

In bringing together representatives of a number of metropolitan communities, the councils typically cut across many local jurisdictions and sometimes do not stop at State lines. Usually they are composed of the chief elected officials of the local governments in the area, and sometimes they include representatives of the State government. They have no operating functions, but are forums for discussion, research, and recommendation only. Their recommendations go to the constituent governments or to State legislatures. They are generally multipurpose, concerning themselves with many areawide problems, and they usually have a full-time staff.⁹

Since the first metropolitan council was organized in the Detroit area in 1954, the idea has been picked up quickly in other parts of the country. In addition to the Supervisors Inter-County Committee in the Detroit area, examples of metropolitan councils now include the Metropolitan Regional Council (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut), Association of Bay Area Governments (San Francisco area), Metropolitan Washington (D.C.) Council of Governments, Puget Sound Governmental Conference (Seattle-Tacoma area), Metropolitan Springfield (Illinois) Council of Governments, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (Salem, Oreg.), Regional Conference of Elected Officials (Philadelphia), Metropolitan Atlanta Council of Local Governments, Southern California Association of Governments (Los Angeles), New Haven (Connecticut) Council of Elected Officials, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (Fort Worth). Further interest in councils will no doubt result from the 1965 amendments to the Housing Act which included a provision making available two-thirds matching grants for support of their activities.

The councils vary in their composition and method of establishment. The Supervisors Inter-County Committee was given legal status by an enabling act of the State legislature in 1957 and consists exclusively of representatives of the six counties in the Detroit area. It does not include representatives of the other governmental units in the area—State, municipal, or special district—and is unique in this respect. The Mid-Willamette Valley Council was organized in 1959 by compact among the city of Salem, the metropolitan school district, Marion and Polk counties, and the State of Oregon. Each of the five units has a member—the Governor, and the elected heads of the four other units. The Association of Bay Area Governments, established in 1961, has legal status under the Joint Exercise of Powers Act of California. All cities and counties in the area may join. The council consists of one representative from each member city and county; city and county members vote separately, with a majority vote of each required for approval.

Although metropolitan councils are conspicuously lacking in legal powers, they have produced surprisingly tangible results in stimulating cooperation among their members, taking a stand on legislation affecting their areas, and coordinating relationships with State and Federal agencies. The New York Council devised a plan for controlling air pollution and presented to the Federal Government the regional case for increased public housing and urban renewal assist-

⁹ The Council of State Governments, *State Responsibility in Urban Regional Development* (Chicago, 1962), p. 89.