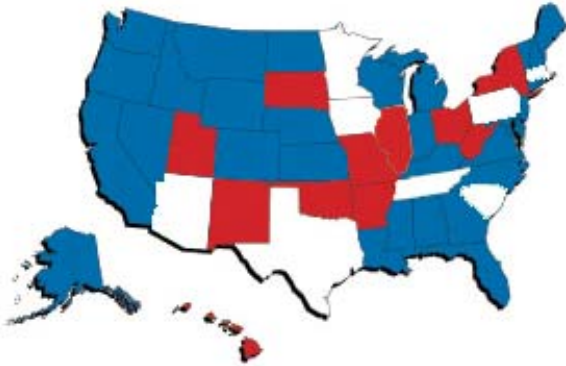


Maps from the Summary of State Land Use Planning Laws

January 2007



Almost all states list plan elements that should or must be in a plan. The level of specificity and detail varies widely. This map shows [in blue] which states specify the elements that must be included in a plan (whether or not the plan itself is required), [in red] which states provide a list of suggested elements, and [in white] which have statutes that are silent on this subject.

States originally passed enabling legislation that gave local governments of various types permission to plan, but did not require it. This generally followed the model State Planning Enabling Act developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce under Secretary Herbert Hoover in the 1920s. Since then, many have chosen to require one or more categories of local government to develop local comprehensive plans. This map shows in red those states that require some or all local government to develop such plans; those requiring some subset of local governments to develop plans are shown in green.



In some states, a zoning ordinance must acquire its validity through its compliance with the comprehensive plan. Where such requirements exist, it is possible to challenge legally zoning decisions that conflict with the city's policies as expressed in its comprehensive plan. This is important because it

gives the plan greater legal force in the land-use decision-making process. This map shows [in blue] which states require internal consistency between the plan and the zoning ordinance.



Vertical and horizontal consistencies are crucial ways in which the state can assure a high level of land-use coordination among units of government. Vertical consistency means that local government plans must not conflict with those of higher levels of government, for example, cities with counties or regional governments. Horizontal consistency means that adjoining jurisdictions must coordinate land-use planning to avoid conflicts within the region, such as an

upstream community allowing intensive development of a floodplain that the next downstream community is trying to protect. The map shows whether the state requires both vertical and horizontal consistency [in blue], vertical only [in green], horizontal only [in yellow], neither [in white], for at least one class of jurisdiction. For greater detail, consult Matrix 1 and the key code.

Ten states have specific requirements that local plans must in some way address natural hazards in a specific element. Some states refer to these as safety elements. In order to be included among the mandatory states [in blue] on this map and in Matrix 2, the state need not specify the inclusion of a discrete hazards element treating that subject alone, but it must at least require that natural hazards be addressed in a larger element that may cover related issues, such as land use or the environment. In these latter cases, however, the statute clearly spells out natural hazards as an essential consideration in those elements.

