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The Potential for Planning an Industrial Cluster in Barre, Vermont: A Case of 'Hard-Rock' Resistance in the Granite Industry

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Abstract

Throughout the world, there has been considerable interest among economic planners concerning the creation of industrial clusters. Efforts to stimulate, nurture and reinforce such clusters can be found in virtually all of the European nations, as well as in Japan, Korea, China and others. These efforts range from reinforcing the strengths of promising areas to stimulating the creation of totally new technologies. The identification of such clustering opportunities has become a critical element of national, state, regional and local planning activities. While there are many researchers who have focused on this topic, the Harvard Business School's Michael Porter has, arguably, been among the most effective in bringing the idea to working planners in both Europe and the US. His books and articles are widely read and analysed on both sides of the Atlantic and his ideas have become increasingly commonplace in mainstream planning for economic development. Of particular note is his work *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*. It remains to be seen, however, what happens when one attempts to implement Porter's principles through local planning.

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