

Milestones in California's Planning Law

- 1907** First Subdivision Map Act enacted.
- 1915** Cities authorized to create planning commissions.
- 1917** Initial zoning law enacted.
- 1927** Cities and counties authorized to prepare master plans (general plans).
- 1929** Adoption of master plans made mandatory for those cities and counties establishing planning commissions (based largely on the 1928 U.S. Department of Commerce Model Standard City Planning Enabling Act). Subdivision Map Act revised enabling local governments to require dedication of improvements.
- 1937** All cities and counties required to adopt master plans. Cities and counties authorized to prepare "precise plans" (similar to specific plans of today) to implement the master plan.
- 1953** Planning law recodified into Government Code §65000, et seq.
- 1955** Land use and circulation elements required in the general plan.
- 1965** Planning and Zoning Law reorganized. Cities and counties authorized to prepare "specific plans."
- 1967** Housing element required in the general plan (effective July 1, 1969).
- 1970** Conservation and open-space elements required in the general plan.
- 1971** Safety, seismic safety, noise, and scenic highway elements required in the general plan. Zoning and subdivision approvals required to be consistent with the adopted general plan.
- 1973** OPR issues first *General Plan Guidelines*.
- 1974** Subdivision Map Act recodified from the Business and Professions Code into the State Planning and Zoning Law within the Government Code.
- 1975** Legislature clarifies statute on general plans' internal consistency.
- 1980** Detailed content standards and adoption procedures added to the housing element requirement. Appeals court says public works must be consistent with general plans (*Friends of B Street*).
- 1982** Appeals court says land use and circulation elements must correlate (*Twaine Harte*).
- 1984** Planning statutes substantially revised, seismic safety and scenic highways elements dropped as required elements, seismic safety merged with safety element.
- 1990** California Supreme Court says zoning in conflict with the general plan invalid (*Leshner v. Walnut Creek*).
- 2001** Legislature requires *General Plan Guidelines* to include environmental justice.

This summary does not include other major planning and land use statutes that have been important in shaping local planning, such as the California Environmental Quality Act, the Williamson Act, the California Coastal Act, and the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act.