

REPORT OF THE

LAND USE POLICIES STUDY COMMITTEE

Submitted to the Iowa Legislative Council
and the Members of the
Second Session of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly

LAND USE POLICIES STUDY COMMITTEE
PROGRESS REPORT
1971

House Concurrent Resolution 25, introduced during the First Session of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly, requested that the Iowa Legislative Council establish a study of land use policies and related problems in the state of Iowa and make recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly. The Legislative Council created a ten-member study committee and appointed the following legislative membership:

Senator Charles O. Laverty
Senator G. William Gross
Senator Wayne D. Keith
Senator James F. Schaben
Senator George L. Shawver
Representative Herbert L. Campbell
Representative Dale M. Cochran
Representative James I. Middleswart
Representative Andrew Varley
Representative William P. Winkelman

In addition, under the Legislative Council's nonlegislative member policy, the Study Committee has recommended the appointment of Mr. Frank H. Mendell and Mr. Allen J. Meier as nonlegislative members.

During the 1971 interim, the Study Committee has held four meetings and has scheduled a fifth meeting for December 22. With the exception of the organizational meeting, the Study Committee has devoted its meetings primarily to receiving testimony from representatives of business and government who are knowledgeable of current land use practices, potential land use needs, and current and potential land use problems. The guest speakers were asked to give their advice and ideas on what should constitute the basic elements of a stand land use policy.

Twenty-five persons responded to the Study Committee's invitation, and presented written and oral testimony. A list of the invitees is attached to, and by this reference made a part of, this report. A copy of the written testimony is on file in the Legislative Service Bureau. Recommendations presented by the guest speakers were many and varied; however, the following statements represent a general consensus of a majority of the guest speakers:

1. Historically, land uses in Iowa generally have been good, but there are examples which demonstrate poor planning or uses which have been "too intensive".

2. A broad, flexible land use policy should be developed and implemented to correct land use mistakes if possible, and to protect the land resources of the state for posterity.

3. A statewide water resource policy is an inseparable part of a state land use or land resource policy.

4. Social and environmental goals, in addition to economic considerations, should be considered when land use priorities are being determined.

5. Land use practices which tend to commit land to irreversible uses should be carefully evaluated to protect the long-term public interest.

6. An effective state land use policy cannot be the product of thousands of unrelated decisions made by single-purpose agencies, local governments, or private persons without regard for each other, or regional, state and national concerns.

At its fifth meeting scheduled for December 22, the Study Committee plans to prepare and adopt a statement reflecting its preliminary findings based on its study of the testimony and other background material received during the 1971 interim and more clearly defining its study objectives. Also, additional consideration will be given to the agendas for the 1972 interim. Some members of the Committee have expressed an interest in holding regional public hearings throughout the state to give the public an opportunity to express their views on a state land use policy directly before the Study Committee.

The Legislative Service Bureau has assisted the Study Committee by obtaining research material including "Toward a State Land Use Policy for the '70's", a paper prepared by Dr. Richard H. Slavin, Director of the Planning and Community Affairs Agency, Olympia, Washington and summaries of land use laws being implemented by the states of Vermont and Maine. The Bureau staff has also assisted by scheduling meetings and testimony, and preparing minutes of the meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

SENATOR CHARLES O. LAVERTY
Chairman

Statement of the
LAND USE POLICIES STUDY COMMITTEE
December, 1971

The Land Use Policies Study Committee, after hearing more than twenty-five persons, including representatives from state and county governments, private organizations and groups found that there is a very strong opinion favoring the development of a land use policy in Iowa. It was noted by most of those appearing before the Committee that any land use policy should be based on "using the land for the purpose it is best suited to provide the needs and desires of the people today and in the future."

It is obvious that as Iowa continues to grow there will be increasing pressure on the land for various purposes, public and private. To assure Iowans of an orderly growth and development of the state consistent with a desirable environment, a more complete understanding of land uses is necessary.

Some reasons given for a land use policy are: (1) to provide for the use of land for the purpose for which it is best suited, i.e., agriculture, industry, recreation, residential, etc.; (2) to protect those areas that have special geologic, aesthetic, scenic, scientific, and historic values; (3) to protect landowners from having their property taken for purposes other than for which it is best suited; (4) to encourage state, county, city and other local agencies to include land use planning in developing their programs; (5) to provide for adequate study of the long-term and short-term effects (ecologic, economic, and social) of land conversions from present use, to another use, especially any nonreversible use, before such conversions are made; (6) to coordinate the manner in which public agencies make decisions concerning land use.

It is the consensus of the Land Use Policies Study Committee that the general public should be informed of the purpose and progress of the land use policy study and should be given the opportunity to participate in the study. Therefore, the Land Use Policies Study Committee plans to hold regional hearings throughout the state to give any interested citizen the opportunity to express his views on the desirability of land use legislation and, if legislation is deemed desirable, to suggest guidelines and methods of implementing such legislation.

LAND USE POLICIES STUDY COMMITTEE

GUEST LIST

1. Mr. William McLaughlin, Iowa Housing Corporation,
1707 High Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
2. Dr. John F. Timmons, 213 East Hall,
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010
3. Dr. Samuel J. Tuthill, State Geologist,
16 West Jefferson Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52240
4. Mr. Robert Mickle, Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission,
265 Jewett Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
5. Mr. Joseph R. Coupal, Jr., Director,
Iowa State Highway Commission, Ames, Iowa 50010
6. Mr. Fred Prierwert, Director, Iowa Conservation Commission,
Valley Bank Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
7. Mr. Sherry Fisher, State Soil Conservation Committee,
Central National Bank and Trust Company, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
8. Mr. Lauren Soth, Des Moines Register and Tribune Company,
715 Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
9. Mr. Warren Davison, Cerro Gordo County Engineer,
Cerro Gordo County Courthouse, Mason City, Iowa 50401
10. Mr. Robert Hays, Executive Director,
League of Iowa Municipalities,
444 Insurance Exchange Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
11. Mr. Alvin Bull, Wallace-Homestead Company,
1912 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
12. Mr. William J. Wagner, 1106 High Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
13. Dr. James B. Sinatra, 103 Landscape Architecture Building,
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010
14. Mr. Othie R. McMurry, Director, Iowa Natural Resources Council,
Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319
15. Dr. Frank Horton, Director, Urban and Regional Research,
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240
16. Dr. David Trauger, Iowa Confederation of Environmental
Organizations, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010

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17. Mr. Earl L. King, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives,
323 University Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50314
18. Dr. John T. Pesek, Jr., Department of Agronomy,
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010
19. Mr. Allen J. Meier, Legislative Director,
Iowa Federation of Labor, 2000 Walker, Des Moines, Iowa 50317
20. Mr. Ralph Schlenker, Vice President,
Iowa Power and Light Company,
823 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
21. Mr. Frank W. Berlin, Director, Iowa Aeronautics Commission,
Des Moines Municipal Airport, Des Moines, Iowa 50321
22. Mr. William H. Greiner, Director,
Department of Soil Conservation,
Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319
23. Mrs. Roberta A. Whitson, Basic Freedoms, Inc.
2606 51st Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50310
24. Mr. Victor Ziegler,
United States Environmental Protection Agency,
911 Walnut Street, Room 702, Kansas City, Missouri 64106
25. Mr. Chet Sloan, Iowa Good Roads Association,
402 Garver Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309