The 1960 General Assembly made available for the first time legislation which permits all counties in Kentucky to organize planning programs. This legislation has important implications for development of the state, and particularly for the many rural counties which are in a precarious economic situation. A county planning program can help responsible local officials formulate the kind of comprehensive plan of action that will be necessary to meet the problems in many of these counties.

This paper will not be concerned with the details of how to go about organizing a county planning program. Mr. Walter Shouse of the Kentucky Department of Economic Development has described what can be done in the July 1960 issue of the Kentucky Farm Bureau News. Mr. Shouse is not only an able and experienced technical planner but is well acquainted with the problems here in Kentucky. He can give you good advice if you call on him.

You will need technical planning assistance in your county planning programs. A limited staff is already available for this purpose in Mr. Shouse's division of the Department of Economic Development. However, on the basis of the trends outlined in this paper and the magnitude of the development problem in many counties, the amount of available technical planning assistance must be increased substantially.

**Population Trends Affect Rural Counties**

To understand the need for comprehensive county planning it is necessary to understand some of the forces at work in the nation and in Kentucky which are having major effects on rural development. The basic trend is the quickened pace of urbanization and industrialization in the past 20 years. This is not a new condition. Over 100 years ago this nation began to experience a growth of cities and expansion of its industrial facilities. Starting slowly at about the time of the Civil War, these trends gained momentum in the years that followed, and by the 1940 to 1960 period they became dominant factors in national development.

How strong these trends are is indicated by the fact that only 30 years ago about 22 percent of our total labor force were employed in agriculture. Today only 9 percent are so employed. At the present time over 60 percent of the population of the nation live in 189 metropolitan areas. Another 15 percent live in smaller urban centers. There is no substantial evidence that these trends will slacken in the foreseeable future. Moreover, these trends represent forces to which all development programs must be related if they are to have a reasonable chance for success.

We have become an urban-industrial nation, and all of us—from the resident of the largest metropolitan area to the subsistence farmer living in the most remote mountain cove—are effected by this situation. It influences where we live and how we make a living. It also challenges our concepts of resource development, of urban-rural relationships, and of the place of science and technology in human
endeavor. A recent study entitled "This Changing South" describes the situation as follows:\textsuperscript{1}

Recent decades have seen two major population trends throughout the Americas. One of these has been a rapid increase in the numbers of the peoples, almost entirely as a result of rising fertility rates and falling death rates. The other has been an unprecedented mobility, with heavy emphasis on the movement of rural folk to cities. The first of these trends has forced revision of all forecasts to the population future of the Americas. The second has made for basic challenges to all the institutions of American society. The acceleration of population growth has appeared in the United States, as well as in the rest of the hemisphere, and has been shared in by all the major areas of the nation. The burgeoning of our cities has been even more general, and has achieved a startling tempo even in the states whose total population has declined or increased very slowly.

Continuing to show a capacity for growth, the population of the region nevertheless continues to grow more slowly than its own natural increase. But the over-all data of growth conceal two opposite trends within the region. More than half of the counties, with a fourth of the people, have been losing population during recent years, while the remainder of the counties show very rapid rates of increase. Thus those concerned with public policy and with business and financial leadership must adjust to two opposite but simultaneous trends, and to what may be a rapid redistribution of the population of the states in the region.

Applying these trends to Kentucky, it is interesting to note that while the state has had a pronounced shift from an agricultural to an urban-industrial economy the per capita income is still considerably less than the national average. This disparity is in large measure the result of the higher proportion of Kentucky's population which remain on small farms or in extractive industries than in most parts of the nation.

But considering the magnitude of the problem facing Kentucky, there has been greater progress in adjusting to these trends than is indicated by some of the over-all population figures. For example, between 1940 and 1960 the total Kentucky population grew by only 195,000 people (6.7 percent increase as contrasted with a national increase of 35.5 percent). But during this same period Kentucky's nonfarm population is conservatively estimated to have increased by 750,000, while the farm population declined by over \( \frac{1}{2} \) million. During this same period the per capita income of Kentucky increased from 54 to 70 percent of the national average.

It should be noted, however, that the proportion of the total Kentucky population still living on farms is roughly 2\( \frac{1}{2} \) times the national average. If the gap in per capita income is to be closed, it is clear that there must be additional shifts out of agriculture and the extractive mining industries.

In terms of the prospects for the future it is likely that in the next 20 to 30 years the proportion of people living on farms may decline to about the present national average. We would hope that the per capita income would at least approach the national average. Such changes will require further shifts in the employment pattern in Kentucky. It will require an increase in industrial employment, the consolidation of farms, and the mechanization of mines. And as per capita income increases from these sources we may expect an expansion of the service industries such as retailing, wholesaling, and the professions which currently provide a much larger proportion of the total employment in the nation as a whole than in Kentucky.

\textsuperscript{1}John M. Maclellan and Joe S. Floyd, Jr., "This Changing South," University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1966, p. VII.

Referring specifically to the South, this same study goes on:\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 142.
All of these trends emphasize that cities have become the focal points of our economy. As a result the major questions facing many rural counties are the relation of the county to the urban centers and how to guide county development so that it will be able to fit into the main stream of American economic life. These questions cannot be answered adequately by viewing resources and development problems as if the pull to the cities did not exist.

To relate these trends to rural counties, this paper will consider three resource problems which must be a part of any over-all county planning program. These are the development of recreation, highway, and industrial land resources.

Recreation Resources

In many Kentucky counties there are magnificent natural and man-made recreation resources. The latter are largely the result of dam and reservoir construction. The examples discussed here are drawn from the experience with the system of dams and reservoirs built by TVA in the Tennessee River basin. The principles illustrated, however, are applicable generally to problems of recreation resource development.

The TVA reservoirs created major recreation resources for development by public agencies and private enterprise. TVA works with state and local agencies to find out where some of these resources are and how they might be used. Through this process TVA reserves land in its custody for use as state parks, city and county parks, and public access areas. The state park developments on lower Kentucky Lake are examples of how the State of Kentucky has used these resources for the benefit of all the people of the state.

The job of planning for recreation development cannot be done exclusively by federal and state agencies or be confined to lands in public ownership. In addition to joining in studies of public recreation facilities, county planning organizations need to appraise recreation resources from the point of view of the contribution they make to the economy of the county. Here development must come by investment in commercial recreation ventures and in cottages and summer homes.

But look what has been happening on some of the TVA reservoirs. For example, in an east Tennessee county which has lost population and which has serious economic problems an out-of-state developer acquired title to a large tract of waterfront property. The land was heavily wooded and had interesting topography and superb access to large bodies of water. It was well suited for a commercial boat dock and a recreation subdivision. Both would have helped the economy of the county.

The property was subdivided into 50 x 80 foot lots. A trail was bulldozed out to provide access, and a small area was set aside for a commercial recreation development. About a thousand lots were sold.

Now the county is feeling the pinch. The roads are washed out and virtually impassable. A few shacks were built, and the other owners abandoned their investment as they realized what had happened. Today the only structure in one large sector of this subdivision is a junked caboose that had been dragged to the site. The man who invested in the boat dock to serve the development has abandoned his investment, and the beached wreckage of the docking facilities is all that remains of this business venture. Over two thirds of the lots are tax delinquent to the point of sale. In short, a rural slum was created.

The tragedy of this story is that the county for all practical purposes has lost a chance for sound recreation development of the area. The lesson in the story is that the subdivision I described a moment ago is actually the result of urbanization. If the county had looked at its resources and had been concerned with the kind of development that took place, it could have had a flourishing recreation center. It could have provided employment and brought new people into the county. It could have had a positive addition to the tax base.

Circumstances such as these make clear not only the reasonableness but the
urgent need for counties to adopt development standards—standards which would encourage growth and at the same time protect limited recreation resources that exist in many of our rural counties. Frequently the major concern is for immediate rather than sound development which can add to the long-range growth of the county.

Highway Resources

Transportation is an important part of resource development. In our present urban-industrial economy industry is becoming more and more market oriented. A recent publication noted, "Detailed study of industrial location . . . shows clearly that for the great majority of industries . . . the location of markets tends to exert the dominant locational pull." This suggests, of course, that counties in their planning programs should consider their relationship to the major transportation systems of the country. For example, the System of Interstate and Defense Highways is now in the construction stage and in a relatively few years will span the nation with highways capable of moving high volumes of traffic rapidly and efficiently. It may not be important that one of these highways pass through your county, but it is important that the highways in your county provide for easy access to the system.

In this connection rural counties, if they are realistic in their appraisal of the problem, will recognize in the trends noted above that almost all of the population growth in the past 20 years has occurred in and adjacent to metropolitan areas. Such growth has occurred for sound economic reasons. Planning a county highway system requires consideration of the relationship of the county to the metropolitan areas, keeping in mind that the Interstate System will open up large new areas for homes, stores, and factories and expand the area with easy access to the important services available in the metropolitan centers.

This point is illustrated by a recent experience of a rural county some distance from a metropolitan area. This county is currently concerned with its economic problems and has organized an industrial development committee. In looking over the problem facing the county its greatest economic asset appears to be its relationship to the metropolitan area. The interstate highway system when completed will bring the county within a 30- to 35-minute drive of the central business district. The county could provide a pool of industrial land which the metropolitan county lacked.

What is needed from a long-range point of view is a county highway system or plan which will assure that small cities within the county have good access to the expressway. By keeping the interchange and roads leading to the expressway system free of congestion, it can capitalize on the economic advantages of its location.

All roads or even the major roads need not be limited access highways. What is required, as Mr. Ward suggested at one of the conference sessions yesterday, is a county highway plan which will provide a circulation system for the county and easy access to the regional highways. Such a plan could provide for an orderly and systematic highway improvement program related to present and future traffic needs and to the over-all economic development of the county. It would also provide for structures to be set back from major county highways and for holding points of access to the smallest number consistent with good development and with a sound land use plan for the county. It would relate highways to rail, water, and air transportation facilities.

Industrial Land Resources

Concern with industrial land resources is an essential part of a county planning program.

In the industrial world in which we live the concept of resources has changed.

Not too many years ago we tended to think of resources only in terms of minerals, forests, and other products of land; but resources in a present-day sense involve a much broader concept. Today markets and transportation, the location of service facilities, housing, and all the related community facilities are important resources.

These ideas have a bearing on our efforts to find and preserve adequate sites for industrial development. The land must not only have the topographic and foundation conditions necessary for low construction costs, but it must be related to the transportation facilities in the county and to the areas which will provide housing and related community facilities.

Also, as was noted above in connection with transportation, the relationship of a particular county to the major metropolitan areas may be one of the most important factors in the selection of industrial sites and, in fact, to the industrial development of a particular county.

In some instances a particular combination of resources may be the key to industrial growth. For example, one Tennessee county that borders a navigable stream also has the only railway and highway crossing over a long stretch of the river. Whereas most of the county is rugged and forested, these crossings are adjacent to level and buildable land. The combination of transportation facilities and suitable land makes this area an important industrial asset for the county. Fortunately, the county took steps to protect the land for industrial use and as a result it is becoming a major industrial area.

Although there are no communities in the immediate vicinity, two towns are located within a short commuting distance. One of these is in an adjoining county. Both cities have had considerable growth and have attempted to improve their housing and other community facilities as an essential part of the over-all industrial program. Both have active city planning programs to supplement the regional industrial effort.

This example thus illustrates the advantages of cooperation between cities and counties rather than each city and county attempting to "go it alone." In fact, a regional program for industrial development and for the preservation of important industrial areas is probably the key to the future development of many areas. From this point of view the Kentucky county planning legislation very wisely encourages cities and counties to join together in their planning efforts.

These are but three kinds of resource development problems which might be the concern of a county planning program.

These programs would recognize that with present population and economic trends the old distinction between urban and rural areas no longer exists. What seems to be emerging is an urban-industrial economy in which both the rural and the urban areas have a common stake. This in turn is leading to the growth and development of areas far removed from our cities. Yet in spite of these trends it is surprising that more counties have not given attention to official county-wide planning problems.

A study of the Southern Appalachian Region, comprising the mountain counties extending from the Pennsylvania state line southeast to Georgia and Alabama, found that there were 132 local governmental units with official planning agencies. But the surprising fact is that only 18 counties had such planning agencies. One other important finding was that in the few instances where cities and counties have joined together in their planning programs they are not only better financed but have staffs which are providing adequate service to both city and county officials. This suggests that it is time for cities and counties to work together for the kind of organization that can provide the best planning services possible.

And finally we are finding that short-range improvising to meet our problems is no longer equal to the task. County planning programs can provide the hard-headed and realistic consideration which present-day problems demand. By this process many counties will be able to appraise the opportunities available to them and will find their place in our present urban-industrial society.