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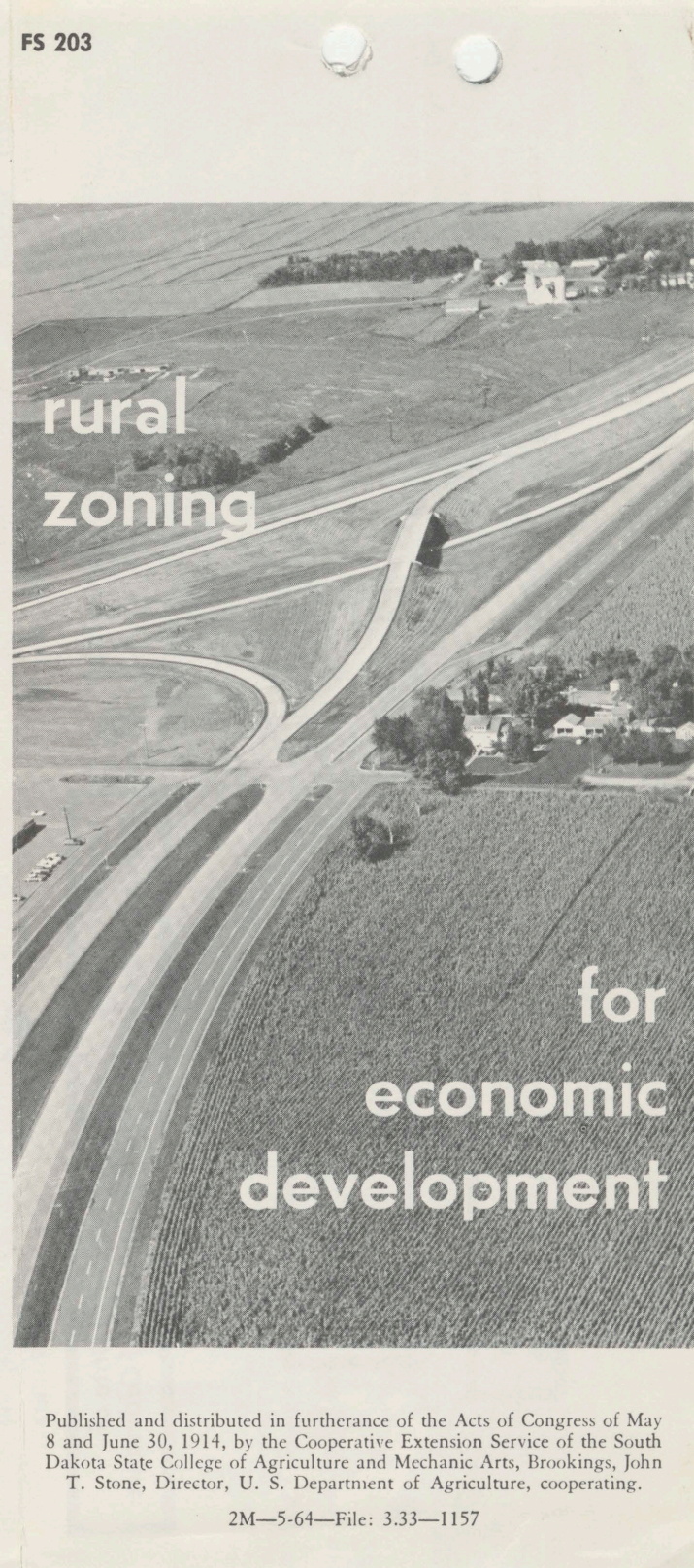
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An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A multi-lane highway with a complex interchange system, including a roundabout and several overpasses, winds through the scene. The surrounding area is a mix of agricultural fields, some of which appear to be planted with corn, and a small cluster of buildings, possibly a farm or a small town, in the upper right. The overall scene is a blend of infrastructure and rural development.

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Rural Zoning for Economic Development

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RURAL ZONING NEW IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Rural zoning, a relatively new concept in area development, is gaining the interest of South Dakotans mainly because land is in demand for uses other than for agriculture.

Two important physical changes have had much to do with creating new demands for land use in recent years. The changes are: (1) creation of the Great Lakes of South Dakota as a result of building four main stem dams on the Missouri River and (2) construction of north-south and east-west Interstate highways.

Land is in demand for lake shore development and service installations along Interstate highways. Also a pressure for new land uses is developing around cities and larger towns.

Proper rural zoning allows orderly development of lake shores, highway services and suburban areas, plus giving South Dakota people a tool to assist in maintaining the scenic beauty of the state. The new highways and the Great Lakes of South Dakota will attract many people to the state for the first time. What they see will determine to a large extent how long they stay, how many times they return. And, how much money they contribute to the South Dakota economy.

RURAL ZONING DEFINED

Rural zoning can be defined as "a legal tool (ordinance) used by local people to put planned area development into effect." Planning is the time consuming part of the job. A zoning ordinance, as such, is not a long document. It simply gives county government power to put the plan into effect. According to South Dakota Law, county government must be granted this power by a petition of 60% of the people affected by the proposed ordinance.

It is possible for a county to obtain a zoning ordinance without going through the planning process. The county could simply adopt an ordinance written in some other county where conditions appear to be somewhat similar. This method would save much time and effort. But it would fail to take advantage of zoning to explore resource development opportunities of the county and to use the zoning ordinance as a device for giving direction to development efforts.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Sequence of the planning process consists of 5 parts.

Part 1. Collect the facts regarding physical and human resources available in the county.

Under physical resources, data is needed on soil, water, timberland, roads, industries, minerals, railways, airlines, wetlands, wildlife, public utilities, public lands, private lands, tax delinquent land and others.

Under human resources data is needed on population, population distribution, age groups, educational levels by age groups, present occupation by age groups, incomes in various occupational groupings, in-migration, out-migration, schools, churches local governmental structure and others that may be of importance locally.

Usually 70% to 80% of data needed to establish these facts may be found in local offices: the county agent, work unit conservationist, ASCS office manager, county superintendent of schools, county assessor and county highway engineer.

Part 2. After gathering facts, available resources must be analyzed to determine strengths and weaknesses.

For example: What are capabilities of various soils? What is the present soil fertility level? Is the water supply adequate for present needs and can it be expanded—if so where? How much tax delinquent land and why is it delinquent? What percent of the population is in nonproductive age groups (the very young and very old)? What age groups are leaving or entering the county? Is there a shortage of school facilities? What kind of vocational training is being offered? Is it the right kind? Would an unused water resource return a greater income to the people of the community if used for irrigation, for industry, or for recreation?

This process of analyzing available resources and scrutinizing strengths and weaknesses will begin to give direction to the all important. . . .

Part 3. In this step—the selection of goals—care must be taken to select goals that are realistic to take advantage of resource strengths brought out in Part 2 and, where feasible, strengthen resource weaknesses made evident by Part 2.

Examples of goals are listed below but a county should not attempt to fit itself to them. On the contrary, goals must be selected that fit the resources of the county.

- Prevent land waste.
- Encourage industry.
- Save most productive lands for agriculture.
- Preserve wildlife habitat.
- Keep housing off flood plains.
- Preserve and develop recreational lands.
- Maintain scenic areas.
- Prevent "sprawling" population.
- Protect or improve the tax base.

Part 4. Prepare a plan to reach these goals. This involves drawing boundaries of use districts (commercial, residential, recreational, agricultural, and others), writing regulations, holding hearings, re-writing regulations as necessary until an ordinance emerges that will encourage the realization of selected goals.

Part 5. Keeping the plan up to date. Plans and ordinances must be updated periodically as conditions change. Sometimes even goals may be advantageously changed. Planning is therefore a continuing process.

WHO DOES THE PLANNING

Planning may be done by Citizens Planning Committees with assistance from a local Technical Sub-Committee, by hired professional planners or a combination of the two.

A suggested organization for the Citizens Planning Committee is shown below. No county should assume, however, that this organization is the only one possible. Variations should be made to fit local conditions.

SUGGESTED CITIZENS PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee Proper

Zoning Commissions
Farm Organizations
Chambers of Commerce
Women's Organizations
Extension Board
Development Associations
ASCS Committeemen
Township Boards
Wildlife Clubs
Power Suppliers
Service Clubs
Soil and Water Organizations
Others as needed

Technical Sub-Committee

County Agent
WUC
ASCS Office Manager
County Assessor
County Highway Engineer
County Superintendent of Schools
County FHA
Game, Fish and Parks
Water Resources Commission
Corps of Army Engineers
Bureau of Reclamation
Others as needed.

Counties may secure the services of hired planners. Section 701 of the Federal Housing Act of 1954, as amended, provides that two-thirds of the cost of the planning program can be paid from federal funds to cities or counties having populations of less than 50,000 and where urbanization is taking place.

Hiring a professional planner does not relieve the Committee proper of any responsibilities. It will, however, relieve the Technical Sub-Committee of much detailed work. The Committee proper remains the representative of the people who must make the decisions.

TOOLS PLANNERS NEED

Persons responsible for planning will need tools with which to work. Most of these tools are statistical data and most are available in various county offices.

Some of the more important tools are:

- Population statistics—density, distribution, age groups.
- Schools—type, location, enrollment, curriculums.
- Farms—size, abandoned, soil bank.
- Land ownerships—private, state, federal, tax delinquent.



Soils—types, topography, drainage, class.
 Available water supplies—surface, under-
 ground.
 Roads—county, state, federal.
 Recreational developments—present, potential.
 Industries—present, potential.
 Utilities.
 Maps, maps and more maps.

Need for maps is emphasized because their use is the most effective way of making statistical data meaningful. All data mentioned and much more can be effectively plotted on county base maps.

The task of assembling data and plotting it on maps is normally the job of the Technical Sub-

Committee or the professional planner if one is hired.

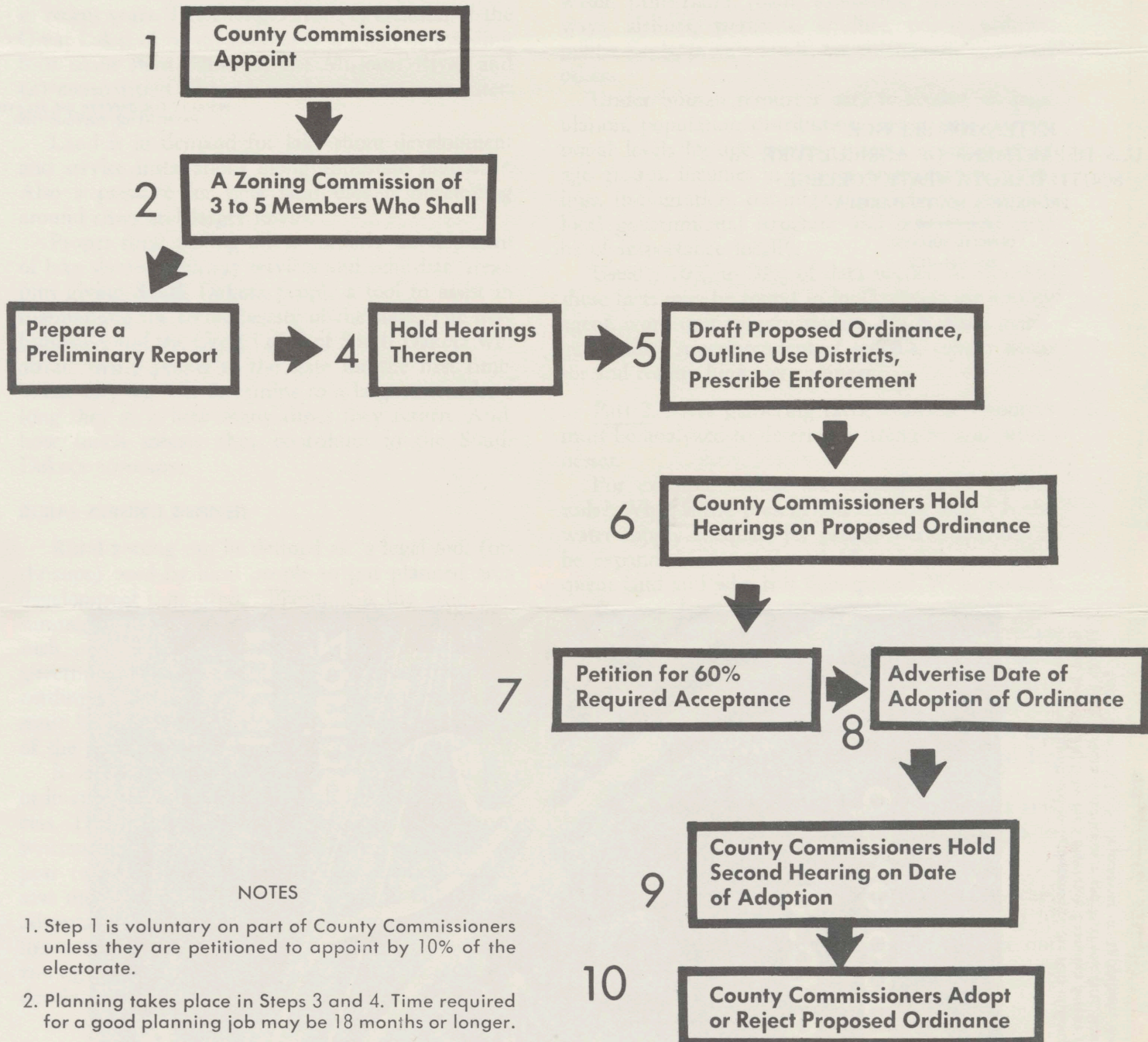
LEGAL STEPS

The South Dakota Rural Zoning Law as passed in 1941, amended in 1961, and effective as of calendar year 1964, is shown graphically on the accompanying chart.

Copies of the Zoning Law are available at County Extension Offices.

The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for the initial step—appointment of the Zoning Commission. At least one member of the Zoning Commission must be a County Commissioner.

LEGAL STEPS IN RURAL ZONING



NOTES

- 1. Step 1 is voluntary on part of County Commissioners unless they are petitioned to appoint by 10% of the electorate.
- 2. Planning takes place in Steps 3 and 4. Time required for a good planning job may be 18 months or longer.

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