

From NIMBY to YIMBY to Mayor Quimby

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[Howard Slatkin](#)

The terms on which local governments are allowed to form, collect and appropriate tax revenues, and regulate land use have a profound impact on the urban and metropolitan landscape, and on the ability of planners to realize their objectives. Today, on topics from housing to renewable energy and transportation, the boundaries of local government authority have increasingly become a battleground for planning policy and politics. It is vital for planners to understand the basis of local government authority, and the ways in which it may be bounded, in order to comprehend the types of planning strategies that can effectively be pursued at the local, state, and federal levels.

With a focus on recent state-level reform agendas in California, New York, and elsewhere, we will examine federalism, government formation, equity, public finance, the relationship between states and local governments, cooperation and conflict between neighboring and overlapping entities, and the relationship between local government and its constituents. We will consider how the structure of local government authority, which varies among cities and over time, shapes land use, economic development, and other planning issues. We will examine the interplay between elective representation, planning processes, decision-making authority, and the social-equitable impact of local governance to understand the implications they have for local and state-level action on critical contemporary planning issues.