advises developers on local political issues, asked about 1,000 people around the country for their opinions on development and developers.

Landfills elicited the most opposition from those surveyed -- 82% said they would oppose one in their community. Single-family housing had the most support -- 75% were in favor.

About one in five of the people surveyed said he had actively opposed development in his community by signing a petition, attending a local government hearing, or some other form of active opposition.

"[The survey] shows that the American public is far more sophisticated about planning and zoning than we thought," said Patrick F. Fox, president of the Saint Consulting Group. "The most staggering number to me is that one in five people have actively opposed a project. "

In the highly developed Northeast about 29% of those surveyed said they were opposed to new development. About 22% in the West and 20% in the South said they opposed new development.

About 61% of those surveyed said local governments did a fair to poor job on planning and zoning.