
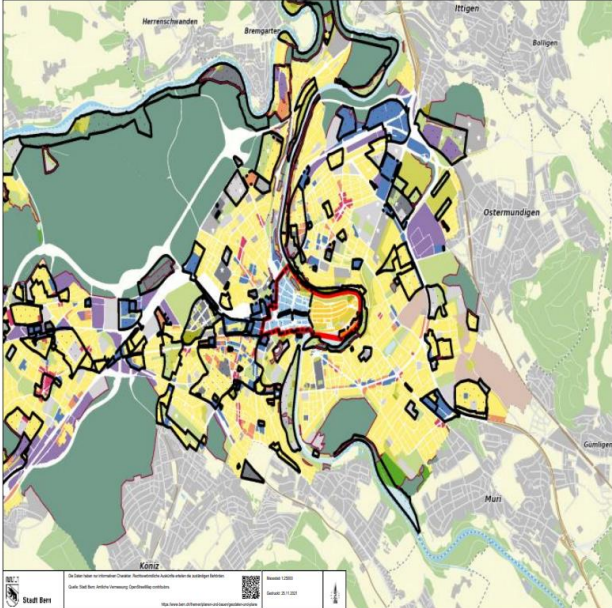


Fact sheet for planning levels

Planning level		Type of plan				
Municipality						
						
Planning level	Planning instrument	Content of plan	Legal basis	Policy maker	Legal impact	Scale
Federal level	Territorial Concept Switzerland	Abstract spatial strategy for the entire country distinguished 12 different actor areas	none	Elaborated by the Federal Office of Spatial Development (ARE). Approved and signed by the territorial planning authorities	none	Nationwide
	Sectoral Concept	Covers spatial relevant projects of a specific sector (typically infrastructure such as rail, energy, or sport facilities). Must comply with national laws.	Art. 13 SPA & Art. 14 2a SPZ	Elaborated by federal departments, approved by Federal Council	Legally binding to all public authorities	Nationwide, dependent on the respective content
	Sectoral Plan	Identical to the Sectoral Concept, but includes more concrete interventions such as locations for specific basic (e.g., transport infrastructure or agriculture). Must comply with national laws.	Art. 13 SPA & Art. 14 2a SPZ	Elaborated by federal departments, approved by Federal Council	Legally binding to all public authorities	Nationwide, dependent on the respective content
Cantonal level	Structure Plan	Spatial principles and strategies for the entire canton. Specific regulations concerning basic laws, planning and major projects.	Art. 6-12 SPA & Art. 1-13 SPZ and cantonal planning laws	Elaborated by cantonal planning department, approved by cantonal government or parliament	Legally binding to all public authorities	Covers the entire canton
Municipal level	Zoning Plan	Land use zones for the entire municipality. Accompanied by municipal building code. Must comply with the cantonal and planning laws (cantonal and federal).	Art. 14 2b SPA & Art. 1-13 SPZ and municipal building codes	Elaborated by municipal planning department or external planning office. Approved by municipal legislature. To be approved by local voters	Legally binding for all persons, incl. landowners	Covers the entire municipality
	Special Land Use Plan	Land use regulations for a specific project or specific area. Must comply with Structure Plan and planning laws (cantonal and federal). Can deviate from zoning plan.	Art. 14 2c SPA & Art. 1-13 SPZ and cantonal planning laws	Elaborated by municipal planning department or external planning office. Usually in cooperation with landowner or developer, approved by municipal legislature. To be approved by local voters	Legally binding for all persons, incl. landowners	Covers the perimeter of a specific project or specific area of high importance (usually decided in zoning plan)
						
<p>Source: City of Bern Zoning Plan (as of 01 December 2021)</p>						

Facts: Zoning Plan (City of Bern)

Legal basis

- City of Bern's Building Code (*Bauordnung der Stadt Bern*) of 24 September 2006 (status as of 19 August 2021) SSSB 721.1
- City of Bern's Municipal Constitution (*Gemeindeordnung der Stadt Bern*) of 3 December 1998 (status as of 1 August 2017)
- Canton of Bern's Building Law (*Baugesetz des Kantons Bern*) of 9 June 1985 (status as of 24 June 2020) BSG 721.0

Competences

The municipal planning department develops the zoning plan according to the objectives and priorities defined by the municipal parliament – within the canton's legal framework (in particular the canton's Structure Plan).

Binding force

The plan is legally binding for everyone (law-like legal character), including landowners. A prior approval by the ballot is needed (obligatory referendum). The zoning plan (and its textual complement: the building code) is the most important legal reference for planning permissions.

Tasks and content

The zoning plan assigns each parcel of land to a specific land-use zone. Development is possible in building zones (e.g. residential zone) (prior building permission required). Outside the building zones (e.g. agricultural zones), development is usually not possible unless for a limited number of explicitly defined exceptions (e.g. farms). The building code serves as the zoning plan's textual complement, and it determines the exact rules that apply in each zone, including the type and degree of permissible development.

Process, duration, participation

Before coming into force, the zoning plan has to be approved by a public vote (obligatory referendum) by the municipality's electorate. Additionally, the process includes a structured public consultation procedure (open for everybody, including political actors and special interest groups) and a conformity assessment by the cantonal authorities. Municipalities often add sophisticated participation processes (including information events, roundtable, and test planning workshops). Furthermore, the draft of the zoning plan is most often preceded by strategic planning documents, sectoral technical reports, and scenario planning.

Duration of validity

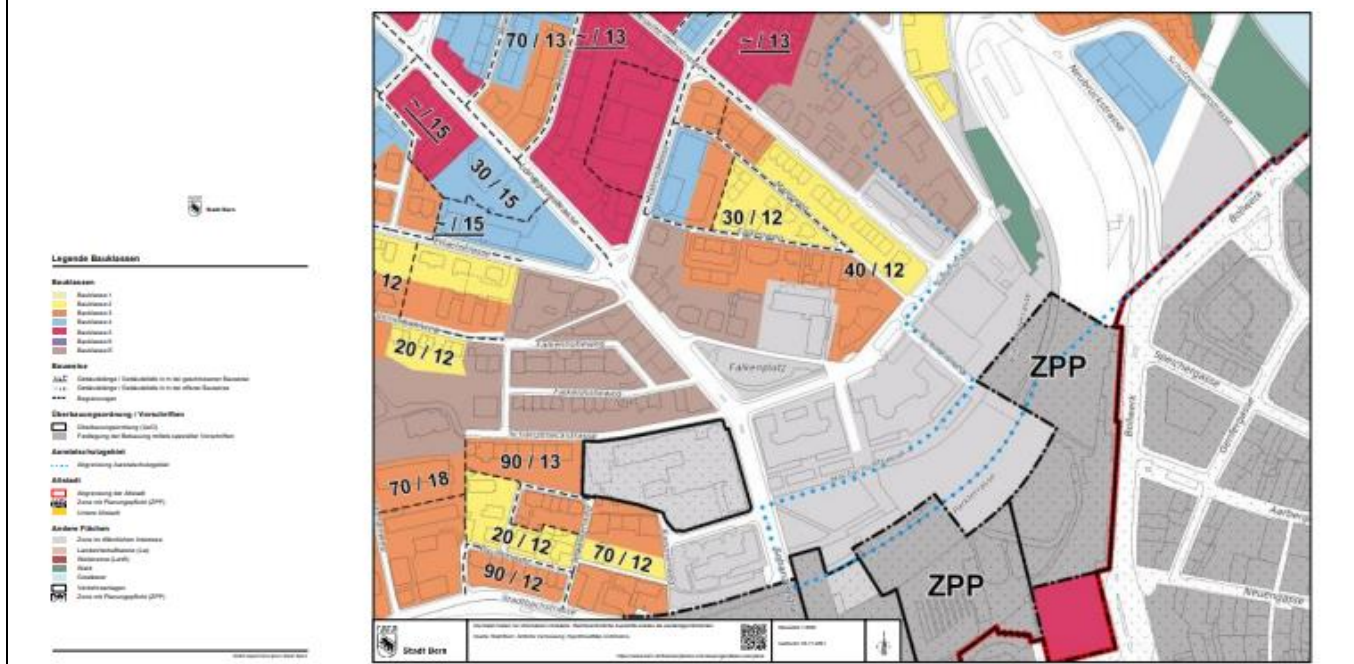
By law, zoning plans have a 15 year planning period (Article 15 SPA). In planning practice, political debates delay renewal procedures quite often. Thus, zoning plans are usually valid for 15 to 20 years.

Details of the plan



Detail 1: Excerpt from Bern's Zoning Plan

Source: City of Bern Zoning Plan (as of 01 December 2021). Section Länggasse / Grosse Schanze.



Detail 2: Excerpt of the very same area in Bern, here the Building Class Plan

Source: City of Bern Building Class Plan (as of 01 December 2021). Section Länggasse / Grosse Schanze

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Characteristics

Location of the area

The zoning plan covers the entire territory of the municipality.

Initial situation

The current version was last amended in 2013, replacing the former version.

Particularities of the process

Unlike most Swiss cities, the city of Bern has two types of plan: the zoning plan (*Nutzungszonenplan*) and the building class plan (*Bauklassenplan*). The former defines the type of permissible development, while the latter determines the degree of permissible development (e.g. number of floors or floor area ratio). Usually, those two dimensions are combined in one plan.

Notes and links

- City of Bern's Building Code. Available in German at: https://stadtrecht.bern.ch/lexoverview-home/lex-721_1 (Accessed: 01 December 2021)
- City of Bern's Zoning Plan. Available in municipal Online GIS at: https://map.bern.ch/stadtplan/?grundplan=stadtplan_farbig&koor=2600650,1199750&zoom=2&hl=0&layer=Nutzungszone&subtheme=CatBauen,CatPlanen (Accessed: 01 December 2021)
- City of Bern's Building Class Plan. Available in municipal Online GIS at: https://map.bern.ch/stadtplan/?grundplan=stadtplan_farbig&koor=2600650,1199750&zoom=2&hl=0&layer=Bauklassen&subtheme=CatBauen (Accessed: 01 December 2021)