CHAPTER 5
THE USE OF SOILS INFORMATION IN URBAN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Fundamentally, urban planning represents an effort to regulate the consumption of land and other natural resources such as air and water in the growth of the urban centers. However, just as the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, the road to urban chaos is paved with unexecuted plans. To be effective, plans must be implemented; otherwise they are nothing but good intentions. In this paper I shall discuss actual experiences in the use of soil maps to implement urban or metropolitan planning. Three specific situations will be discussed in which soil maps were used to implement urban plans.

First I want to emphasize the importance of soils information and its use by those involved in planning the growth and development of metropolitan areas.

Disposal of domestic sewage is quite commonly attempted through the use of on-lot soil absorption fields which, generally speaking, function as reverse drains or subsurface irrigation systems. When this is done without proper soils evaluation, dire consequences often follow. The basic problem is the soil on which the home and the septic tank filter field are constructed and this is the one component of the sewage disposal system which the builder cannot readily manipulate. The only solution to the problem is public sewers, and in many instances this is too costly. It is difficult and expensive to change the site for a building after it has been purchased. If the soil is poorly suited for the intended use, there is little that can be done without great expense to change it. In some instances one can design the structure to combat the limitations of the soil but the problem must be known prior to construction.

USE OF SOILS MAPS IN A COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

My first illustration involves the use of soils maps in a community action program in a small municipality of approximately 400

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