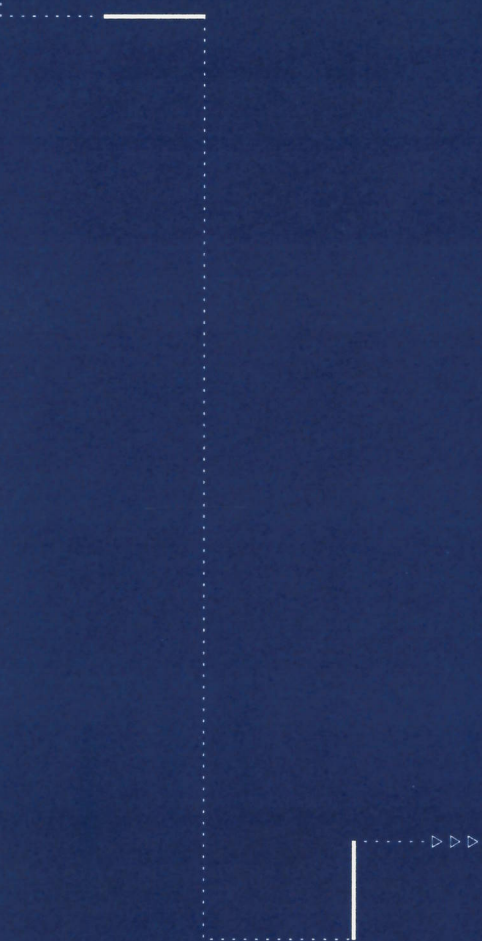


Effective Solutions



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**CITY OF MORGANTON**

**2015 COMPREHENSIVE  
RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

**City of Morganton, NC**

**June, 1997**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This document is the Executive Summary of the Morganton — 2015 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan prepared in 1997. Refer to the full Comprehensive Master Plan report for accompanying tables, exhibits, and maps.*

### Master Plan Purpose

- This document assesses the current and future park recreation needs for the City of Morganton over the next eighteen years and establishes a guide for meeting these needs. The overall goal of the plan is to provide a long range plan for parks recreation and open space that adequately addresses the short and long term recreation needs for all citizens within the community. The plan was accomplished through the efforts of the city staff, the Recreation Advisory Committee and Woolpert.
- The Recreation Department and Planning Department requested that a master plan be completed and that recommendations be developed for the following specific areas:
  - Renovations to existing facilities or proposed new facilities
  - Changes to existing programs or adding new programs
  - Expansion of existing parks or acquisition of new sites
  - Joint use of school facilities
  - Aquatic facilities
  - Cross over recreation with Burke County
  - Community centers, auditoriums, and meeting space
- The main purpose of this document is to provide the City of Morganton with an accurate, usable plan to guide its actions and decisions concerning:
  - The future recreation role for the City;
  - Park renovations, acquisitions, and developments;
  - Facility renovations and developments;
  - Recreation programming strategies.
- The Master Plan is organized into five major components:
  1. Review of Demographic Information
  2. Inventory of Existing Recreation Facilities
  3. Community Needs Assessment
  4. Master Plan Proposals and Recommendations
  5. Action Plan Implementation

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Total land area for the City encompasses approximately 18 square miles. The planning area for this study is approximately 60 square miles and includes land defined by the Extra-territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) boundary for the City. This boundary coincides with the study limits of the 1996 Morganton Thoroughfare Plan, from which population data for this plan was obtained.
- The growth potential of Morganton appears to be moderate leading into the 21st century. Capable infrastructure, quality of life influences, and strategic location on a major interstate highway are significant factors that enhance its growth potential.

- Population information provided for this plan came from 1990 US Census Data, 1996 Morganton Thoroughfare Plan prepared by NCDOT, North Carolina Municipal Population 95, and data from Sales and Marketing Management, 1995 Survey of Buying Power. The data from NCDOT, encompasses a study area of approximately 60 square miles which is larger than the area defined by Extra-territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) boundary for the city of Morganton. The NCDOT study area is the basis for the population figures used in this study for the planning area.
- Between 1980 and 1990, the annual growth rate was .92%. The population growth rate between 1990 and 1996, as estimated by the State Planning Office was 8,76% overall and 1.41% per year. The growth is primarily attributed to annexation.
- Population projections for Morganton and the Planning area from 1996 to 2015 are as follows:

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015
City of Morganton	16,407 <sup>2</sup>	17,019 <sup>4</sup>	17,816	18,651	19,525
Planning Area	28,359 <sup>3</sup>	28,930	29,661	30,410	31,180

- The median age is 39.8 years old as compared with the 34.4 years old within the overall state. The largest segment of the population falls within the age group of over 50, which accounts for 34.6% of the population. Trends indicate the median age will continue to increase through the planning period.

**ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARK FACILITIES**

- The inventory of existing recreation facilities in Morganton was compiled and site inspections were conducted by Woolpert. Inspections focused on determining the number and types of facilities provided at each site. The inventory did not include a detailed assessment as to the quality and condition of each facility. The facilities as offered in Morganton and the planning area are presented in the following categories: Recreation center and gymnasiums, park sites, and special use facilities, Burke County park facilities, state/regional park facilities, and school recreation facilities. (See Existing Facilities Map for park facility locations)

**RECREATION STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- The identification of community needs of new recreation programs and park facilities were determined by using three separate assessment techniques: public involvement, group interviews and recreation standards. One of the most important aspects in preparing a comprehensive master plan is to solicit public comment on the perceived recreation and park needs in the community.
- Eighteen special interest group meetings were held between January 21, 1997 and January 23, 1997 to solicit input for the plan. Each group was asked to identify services, needs, activities or important issues pertaining to recreational services, programs, and facilities provided by the city. In addition two public workshops were held to solicit public input.

- A community-wide public workshop was held on January 30, 1997. Input statements from the special interest group meetings were displayed at the workshop, and participants were given the opportunity to read the statements concerning the recreation needs of the community. In a democratic fashion, participants were given the opportunity to vote any statements they supported.
- In addition to the public workshop input, written statements from Morganton citizens or groups were received and incorporated into the public involvement process.
- The following represents a brief summary of the key issues brought forward at the community workshop meeting that had high community support: (a complete summary is provide in Section 3 of the report, divided into statements concerning facilities, programs, or policies)

#### **Facility Statements**

- An indoor pool is needed in the community for all forms of water recreation. (recreational swimming, competitive swimming, swimming instruction, and exercise classes).
- An indoor pool is needed because existing facilities cannot provide adequate time for all the existing users.
- There is a strong need for more gymnasium space because existing facilities are currently overloaded with programed activities and there is no place for practice and open play.
- There is a strong need for more sports fields (especially soccer, baseball and softball) because existing facilities are currently overloaded with programed activities and there is no place for practice and open play. This causes overuse of fields and contributes to poor quality of playing surfaces.
- Consider the Edwards Nursery site as a potential new multi-use park, where the new athletic fields could be located.
- The City Council is committed to continuing with the development of the Catawba River Greenway. The initial phases have been well received by the community because it satisfies the needs of many users (nature walkers, joggers, bicyclists, etc.).
- Provide bike routes for safe access to facilities

#### **Program Statements**

- The Morganton community is very recreation oriented and is desiring diverse facilities and programs to meet their needs.
- Keeping tournaments in Morganton will keep dollars here also (gas, restaurants, hotels, etc.).
- Expand programs for kids at risk and provide easily accessible locations for these activities.
- Provide environmental and educational programs associated with the greenway and the parks

#### **Policy Statements**

- Recreation facilities and programs must be affordable and accessible to all segments of the community, especially those who cannot afford "private memberships".
- Many people moving into the area will probably live outside the Morganton City limits, but will depend upon the recreation facilities and programs that the City offers. Fees must be revaluated for non- residents.
- A successful recreation bond will need to be tied to various recreation improvements throughout the City, and not just to one special use facility such as a swimming pool.

- Recreation Department does an excellent job providing facilities and programs with limited resources
- Try to get money for recreation improvements through federal or state grants.
- a strong Recreation Department with numerous programs can help keep the youth of the community active in a positive way and will help reduce crime
- Bring in an outside consultant to help further research the need for an indoor pool, and help with a bond promotion.
- Funding will have to come from many sources but a key source will be the private sector. Alliances will be needed.
- An indoor pool, if jointly developed with other entities will require policies on maintenance, operation, and funding.

- In preparing the Master Plan, standards developed by organizations including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment Health and Natural Resources, (NCDEHNR) were analyzed to support the development of individual standards for Morganton. Specific circumstances such as varying natural resources, cultural conditions, economic conditions, land use availability and community needs helped to determine the unique standards for Morganton.

**Park Classifications and Land requirements**

- The types of parks which will be needed by the end of the planning period (year 2015) based upon the acreage standards provided in Table 3-2 of the report includes:
  - District Parks - 156 acres or 1 district park
  - Community Park - 187 acres or 5-6 community parks.
  - Neighborhood Parks - 62 acres or 6-7 neighborhood parks
  - Mini-Park - 7.8 acres, or 8-10 mini- parks.

**Facility Standards and Needs**

- Minimum standards for recreational facilities (i.e., ballfields, courts, outdoor areas, etc.) have been developed for Morganton in accordance with guidelines established by the NRPA and the NCDEHNR.
- Based upon the standards immediate needs for additional facilities include:
 

(4) Youth baseball fields	(12) Play areas
(2) Softball fields	(4) Neighborhood centers
(7) Soccer fields	(4-5) Miles of and walking/hiking trails
(2) Volleyball courts	(18) Miles of bike paths
(8) Picnic facilities/tables	(4.7) Miles of canoe stream miles
- Through the year 2015 the facility needs increase to the following totals:
 

(1) Swimming pool	(16) Play areas
(1) Baseball field (adult)	(5-6) Miles of and walking/hiking trails
(1) Football fields	(21) Miles of bike paths
(16) Picnic facilities/tables	(5.2) Miles of canoe stream miles

**MASTER PLAN PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In order to present a realistic plan of meeting the recreational needs of the future, three master plan scenarios were developed as part of the overall planning process. Proposals and recommendations were prepared for each scenario and the plans were

evaluated as to how well each addressed the recreational needs of the community. The plans were presented and reviewed with the Recreation Advisory Committee.

### Roles

- Meeting all the recreational needs of the community will require a joint effort between the various government agencies and the private sector. No one group can be held solely responsible for providing all the programs and facilities for the community. The following is a recommendation summary describing the roles of each recreational providers over the next 18 year period:
  - The state of North Carolina should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a multi-county regional basis.
  - The state of North Carolina should also financially assist Morganton in the acquisition and development of new parks, and renovations of existing parks, through a state grant programs.
  - Burke County needs to supplement the recreation and park facilities that are offered throughout the City.
  - The primary focus for both the City of Morganton and Burke County is to insure that recreational facilities and programs are available to satisfy the needs for their citizens. Through cooperation and coordination, some of these facilities and programs may be offered jointly by the city and county.
  - Morganton will be responsible for providing community, neighborhood, and mini parks and should request assistance from Burke County for the development of the Edwards Nursery site as a city-wide/district park. Additionally the city should seek assistance for Special Use Parks such as greenways, trails, and sports complexes. The planning for parks and facilities needs to be closely coordinated between Morganton and Burke.
  - The Master Plan is based on the premise that Morganton recreation system will be serving a study area population of 31,180 people by the year 2015.
  - The schools in the area should assist in serving the community by supplying existing school sites for active recreation. A joint use agreement between the school system and the Morganton Recreation Department will require a cooperative effort to ensure best use of community resources.
  - It will be important through the year 2015 that the quasi-public sector continue to their support role in providing recreation facilities and programs.
  - Large industries such as Dana, Shadowline Industries, and Henredon Furniture, can play a vital role in assisting the city with providing leisure services.
  - Land developers should be responsible for the dedication of open space when it is associated with the development of residential, commercial, or industrial properties within the city ordinances and codes. The land development process provides an excellent opportunity to gain additional land for natural area preservation and greenway development.

### Park Proposals and Recommendations

- It is recommended by the year 2015 that Morganton makes provisions for: (1) district/city-wide park, (5) community parks, (6) neighborhood parks, (8) mini-parks, (2) neighborhood centers, (1) community center, (1) special use athletic/soccer park, (1) centrally located indoor pool, and (12) miles of greenways/urban bike paths and promotion of a rural bike route. (see the Park Master Plan and proposal summaries listed below by park type)

**City-Wide/District Parks**

- A district park provides active and passive recreational opportunities; is easily accessible by the population it serves within a 5-10 mile radius; contains a minimum of 5 acres per 1,000 population and is a minimum of 200 acres.
- The city-wide/district park should be located at the Ralph Edwards Nursery Site ( $\pm 200$  acres) on the Catawba River. The site master plan for the park that encompasses approximately 150-acres and includes facilities such as softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, camping, educational/nature center, greenway connections, and river access points.
- Currently the City nor the County provide this type of facility.
- Typically, counties take responsibility of developing District Parks while cities and towns focus on providing community and neighborhood parks. However the City has been looking at purchasing the Nursery Site for a "city-wide park".
- The proposed park is an opportunity for the City to actively seek support from the County in developing a park. It's an opportunity for both governing bodies to share in a project for the citizens of the planning area.

**Community Parks**

- Collett Street Center/Turner Park - to remain the same size, however additional facilities such as an indoor pool, play area, and picnic facilities may be located at this site. The park will need general renovations through the planning period. In addition, the existing outdoor pool may need to be replaced by the end of the planning period. A pool study should be performed for locating an indoor pool at this site. In conjunction with this study the master plan will be updated.
- Freedom Park - Expansion of the park is not proposed. Facilities in the park appear spread out, which make the park look poorly planned. The park layout should be evaluated to optimize the use of park land and eliminate conflicting uses. Conflicting uses such as the basketball courts at the park entrance, and walking paths abutting the tennis courts may be improved or eliminated through redesign. Additional parking is needed for peak use periods and a widened walking trail will improve use. Redesign will allow for additional recreation facilities such group picnic facilities and play apparatus. The park will require general renovations and an updated site master plan is needed.
- Bethel Park - The park will remain same size and primarily serving residents in the east Morganton area. The park requires general renovations including those for the track/soccer field. Similar to Freedom Park this park appears to be spread out and arranged randomly. An example is the location of the main parking area next to neighboring residences; and the location of the basketball courts next to the tennis courts. The arrangement of park elements should be evaluated to optimize use of park land, eliminate conflicting uses, and increase overall participation. More parking is needed during peak use periods. The park will be affected a by a future roadway project that will abut the park property. The road project may be an opportunity to expand the park and update a site master plan.
- Shadowline Park - This leased facility needs overall general renovations and improvements to the soccer fields, play equipment, and picnic facilities. The 2 mile radius service area of approximately a serving those in north Morganton. Allow for additional recreation facilities. The park may need to be replaced by another northern site if the lease is not renewed with Shadowline Industries.
- "South or North Community Park" - One new community park is needed in the area by 2015. A southern location is proposed using the joint use of state property near Western Piedmont. The park will have a 2-3 mile service radius

serving those in south Morganton. A combination of active and passive recreation facilities should be provided and a site master plan is needed. An alternate location for a community park is shown on the master plan in the northern part of the city. This site is suggested for two reasons: 1. As a replacement for Shadowline Park if the lease is discontinued; 2. As an alternate location, in lieu of the south site, if urban growth to the north develops a demand faster than to the south.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

- Mountainview/Martin Luther King, Carbon, and Parker Road Parks - The existing sites will remain the same size and primarily serving adjacent neighborhoods. Some of the elements in these parks, such as softball fields and group picnic shelters will make their service radii larger than typically found for neighborhood parks. All parks will require general park renovations such as improved play equipment.
- “Northern, South and Hillcrest Neighborhood Parks” - A total of three neighborhood parks are recommended by the 2015. The parks should be 8-10 acres and be located in the areas where the city is expanding and in the area near Hillcrest school. Sites can to be acquired through the land development process, through Community Development projects, or through coordination with the school system. Neighborhood centers are also proposed for the South Neighborhood Park and Hillcrest sites, (see individual facility proposals and recommendations). The parks will consist of primarily active recreation facilities. Site master plans will be required for each park.

### **Special Use Parks**

- Shuey Park - This park is characterized as a special use facility for softball and baseball is to remain the same size. The park is in overall good condition and will require only minor renovations and additions such as play equipment and picnic facilities. The existing softball fields are short for current standards of play, (280' vs 300'), and expansion should be reviewed. The development of new softball facilities in the city will most likely make these fields available for lower level league play and practice.
- 40 Acre Soccer Site - The need for soccer facilities was made very evident during the public involvement process. The facility standards recommend that 6-7 new fields be constructed by 2015. The site, located near the Catawba greenway, is being purchased by the City from Crescent Resources (Duke Power) and is suitable for development of soccer fields. A site master plan is to be prepared to determine how many fields can be located at the site.

### **Mini-Parks**

- Children's Park - This play area facility is in excellent condition and is used by the entire city. Expansion of the park is not proposed and the park will only require routine renovation and maintenance through the planning period.
- Various Locations - The recreation standards established in Section 3 recommended that Morganton 8 mini parks by the year 2015. Morganton has four existing sites, including Children's Park, that primarily serve the central area of the city. The four new mini-parks should be scattered throughout the city as land is made available. The sites can be acquired through cooperative efforts with neighborhood associations, land developers, and community development projects.



### Greenways/Bike Route

- Catawba River Greenway - The existing greenway project has proven to be a very successful recreation opportunity for the city. The master plan proposes to expand the greenway to connect with downtown, other park sites, and the proposed bike route. The greenway corridor of  $\pm 13$  miles will primarily will follow the Catawba River and Hunting Creek. It will also connect through urban walkways and trails to the downtown area. Most of the proposed greenway is to be located on sewer and road right-of-ways; or easements and other government properties which will reduce the need for land acquisition.
- Rural Bike Route - A rural bike route of approximately 20 miles heading toward Lake James is proposed for the plan. The route will use existing roads to connect to the greenway system and Freedom Park. Construction of off road trails would be part of the greenway system and the bike route would only require minor funding for signage and promotion of the route.

### Facility Proposals and Recommendations

- Individual facility improvements that need to be strongly considered in future park development include the following:
  - (1) adult baseball fields be added at a city-wide/district park or community park;
  - (4) youth baseball fields be added at a city-wide/district park or community park;
  - (4) softball fields ( $\pm 300'$ ) be added at city-wide/district park or community park;
  - (1) football field at one of the community park sites;
  - (6-7) soccer fields be added at a special facility, city-wide/district park and/or community parks;
  - (2-4) additional volleyball courts be provided community, neighborhood, or special use parks;
  - (1) large group picnic pavilion/ shelter be added at a city-wide/district park;
  - (4) group picnic shelters be added at community parks sites;
  - (4) small group picnic shelters be added at neighborhood park sites;
  - (16) new playgrounds be provided throughout the park system;
  - (12) miles of new nature / hiking trails be provided throughout the park system;
  - (1) indoor swimming facility be provided at a central city location,
  - (2) neighborhood centers (1 with a gym) be added by year 2015.

### Program Recommendations

- Forecasting of specific recreation program needs on a long-range basis is an extremely difficult task. The interest and needs of a community can differ so rapidly and are influenced by unpredictable cultural, economic, social, and technological factors. It is, however, important to have an overall philosophical direction regarding programming for decision-making purposes. To perhaps overly simplify, programming is a process which includes the following steps:
  - Define Program Mission Statement
  - Assess Specific Program Needs
  - Define Operational Goals and Objectives
  - Evaluate Programs
- In Section 3, "Community Needs Assessment of Recreation and Facilities" numerous program improvement suggestions were offered by the general community. The following statement deserve further consideration by the city, and if proven worthy, action should take place immediately.

- Better communication of available programs is needed in the community. Consider a citywide communication network encompassing news media, public schools, churches, civic organizations, all local government agencies.
  - Better awareness of the comprehensive nature of available programs is needed in the community. For example, there is currently a perception that programming is slanted towards adult athletics when in reality there are more organized youth teams. More staff time is devoted to youth athletics than adult athletics.
  - Consider extended hours of operation and schedule flexibility. Give the youth a place to “hang out” especially during the evening hours.
  - Expand athletic programs for females in the community.
  - Continue professional development of recreation staff so they may become better skilled at leading new programs and services.
  - Make Morganton a better place to live and work through enhanced quality of life leisure programs such as cultural and performing arts, trails and greenways, and community beautification.
  - Make Morganton an environmentally aware community demonstrated through programs involving recycling, greenways, and environmental interpretation.
  - Consider consolidation of city and county facilities and programs regarding youth athletics. Additional facilities and programs may wish to be considered after evaluating the success/failure of consolidating youth athletics.
  - Encourage a more comprehensive and coordinated community approach to recreation including the use of schools (athletics, swimming pools, and playgrounds), quasi-public (church, YMCA) programs, and the private sector.
- The park and facility proposals have been prioritized into three separate time frames for implementation. The prioritization was influenced by the evaluation of existing facilities, the community needs assessment and the financial ability of the city to implement the overall capital improvement plan.

#### **Years 1998-2000**

- Provide general on-going renovations to existing facilities at all community, neighborhood, and special use sites/parks including the Old Armory building.
- Purchase 200 acres of property to begin design of a district/city-wide park at the Ralph Edwards Nursery site. Funds for purchasing the property are coming from a the sale of city property for watershed protection.
- Commit the 40 acres which was recently purchased next to the Catawba Greenway for development of a special use facility for soccer.
- Begin acquiring property along the designated greenway routes and start developing facilities where possible.
- Create a mini-park site and install play apparatus at neighborhood park sites.
- Negotiate with the school system to enter into a joint use agreement that is beneficial to both parties for use of facilities and programs.

#### **Years 2001-2005**

- Continue to provide on-going renovations to existing facilities at community, neighborhood, and special use sites.
- Purchase property and develop a mini-park in the city.
- Purchase 8-10 acres of property and develop a new neighborhood park in the Hillcrest area of Morganton.
- Develop Phase I of the district/city-wide park at the Ralph Edwards Nursery site along the Catawba River.
- Continue to acquire property along the designated greenway routes and continue development of facilities where possible.
- Develop an indoor pool facility to meet the needs of recreational, competitive, and instructional swimming programs.

**Years 2006-2010**

- Continue to provide on-going renovations to existing and new facilities at community, neighborhood, and special use parks.
- Purchase another 8-10 acres of property and develop a second new neighborhood park in south Morganton.
- Purchase property and develop a mini-park in the city.
- Develop Phase II of the district/city-wide park at the Ralph Edwards Nursery site along the Catawba River.
- Develop a neighborhood center with a gymnasium at one of the proposed neighborhood park sites.
- Continue to acquire property along the designated greenway routes and continue development of facilities.

**Years 2011-2015**

- Continue to provide on-going renovations to existing and new facilities at community, neighborhood, and special use parks.
- Purchase another 8-10 acres of property and develop a second new neighborhood park in north Morganton.
- Purchase property and develop a mini-park in the city.
- Develop Phase III of the district/city-wide park at the Ralph Edwards Nursery site along the Catawba River.
- Develop a neighborhood center without a gymnasium at one of the proposed neighborhood park sites.
- Continue to acquire property along the designated greenway routes and continue development of facilities.
- Purchase 30-40 acres of property and develop a new community park in north or south Morganton.

**ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

- The capital improvement program for the acquisition and development of parks is for a eighteen year period. All of the proposed costs are shown in 1997 dollar values. The capital improvement costs include for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, access and parking along with specific recreation improvements. The capital improvement plan also includes for estimated planning and design fees. The capital improvement program can be summarized into the following components:

Renovation/Maintenance Program	\$1,375,000
Land Acquisition Program	1,930,000
Park Development Program	7,810,000
Special Use Facilities Development Program	<u>11,770,000</u>
Total Capital Improvement Cost	\$22,885,000

This total equates to spending approximately \$1,271,389 annually through the year 2015.

- The proposed operations budget includes cost for staff, operations, and general maintenance requirements similar to those that are currently being performed by the Recreation Department.
- The grand total cost for operations through the year 2015 is estimated to be \$26,368,295 or approximately \$1,464,905 per year throughout the 18-year period. The 18 year per capita cost average equals \$80.01 which indicates a 3.5% annual increase through the planning period.

- The Morganton Recreation Department's structure and number of personnel appears to be consistent with other similar size municipal departments in the state. All existing positions within the Department are warranted but responsibilities are recommended to change over the next 18 years. A new organizational structure for the Department will include the following positions:
  - Parks Superintendent/District Park Manager
  - Administrative Specialist/Secretary I
  - Aquatics Superintendent/Manager
  - Program Supervisor
  - Neighborhood Center Director
  - Laborers
  
- The following is a listing of potential funding revenue sources that Morganton will need to consider in financing the proposals and recommendations of the Master Plan:
 

— General Tax Revenues	— Fees and Charges
— General Obligation Bonds	— Contributions
— Federal Assistance	— General Foundations
— State Assistance	— Partnership Structures
  
- Methods available to Morganton for acquiring and developing parks as recommended in the Master Plan include the following:
 

— Fee Simple Purchase	— Local Gifts
— Fee Simple With Lease-Back or Resale	— Life Estate
— Long-Term Option	— Easement
— First Right of Purchase	— Zoning/Subdivision Regulations/Mandatory Dedication

#### Proposed Funding Strategy

- The average municipal expenditure from the general fund for parks and recreation has ranged from \$58.00 to \$62.00 per capita throughout North Carolina municipalities. Communities of similar size to Morganton (Municipal Class D) average \$62.57 per capita for FY 95/96. In the past the Morganton Parks and Recreation Department has operated in the \$57.00 to \$65.00 range. With this in mind, it appears that Morganton falls within the average ranges in the state.
  
- Over the next 18 years, the City of Morganton will not be able to support the overall capital improvements and operations budget of \$49,253,295 solely through the general fund. A combination of revenue services will need to be applied. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented by the City Council. This Master Plan proposes that City Council begin the process by evaluating the following strategy:
  - If allocations from the general fund are maintained as shown in Table 5-2 at average of \$80.01 per capita throughout the next 18 years, it will provide approximately \$26,368,295 for the Recreation Department. This equates to 53.54% of the total projected expenditures for capital improvements and operations, or 100% of the operations budget. Based on current trends, the Morganton Recreation Department should be able to return approximately 18%-20% of the operations budget, (approx.\$9.0 million), back into the general fund through fees and charges.
  - General obligation bonds should be used in acquiring and developing new park facilities. A minimum goal of \$9.0 million should come from bonds. This represents approximately 39% of the proposed capital improvement program and

18.27% of the total budget. Bonds could be formatted in three separate campaigns at ±\$3.0 million each, spaced four years apart.

- A combination of gifts, mandatory land dedication, grants and other revenue sources will need to offset the remaining \$4.93 million, 10% of the total budget, to implement the Master Plan. The state, Burke County and the private sector should be aggressively approached in helping with this financing.

**Funding Strategy Summary**

Source	Percentage of Overall Budget	Amount
General Fund	53.54%	\$26,368,295
Bonds	18.27%	\$9,000,000
Gifts, Grants, & Foundations	10.00%	\$4,925,330
<u>Revenues</u>	<u>18.19%</u>	<u>\$8,959,670</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$49,253,295</b>

**Benefits of Parks and Recreation**

- The vast majority of the American public use and benefit from the service and facilities provided by their local recreation and parks department and the citizens of Morganton are no different. Recreation services and parks are valuable resources for many different reasons. These benefits can be categorized into personal, environmental, social, activity-oriented, and economic.
- According to the Benefit's of Local Recreation and Park Services: A Nationwide Study of the Perceptions of the American Public, individuals feel they benefit the most from recreation when they participate in programs that provide exercise and fitness. As a result, a large segment of the population views parks and recreation agencies as being health and wellness organizations.
- Environmentally, parks provide habitat for wildlife, and green space for wildlife viewing. Socially, recreation and parks help to foster community awareness or a “sense of community.”
- Recreation and parks departments provide many recreational activities that would not otherwise be available to the general public.
- The economic benefits of parks and recreation is perceived differently by various segments of the community. For example, developers, and realtors consider whether the facilities increase property values, increase selling time of property or persuades a corporate relocation.
- Whether it be personal, environmental, social, activity-oriented or economic, benefits of recreation and park services can be summarized as simply providing a better way of life for the community and its citizens.

