



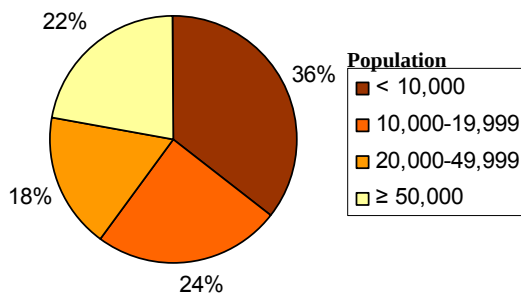
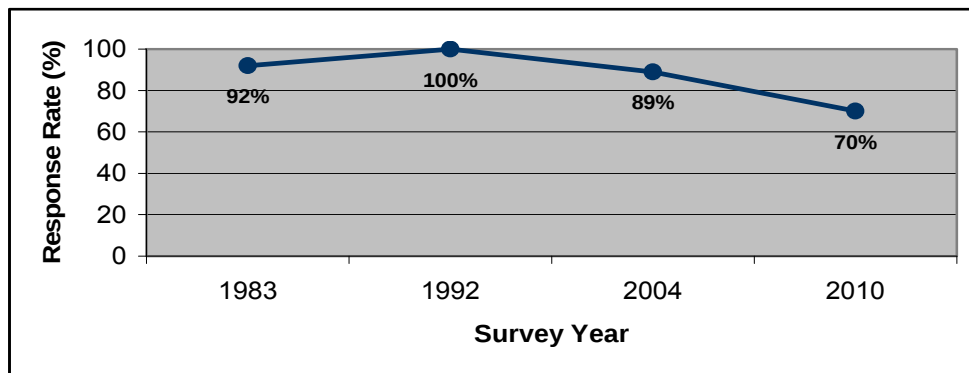
2010 Colorado County Land Use Survey Results

Overview

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) conducted the 2010 county land use survey in partnership with Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI), the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Co), and the Colorado State University Extension Office. The purpose of this survey is to maintain an understanding of county land use planning throughout Colorado, recognize trends compared to previous survey years, and to provide communities with an inventory of Colorado land use planning efforts. Similar surveys were conducted in 1983, 1992, and 2004. Although many questions in the 2010 survey were not included in previous survey years, there were several consistent questions that allow for tracking trends over time. The survey was distributed electronically to county planning directors and results were collected from 45 counties in Colorado.

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36% of responding counties have a population less than 10,000

Compared to previous years, the response rate was significantly lower in 2010 (70%). This could be attributed to the electronic administration of the survey. In previous years, hard copy surveys were mailed to each county. Thirty-six percent of the responding counties have a population less than 10,000. Twenty-two percent of the responding counties have a population greater than 50,000.

Comprehensive or Master Plans

Of the 45 counties that responded to the survey, 42 (or 93%) indicated they have an adopted comprehensive or master plan. The same percentage of counties had adopted master plans according to the 2004 land use survey. According to statute C.R.S. §30-28-106(4), counties with populations over 10,000 who have experienced growth more than 10% in any 5-year period are required to adopt a master plan.

Adopted Comprehensive or Master Plans by Population, 2010

Population Categories	Have adopted a comprehensive or master plan (number of counties) 2010	Percent of total counties surveyed 2010	Percent of total counties surveyed 2004
< 10,000	15	33%	90%
10,000 – 19,000	9	20%	83%
20,000 – 49,999	8	18%	100%
≥ 50,000	10	22%	100%
Total:	42	93%	93%

Summary of Counties with an Adopted Comprehensive Plan

Survey Year	Percent of Responding Counties
1983	72%
1992	78%
2004	93%
2010	93%

93% of responding counties indicated they have an adopted comprehensive plan

Administrative and Technical Resources

Respondents were asked about their existing administrative and technical planning resources – *Do they have a planning commission? Do they have planning staff? Who do they rely on for technical assistance? Do they use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for support?*

Planning Resources among Responding Counties, 2010

Type of Resource	Number of Responding Counties	Percent of Responding Counties
Have a planning commission	44	98%
Have a planning department	39	87%
Have a separate board of adjustment	39	87%
Have all three	36	80%

All but one of the responding counties (98%) indicated that they have a planning commission. Eighty-seven percent of the responding counties indicated that they have a planning department, and the same percentage (87%) has a separate board of adjustment.

87% of responding counties indicated they have a planning department

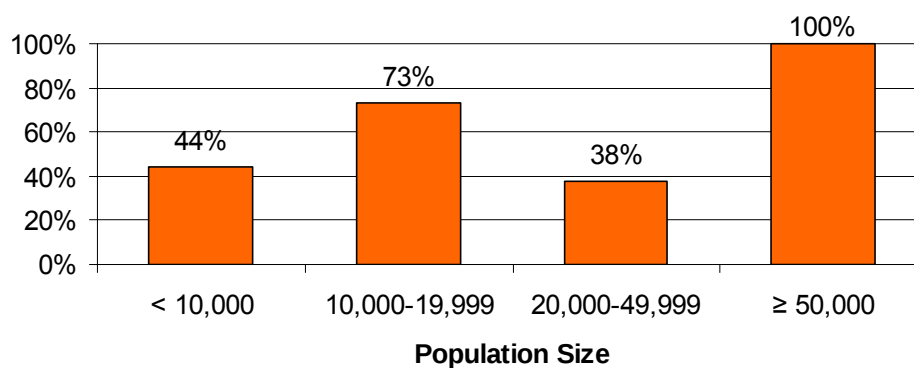
Ninety-seven percent of the responding counties with a population greater than 10,000 have a planning commission, a planning department (with at least one staff), and a separate board of adjustment. Conversely, only 50% of responding counties with a population of fewer than 10,000 have all three resources.

Use of GIS Services among Responding Counties

Type of GIS Service Used	Percentage of Responding Counties
Planning department's own GIS capability	62%
Council of Governments (COG) or Regional Planning/Economic Development Organization	11%
County GIS (other department)	16%
State agency	22%
Federal agency	11%
Nonprofit organization	4%
Private consultant	9%
Other (please specify) ¹	18%
We do not currently use GIS support	11%

Sixty-two percent (62%) of the responding counties have GIS service capabilities within their planning department. Twenty-two percent (22%) of responding counties use GIS services from a state agency. Eleven percent (11%) indicated they are not currently using GIS support. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the responding counties with a population fewer than 10,000 are not currently using GIS support. The table below illustrates the percentage of responding counties with GIS service capabilities within their planning department based on population size.

Counties with GIS service capabilities within planning department, 2010



All responding counties with populations over 50,000 indicated that they are using GIS within their internal planning

¹ Other responses included: assessor's office, road and bridge department, county GIS department, county mapper, Google Earth, and county IT department.

The use of GIS has increased among counties compared to previous survey years. This is likely the result of the increasing progression and ease of use among GIS software and systems that was considerably less prevalent in previous survey years.

Using GIS, by Survey Year

Survey Year	Percent of Responding Counties Using GIS
1983	--
1992	21%
2004	81%
2010	89%

The responding counties indicated that they rely on multiple planning resources for planning-related assistance. Counties with larger populations are relying most on DOLA, APA, CCI, RMLUI, and planning consultants. The smaller counties indicated that they are relying more on DOLA and CCI than other resources.

Planning Resources used by Responding Counties by Pop., 2010

Planning Resource	<10,000	10,000-19,999	20,000-49,999	>= 50,000
Colo. Dept. Local Affairs (DOLA)	69%	55%	75%	90%
Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI)	69%	36%	63%	70%
American Planning Association (APA)	25%	73%	100%	100%
Planning consultant	31%	36%	25%	90%
Informal planner network	19%	55%	38%	60%
PC Journal/Planners Web	13%	18%	38%	50%
Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute	13%	45%	50%	70%
COG or regional planning/economic development organization	25%	9%	13%	60%
Other ²	6%	0%	0%	0%

Planning Policy Guidance and Regulations

Counties were asked to indicate whether or not they had implemented policies or regulations on specific planning issues within general categories including planning and growth management; agriculture and food systems; business and economic development; environment; hazards, health, and safety; housing; and infrastructure. Within these categories, counties were asked to select specific policies and regulations currently in place.

Policy was defined as *explicit guidance regarding a particular topical area that may be contained in a comprehensive plan, resolution, or elsewhere.*

Regulation was defined as *specific codified regulatory guidance (ordinance, resolution) that is usually contained within a land use code, zoning resolution, etc.*

² Respondents who marked 'other' indicated they relied on the county attorney.

The following table summarizes the specific issues most frequently guided by policy among responding counties.

Issues Most Frequently Guided by Policy in Responding Counties, 2010

Specific Planning Issue	Percentage of Responding Counties using Policy Guidance
Right to farm	58%
Retention of agricultural land/water	51%
Recreation and tourism	51%
Cultural/historic preservation	51%
Economic development or downtown revitalization	49%
Affordable housing (e.g., inclusionary zoning)	44%
Open space protection	44%
Wildlife and habitat protection	44%
Adequate public facilities or concurrency	42%
Viewshed corridor protection	42%

These policies are aligned closely with the results from the previous survey year 2004. The data show that the larger counties had more policy guidance concerning growth management and wildlife and habitat protection than the smaller counties. Right-to-farm policy was generally higher on the list for the smaller counties than the larger counties. As counties continue to grow they will likely rely on more sophisticated planning tools to guide them in the right direction.

The planning issues most frequently addressed by responding counties in plan elements or policy in 2010 were right-to-farm, retention of agricultural land & water, recreation & tourism, and cultural and historic preservation.



Farm near Proctor, Colorado in Logan County – Photo by Greg Etl, Department of Local Affairs

Issues Most Frequently Addressed by Regulation, 2010

Specific Planning Issue	Percentage of Responding Counties using Regulation
Planned Unit Development	78%
Mobile Home Parks	78%
Signs	76%
Subdivision Exemptions	76%
Mineral Exploration/Extraction	76%
Home Occupations	76%
Floodplain	73%
Nuisance	71%
Solid Waste Management	64%

Compared with the results from the previous survey year 2004, the top planning issues are aligned. Those issues least addressed by regulations by the responding counties include public safety, climate change/greenhouse gases, redevelopment/infill, homeland security and transit oriented development. It is interesting to examine the regulation data against specific population categories:

Most Prevalent Issues Addressed by Regulation by Population, 2010

Population Category	Most Prevalent Planning Issues Addressed by Regulation
< 10,000	Mobile Home Parks, Mineral Exploration/Extraction
10,000 – 19,999	Home Occupations, Signs, Planned Unit Developments
20,000 – 49,999	Subdivision Exemptions, Floodplain, Home Occupations
≥ 50,000	Home Occupations, (eleven others tied for second most regulated)

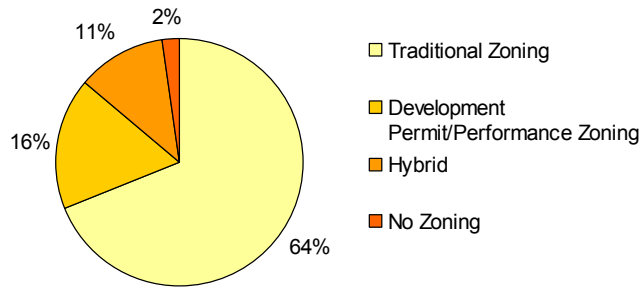
Home occupation regulations were prevalent among the larger population categories, whereas mineral exploration/extraction and mobile home parks were more prevalent among the smallest counties and slightly less so in those counties with larger populations.

The planning issues most frequently addressed by responding counties through regulations in 2010 are planned unit development, mobile home parks, signs, subdivision exemption, mineral exploration/extraction, and home occupations

Zoning

Zoning helps counties regulate growth and development and control impacts from certain types of development on adjacent land uses. Of the responding counties, 64% use a traditional (or Euclidean) zoning system. Sixteen percent of the responding counties use a performance-based or development permit system, and 11% percent use a hybrid system – a mix of traditional and either form-based or performance zoning system.

Zoning used by Responding Counties, 2010



Zoning used by Responding Counties by Population, 2010³

Type of Zoning	<10,000	10,000-19,999	20,000-49,999	>= 50,000
Traditional Zoning	63%	73%	75%	50%
Development Permit/Performance Zoning	19%	18%	13%	10%
Hybrid	6%	0%	0%	40%
No Zoning	0%	0%	13%	0%

As the table above indicates, the larger counties, likely with more technical, administrative, and financial resources, are using a hybrid approach to zoning to regulate land uses. The use of hybrid codes can also be attributed to the more complex land use issues facing Colorado communities and how they respond to those issues by adjusting regulations accordingly.

Impact Fees and Land Dedications

Many Colorado communities offset the costs of public improvements and infrastructure required to serve new development by placing some of the burden onto the development through the approval process using impact fees, land dedications, or fees-in-lieu. Counties use these tools to help offset portions of the costs of systems such as water, sewer, parks and recreation, transportation, and others. The following table summarizes the types of impact fees and dedications used by the responding counties.

Types of Development Charges Adopted by Responding Counties, 2010

Type of Charge	Percentage of Respondents with Adopted Impact Fee	Percentage of Respondents with Adopted Dedication or Fee in Lieu
Transportation	22%	7%
Parks and recreation	11%	18%
Affordable housing	11%	9%
Public safety	7%	2%
Water	4%	7%
Storm drainage	4%	7%
Sewer	0%	7%
Schools	--	49%
Other	18% ⁴	7%

³ Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and those not responding to the question

⁴ Other impact fees included wind farms, trash, fire, public facilities, and roads

These results indicate a shift from the previous survey year 2004 when storm drainage was among the most commonly utilized impact fees and affordable housing was at the bottom of the list. It is interesting to look at the impact fee data against population categories.

Impact Fees Imposed by Responding Counties by Population, 2010

Type of Impact Fee	<10,000	10,000-19,999	20,000-49,999	>= 50,000
Water	0%	18%	0%	0%
Sewer	0%	0%	0%	0%
Parks and recreation	0%	18%	25%	10%
Transportation	19%	9%	13%	50%
Storm drainage	0%	0%	0%	20%
Public safety	6%	0%	13%	10%
Affordable housing	6%	27%	13%	0%
Other	13%	27%	13%	20%

There is a higher percentage of small to medium-sized counties imposing impact fees for affordable housing than the largest counties. A higher percentage of the largest counties are imposing impact fees for transportation and storm drainage than the smaller counties. It is possible that the largest counties are including multiple modes of transportation that the impact fee may be used for including but not limited to public transportation, roads, bikeways, and trails.

One-half of the responding counties with a population greater than or equal to 50,000 indicated that they impose an impact fee for transportation

Intergovernmental Agreements for Planning and Land Use

An intergovernmental agreement (IGA) is any agreement that involves or is made between two or more governments to cooperate in a specific way to solve problems of mutual concern. Intergovernmental agreements can be made between or among a broad range of governmental or quasi-governmental entities, such as two or more counties, two or more municipalities, a municipality and a special district, and so forth. The use of intergovernmental agreements related to planning and land use has consistently increased over time since the first survey year in 1983.

Use of IGAs 1983-2010

Survey Year	Percentage of Counties Using IGAs
1983	44%
1992	46%
2004	67%
2010	82%

82% of the responding counties indicated they currently utilize some type of planning or land use IGA

Types of IGAs used by Responding Counties, 2010

Type of IGA	Percentage of Counties Using IGAs
Cooperative planning (e.g. urban growth boundaries, urban service areas, or joint planning review)	47%
Agreement with a municipality for building inspection	29%
Transportation planning	18%
Resource sharing (e.g. parks, fields)	16%
Joint planning commission	4%
Joint planning department	0%
None at this time	18%
Other	11%

Conclusions

Although the response rate for 2010 was relatively low compared to previous survey years, the land use survey results tell the general story of land use planning in Colorado's counties. As with the previous survey year in 2004, 93% of the responding counties indicated they have an adopted comprehensive or master plan.

As expected, the survey results confirm that the smallest counties often have fewer technical and administrative resources such as boards of adjustment, planning staff, and use of GIS systems. In fact, 80% of the counties not currently using GIS have a population fewer than 10,000. The overall use of GIS in Colorado counties increased eight percent since the previous survey year from 81% in 2004 to 89% in 2010. The use of GIS in planning related activities is now widely accepted as the norm for mapping and spatial analysis. The survey results also show that counties are increasingly relying on more outside resources for planning activities. The data generally indicate that the smallest counties are relying slightly more on DOLA and CCI for land use and planning inquiries than the larger and medium-sized counties, yet the largest counties more so on APA, followed by DOLA and consultants.

As with the previous survey year, the most prevalent guiding policies include those addressing right-to-farm, retention of agricultural land, recreation and tourism, and cultural and historic preservation. Issues addressed most frequently by regulations are planned unit developments and mobile home parks, followed by subdivision exemption, nuisance, signs, and home occupations. The higher percentage of Colorado's largest counties addressing home occupation regulations is perhaps attributable to an increasing demand for live-work space and mixed-use development found in the larger metropolitan areas within the state and potentially due to a stressed economy.

Only two percent of the responding counties indicated that they do not currently have zoning in place. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the responding counties are using traditional zoning practices, followed by 16% using a development permit or performance zoning system, and 11% using a hybrid system (mix of traditional and form-based or other type).

Intergovernmental agreements are becoming ever more popular. In 1983 when this land use survey was first administered, 44% of responding counties were using IGAs. In 2010

that number nearly doubled to 82% of responding counties. Sharing resources will continue to become progressively utilized especially during difficult economic times.

The 2010 Land Use Survey clearly illustrates the various methods and tools that Colorado counties are using to implement their planning activities. Guiding and regulating land use and development in Colorado is not a one-size-fits-all process. As our population continues to increase, a wider range of progressive planning tools are being used in Colorado. Counties are using discretion to determine the most effective and appropriate tools depending on population size, community needs, growth pressures, and ability to cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions. The increase in the overall level of planning expertise and regional collaboration in Colorado is evident from the results of this survey.

For questions regarding this survey, or to obtain tabular results, please contact:

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<http://dola.colorado.gov/dlg/osg/surveyresults.htm>

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