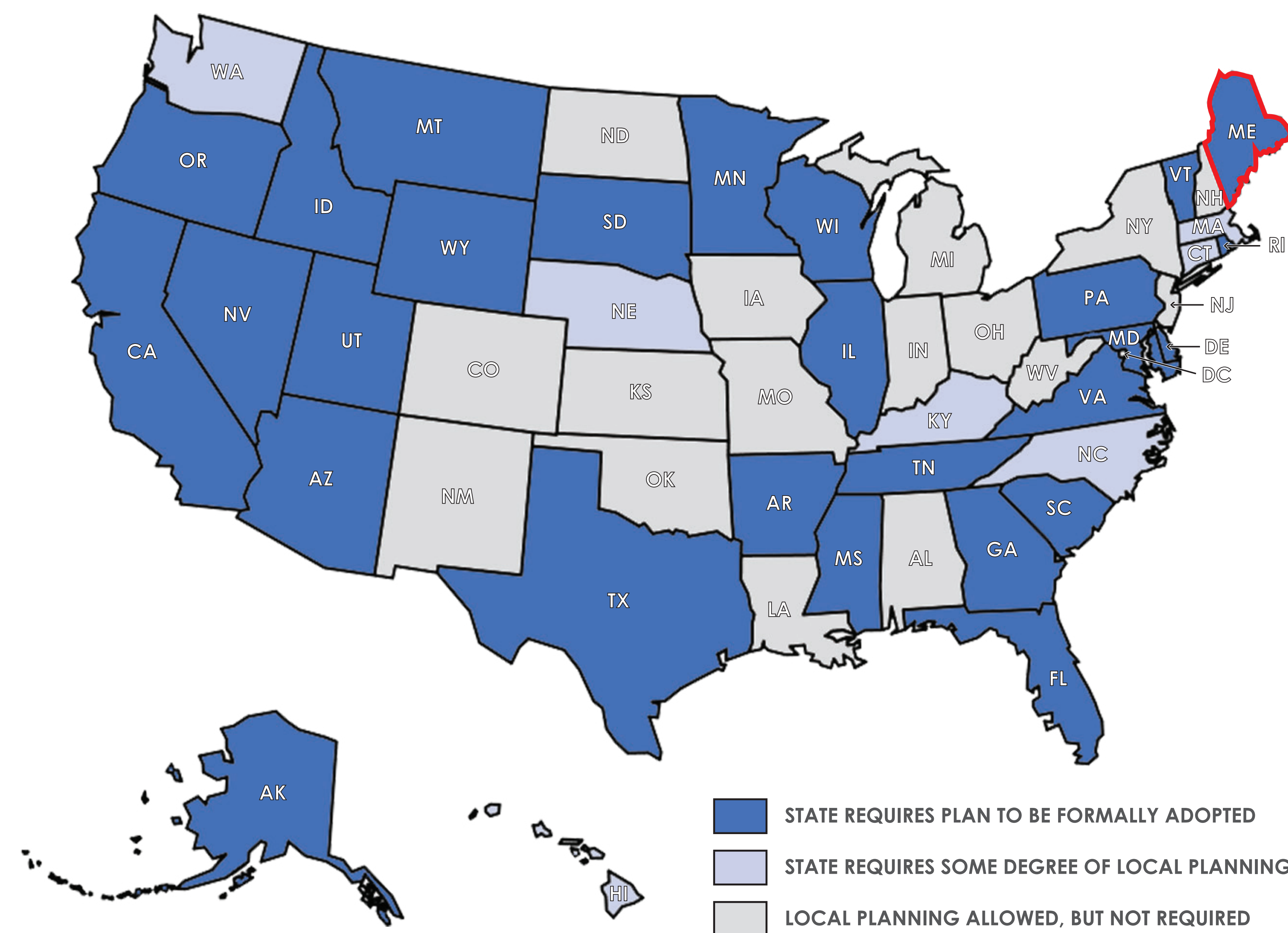


# COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

At its most basic, a comprehensive plan is a statement of a community's vision for the future, a base for capital improvement programming, and a legally defensible foundation for community actions, policies, and regulations. The American Planning Association (APA) defines a comprehensive plan as:

*the adopted official statement of a legislative body of a local government that sets forth goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development within its planning jurisdiction. A local comprehensive plan represents a “big picture” of the community, allowing officials and citizens to explore their communities’ major opportunities and challenges and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they would like to live in.*

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN THE UNITED STATES AND MAINE



CA: Housing element to be updated every 5 to 8 years.  
 DE: Annual reporting and an update required every 10 years.  
 FL: To be reviewed for potential amendments every 7 years.  
 GA: Many, but not all, of the elements to be updated every 5 years.  
**ME: Update required every 12 years.**  
 MD: Update required every 5 years.  
 MN: Communities in 7 County Minneapolis Region must update every 10 years.  
 MT: Growth Policy to be updated every 5 years.  
 NV: Annual reporting required.  
 OR: Updated per State Land Conservation and Development Commission schedule.  
 PA: Update required every 10 years.  
 RI: Update required every 10 years.  
 SC: To be reviewed every 5 years and updated every 10 years.  
 UT: Moderate Income Housing Plan reviewed annually and updated every 5 years.  
 VT: Update required every 8 years.  
 VA: Review required every 5 years.  
 WI: Update required every 10 years.

\* Many states exempt or relax requirements for small communities.



In Maine, a comprehensive plan must contain the following elements:

- Inventory and analysis of existing conditions and ten (10) year projections of local and regional growth in population and residential, commercial, and industrial activity; the projected need for public facilities; and the vulnerability of and potential impacts on natural resources. The inventory and analysis section must include, but is not limited to:
  - Economic and demographic data
  - Significant water resources
  - Significant or critical natural resources
  - Marine-related resources and facilities
  - Commercial forestry and agricultural land
  - Existing recreation, park and open space areas
  - Existing transportation systems
  - Residential housing stock
  - Historical and archaeological resources
  - Projected development patterns
  - Assessment of capital facilities and public services
- Future Land Use Plan that should clearly designate rural areas and appropriately sized growth areas and include actions that will be taken to direct development away from the rural areas and into the growth areas;
- Policy development that relates to the findings contained in the inventory and analysis section; and
- Implementation strategies including a timetable for the implementation program ensuring that the goals are met.

## IMPORTANT EVENTS IN COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN THE UNITED STATES AND MAINE

Although contemporary comprehensive plans may address a broad range of issues, the origins of comprehensive planning are tied to land use and an attempt to control development. Maine's requirement for comprehensive planning is strongly tied to land use as it is part of the Growth Management Program.

