

To date, the municipality of Metropolitan Seattle has done a competent job in developing a regional sewage system. But it is not a metropolitan government; it cannot plan and allocate resources for the full range of functions, nor can it assess priorities among these functions. It is staffed by personnel whose primary training is in the planning and development of sewage facilities. Seattle's Metro considers expansion primarily in sewer terms. There is a strong possibility that the founders of Seattle's Metro, most of whom strongly favor general multipurpose metropolitan government, have created an instrumentality which will develop a narrow utility orientation rather than a broad concern for the overall community and its full range of developmental needs. While the waste disposal system being planned and developed by Metro already has had an impact on development patterns in the region, the metropolitan government lacks a general planning function and general purpose planners. Serious questions can be raised about the competency of sanitary engineers to guide overall development in a metropolitan area.

In spite of its obvious shortcomings as long as its activity focuses on a single function, the Seattle approach offers more promise for long-range development of utilities in conjunction with other community activities than a unifunctional district or authority could. As metro Seattle's founder, James R. Ellis, has noted:

The Seattle story is not one of an all-out attack upon the tangle of metropolitan growth. The community is not now ready to accept the Metro approach to a number of problems which will soon demand areawide attention. It is rather the story of preparing for growth by creating a flexible metropolitan agency capable of dealing with one tough areawide problem and elastic enough to tackle other problems as they arrive.¹⁶

In the technical and political context of most metropolitan areas, perhaps this is the best that can be achieved in organizing water and sewage service on a regional basis.

THE STATE ROLE

The States occupy a strategic role in the solution of urban water problems. As the creators and overseers of local government, they can grant or withhold the governmental and financial tools necessary for metropolitan problem solving. Policies relating to allocation and regulation are extremely important for the development of urban water supplies, the construction and operation of metropolitan sewage treatment facilities, and the control of unwise individual and small community water and waste systems. The States' greater geographical area and more diversified water resources often make them a more logical unit than the metropolitan area for comprehensive planning and development on the basis of watersheds, drainage basins, and river basins. The role of the States in urban water resource planning and development undoubtedly will grow more important in the future. Increasingly, metropolitan areas will reach out for water sources far beyond their boundaries. The metropolitan areas will grow together into vast urban regions. And population concentrations and industrial development will intensify the pollution of water and demands for its reuse. Although the States' jurisdiction is not large enough to

¹⁶ James R. Ellis, "Government for Growth, the Seattle Story," *op. cit.*, p. 9.