Model Zoning Ordinance/Zoning Update Tool Outline

Need:

Several smaller cities in Fresno County have a need to update their zoning ordinances but do not have the staff time or funds or expertise available to do so. There have been numerous new State zoning requirements in the last few years, cities may have adopted new General Plan or amendments creating inconsistencies with their zoning ordinance, or their code is just out of date, not user friendly, or is not accomplishing city goals for encouraging and shaping development for a small rural city.

Purpose:

A. Develop a tool/checklist for the small cities in Fresno County to systematically assess their current zoning ordinance to identify:
   - Consistency with their General Plan and Housing Element
   - Is it user friendly? For staff? For the public?
   - Up to date on the latest State regulations for zoning codes, specifically housing related laws such as second units, accessory dwellings, farmworker housing, etc.
   - Review planning permit process: is it working? Opportunities to streamline
     o Review allowable use categories: By-Right, Director Review, CUP
   - Blueprint Compatibility
   - Are standards up to date? Setbacks, building height, FAR, parking etc.
     o Do standards reflect community needs and values?
     o Do standards accomplish what they are intended to do?
   - Specialty Regulations. Are they legal, up to date, needed, need to delete, etc.
     o Sign Ordinance
     o Adult businesses
     o Cell phone towers
     o Accessory dwelling units
     o Overlay districts
     o Parking
     o Fencing
     o Special Uses
   - Identify issue areas
B. Provide a template or tool to update or develop a new zoning code to include:
   - Divided into modules so cities can design the update to meet their needs and budget
   - Standard layout for organizing their code coordinated with the module approach (plug-n-play)
   - Provide standard code language a city can modify to fit their standards or needs
   - Provide graphics that make the code user friendly
   - Provide flow charts for different types of permits to illustrate the permit process
   - Provide model ordinances for specialty areas that meet legal requirements
   - Standard definitions
   - Development standards and processes that are straight-forward and easily managed and implemented