

**ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO URBAN PROBLEMS:  
LOCAL AND AREA-WIDE<sup>1</sup>**

The rapid and often complex community changes taking place today, particularly in metropolitan areas, have made it increasingly difficult to provide urban services on a timely and adequate basis. To resolve urban problems, many states are today carefully reexamining their traditional concepts of local governmental roles and urban service responsibilities. In numerous instances, many are also exploring new concepts of local government and new approaches to the problem of defining urban service roles and jurisdictions.

Numerous alternative approaches to urban problems have been proposed. Many are confusingly similar in termi-

nology or impact; many others are closely interrelated or focus on the same problems. One approach to understanding each of the alternatives is that of defining each proposal in terms of its relationship to the existing local governmental process. Specifically, each can be evaluated on the basis of what local or urban problem it is designed to resolve and what its basic impact on the existing system might be: that is, whether it utilizes and strengthens existing local governmental units and traditional techniques of change or whether it modifies or otherwise substantially changes existing patterns of local service roles and responsibilities.

**THE "LOCAL" URBAN SETTING:  
COUNTY-MUNICIPAL ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

**I. Techniques of Geographic Change.** Many of the continuing problems created by recent urban growth arise from the fact that the boundaries of existing local governments, particularly those of municipalities, no longer fully correspond to the boundaries of the urban community. This discrepancy between community and governmental boundaries in turn can create inadequate or

disrupted service jurisdictions, duplication or overlapping of local effort, competition among local units for authority and resources, and inadequate governmental services and facilities in particular areas.

Techniques for geographic or boundary change have traditionally been relied upon to resolve major community-governmental discrepancies. Such techniques include incorporation, annexation, extraterritorial jurisdiction, and unit merger or consolidation.

**INCORPORATION**

Incorporation is the traditional method by which new urban communities, as they emerge, can be governmentally recognized and provided for. In Maryland, the question of whether a new community should be incorporated requires, by law, the approval both of those residing in the new community and

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the one referred to as *Methods of Providing for Local Government of Metropolitan Areas* in note 241 on page 246 of the REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION COMMISSION (1967). It was jointly prepared for the Commission by Jean E. Spencer and John C. Brooks. Miss Spencer is Assistant Director, Governor's Task Force on Modern Management; B.A., 1955, and M.A., 1961, University of Maryland; Ph.D., 1965, University of Maryland. Mr. Brooks is Executive Director, Maryland Constitutional Convention Commission; A.B., 1959, University of North Carolina; J.D., 1962, University of Chicago; member of the North Carolina Bar.