

Public Planning

STATE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

State Planning Commission

Chairman: Joseph Meyerhoff, 1963

Ex officio members: William S. James, State Senate; E. Homer White, Jr., House of Delegates

Appointed members: F. Murray Benson, 1961; James H. Grove, Jr., 1961; Saul I. Stern, 1961; Sidney H. Tinley, Jr., 1961; James C. Anderson, 1963; John McC. Mowbray, 1963

James J. O'Donnell, Director

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The State Planning Department was created by Chapter 543 of the Acts of 1959 as the successor to the Maryland State Planning Commission, established in 1933.

The State Planning Department functions "as the Governor's Staff Agency in planning matters," and prepares and keeps up-to-date a program for the development and effective employment of all State resources, known as the State Development Plan. To this end the Department studies "the resources of the State and . . . existing and emerging problems of agriculture, commerce, transportation, population, housing, public service, local government" and other matters that affect the development of Maryland. It also "prepares the State's capital program in collaboration with the Department of Budget and Procurement and . . . assists in the preparation of the annual capital budget." In addition, it acts "as an advisory . . . and coordinating agency," harmonizing its planning activities with those of State or local government agencies and providing these agencies with planning assistance. Finally, it attempts to stimulate "public interest and participation in the development of the State." The Director of the State Planning Department is appointed by the Governor and serves at his pleasure.

The law provides for a State Planning Commission within the State Planning Department to advise and assist the Director. The Commission consists of nine members: Seven are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms; the other two represent the House of Delegates and the State Senate and are appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate respectively.

The Commission may establish subcommittees to which it may delegate any of its functions. It is also to (1) "study and report from time to time upon the effectiveness of planning in the State;" (2) "evaluate the effectiveness of this Article, and . . . urge its revision or amendment whenever necessary;" (3) "receive and approve, disapprove, or resubmit to the Director of State Planning recommendations concerning the establishment of regional or metropolitan areas;" (4) "hold public and private hearings and sponsor public forums in any part of the State."

The State Planning Department is the successor to the former State Planning Commission and inherits the various reports, studies, and surveys prepared by the Commission over the years. The Department will continue the Medical Care Committee, the former Commission's major subcommittee for the study of medical and health problems, and will continue to work with the Baltimore Regional Planning Council, an agency originally sponsored by the former Commission.