

THE STUDY OF URBAN ZONING AND ITS APPLICATION TO RURAL ZONING

An Outline Presented

By

F. W. Sayers, Subcommittee Chairman.

It has become evident that a roadway, traffic way or freeway is not only the area from ditch line to ditch line, but that the countryside through which the pavement runs is an integral part of the highway.

A highway should be looked at as being built not for the vehicle but for the passengers in the vehicle.

Factors to be considered:

Safety, convenience and comfort of travelers.

Economical transportation of goods and passengers.

Property values of adjacent lands.

Future expansion of roadway widths.

Sightliness and attractiveness of the roadsides.

Adequate right of way for effective roadside improvement.

Rural zoning as a means of controlling building lines, providing adequate right of way for present and future, and providing forest areas, agricultural areas, residential areas, and business areas.

Progress in rural zoning being made in some States

ZONING - DISCUSSION

With regard to the part which zoning must play in the proper development of the roadside, Mr. Sayers pointed out the need for an outline which would incorporate the purposes of this phase of the work. The Committee has made a survey of facts concerning zoning for highways, but for the purpose of developing a report there is need for a study relative to principles of zoning for highway purposes, and actual practice as already applied. There should also be an outline of definite research problems and a questionnaire by means of which every State could cooperate in furnishing data.

The Committee went on record as favoring comprehensive zoning acts for each region of each State, and enabling acts permitting set-back lines for future highway use. Rural zoning has made state-wide progress in California and Wisconsin, but in the knowledge of the Committee this progress has not been equaled in other States. A state-wide zoning act was recently defeated in the Missouri State Legislature, but this State is probably leading the way for the entire country in establishing a state-wide standard of 150-foot of right of way with 10-ft. shoulders. It was pointed out that the traffic surveys now being conducted by the States in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads will provide information upon which future zoning legislation may be based.

Chairman Neale requested that each of the members of the sub-committee present his ideas concerning the objectives of highway zoning. The opinions given emphasized the need for providing ordinances which would establish future widths for rights of way such as would allow proper planting and grading. At the same time it was noted that a minimum setback line should be established for the erection of buildings. Mr. Holley was of the opinion that the highway departments should have jurisdiction over unsightly areas such as automobile graveyards, and that they should be able to control the size and position of billboards. Billboards in Indiana can be placed only where the highway commission designates. Mr. Sayers mentioned the fact that Missouri has a law prohibiting the establishment of junk yards along highways, and requiring such sites to be concealed by high-board fences.

As justification for rural zoning ordinances Mr. Stellhorn noted the need for adequate right of way depending on immediate and future traffic requirements, preservation of natural scenery, and the prevention of commercial encroachment; also the necessity of determining locations for scenic parkways and suburban approaches. Professor Elwood expressed the matter in terms of the preservation of established values: the highway investment, the natural scenic beauty of the region, and the economic development of the adjacent land in accordance with a comprehensive zoning plan. He also stated his belief that city ordinances should prevail beyond the city limits, since the worst abuses are at the edges of cities.