

Municipal Floodplain Zoning in North Dakota

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In order to determine the extent to which development on floodplains is regulated by North Dakota communities, a questionnaire¹ was sent in October 1971 to the mayors of 76 communities located adjacent to rivers, lakes or reservoirs. Returns were received from 68 communities. Two questionnaires were returned without response because the communities are not incorporated. The mayors of six communities did not respond either to the first questionnaire or to a follow-up request.

The responses to the questionnaire are tabulated in Table I. Only four communities had some form of floodplain zoning regulations: Grand Forks, Minot, Mott, and Wahpeton. In addition, the Mayor of Cavalier stated that building in the floodplain of his community required authorization of the City Council. Only three communities, Bismarck, Fargo, and Pembina had ordinances under consideration at the time the questionnaire was distributed. The small number of communities having or considering the establishment of such regulations is surprising considering the frequency with which floods have occurred in many communities.

¹The questionnaire was prepared and sent out in cooperation with the Bureau of Governmental Affairs at the University of North Dakota. I thank the Associate Director, Mr. Boyd Wright, for his assistance in this project.

TABLE I. STATUS OF FLOODPLAIN ZONING IN NORTH DAKOTA CITIES

CITY	ORDINANCE IN EFFECT	NO ORDINANCES		
		Ordinance under Consideration	Problem has been Discussed	No Planning No Discussion
Bathgate				x
Beulah				x
Bismarck		x		
Burlington			x	
Carpio				x
Cavalier			x	
Cayuga				x
Center				x
Coleharbor				x
Crystal			x	
Devils Lake				x
Dickey				x
Dickinson			x	
Donnybrook			x	
Drayton			x	
Dunseith			x	
Fairmount				x
Fargo		x		
Forest River			x	
Fort Yates				x
Garrison				x

TABLE I. (Continued)

CITY	ORDINANCE IN EFFECT	NO ORDINANCES		
		Ordinance under Consideration	Problem has been Discussed	No Planning No Discussion
Gladstone				x
Glen Ullin				x
Golden Valley				x
Grafton			x	
Grand Forks	x			
Halliday			x	
Harvey				x
Harwood				x
Hazen				x
Hoople				x
Horace			x	
Jamestown			x	
Kathryn				x
Kenmare				x
Killdeer			x	
LaMoure				x
Linton				x
Lisbon			x	
Mandan			x	
Mapleton			x	
Marmarth				x
Mayville			x	
Medora			x	
Minnewaukan				x
Minot	x			
Minto				x
Montpelier				x
Mott	x			
Neche			x	
New England				x
New Rockford				x
New Town			x	
Oakes				x
Park River				x
Pembina		x		
Portland				x
Riverdale				x
St. Thomas				x
Valley City			x	
Velva				x
Wahpeton	x			
Walhalla				x
Washburn				x
West Fargo			x	
Williston				x
Willow City				x
Zap				x