

politan Water District of Southern California. A number of factors account for the separate handling of regional functions in metropolitan areas. The natural service areas for water, sewage disposal, planning, transportation, and other functions usually do not coincide. Closely related are the preferences and pressures of the technicians, who are influenced by both technical and personal considerations. Sewer or water engineers are more likely to predominate in single-function organizations than in multipurpose agencies. Differences in the timetable of needs also foster the single-purpose approach. Since regional agencies usually are created in response to the most pressing problems that cannot be handled satisfactorily on a less inclusive basis, a single-purpose agency to handle the particular function is a natural solution.

Political feasibility is another explanation of the prevalence of single-function metropolitan agencies. The single-function approach does not pyramid conflicts. It tends to separate the population into those who are for or against a regional sewage agency or a metropolitan water supply district. The multipurpose approach produces an overlap of opponents: those who are opposed to regional sewage, those who are opposed to regional water supply, those opposed to metropolitan transportation, and so on. The single-purpose approach also is more acceptable to the large number of people, particularly in the suburbs, who fear metropolitan government. A sewer or water district poses much less of a threat—regardless of whether the threat is real or imaginary—than a multipurpose district or a broader metropolitan government, to the real or imagined prerogatives and virtues of local governments.

Supporters of multipurpose metropolitan agencies are primarily and properly concerned with the inability of the present governmental structure in metropolitan areas to plan, program, budget, and allocate for a range of governmental functions on an areawide basis. They see a particular service problem, such as inadequate sewage disposal or an inability to guarantee future water supply, as the cutting edge for general purpose metropolitan instrumentalities. They fear single-purpose solutions which remove the pressures for comprehensive multifunctional approaches. Those who are skeptical of any form of regionalism are likely to embrace the single function approach when the alternative is the provision of the particular service on a regional basis by a still stronger metropolitan government.

The State of Washington's Metropolitan Municipal Corporations Act of 1957, the enabling legislation for the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, provides a halfway house between the single purpose district and multifunctional metropolitan government. The enabling legislation makes the machinery of metropolitan government available for one or more of the following functions: Sewage disposal, water supply, public transportation, parks and parkways, garbage disposal, and comprehensive planning. In 1957 there was an unsuccessful effort in the Seattle area to secure popular approval of a metropolitan government empowered to perform sewage, transportation, and planning functions. A second vote the same year on a less inclusive proposal, both geographically and functionally, was successful. The areas in which there was a heavy negative vote on the initial proposal were omitted and Metro's powers were limited to the sewage function.