



## Using Plans and Regulations to Increase Community Fire Adaptation: Who's Planning for Wildfire?

**A** number of communities are taking an active approach to ensure wildfire is part of their planning and regulatory process. The list below, while not comprehensive, is a sampling of community examples from across the country.

### Flagstaff, Arizona

*Featured Tool: Comprehensive Plan*

The city has wildfire policies in their [Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030](#) to support activities such as forest management, watershed protection, community resiliency and the effects of climate change on wildfire. When preparing council reports, staff frequently refer to the Flagstaff Regional Plan to support wildland fire program objectives. Specific policies include:

- Invest in forest health and watershed protection measures.
- Encourage public awareness that the region's ponderosa pine forest is a fire-dependent ecosystem, and strive to restore more natural and sustainable forest composition, structure and processes.
- Promote protection, conservation and ecological restoration of the region's diverse ecosystem types and associated animals.
- Support cooperative efforts for forest health initiatives or practices, such as the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), to support healthy forests and protect the city's water system.

### Hillsborough County, Florida

*Featured Tool: Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Local Mitigation Strategy*

Like other counties in Florida, Hillsborough County maintains a [Local Mitigation Strategy](#) (LMS)—a document that identifies and assesses potential local hazards and provides actions to mitigate damage. The



*Increasing home losses from wildfire in Horry County, SC are prompting local planners to rethink development features, such as the location and design of community open space.*

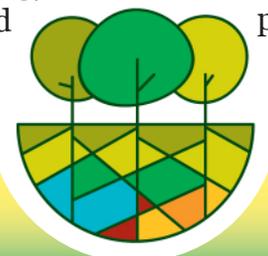
*Photo: South Carolina Forestry Commission.*

county's LMS also includes their [Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) (CWPP) and Floodplain Management Plan. Inclusion of the CWPP in the LMS results in frequent updates, specific mitigation actions and additional funding opportunities. Their CWPP's action plan includes policy and regulation recommendations, such as including the county's wildfire risk map in the Future Land Use Map Series of each local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. In addition, Hillsborough County has a [Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan](#) that outlines the county's long-term post-disaster redevelopment and recovery plans.

### Kittitas County, Washington

*Featured Tool: Wildland-Urban Interface Code*

Kittitas County has adopted a [Wildland-Urban Interface Code](#) (WUIC) that applies to all properties designated in a wildland-urban interface area. Building construction and property maintenance requirements are based on a classification system, which inform the type of compliance required.



Requirements may include:

- installation of a sprinkler system;
- submission of defensible space plans along with building plans;
- storage of firewood and combustible materials within a property’s defensible space, but at least 20 feet away from any structure;
- the use of approved ignition-resistant building and construction materials;
- prohibition of combustible materials such as wood siding.

### Larimer County, Colorado

*Featured Tool: Land Use Code, Development Agreements*

Larimer County’s [Land Use Code](#) states that “development proposed within an area that is or may become a natural hazard may be disallowed if not designed and built in a manner that sufficiently mitigates the hazard.” During the pre-application conference (i.e., a meeting that planning staff have with an applicant who is interested in doing a development project), staff will consult with the county’s adopted Wildfire Hazard Areas Map to determine if a wildfire mitigation plan is required. If so, mitigation plans must meet specific criteria ([Land Use Code, Section 8.3.8](#)). Any approved mitigation plan and conditions for approval must be included in the development agreement ([Land Use Code, Section 12.6](#)).

### Austin, Texas

*Featured Tool: Resiliency, Sustainability & Climate Plans*

The city of Austin recognizes wildfire’s ecological role and potential impacts as a natural hazard in a wide range of city plans. For example:

- Austin’s [Urban Forest Plan](#) contains a policy that recognizes the important balance between

community desires for wildfire risk reduction and responsible vegetation management.

- Austin’s 2015 [Community Climate Plan](#) contains a climate resilience planning section, which discusses how future risks from increased wildfires, drought and high temperatures will require proactive steps to manage impacts to capital investments.

- Austin’s [Sustainability Action Agenda](#) is a framework for ten areas of sustainability innovation. As part of the Health and Safety area, the Austin Fire Department has implemented wildfire actions to promote resident engagement and risk reduction.

### Horry County, South Carolina

*Featured Tool: Land Development Regulations*

Horry County is hoping to increase community safety for wildfire during their [Land Development Regulations](#) update. Currently, Land Development Regulations require a minimum amount of open space for new residential development. Typically this results in a developer providing a pool and other community amenities. However, due to lot size, development patterns and proximity to forested areas, the ability for property owners to manage their defensible space is often limited—leaving residents at risk to adjacent forested and wildfire-prone areas. The county is hoping to offer an alternative by proposing an open space option that allows developers to create a linear open space “buffer” around the exterior of the neighborhood, doubling as both a recreational trail system and fuel break. This would also allow easier access for firefighter response and suppression. (Open space maintenance would still be required by the homeowner’s association.)

For more information, visit <http://www.facnetwork.org>.

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