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AN ANALYSIS OF PARK ADMINISTRATION
IN THE MISSOULA URBAN AREA

By

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Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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1977

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ABSTRACT

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Political Science

An Analysis of Park Administration in the Missoula Urban Area (134 pp.)

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This thesis explores the administrative conditions for improved provision of park services in the Missoula urban area. Prior to 1975 only the city of Missoula maintained a Parks and Recreation Department. County residents in the urbanized area surrounding the city use city parks free of charge. The present situation involves an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement enacted on July 8, 1975. Park administration is examined in terms of park management, park planning, land acquisition, park usage, and budgeting. These criteria form the basis for investigating the past and present situation in both the county and the city. Also, state laws governing parks, forms of local government and intergovernmental relations are discussed in relation to the park situation in Missoula. Consolidation, a proposal presented to the Missoula County voters in 1976, is also discussed and used as a basis for comparison to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.

The thesis concludes that the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is potentially the superior administrative alternative for the provision of park services in the Missoula urban area. However, several recommendations intended to broaden the scope of the agreement and define the lines of authority are presented. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement together with these recommendations form a foundation for further unification of city and county to assure better provision of park services in the Missoula urban area.

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CHAPTER I

GOVERNMENT AND PARKS ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

Recreation is an activity in which one expresses certain interests and needs in hope of gaining personal satisfaction. As leisure time increases more time is available for recreation and it becomes an increasingly important service which a community provides for its residents. This thesis deals with only one aspect of recreational services, park administration. Park administration, including park development and management, is that administration pertaining to land dedicated for the purpose of recreation.

On July 8, 1975, the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department and Missoula County entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for the purpose of city assistance in county regional park development.¹ Before this date, only the City of Missoula maintained a Parks and Recreation Department. Many county residents, because of the close proximity to the city, enjoy city services free of charge. One such service is the provision and maintenance of parks. The City

¹See the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, Appendix A.

of Missoula opens all parks to the public without regard to user residency.

It is because of the recent Interlocal Cooperation Agreement that parks administration has been selected as the topic of this thesis. The primary focus of the analysis is upon the Missoula urban area. The question of concern is: How can Missoula urban area residents best be served in regard to park services? Missoula urban area refers to both those residents within the city limits and those within the concentrated population surrounding the city.

The data gathered are used to prove or disprove the hypothesis that the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City Parks and Recreation Department and the County of Missoula is a superior administrative alternative compared to the previous situation. However, should the results disprove the hypothesis, any other alternative suggested will undergo the same analysis.

Three criteria form the basis for studying the impact of various local government approaches on park administration. The criteria are:

PARK MANAGEMENT

This involves authority given to park managers and the derivation of that authority. The different forms of government involved in this analysis as they relate to the operation and administration of a park department will be

discussed.

PARK PLANNING, LAND ACQUISITION AND PARK USE

This section involves the question of: Long range planning, implementation of planning goals in regard to land use; acquisition of park land through the park dedication law and other means; and amount of park use and user surveys in relation to future potential of park use.

BUDGETING

This provides a comparison between the costs of the various park administration systems and their respective budgetary procedures.

The above criteria comprise the basis for analysis between the administrative situations before and after the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement and any proposed alternative.

The first chapter of this paper will present background information pertinent to parks administration and local government. Chapter two will discuss the past park administration of both the city and the county. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement and the transition period since its enactment will be the focus of chapter three. In chapter four the proposed charter consolidating the City of Missoula and Missoula County in a single government and the effects of such a change will be discussed. Chapter five will present the author's summary of the data gathered and suggested recommendations.

In viewing the park situation of the Missoula urban area, this chapter examines topics involved in park administration. These topics, such as population characteristics of the Missoula urban area, forms of government, intergovernmental relations and elements of administering a park system lead to an understanding of the possibilities of serving the park needs of the urban area. A knowledge of these topics provide a basis for detailed examination of the question of this thesis: How can Missoula urban area residents best be served in regard to park services? In addition, studies into the perceived needs of the residents in regard to parks contribute to the general knowledge needed for following chapters.

The comparison of 1960 and 1970 census figures establishes a rapidly growing fringe area which is dependent upon the city provision of park facilities. The 1970 census states the Missoula Division of Missoula County consists of 50,669 residents. Of these 50,669 residents, 29,497 or 58.2 percent reside within the city of Missoula, while the remaining 21,172 or 41.8 percent live adjacent to the city limits. The actual growth of the city was 2,407 between the years 1960-1970. During the same years the urban fringe area increased by 17,355.²

²Population figure from Missoula, A Policy of Urban Growth (Missoula: Missoula Planning Board, 1975), p. 5.

Park AdministrationLaws

In the Revised Codes of Montana the laws relating to parks and recreation are permissive as local governments have authority to decide whether or not state park laws will be enacted.³ State laws cover such areas as: the powers and duties of park commissioners; acquisition of land and use of park land; disbursement of park funds; limitations on taxation and mill levy assessment; and procedures for acting independently or in cooperation with other cities, towns, school districts, or park boards. In addition to state park laws, a local government may pass ordinances which aid in their implementation. Although local ordinances cannot conflict with state law, they may enlarge upon them.

The Park Dedication Law is one particular state law that has had great significance in the acquisition of park land. This law, first passed in 1947, stated that one-ninth of all subdivided land be set aside for public parks and playgrounds. Further refined by an amendment in 1973, this law allowed cash to be accepted in lieu of park land and stated that in all subdivisions one-ninth of the land was to be dedicated if the lot size was five acres or less and

³Paul E. Nordstrom, A Guidebook of Montana Laws Governing Municipal and County Parks and Recreation (Bozeman: Cooperative Extension Service, Montana State University, 1973), p. 5.

one-twelfth of the land if lots were over five acres. In 1974 House Bill 1017 waived the requirement for park dedication in subdivisions with lots over twenty acres. Under present law, the fair market value of unsubdivided, unimproved land forms the basis for the amount of cash to be accepted in exchange for any proposed park land. Any monies acquired through this means create a park fund which can be used only for the purpose of initial park development, playgrounds, or acquisition of additional land. A developer may disregard land or cash requirements only if sufficient land has been dedicated in an already existing subdivision, if land has previously been set aside in a planned unit for development for its residents, or if the person developing all tracts in a subdivision has already allowed for adequate park land.

The critical importance of the Park Dedication Law is its application. Although much park land has been acquired because of this law, in many cases developers dedicate land that is unsuitable for building purposes for parks. Some examples are rock slides, ravines, and wetlands. Consequently, many park sites are impossible to develop.

Administering a Park System

Many forms and levels of recreation exist. Recreation can be highly individualized or oriented towards mass-use participation. In a community such as Missoula where scenic

surroundings enhance recreational opportunities, the individual acts more independently of an organized program and seeks his or her own source of recreation. William Hollenbaugh cites a thesis by David G. Conklin in Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (draft copy for review) concerning preferences for recreation areas in Region 11 of Montana. Region 11 includes Sanders, Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli Counties. This study stated that residents in this area preferred natural undeveloped environment, general outdoor recreation areas and primitive areas to intensively developed areas.⁴ It is possible to conclude from this that the need for a community park and recreation system is reduced. However, before drawing this conclusion, one must consider the proximity of aesthetic areas, community size and recreation desires and needs of a majority of the population. These factors play an important part in determining the role of a community park and recreation system. Harold D. Meyer, Charles K. Brightbill and H. Douglas Sessoms stated in their book, Community Recreation, that "beyond the efforts of the individual to provide recreational opportunities for himself, the primary responsibility for community recreation belongs to the community itself. It is in the community where people live that their individual

⁴William C. Hollenbaugh, Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, draft copy for review (Missoula: Missoula Planning Board, 1976), p. 32.

recreation interests and needs are best determined and served."⁵

Various means can be utilized for governing a local public park or recreation system. The three most often used are: as a separate function or government, i.e., recreation boards or departments; parks and recreation combined into one single department; and in conjunction with a local school system.⁶ Although these are the most frequently used, other arrangements are available, such as: metropolitan service areas or districts and city-county consolidation of park and recreation. There is no set plan regarding how a park or recreation service should be provided. A community should consider many variables, such as domestic conditions, traditions, needs, and characteristics before adopting a park or recreation system.⁷ Assessment of these variables enhances the community's ability to serve the needs of its citizens.

Forms of Government and Intergovernmental Relations

The forms of government of the City of Missoula and

⁵Harold D. Meyer, Charles K. Brightbill and H. Douglas Sessoms, Community Recreation (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 185.

⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁷Thomas S. Yukic, Fundamentals of Recreation (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), p. 91.

Missoula County are integrally related to the provisions of park services because a park department must work within the structure of government. The advantages and disadvantages of the governmental administrations involved are outlined below. Four forms (County Commission, weak Mayor-Council, strong Mayor-Council, and Commission-Manager) are chosen for analysis; the first two are now in operation, while the latter were options in the charter proposed by the Missoula City-County Study Commission.

In recent years, the City of Missoula and Missoula County have operated parks under an interlocal agreement. Therefore, characteristics of an interlocal agreement also are considered. In June of 1976 the citizens of Missoula County voted against the proposal for a consolidated government.⁸ Consolidation would have affected the provision of a park service. A discussion of consolidation is included because a proposal for consolidation was considered in Missoula. Also, it provides a basis for comparison with other forms of government.

County Commission

County governments are "long-existing and well-established American political institutions that demonstrate

⁸On June 1, 1976, Missoula voters defeated the proposed charter with a vote of 10,477 against the new form of government and 8,842 for the charter. The Missoulian, June 10, 1976.

great durability."⁹ The commission form of government is popular among counties. All but one of Montana's fifty-six counties used this form in 1976. A problem of county government is the state legislation relating to counties that goes into great detail regarding what counties may and may not do. Because of this strict state legislation, county government functions primarily as an administrative arm of the state.¹⁰

County government in Missoula operates under the commission form of government. Three commissioners are nominated by districts and elected at-large on a partisan basis to serve staggered terms of six years. Montana state law states the county commissioners have all legislative, executive and administrative powers and duties. Legislative power is limited since the county commissioners cannot enact ordinances such as a city council is allowed to do. In addition to the commissioners, this plan lists eleven county "row" officers to be elected. The row officers may include a legal officer, law enforcement officer, clerk and recorder, clerk of district court, treasurer, surveyor, superintendent of schools, assessor, coroner, public administrator, and

⁹John C. Bollens, American County Government (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 9.

¹⁰Lauren S. McKinsey and Peter H. Koehn, Lake County, Montana: Growth of a Small Government (Missoula: Bureau of Government Research, Occasional Papers in Local Government, No. 9, 1975), p. 30.

auditor. These officials carry out primarily administrative duties rather than those involving policy making. In most cases each of these county officials acts independently of the others and without clearly defined duties. Because of this, the county commissioners have little administrative control of the county government.¹¹ The commissioners exercise some discretion regarding the election of these row officers. The commissioners can combine any of these offices or totally eliminate them. Related to parks, the county commission form of government does not stipulate an officer for parks administration although state law allows commissioners to create a county park board. Paul Nordstrom, in a report concerning park and recreation attitudes in non-urban Montana communities, asked a question concerning the county's part in the provision of parks and recreation. Responses revealed that the county did very little in this area although nearly all respondents indicated they felt the county should have at least advisory responsibility in the provision of parks and recreation.¹² This indicates that although state law provides for the creation of a county park board, little is being done by county government in this area.

¹¹Roland R. Renne, The Government and Administration of Montana (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958), p. 129.

¹²Paul E. Nordstrom, Attitudes on Parks and Recreation in Non-Urban Communities of Montana (Bozeman: Cooperative Extension Service, Montana State University, 1973), p. 13.

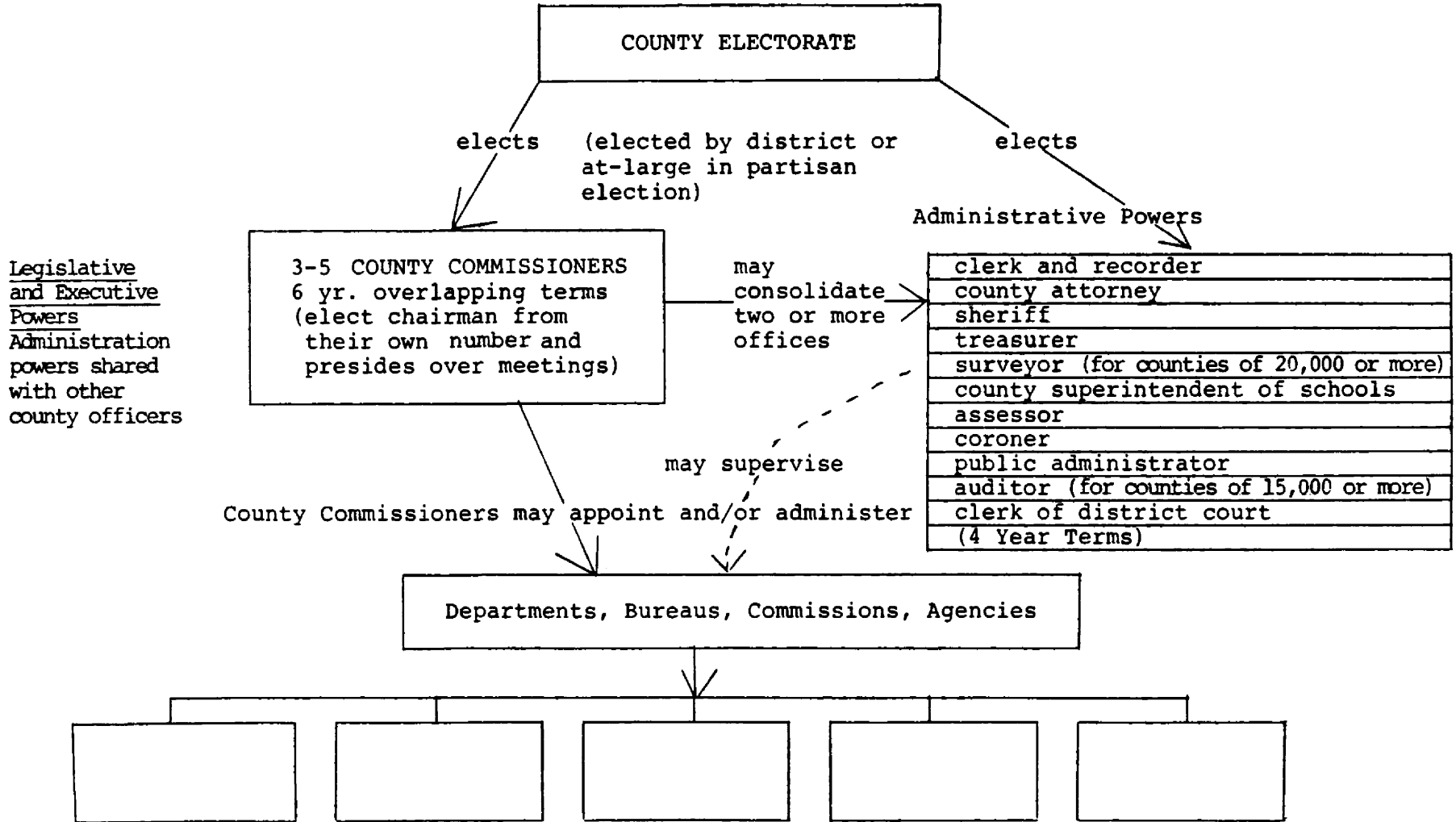
The county does not have a policy making body comparable to a city council. State law limits the policy making powers of the commissioners. The lack of a separate executive makes the commissioners first among equals in county government (see Figure 1).

George S. Blair writes in American Local Government that the county commission form of government is noted for the combining of executive and legislative powers in the Board of County Commissioners. Elected row officers share administrative powers and duties with the county commissioners. The use of many elected officials, working autonomously, can produce inefficiency and high costs for county government. Evidence of this is seen by duplication of functions and a lack of coordination between departments. The lack of a single executive, scattered autonomous offices, operation under many elected officials, and long ballots to elect these officials are weaknesses of a county commission form of government. Results of these weaknesses are a lack of overall supervision of county functions and lessening of the ability to devise or administer a comprehensive county budget.¹³

Much of the criticism directed at the county commission form of government concerns its application in a largely urban situation rather than in a rural setting. The

¹³William H. Young, Essentials of American Government (New York: Meredith Publishing Co., 1964), p. 634.

**EXISTING
ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIAL FORM**



Citation: Section 16-5014, R.C.M. 1947

*Figure 1.

commission form may function well for those rural counties operating as an administrative arm of the state and for those rural counties that are not actively concerned with operating independent programs. The commission form of government which often is government by long-term public servants which are directly elected and often re-elected natives of the community is a form of administration with an informal character. In Handbook of Montana Forms of Local Government, James Lopach and Lauren McKinsey arrive at the conclusion that "the familiar Montana county structure with three elected commissioners and ten or eleven elected row offices might, therefore, continue to service well in the state's predominantly rural and stable counties."¹⁴

Proponents of county commission government believe that the frequent re-election of officials creates public servants that are more knowledgeable and can represent local citizen concerns better. On the other hand, in a more urbanized county, such as Missoula, more concentrated populations place different demands on government. Government officials of urban counties experiencing considerable growth find this form of government inadequate. They might place higher priorities on reduction of costs, separate

¹⁴James Lopach and Lauren S. McKinsey, Handbook of Montana Forms of Local Government (Missoula: Bureau of Government Research, 1975), p. 147.

executive and administrative leadership for policy making, coordination of programs, and clear lines of accountability.¹⁵ The urban segment of Missoula County is growing steadily. These urban residents require services other than those provided to rural residents. However, the government continues to function much as it did when the county was predominantly rural and sparsely settled.

Mayor-Council

Smaller cities most frequently use the weak mayor-council form of government although a few larger cities have retained many of the form's characteristics (examples: Chicago, Atlanta and Minneapolis). A mayor with very little administrative power in relation to the powers of the council characterizes the weak mayor-council form of government. There is also an absence of clear boundaries between the responsibilities of the mayor and the council. The weak mayor form divides duties and responsibilities among various elected officials, boards and commissions, and department heads. This form lends itself to uncoordinated and confused lines of authority. Like the commission form of government a weak mayor-council form sometimes necessitates a long ballot and scatters administrative powers between the council and the dispersal of administrative power can be viewed

¹⁵Ibid., p. 147.

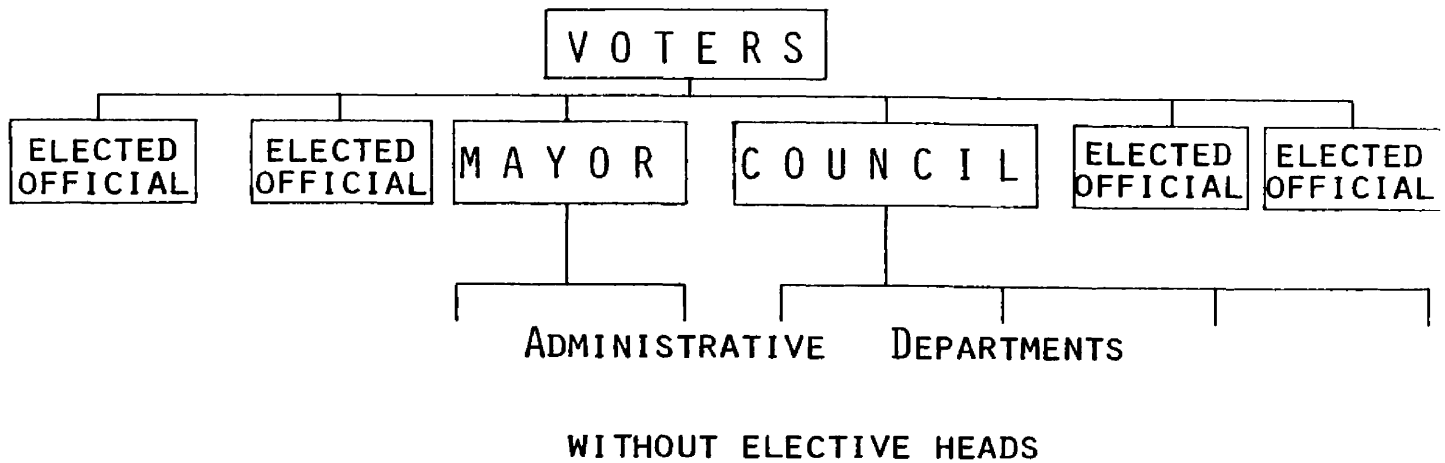
as either an advantage or a disadvantage. It is an advantage in that it is unlikely for a deadlock to arise between the council and a mayor with little administrative power. According to Lopach and McKinsey, this form can cause problems because unclear lines of authority and "structural blurring create confusion and conflict."¹⁶ The administrative supervision of the weak mayor-council form of government has a tendency to be uncoordinated and the existence of numerous policy-making boards make it easy for policies to be in conflict with each other.

The City of Missoula has a weak mayor-council form of government (see Figure 2). The voters elect the mayor as chief executive at large but choose the policy or legislative body (council) by wards. Montana state law grants general powers to the mayor such as directing, supervising and administering all departments and agencies. However, under the weak mayor form the council and boards/commissions share this power with the mayor. The city council advises and consents with the mayor on appointments, approves the budget, adopts city ordinances, and assumes some executive duties of running the city government.

The strong mayor-council form of government contains basically the same format as the weak mayor-council with the exception that a strong mayor has more administrative

¹⁶Ibid., p. 133.

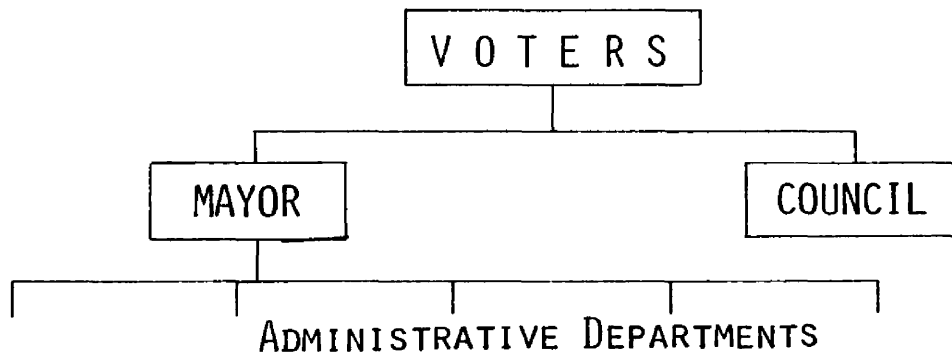
WEAK MAYOR-COUNCIL



*Figure 2.

*William Anderson and Edward W. Weidner, American City Government (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1950), p. 368.

STRONG MAYOR-COUNCIL



*Figure 3.

*Anderson & Weidner, American City Government, p. 376.

powers. Often times a strong mayor exercises veto powers which give him considerable control over the council. Reduction of the council's powers produces a body that is almost exclusively legislative (see Figure 3).

A strong mayor-council government has lines of authority that are clearly defined (as compared to a weak mayor-council), definite separation between the executive and legislative branch, and strong leadership in supervising and administering city functions. Under this form a mayor has direct supervision, not shared with council, over administrative departments. However, opponents to the form believe that it is a disadvantage to vest too much authority in one elected executive. They contend that personal popularity may exceed administrative competence in an election.

According to a study by Rick Gillmore, "the mayor-council form in Missoula can be classified as a compromise between the weak and strong mayor forms. After interviewing past and present city officials it seems that the distinction between mayoral types is a function of the personalities involved."¹⁷ Personality, interest and past experience of the mayor appears to play a dominant part in determining the role the mayor will have in such areas as use of veto power, appointments and budget consideration.¹⁸ For instance,

¹⁷Rick Gillmore, Report on Missoula City Government (Missoula: Bureau of Government Research, 1975), p. 14.

lsberg, interviews with past and present officials (Missoula: Bureau of Government

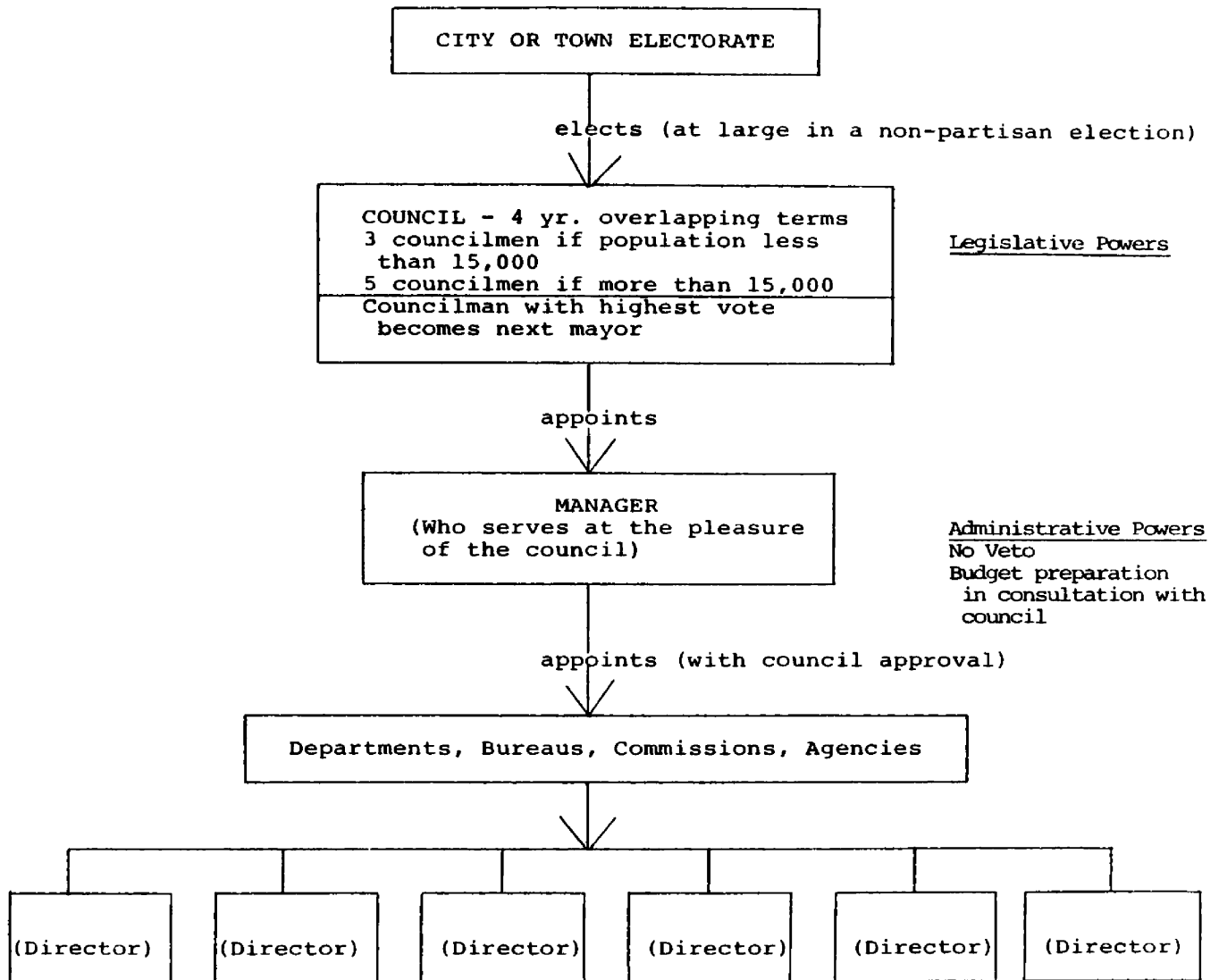
former Mayor George Turman had previous experience in budget preparation and upon taking office actively participated in formulating the city budget. The mayor's relation to the park department and the park board under this form of government also depends upon personality, interest, and past experience. The mayor is a member of the park board but is not assigned specific duties or responsibilities because he is the mayor.

Commission-Manager

A professionally trained manager with centralized administrative power typifies the commission-manager form of government. The manager runs the government on a daily basis and the commission develops policies and provides direction for the city. Duties performed by the manager include preparing a budget, directing all departments and agencies and the appointment or removal of all government employees with council approval. The manager does not have veto power. This form of government dictates a definite separation between policy making and administration (see Figure 4). However, the manager voices his recommendations for future policies and actively participates in their formulation.

A problem of the commission-manager form of government concerns who has political leadership within the community, the commission or the manager. The manager has almost total

EXISTING
CITY MANAGER FORM



Citation: Section 11-3201, R.C.M. 1947

*Figure 4.

monopoly of detailed, technical information regarding the city's affairs. Consequently commission members have a strong dependence on him. This develops as a disadvantage since the manager sometimes is maneuvered by the commission into taking responsibility for controversial issues. The commission then takes advantage of the situation, depending on the outcome of the issue, by either taking credit with the manager or blaming him.¹⁹ Occurrences such as these place the manager in a difficult situation. How he handles the situation depends on his relationship with the commission and the city.

The greatest advantages of the commission-manager plan are that it normally involves a well-trained professional manager, coordinated administration, clearly defined responsibilities and competence, and accountability among office holders. Critics of this form of government list the following as leading disadvantages: lack of a single elected executive to provide leadership, too much authority vested in the manager, and an outsider running the government.²⁰

The manager's relationship to boards, commissions and departments is the same as the mayor under a strong mayor-

¹⁹Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 175.

²⁰State Commission on Local Government, Voter Review of Local Government (Helena: State Commission on Local Government, 1975), p. 11.

council form of government. With regard to parks under the commission-manager form, the manager is a member of the park board identical to the position of a mayor. Montana state law does not stipulate any difference in function between a mayor or manager on the park board. Since there is no difference between the mayor or manager's position with the park board, the manager's personality, interest and past experience would also influence his involvement with the park board.

Interlocal Agreements

Interlocal agreements are one of the most widely used forms of cooperation between two or more jurisdictions. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations defines this type of agreement as an arrangement whereby governmental units may work jointly for a specific purpose or one unit may provide a service for another.²¹ The A.C.I.R. also states that interlocal governments are designed to be flexible in that they can be "permanent or temporary; pursuant to special act or general law; effective with or without voter approval; and may be formal or informal in character."²² Due to the flexibility of these agreements, their use is widespread.

²¹Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas (Washington, D.C.: Report No. A-11, June 1962), p. 26.

²²Ibid.

Part of their usefulness stems from the fact they provide a means for enlarging the geographic base for administering services. Enlarging the geographic base accentuates more effective planning.

Strengths and weaknesses differ according to the nature of each agreement, but those most frequently cited will be discussed. Interlocal agreements can save money by reducing duplications in service delivery. Having one organization or department provide the same service to two or more jurisdictions economizes on administrative and maintenance costs. Funds are used more efficiently when only one department is competing for financing. Economies of scale can be attained through an interlocal agreement. This means that as a service area is broadened, the costs for providing the service decrease. An actual reduction of dollar costs may not always occur, but service delivery may increase or be improved, at the same cost to the taxpayer.

Other strengths include the flexibility of the boundaries and coordination of personnel, both of which promote long-range comprehensive planning throughout the area. The effects of combining knowledge and expertise of government officials also proves to be advantageous. William S. Carpenter states that through cooperation with other governmental units local officials may discover means of acquiring results that they might not have otherwise learned.²³

²³William Seal Carpenter, Problems in Service Levels

Some of the negative aspects of interlocal agreements result from the failure of the agreement to meet the desired goal and economies of scale. Examples of this include: costs increasing rather than being reduced, conflict or misunderstanding among the parties involved, and a lack of complete cooperation between jurisdictions.

In addition to the failure to meet the goal, local governments are often apprehensive of entering into such agreements. The most commonly held fears are the following: apprehension about the ability of counties to effectively deliver services; inequitable distribution of the costs of the service among the units; perception of loss of self-determination; limitations on the flexibility of local government structure; and adverse public reaction to services currently provided by another local government unit.²⁴

Another negative aspect of an interlocal agreement is the lessening of desire to push for a more fundamental change. In other words, officials may be satisfied with a change brought about by the interlocal agreement when, in fact, they might benefit by a more concrete change.

One inherent weakness is the advantage of the seller unit over the unit of local government desiring the service. This occurs infrequently but when it does the seller unit

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 67.

²⁴Lauren S. McKinsey and Michael Halligan, Service Agreements in Voter Review (Helena, Montana: State Commission on Local Government, 1976), Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 3.

remains in control by either raising the cost of the service or lessening the quality.

An interlocal agreement cannot be expected to meet all the demands of a particular situation. However, the flexible nature of these agreements allows them to be adapted to many situations. This is perhaps an interlocal agreement's strongest point.

Consolidation

In 1975 the Montana Legislature provided guidelines for three kinds of consolidation: merger of a county and one or more participating municipalities, or two or more contiguous counties, and of two or more counties and any municipality within a participating county. A single unit of local government emerges from any of the three forms of consolidation. The form of consolidation of concern here is a merger of a county and one or more participating municipalities. A county-city form of consolidation permits the new government to hold the powers of a county in addition to that of an incorporated municipality. Montana law allows any authorized alternative form of government, except town meeting, to be used by the consolidated government.

Consolidation offers government units several advantages as well as disadvantages. The following is a summary of the advantages and disadvantages discussed in Voter Review of

Local Government by the State Commission on Local Government and Handbook of Montana Forms of Local Government by James Lopach and Lauren McKinsey.²⁵

Some advantages of city-county consolidation include:

1. Reduction of duplication. This involves both the delivery of services and the day to day functions of city and county government. Departments can combine to allow for more comprehensive planning and efficient operation. Although the cost of a service may not be reduced by combining departments, the quality of service may be greater at the same cost. Centralized purchasing may achieve economies of scale.

2. Consolidation can simplify existing governmental structures. The county commission and weak mayor-council form of governments, it was shown previously, both experience a diffusion of administrative powers. Generally a consolidated government requires a strong executive official as opposed to a weak administrator to be in charge of a larger governmental structure. This also enables the government to clearly define lines of authority.

3. Accountability of governmental officials is increased. Many elected officials, working independently of each other, burden the existing forms of government in the City of Missoula and Missoula County. Fewer people

²⁵State Commission on Local Government, Voter Review of Local Government, pp. 22-23; and Lopach and McKinsey, Handbook of Montana Forms of Local Government, p. 169.

holding office and clearly defined lines of responsibility increase accountability.

4. Comprehensive planning and orderly development is enhanced. With consolidation, problem solving becomes area-wide allowing previous boundaries of local government units to be crossed.

5. Promote tax and service equality. Residents in an urban fringe area may take advantage of city services without being taxed for them creating inequality of taxes and services delivered. On the other hand, city residents may pay county taxes without receiving the same benefits as county residents.

Disadvantages of city-county consolidation include the following:

1. Resistance from rural residents and government employees and officials. The rural residents may fear losing representation if they consolidated with a larger municipality. They may also fear a loss of community and feel the need for their own government that would encompass their own special needs as compared to those needs of a larger municipality. Employees and officials may oppose consolidation if they fear their jobs will be in jeopardy if consolidation takes place.

2. Tax increases. Urban fringe residents that are enjoying city services without taxation may fear a great increase in taxes while other city and county residents may

hope for tax reductions.

3. Cost decrease unlikely. It has not been documented that costs usually decrease with a consolidated government.

4. Resistance to change. Consolidation, being a dramatic change in present structures of government and necessitating much action within that government, triggers a natural resistance.

A political problem of consolidation to be considered is that consolidation appears to work well in theory but in practice difficulties arise concerning implementation. It is not easy to combine two or more distinct government units into one. For example, concerning personnel, a consolidated government would create one position or department head when in the other government system there might have been two or more positions available. Retirement plans would have to be equalized under consolidation between government employees if previous to consolidation they were not identical. Personnel codes would need to be adjusted to include job descriptions, qualifications and pay scales that were compatible with the previous positions. Problems such as these are not easily handled in practice although consolidation may appear to be an ideal form of government theoretically.

In terms of parks administration, consolidation offers comprehensive, area-wide planning which is beneficial in developing a well organized system of parks. Likewise, the administration of the department would be under one head

which promotes efficiency and accountability. Financing of this park service would come from an equalized tax base and all residents involved would share in the expense of the service. On the other hand, costs might increase as a park department expanded to serve a larger area. Residents may view this cost increase as a disadvantage outweighing the advantage of more comprehensive park service. Overall, consolidation presents a viable plan for the provision of park services over a large geographic base.

In developing a park system the city or county must consider the perceived needs of the residents in that area. These needs aid in the determination of the amount of service to be offered, goals of the department and priorities for development. The following section discusses a survey of needs concerning residents in the Missoula urban area. Chapter five makes use of the results of this survey in its summary and recommendations.

Park and Recreational Needs

In a 1974 survey conducted by the Missoula Planning Board for the Urban Missoula Development Plan, 69 percent of the urban respondents, both city and county residents, felt there was a need for a county maintained park system. Also, a high percentage of respondents expressed a need for more community park facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, ice skating, and picnicking. The following

charts, taken from the "Questionnaire Results for Urban Missoula" and prepared by the Missoula Planning Board staff, show exact tabulations for those questions concerned with parks and recreation.

1. Distance From Home to Nearest Park

a. 0 - 3 blocks	577	48.4%
b. 4 - 6 blocks	283	23.7%
c. ½ - 1 mile	147	12.3%
d. 1 mile or more	186	15.6%

Of significance, these results show that nearly three-fourths of the residents live within a short walk from the nearest park. It also establishes that parks are available to residents and that residents are aware of the existing parks.

2. Neighborhood Park Facilities Needed

	YES		NO		DON'T KNOW OR NO RESPONSE	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
a. Playgrounds for Young Children	640	47	395	29	322	24
b. Playgrounds for Older Children	627	46	351	26	379	28
c. Game Fields (Baseball, Football)	624	46	332	24	401	30
d. Soccer, Basketball, Horseshoes	490	36	268	20	599	44

A majority of the respondents with definite opinions

felt that there was a need for more facilities within the parks. However, whether this should be considered a high priority item would entail a different type of survey which would ask respondents to list items in order of priority.

3. Community Park Facilities

	YES		NO		DON'T KNOW OR NO RESPONSE	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
a. tennis courts	910	67	125	9	322	24
b. swimming pools	872	64	164	12	321	24
c. ice skating	870	64	151	11	336	25
d. band shell	472	35	325	24	560	41
e. fishing pond	515	38	359	27	483	35
f. gardens	722	53	212	16	423	31
g. picnicking	764	56	224	17	369	27
h. golfing	443	33	375	28	539	39

Question 3 concerns additional facilities of those types desired by respondents. The first three items mentioned--tennis courts, swimming pools and ice skating rinks--show considerably higher interest than the remaining five. The growing popularity of tennis increases the desire to have more tennis courts available. The response to item b (swimming pools) emphasizes Missoula's need for a new swimming pool but questions of location, construction (indoor or outdoor) and financing still need

consideration. Missoula does not have a refrigerated ice skating rink, hence the desire to have one available is natural, especially since Missoula experiences a variable winter climate. Band shells, fishing ponds, gardens, picnic areas, and golf courses are currently available to residents.

4. Need For More Community Indoor Recreation

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Yes	913	67
b. No	103	8
c. Don't Know	285	21
d. No Response	56	4

If yes, what type? (Reported by % of "yes" respondents)

	Children		Teens		Adults		Senior Citizens	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Swimming pools	554	61	548	60	562	62	421	46
b. Ice Skating	580	64	582	64	528	58	293	32
c. Archery Range	174	19	337	37	360	39	178	19
d. Rifle Range	121	13	281	31	350	38	178	19
e. Roller Skating	303	33	339	37	261	29	136	15
f. Handball	166	18	409	45	487	53	186	20
g. Gymnasium (basketball, etc.)	303	33	442	48	444	49	193	21

	Children		Teens		Adults		Senior Citizens	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
h. Universal Weight Gym	116	13	154	17	299	32	139	15
i. Youth Center	284	31	667	73	99	11	62	7
j. Shuffle-board	96	11	155	17	217	24	312	34
k. Horse Arena	199	22	253	28	240	26	147	16
l. Bowling	129	14	175	19	180	20	169	19

The Missoula Parks and Recreation Department has no indoor facilities for community recreation. For a large portion of each year, Missoula residents must find their own facilities for recreational pursuits. The results of this question show the need for indoor recreation.

5. Community Use of School Playgrounds and Gyms

	#	%
a. Yes	951	70
b. No	86	6
c. Don't Know	67	5
d. No Response	253	19

These results show that Missoula residents are in favor of using school facilities for recreational interests. This is an excellent way to enlarge the city's recreation facilities. The high cost of building indoor and outdoor facilities, such as gymnasiums, recreational centers, and playgrounds can be alleviated by using existing school

facilities after school hours. Additionally, schools are generally well distributed throughout a community.

6. Protection From Development of Lands Along Certain Streams and Rivers

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Yes	1,230	91
b. No	42	3
c. Don't Know	41	3
d. No Response	44	3

These results indicate a large majority of respondents agree that scenic streams and rivers in the Missoula area need to be protected and preserved for future enjoyment.

7. System of County Maintained Parks

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Yes	937	69
b. No	147	11
c. Don't Know	207	15
d. No Response	66	5

The significance of these results is that a large majority of Missoula urban residents want a system of county maintained parks. A likely explanation is that city residents resent county residents using their parks and recreational facilities without being taxed. City residents may feel that they are not getting their full share of park use because of county residents' use. This would be especially true in the case of the overcrowded tennis courts and

swimming pools. Also, urban county residents are indicating more of a desire for a system of parks in their area than rural residents.

The results of the survey establish the fact that urban Missoula residents feel an increasing need for park and recreational areas. This is especially evident from responses supporting the need for more facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, and ice skating rinks. A large majority of residents also are in favor of adding indoor recreation facilities. The proposal in chapter five focuses on this park and recreational need of Missoula urban residents.

Chapter two will examine past park administrations of the City of Missoula and Missoula County and provide a basis for understanding the present Interlocal Cooperation Agreement which will then be discussed in chapter three.

CHAPTER II

PAST PARK ADMINISTRATION

County Park System

The purpose of reviewing past park administration in Missoula County is to provide information pertaining to the park situation prior to July 8, 1975, the official formalization of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. Past park administration will be analyzed in terms of park management, park planning, land acquisition, park use, and budgeting.

In the urban area surrounding the city of Missoula there are 223 areas of county park land in total. Figure 5 illustrates location of county urban park lands. With the exception of two parks (Lincolnwood and Pineview), or approximately 7 to 9 percent, the remaining acreage is undeveloped.

Park Management

Authority

There is no department or board within county government that deals specifically with parks or recreation. Within the last three to four years the county commissioners have shown interest in county park development. In separate interviews held on April 21, 1976, all three county commissioners

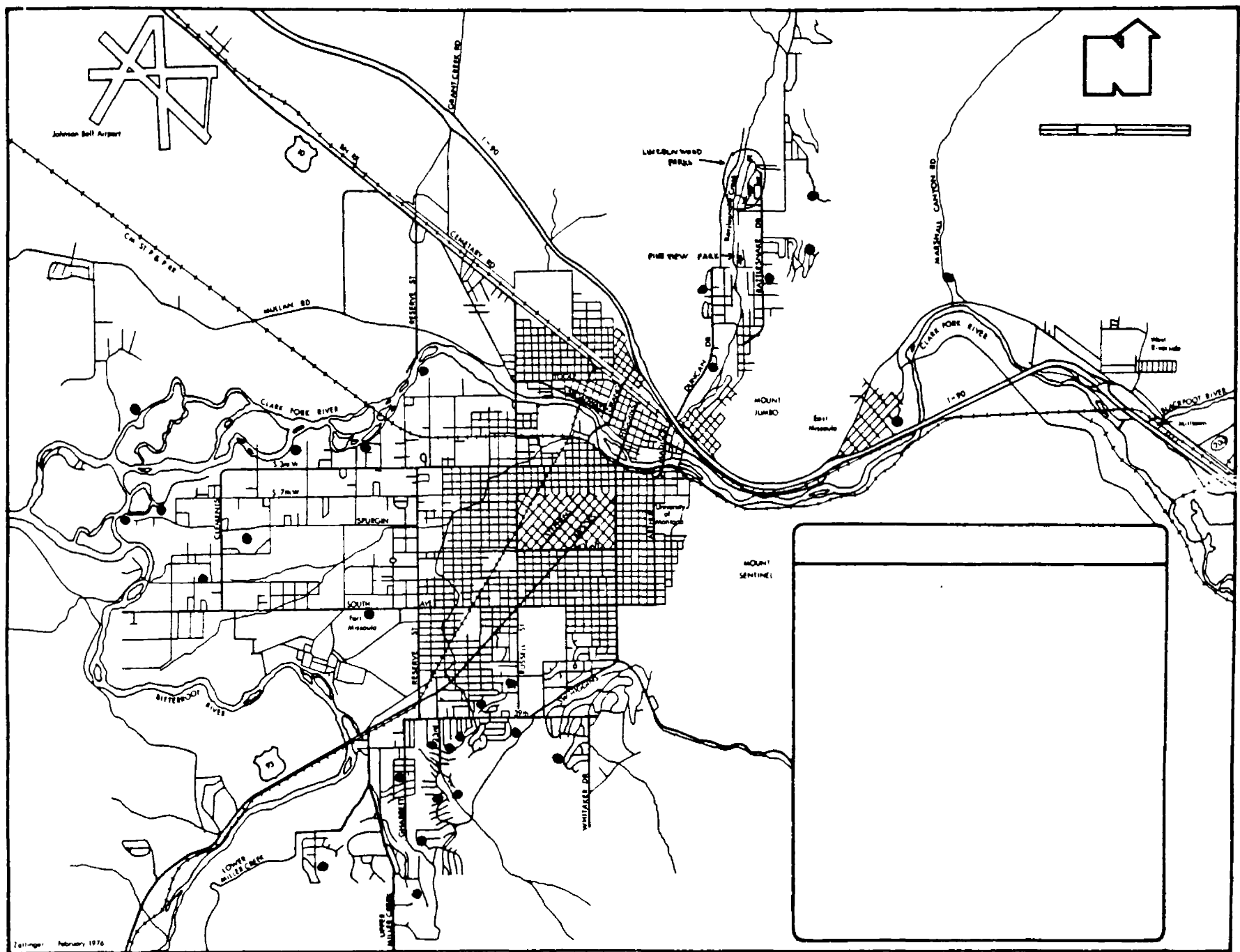


Figure 5. County Urban Parks

concurred that county effort in regard to parks had been virtually nonexistent prior to 1974-75. All three commissioners emphasized shortage of funds as a major reason for the lack of park development. Wilfred Thibodeau mentioned that a majority of county residents failed to generate substantial interest. Lud Browman and Richard Ostergren cited the close proximity of national forest land as a contributing factor. Until 1974 state law restricted Montana county governments in the amount they could spend on park maintenance, which is of special significance to county involvement in parks. A 1974 amendment to Section 4, 62-102 (4444.2) deleted the sentence: "No county shall be authorized to expend to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) per annum out of the general fund of the county for the purpose of maintaining parks as herein provided."¹

The county commissioners make broad policy decisions concerning all county parks. These policy decisions include such things as the ban on drinking of alcoholic beverages and overnight camping in the parks. These decisions are county-wide and are enforced by the county sheriff. Members of park associations make decisions that pertain to their individual park. Apart from the county commissioners, park associations are the only structure of park administration in Missoula County.

¹Revised Codes of Montana 1947.

Park Associations

A park association consists of a group of citizens interested in park development within their neighborhood. Once an association is formed, the members must first seek funding. No county funds are available to the park associations for park development or maintenance. There are three functioning park associations in Missoula: Pineview Park Association, Linda Vista Park Association, and Lincolnwood Park Association. No park association operates in Valley View Park, but interest is shown by a group of residents in the area. Rae Coston, a resident near the Valley View Park, furnished the necessary information.² The three park associations and Valley View Park are located in the urbanized area surrounding the city limits. The oldest association formed in 1966 in the Linda Vista area. Pineview Park Association organized in 1967, and Lincolnwood Park Association in 1968.

Park associations in the county are officially responsible to the county commissioners. However, all associations mentioned that there is little interaction or communication between themselves and the county commissioners. The associations initiate any interaction that does occur. Three out of the four persons interviewed reported little help or encouragement from Missoula County Commissioners. Consequently, associations seek funding through Rural Special Improvement

²Telephone interview with Rae Coston, March 24, 1976.

Districts and grants from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

The first step necessary to create a Rural Special Improvement District (RSID) is to attain 60 percent of the area's freeholders' signatures on a petition. After two weeks' notice in the local newspaper, the county commissioners then hold a hearing. Any protest to the potential RSID may be brought forth at this hearing. After the hearing the county commissioners determine if the proposed RSID should be approved. Pineview Park Association and Lincolnwood Park Association are the only two park associations in Missoula County having an RSID designated for park purposes. Each freeholder pays an amount determined by the size of lot they own. The county's 1977 fiscal budget then allots the \$3,000.00 it collects to the Pineview Park Association RSID which averages \$10.00 per household and \$6,946.00 to the Lincolnwood Park Association RSID or about \$30.00 to \$50.00 per household. Pineview Park Association obtained a grant from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation when first developing their park. To date the association has received approximately \$23,000 from this grant. School District #1 has contributed \$7,500 for matching funds to obtain the grant. Other contributors are Pineview Park Association--\$4,423.38; Washington Construction--\$3,988.00; and Missoula County--\$5,900.00.³ Linda Vista Park Association relies

³The Missoula County Accounting Office supplied these figures.

entirely on contributions for financial support.

The Pineview Park Association developed the first park in the county. The park includes tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas, play equipment, passive areas, and flat open space adequate for baseball, football, or other participatory sports. The governing body of the association consists of nine members, three of whom are elected annually. Each spring the president calls a special meeting for the purpose of electing new board members. Other than this meeting, the president of the board calls meetings on an ad hoc basis. Such meetings total about four a year. Anna Sain, president of the Pineview Park Association, stated in a telephone interview on January 7, 1977, "Generally the public turnout at any meeting is not acute unless a problem is involved." All persons in the RSID area and anyone within the vicinity of the park may attend the meetings and express their views. The Pineview Park Association is an official corporation in accordance with Montana state law. The purpose of incorporation: "The corporation is organized for the exclusive charitable purpose of erecting and maintaining public works and public parks, so as to qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provisions of future laws."⁴ Funding for park maintenance

⁴Articles of Incorporation of Pineview Park Association.

is through a Rural Special Improvement District fee paid by the freeholders of the area. Means of obtaining funds for park development other than maintenance were neighborhood projects such as hot dog sales and a community carnival which, together, netted a total of \$2,200.00.

Approximately ten years ago the Linda Vista Park Association formed. Every family within a short distance from the park is a member of the Association. The Association includes about seventy families and members elect a president, secretary, and treasurer. The president calls meetings whenever there is need, an average of three or four a year. Financing park development and maintenance has been provided entirely by contribution with the treasury now containing approximately \$200.00. Gretchen Rooney, a past president, acknowledges that there is little development in the park and that it is infrequently used.⁵ The park includes a swing set, slide, softball field, and a barbecue/picnic area. However, because of the lack of interest and funding, the park has become overgrown with weeds.

In April of 1976, at the request of interested residents, the county commissioners appointed eight members to organize a Rural Special Improvement District for Lincolnwood Park. Before this, the Lincolnwood Park Association held

⁵Telephone interview with Gretchen Rooney, March 23, 1976.

meetings on an irregular basis. The new president, Marjorie Burgan, plans to hold meetings once a month. All property owners in this area are considered members of the Association and are free to attend the meetings. Lincolnwood Park consists of seven different parcels of land. Two of these parcels are developed and include such things as: play equipment and areas for baseball and basketball. The other five parcels are smaller and at this time just bare land. The newly created RSID will be the major source of funding for Lincolnwood Park.

The Valley View Park is a "bunch of weeds" according to Mrs. Ray Coston in a telephone interview on March 24, 1976. There is no organized association. The county commissioners never encouraged those residents interested in starting a park and refused to visit the park site. There is no development within the park and few persons, if any, have attempted to use the park, according to Mrs. Coston. Linda Vista Park Association's past president and Valley View Park's spokeswoman both expressed that the lack of funds and encouragement from county officials has limited the development of their parks.

The most frequently mentioned problems that have beset the park associations are:

1. A lack of knowledge of funding techniques. A first priority in developing a park is to acquire sufficient funds. This includes knowing what sources are available at each

level of government, what department or person to contact and how to apply.

2. Maintaining interest among neighbors. Projects of this nature often move slowly, causing interest to wane. Also, people moving in and out of the neighborhood create the problem of changing leadership and support for developmental plans.

3. Attaining building and maintenance equipment. The high cost of this equipment prohibits an association from purchasing. Therefore, they attempt to acquire equipment through other means or from within their membership. In one case, the county allowed Pineview Park Association to use two dump trucks, provided the Association pay for the time spent by the drivers.

In summary, some common patterns emerge pertaining to park associations. In all cases, the initiative for organization comes from the members of the neighborhood. The county commissioners, because of a lack of interest and monies, give little encouragement except in the approval of the RSID which simply is permission for a neighborhood to tax themselves for their park. RSID's provide the advantage of allowing neighborhood money to be spent for neighborhood goals. Despite this lack of outside help and encouragement two associations, Pineview and Lincolnwood, have persevered sufficiently to attain a usable park. Others have found the lack of sustained neighborhood interest

and support from county officials to be discouraging. Lack of funds, encouragement and expertise appear to be the most important factors mentioned in interviews concerning park associations.⁶

Form of Government in Relation to the Park Associations

The commission form of government as found in Missoula County limits any park administration. Since the commission form does not specify a separate department for parks and recreation the commissioners are responsible for any guidance, assistance or expertise. Park associations have provided the main source of administration. In interviews with presidents of the park associations each responded to the question: "Do you see any effects from the county commission form of government on the operation of parks within the county?" Only Linda Vista Park Association's past president, Gretchen Rooney, believed that the form of government had been a hindrance to park development. Mrs. Rooney clarified what she meant by hindrance, emphasizing the difficulty the Association encountered in obtaining funds for park development.⁷ The other park association presidents felt neutral to the form of government, or did not have enough experience to know if it had any effects. The greatest concern to the

⁶Telephone interview with Rae Coston, March 24, 1976; telephone interview with Gretchen Rooney, April 20, 1976; personal interview with Roy Mix, April 5, 1976.

⁷Telephone interview with Gretchen Rooney, April 20, 1976.

park association presidents was not the form of government. Instead, they expressed desire for more technical expertise and leadership in the area of parks at the county level.

The commission form of government is not noted for its usefulness in an urban setting such as Missoula. James Lopach and Lauren McKinsey explain that "as living patterns become more complex and governmental responsibilities grow, the need for policy planning, administrative overview and control, reliable public information, and public accountability increases."⁸ If, indeed, park administration on a county level is to be a viable idea and well executed, planning, administrative overview, reliable public information, and accountability must be included. Although the Missoula County Comprehensive Plan states guidelines with respect to parks, the county commissioners must outline specific plans. The Missoula Planning Board's jurisdiction of expertise excludes designing specific development plans for parks. The commissioners must deal with the specific details, such as which areas have developmental priority, what improvements are needed in existing parks, and procedures and policies for maintenance. Pineview Park Association's past president Roy Mix recognizes a need for more responsiveness and technical expertise within the county government for park development.⁹ A department or board responsible for park

⁸Lopach and McKinsey, Handbook on Montana Forms of Local Government, p. 147.

⁹Personal interview with Roy Mix, April 20, 1976.

administration and development at the county level would be advantageous to individual associations in dealing with their park problems as well as to those areas where there is no association.

Park Planning, Land Acquisition and Use

Park planning in the county had been virtually non-existent until 1975, when the county hired William C. Hollenbaugh to design a comprehensive county-wide plan for possible park development. Hollenbaugh worked in the Missoula Planning Board office while conducting his study. His plan, entitled "Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan: Policies - Programs - Needs," consists of three phases. Phase One is the overview plan; Phase Two, the plan of development; Phase Three, the implementation plan. The plan states as its first recommendation the need for a county park department. According to the county commissioners the purpose of Mr. Hollenbaugh's plan is the provision of an inventory of the current county park situation and guidelines for future action on the part of the county.¹⁰ However, the commissioners emphasized that they have no intention of creating their own park department.

The Missoula Planning Board prepared a land use plan specifically for Missoula County and the county commissioners

¹⁰Personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, March 2, 1976.

adopted this plan on June 24, 1975. The plan, entitled Missoula County Comprehensive Plan, outlines six goals for open space and recreation:

1. Provide community recreation opportunities which meet the needs of all citizens of the community.
2. Protect the natural environment and improve it where degradation has occurred, in order to maintain a high quality of life for our citizens of the county.
3. Develop opportunities for public recreational use of rivers and lakes while protecting environmental quality and private property.
4. Expand recreation programs and facilities to meet the needs of the growing population and new demands for all segments of the county.
5. Establish standards for the acquisition and development of parks and playgrounds, and establish an improvement program for developing parks and recreation programs.
6. Develop a plan for the acquisition of development rights and agricultural land.¹¹

There is no force of law behind this plan. Its purpose is to "serve as a guideline for future decisions by officials."¹² These particular goals are broad and comprehensive. Although they serve the purpose of existing as guidelines, they do not offer any definite plan of development for Missoula County. This is not to imply that the statement of goals is totally useless. However, if the county were to decide to develop county parks, they would need a definite, concrete plan of

¹¹Missoula Planning Board, Missoula County Comprehensive Plan (Missoula, Montana: 1975), p. 9.

¹²Telephone interview with Dan Obermeyer, Missoula Planning Board, June 1, 1976.

action that deals with specific problems such as those mentioned in the previous section and funds to implement that plan.

In accordance with the growing interest among county urban residents for park development, the county commissioners have begun to be cautious in selecting park sites. The commissioners evaluate each park site proposal according to its location and desirability.¹³ The Park Dedication Law simplifies land acquisition for the county. It was the 1973 amendment to this law that gave authority to the governing body to specify both the location and the suitability of a park proposed for dedication. Prior to the amendment of the law, several parks acquired were undesirable to develop. Examples in the Missoula urban area: High Park in the South Hills area is inaccessible because of a deep gully; Moose Can Gully, in the southeast side of Missoula, consists of a steep ravine; and a steep hillside named Syringa Park is located in the upper Rattlesnake area. Although these parks are unsuitable for development, the county has acquired other suitable park lands as a result of the Park Dedication Law, such as the Lincolnwood parks, Linda Vista Park, Honey-suckle Park in the Spring Hills Addition and 2.3 acres of park land in Wapikiya Addition #3.

¹³Personal interview with Chuck Painter, Administrative Assistant to the Missoula County Commissioners, March 1976.

The county does not keep records of park use, but there are local use studies and a user preference survey conducted in Missoula over the past several years. William C. Hollenbaugh has incorporated the Missoula Planning Board studies and those of the Montana Power Company, League of Women Voters, Montana Department of Fish and Game, and thesis studies by David G. Conklin and William B. Mahoney as data for the first phase of his "Missoula County Parks - Recreation and Open Space Plan." The Missoula Planning Board survey is the most pertinent to this analysis. The survey, conducted in 1974, includes only non-urban residents of Missoula County. This survey is also part of the County Comprehensive Plan. Of 2000 questionnaires sent out, 706, or 36 percent, were returned. The responses represent 12 percent of the non-urban population of Missoula County. This survey presented the following results pertinent to county parks and recreation exclusively in the rural area:

<u>QUESTIONS</u>	<u>RESPONSES</u>	
1. Is state and federal land adequate for recreation?	yes	71.95%
	no	16.86%
	no response	10.62%
2. Does your area need more county parks?	yes	24.08%
	no	62.32%
	no response	13.31%
3. Is public access adequate to rivers and lakes?	yes	71.10%
	no	22.24%
	no response	6.66%
4. Area need for neighborhood park, community park, community hall, youth center, other?	no response	26.35%
	NP	6.23%
	CP	7.08%
	CH	6.66%

NP - Neighborhood Park			YC	14.31%
CP - Community Park			OTH	2.69%
CH - Community Hall	* * none * *			13.03%
YC - Youth Center	* * all * *			3.26%
OTH - Other	NP CP			1.13%
	NP CH			0.57%
	NP YC			2.97%
	NP OTH			0.42%
	CP CH			0.71%
	CP YC			3.26%
	CP OTH			0.71%
	CH YC			4.82%
	CH OTH			0.14%
	YC OTH			0.71%
	NP CP CH			0.14%
	NP CP YC			1.27%
	NP CH YC			0.71%
	CP CH YC			1.56%
	NP YC OTH			0.42%
	NP CH YC OTH			0.28%
	CP YC OTH			0.28%
	CP CH YC OTH			0.14%
	NP CP CH OTH			0.14%

As shown by the results of question number one, a large majority of rural residents are satisfied with recreational areas now provided by state and federal lands such as Lolo National Forest, Mission Mountains Primitive Area, Blue Mountain Recreation Area, and numerous picnic and camping areas. The county commissioners also cited the close proximity of National Forest Land as a reason for the lack of county effort in regard to park development. Non-urban county residents are also opposed to having more county parks created, shown by the results of question number two. This attitude may result from satisfaction with state and federal recreation areas. In regard to access to rivers and lakes, 71 percent of those responding were satisfied that access was adequate.

The response to question number four did not provide any concrete facts. Of the items mentioned Youth Centers received the most support with 14 percent. However, only 13 percent felt no facilities were needed, and 26 percent gave no response. This is not a strong indication that any of the facilities mentioned are badly needed. The conclusion drawn from these results is that non-urban county residents are satisfied with the park and recreational opportunities that presently are available. Significantly, the real focus of need at the county level is the urban non-city area. County residents are heavy users of city parks on the edge of the Missoula city limits. County residents also heavily use those parks equipped with swimming pools and tennis courts. However, they do not help financially to support these parks. Acknowledging this county usage of the city parks, the county commissioners contribute money each year to the City Department of Parks and Recreation for city recreational and park programs (exact figures shown in Table 2).¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that this contribution is out of the county general fund, 41 percent of which comes from city resident taxes.¹⁵

¹⁴Personal interview with Lud Browman, Missoula County Commissioner, January 1976.

¹⁵Malinda Schai11, Taxes in Missoula County: The Suburbia Exploitation Thesis (Missoula: University of Montana, Department of Economics, 1974), pp. 10-14.

In a study by Dr. Malinda Schai11 at the University of Montana, the technique of "demographic potential" was used to determine the potential use of each park in the city of Missoula using population and distance from each park according to sixty-one enumeration districts.¹⁶ The potential or "pull" of each park was computed by a formula using population and distance from park as factors. The net tax-attributable budget was then derived for each park. Budget items used only for specific parks were allotted to those parks (i.e., swimming pool chemicals and salaries for tennis and swimming instructors and lifeguards). Parks that were affected by user fees had these deducted from their budget. Salaries and overhead expenses were distributed evenly among the parks. An estimate of benefit received by non-city residents was acquired by multiplying the tax-attributable budget and the percentage of non-city resident use for each park. Benefits received by non-city residents are shown in Table 1. The significant point of these findings is that county urban residents are receiving \$48,958.00 of benefits for only \$3,245.00. This is a serious economic injustice to city taxpayers. City-dependent residents average one-fourth of the use of each park. These results further emphasize the need for parks in the county urban area. The study presented in chapter one under "Park and Recreational Needs" also showed

¹⁵Ibid.

TABLE 1

PARKS AND RECREATION BENEFITS RECEIVED
BY CITY-DEPENDENT RESIDENTS

Park Name	Percent of Use By Out-of-City Residents	Tax Attributable Park Budget	Out-of-City Benefits
North Side	25.8	\$12,831	\$3,310
West Side	20.3	11,829	2,401
McCormick (Northside)	20.6	6,475	1,334
Greenough	22.1	9,594	2,120
McCormick Recreation	22.7	14,730	3,344
Island	17.4	6,475	1,127
Kiwanis	16.9	11,240	1,899
Madison	18.8	6,475	1,217
Sacajawea	15.1	9,594	1,449
Anderson	17.3	6,475	1,120
Memorial Rose	17.1	9,594	1,640
Bonner	15.2	13,243	2,013
Russell Street	23.7	6,475	1,535
Franklin	36.9	12,831	4,735
McLeod	30.5	10,828	3,303
Washington	22.6	6,475	1,463
Playfair	31.2	7,675	2,395
Spartan	31.2	11,412	3,561
Elms	24.3	6,475	1,573
Boyd	38.6	6,475	2,499
Children's Fish Pond	35.7	6,475	2,312
Farviews	27.8	6,475	1,800
Lester	24.3	6,475	1,573
High Park	38.3	6,475	<u>2,480</u>
TOTAL			\$52,203
Less County Contribution			<u>3,245</u>
NET BENEFIT			<u><u>\$48,958</u></u>

Malinda Schaille, Taxes in Missoula County: The Suburbia Exploitation Thesis, p. 13.

that urban residents would be in favor of a county maintained system of parks.¹⁷ These two studies lead to the conclusions that county urban residents would both use and support a well developed system of county maintained parks and that the tax inequities of the urban park situation are quite severe.

Budgeting

Until 1974, state law stipulated that five thousand dollars was the limit that could be spent from the county general fund for park maintenance. Since there was no park and recreation department at the county level, county commissioners exercised discretion concerning where most funds were spent. Money accepted in lieu of park land constitutes the Park Fund. Park associations provide their own funding for park maintenance.

Missoula County budget expenditure records for 1973 and 1974 indicate that Missoula County aided in the development of Pineview Park. The county commissioners took \$115.74 in 1973 and \$1,221.19 in 1974 out of the Park Fund for development in Pineview Park. Over the years 1971 to 1975 the records did not designate any other park had received aid from the county. During the years 1973 to 1975, Park Fund money paid for items such as: sprinkling systems, fencing,

¹⁷See page 29 of this study.

grass seed, title company bills, legal publications, appraisal fees, and miscellaneous building materials.

In recognition of the fact that county residents do use city parks, the county gave varying amounts to the city park fund for their park and recreation programs as shown in Table 2. The county commissioners determined the amounts listed under "county part in city parks." The city then deposited this money into the general fund of the City Parks and Recreation Department, rather than using it for a specific purpose. The amount of expenditure for parks by the county government for the past five years is shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2
COUNTY EXPENDITURES FOR PARKS

Fiscal Years	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Operations from the Park Fund	0	0	\$7,001	\$4,702	\$1,073
County part in city parks	0	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$3,000

In summary, Missoula County government has been negligent in providing a park service to its residents. The problem is not as severe in non-urban segments of the county as it is in the urban fringe surrounding the city of Missoula because of easier access to state and federal recreational

lands. The people in the urban area have no public parks maintained by the county except for two that are provided and maintained by the park associations. The survey cited in chapter one indicated a strong urban preference for a county maintained system of parks. Between the years 1970 and 2000 the county population is expected to increase by 48,389 persons and the Missoula urban area by 42,060 persons according to the projections of the Missoula Planning Board.¹⁸ Park and recreational problems cannot be ignored by the county. The county commission form of government is not required by state law to provide a park service to its residents. However, the county commissioners could make it easier for park associations to develop parks by being more encouraging and providing expertise in park planning at this level. The fact that citizens have tried to establish park associations indicates that there is interest in developing parks within the county urban area. Also, county residents close to the city limits use city parks free of charge. The money that the county contributes for county residents' use of city parks is merely a token gesture compared to the benefits received by these residents (see Table 2). The City Parks and Recreation Department cannot be expected to provide service to the entire urban area without greater support from the county. Some positive steps have been taken by the county

¹⁸Population figures from Missoula, A Policy of Urban Growth, p. 5.

toward park and recreational development. This includes the hiring of William Hollenbaugh to study the current park situation in the county, the initiation of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the City Parks and Recreation Department (to be discussed in chapter three) and more judicious choice of park sites.

City Park System

In contrast to the county, park development in the City of Missoula has grown steadily since the early 1900s. At that time, Missoula dedicated and developed for park and recreation purposes Sacajawea Park and Greenough Park. The Street Department was in charge of any improvement or maintenance within the parks until 1952, when the city hired a Recreation Director. His main effort promoted recreational programs within the parks. In 1960 the Missoula City Council officially created the Missoula City Parks and Recreation Board.

Currently there are 363.1 acres of park land within the Missoula city limits or 6.85 percent of the total acreage of Missoula. The 1974 Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department states, "plans for future development of some of the other undeveloped park land are under consideration."¹⁹

The City Parks and Recreation Department has divided

¹⁹City Parks and Recreation Department, 1974 Annual Report (Missoula, Montana, 1974).

parks in their jurisdiction into five different categories as listed below:

1. Regional Park - an area, either developed or undeveloped, which because of unique history, landscape, facilities, or size attracts visitors from the entire region.
2. Community Park - an area, either developed or undeveloped, which because of its location, size, landscape features, or facilities attracts visitors from throughout the city.
3. Neighborhood Park - an area, either developed or undeveloped that is designed to serve the needs or interests of a particular neighborhood.
4. View Type Park - an area required and/or developed because of a unique terrain or location. These areas are often developed to enhance streets, boulevards, and intersections for the beautification of the community.
5. Nature Park - an area left either entirely or mostly in its natural state.²⁰

The city of Missoula has a total of nine community parks (188.9 acres), thirteen neighborhood parks (35 acres), seven view type parks (3 acres), and four nature parks (108.2 acres). Figure 6 shows the distribution of city parks.

Park Management

Authority

Montana state law governs both the Park and Recreation Department and the Park Board. The regulations concerning city parks and the Park Board are very similar to those that would govern a county park board. The City Park Board

²⁰Ibid.

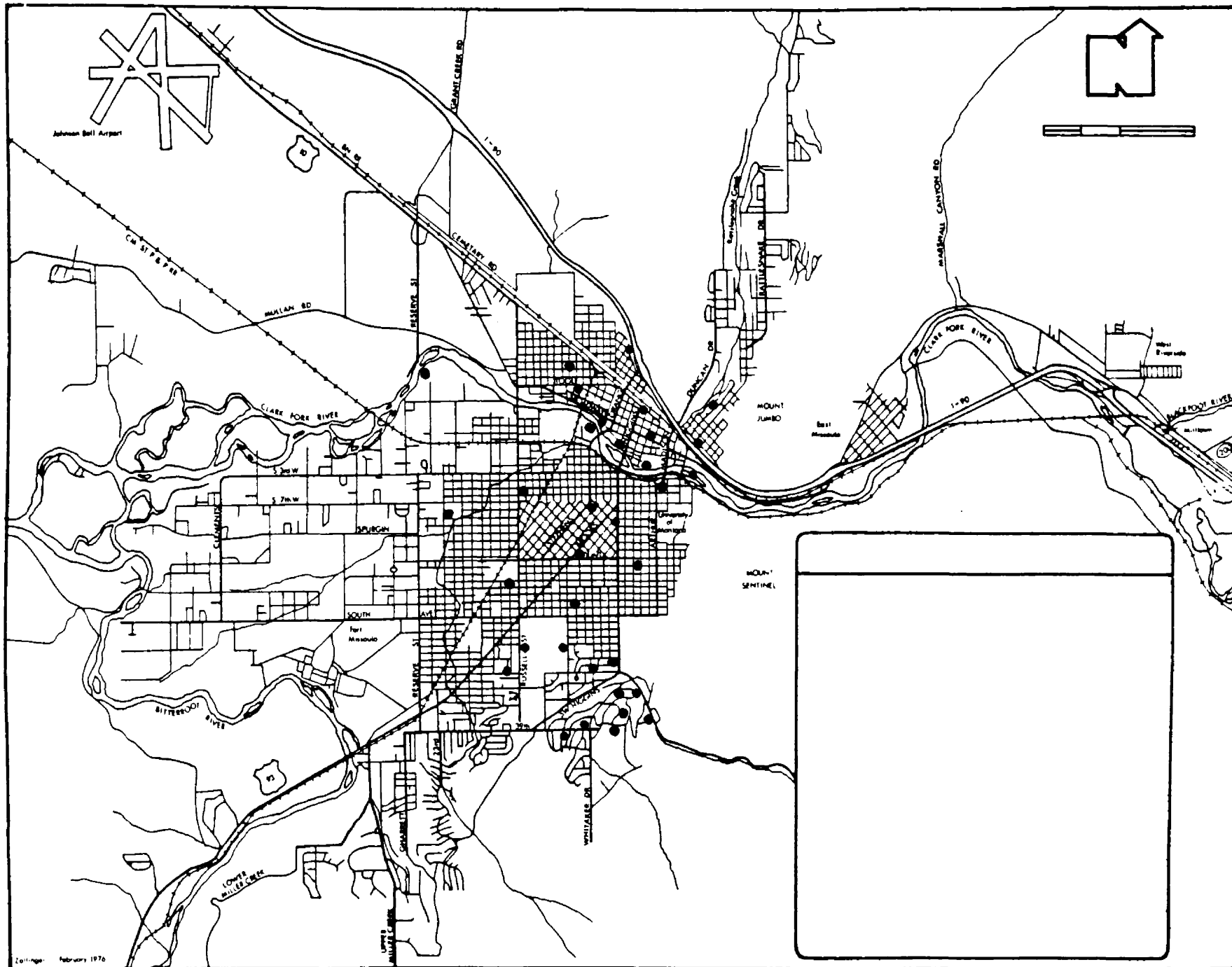


Figure 6. City Parks

consists of six members and the mayor. The mayor appoints these members for two-year terms upon approval of the City Council. The members do not represent a particular section of the city. If a vacancy occurs on the Park Board, the mayor's office places a notice in the paper inviting interested persons to submit a letter of interest to the mayor. Persons applying must be "25 years old, taxpaying freeholder within the limits of the city of Missoula, and a resident of the state for at least three years, and a resident of the city of Missoula for two years next preceeding his appointment, and shall reside within the city of Missoula during the period of his appointment."²¹ According to Mayor Robert Brown, during the process of selecting new members, he chooses more on a basis of interest rather than location in the city. Special interests of an individual, such as tennis, softball, social organization membership, and the school system, are considered. Even though this selection method might attract those persons with a special park or recreation interest to apply for the Park Board, it possesses some drawbacks. For instance, with only six appointed members it is impossible for all recreational interests to be represented. Furthermore, the decision concerning what interest should be represented lies solely with Mayor Brown. Figure 7 illustrates Park Board members' residences from 1969

²¹City Parks and Recreation Department, Policy Manual (Missoula, Montana, 1976).

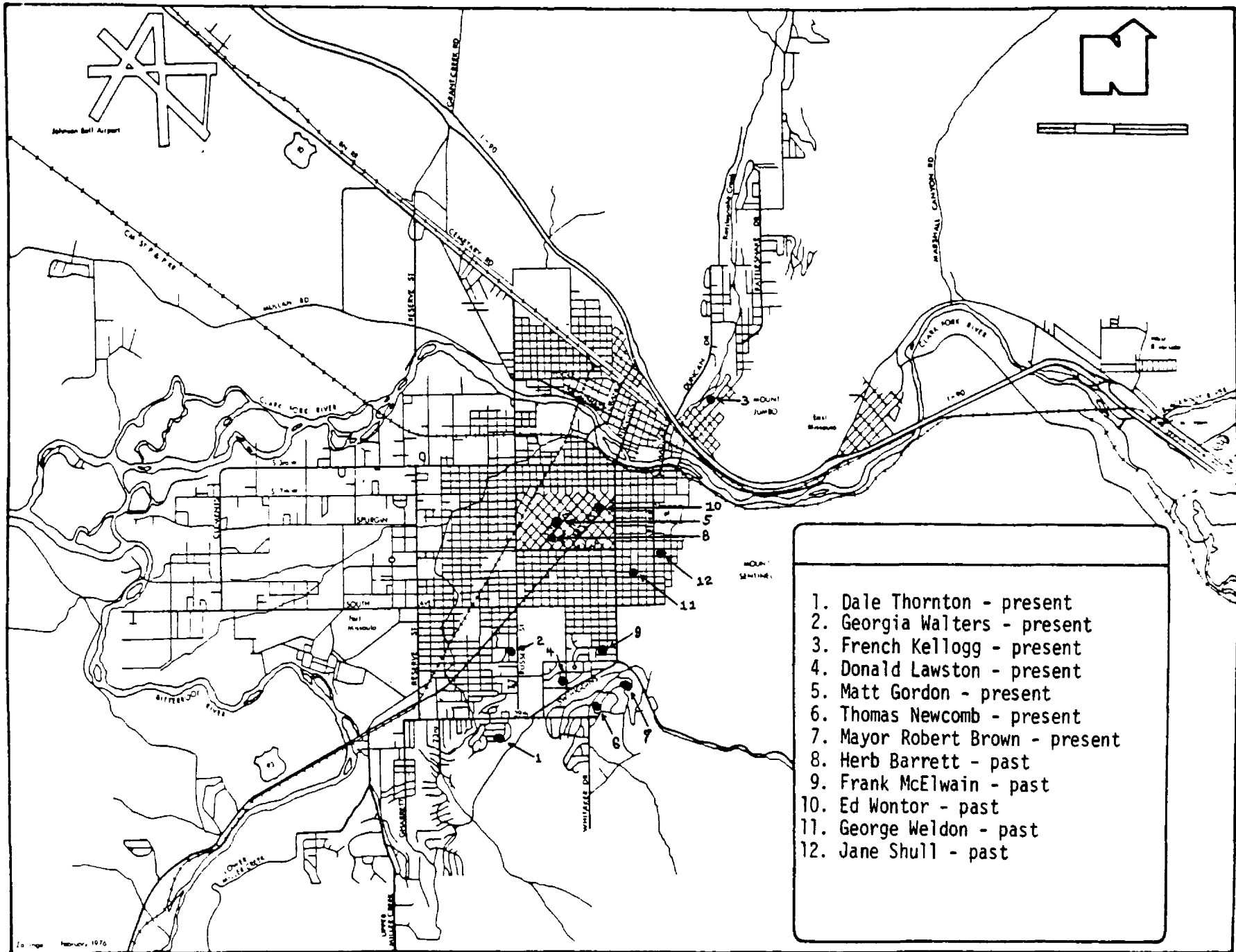


Figure 7. Park Board Residences

through 1976 as found in the records of City Council minutes. This indicates that large portions of the city have not had representation on the Park Board during these years. A review of the City Council Minutes from 1969 through 1976 revealed that Mayor Brown's recommended appointees to the Park Board received Council approval without discussion. These same records indicate a slow turnover rate with "personal reasons" usually being the reason for a resignation.

Referring to interest shown in applying for the Park Board, Mayor Brown stated, "it is difficult to get members for any volunteer city board" in a December 9, 1976, interview. Park Board members serve without compensation and meet regularly on a monthly basis. The Park Board hires the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation and he is responsible to that board. The Superintendent manages all other employees of the department. These employees are hired by the Superintendent after meeting qualifications set out in the job descriptions found in the department's policy manual. Besides outlining the duties and requirements these job descriptions outline the education and experience necessary for all jobs and also indicate the supervision of each job. The organization chart, Figure 8, illustrates the relationship between the Parks and Recreation Department, the Park Board and the city government.²²

²²City Parks and Recreation Department, 1975 Annual Report (Missoula, Montana, 1975).

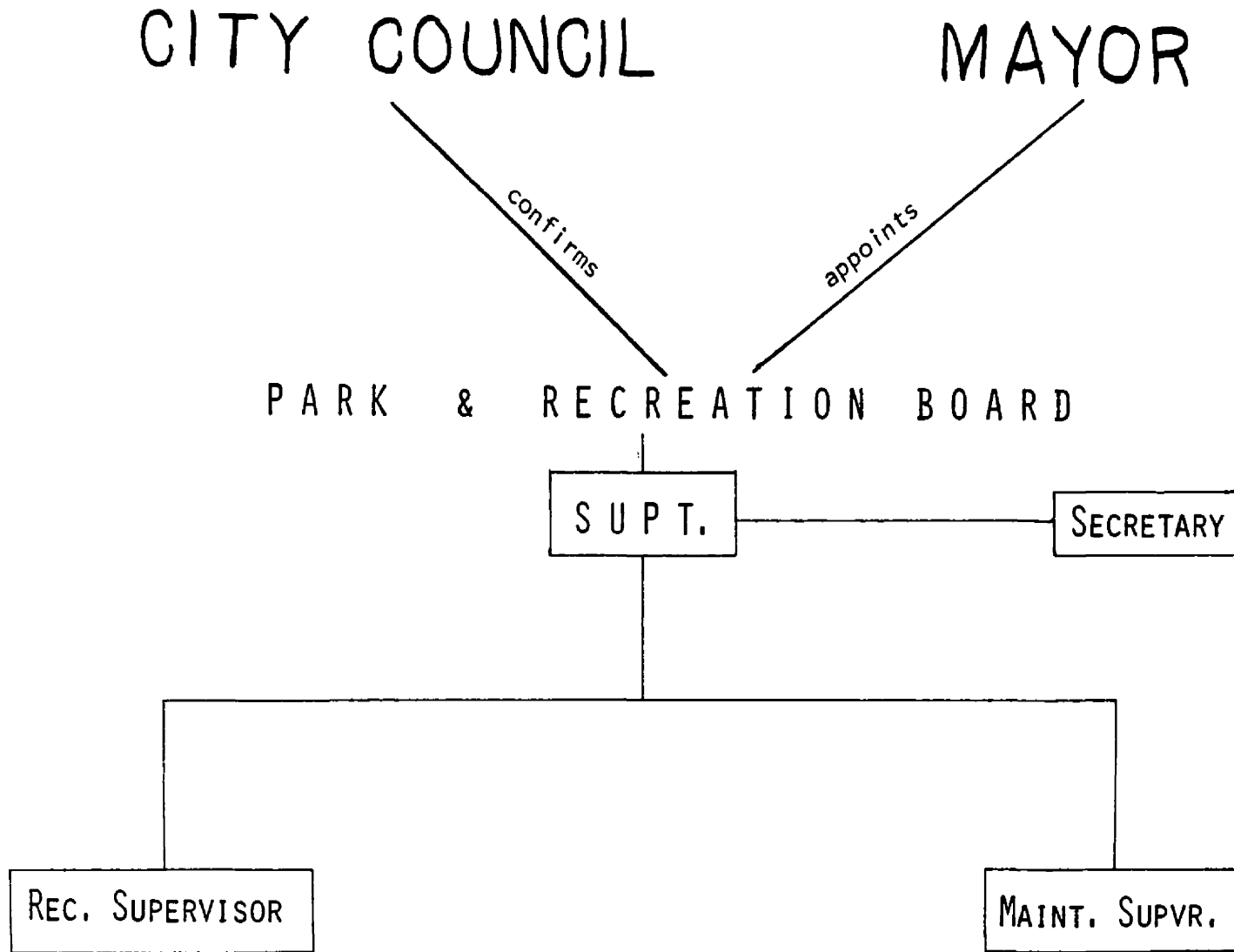


Figure 8. Organization Chart

In an interview, the mayor stated that he is "just one of the members of the park board who is not given any different status or responsibilities because of his position within the city government."²³ Mayor Brown regularly attends Park Board meetings and according to the Superintendent the mayor has been an active participant. Whether or not a mayor attends Park Board meetings is up to his discretion since he is automatically a member of that board. Input to the Park Board from the mayor depends solely upon personality. State law, section 62-203 (5161) Revised Codes of Montana, does not stipulate any difference of function between a strong mayor, weak mayor, or manager in relation to the Park Board. Under the proposed local government code the governing body will create boards by ordinance. This ordinance will specify the number of board members and will outline duties, responsibilities, and administrative powers of said board and members. The ordinance may also provide for voting or non-voting ex officio members.²⁴

In personal interviews, each of the Park Board members responded to this question: "As a park board member, what are your main duties and responsibilities?" Although the answers were varied, they remained within the realm of the policy manual, which incorporates state law. French Kellogg

²³Personal interview with Mayor Robert Brown, Mayor of Missoula, May 27, 1976.

²⁴Proposed Local Government Code Title 47A, R.C.M., 1947 (Helena, Montana: Staff Report to the Commission on Local Government, Subject to Revision, 1976), p. 107.

stated his main duty or responsibility as "making policy decisions;" Dale Thornton believed "to see to the smooth operation of the department;" while Donald Lawston cited "to attend the regular meetings and approve the budget."²⁵ Mayor Brown and Matt Gordon specifically stated that their duties and responsibilities were outlined in state law and the department's policy manual.²⁶ Other responsibilities distinguished in the interviews included: approving recreational programs, park improvements, and land acquisition. Although it was apparent to the author during these interviews that each member perceived certain duties or responsibilities as more important than others, it was also clear that there was a definite understanding of the lines of authority by the policy manual and state law. This enhances administrative efficiency within the department.

Park Board members answered a question concerning policy making unanimously. This answer stated that policy decisions effecting the City Parks and Recreation Department are made by the Board, not by the Superintendent or City Council. The Park Board makes decisions that affect policy every month. These decisions include policies for the leasing and joint usage of park facilities, guidelines for naming parks, and

²⁵Personal interviews with Park Board members: French Kellogg, April 20, 1976; Dale Thornton, April 21, 1976; and Donald Lawston, April 22, 1976.

²⁶Personal interviews with Mayor Robert Brown, May 27, 1976, and Matt Gordon, April 20, 1976.

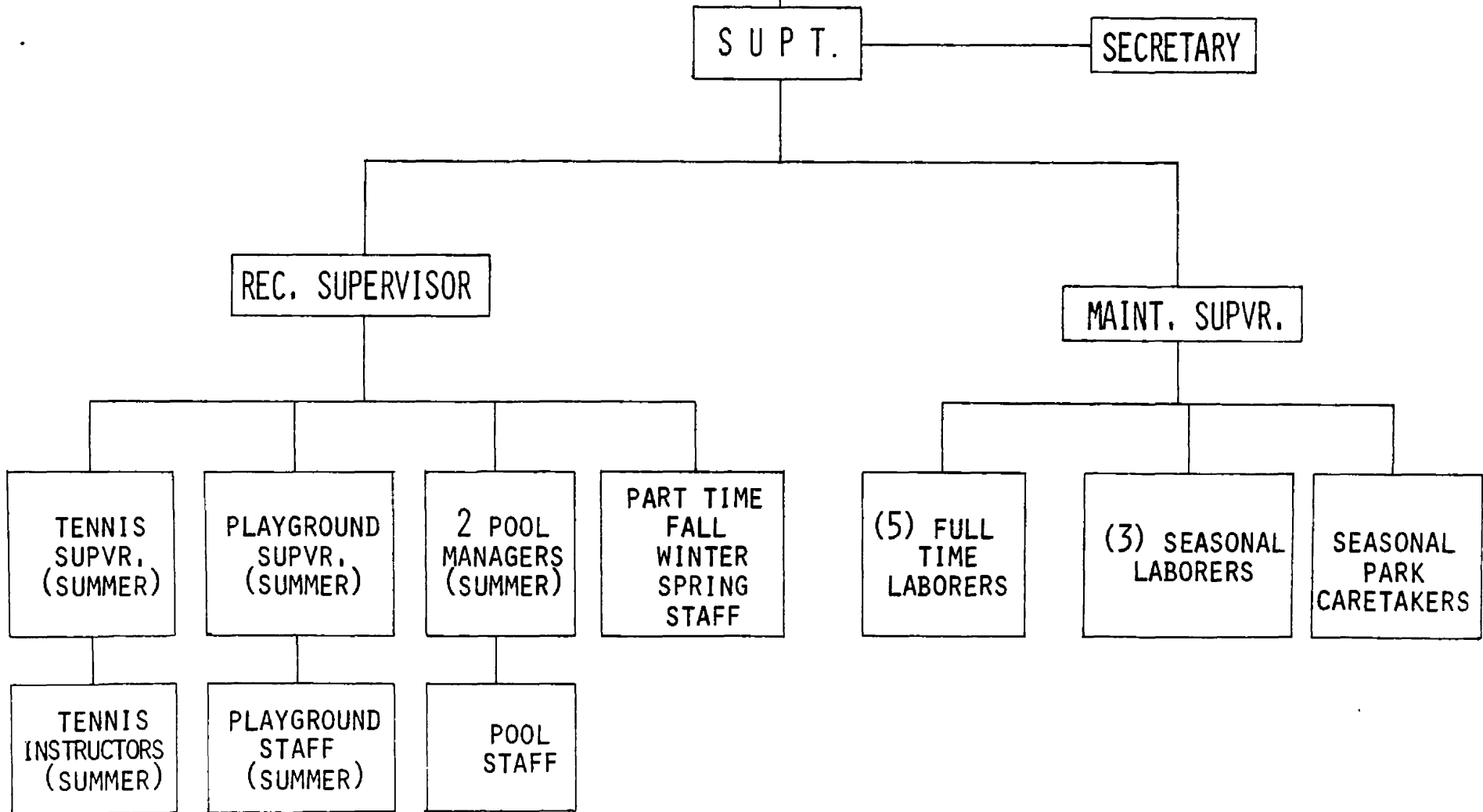
policies concerning use of park equipment. Although it is the Park Board's responsibility to enact policies, they exhibit a strong dependence on the Superintendent. The Superintendent participates in policy decision making each month by suggesting policies to the Park Board. The Superintendent attends all Park Board meetings and is included in discussions concerning policy making. An example of a superintendent's recommendation to the Park Board concerned the policy for naming parks and more recently his recommendation not to provide a ski bus to Snow Bowl Ski Area. On both of these occasions the Park Board followed the Superintendent's recommendation. Day to day decisions that involve implementation of policies enacted by the Park Board are the Superintendent's responsibility.

The author noted during interviews with Park Board members and the Superintendent that their answers concerning lines of authority were consistent as shown in Table 3. It is evident that the City Parks and Recreation Department is administered relatively closely to what it was set up to be. In 1975 the author worked as a Graduate Intern in the Parks and Recreation Department. At that time the author did not detect any behavior that suggested a deviation from the lines of authority as established in the department's policy manual. This is not to imply that the workings of the department are formal and rigid. It was apparent to the author through the interviews and working in the department that, in fact, a

TABLE 3

CITY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

PARK & RECREATION BOARD



rather informal atmosphere prevails. The Park Board members and the Superintendent interact frequently. However, a great deal of this informality and good working relationship is a result of the personalities involved rather than an institutionalized authority. A majority of the Park Board members volunteered their satisfaction and confidence with the Superintendent and respect his ideas and suggestions. Likewise, the Superintendent tries to keep the Park Board members aware of the day to day workings of the department. Since this is not an institutionalized authority, if a new superintendent was to be hired, the situation could be entirely different.

Not one of the members of the Park Board or the Superintendent believed that the form of city government in Missoula had any effect on the operation of the department or the Park Board. When asked a direct question concerning the effects of the form of government the consensus was that the Park Board was an autonomous board and that the city's form of government had no immediate effects on the operation of the department.²⁷ As discussed in chapter one the weak mayor-council form of government is characterized by administrative powers dispersed between the Council, elected officers, and boards and commissions. The organizational chart provided earlier in this chapter shows that the Park Board is ultimately responsible to the mayor and city council. However, under the

²⁷Personal interviews with Park Board members: Dale Thornton, April 21, 1976; Georgia Walters, April 22, 1976; Thomas Newcomb, April 22, 1976; Donald Lawston, April 22, 1976; and Mayor Robert Brown, May 27, 1976.

weak mayor-council form of government as found in Missoula, the Park Board is highly autonomous and acts independently of the Mayor and the City Council. For instance, in the spring of 1975 the Park Board voted to increase the user fee for all swimming pools. Although several aldermen voiced opinions against the increased fee the Park Board decision was not changed. The Park Board does interact with the city government occasionally but the Board's opinions are respected by the Council.²⁸

Park Planning, Land Acquisition and Use

The superintendent plans and investigates improvements in all city parks. Each year, the Superintendent updates a Five-Year Development Plan. This plan includes all projected park improvements such as: landscaping, irrigation systems, athletic fields, and play equipment. The Five-Year Plan also includes the estimated cost of each improvement. This plan is meant to be flexible to conform to current issues and trends but at the same time outlines most of the future park developments and improvements.

The department follows these policies for park development:

1. Adequate planning of new park areas shall be considered if funds are available for proper designing.

²⁸Personal interviews with Park Board members: Georgia Walters, April 22, 1976; Dale Thornton, April 21, 1976; Mayor Robert Brown, May 27, 1976; and Thomas Newcomb, April 22, 1976.

2. Development of new or used park areas shall be done on a demand and popularity schedule with accessibility and usage being a prime factor.
3. Funds for development of new or used park areas shall come from the regular Park and Recreation budget unless outside funds are available or presented.²⁹

These policies answer three important questions that need to be asked about any park development. They are: 1) When will the planning and development take place? 2) What are the priorities to determine which site will be developed? and 3) How will the project be funded? Since each potential park site requires individual attention, it is impossible to include specific details of park development within these policies. However, the pattern the department follows is to establish the highest priority facility and work toward that goal.

The Missoula Planning Board has presented a development plan for the urban portion of Missoula County entitled, "Missoula, A Policy Guide for Urban Growth." The City Council adopted this plan on July 28, 1975. Like the Missoula County Comprehensive Plan, land use is the major consideration. The same six goals for open space and recreation that are used in the county plan are also used in the urban plan. The only difference is the wording noting county or urban territory. The purpose of this plan is to "serve as a guideline for future decisions by officials" and like the county plan there

²⁹City Parks and Recreation Department, Policy Manual.

is no force by law for its direct implementation.³⁰

Land for city parks can be acquired by either donation, purchase, or the Park Dedication Law. The majority of parks are either donated or given in the subdivision process. The policy manual for the Parks and Recreation Department suggests that there should be a city ordinance to insure that land dedicated would be suitable for park purposes. Such consideration as size or acreage, location (marginal property should not be considered where there are danger areas) and condition of the land (i.e., land should be readily usable) are important.

The heaviest park usage in Missoula occurs during the warmer months of the year. Due to the growing enthusiasm of tennis and swimming in Missoula, people use those parks having either of those facilities the most. The City Parks and Recreation Superintendent estimates that "40 percent of park usage is by county residents" (estimate based on the records of attendance in six of the parks during summer months). Urban county residents around Missoula use the city parks and primarily those having tennis courts or swimming pools.³¹

The Superintendent hires a full-time recreation super-

³⁰Telephone interview with Dan Obermeyer, Missoula Planning Board, June 1, 1976.

³¹Personal interview with Garry Kryszak, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, January 1976.

visor to design park and recreational programs for the entire year. During the months of heaviest park usage the recreation supervisor employs additional staff such as instructors for tennis and swimming who teach at city maintained facilities. A full-time maintenance supervisor, laborers and seasonal park caretakers maintain and construct park facilities. In accordance with the department's policy for park development, parks are continuously updated and expanded as need arises. Such additions include new play equipment, picnic shelters and softball fields.

During the summer months, the city maintains six supervised playgrounds for public use at no cost to the user. The department staffs the playgrounds Monday through Friday. The department employs ground supervisors for the purposes of planning, organizing, and implementing games and for general leadership of all activities within the park. At other times of the year, there is no supervision in the parks.

Budgeting

There are three stages in the budgetary process for the Parks and Recreation Department. First, the Superintendent draws up a proposed budget of what he thinks would be sufficient to meet the next year's plan for improvements and development of the parks and recreation program and those expenses necessary for the daily operation of the department. Once he has completed this, the Park Board holds a special

meeting for the purpose of approving the proposed budget by the Superintendent. It is not just a matter of formality that the Park Board approves the budget but rather an opportunity for the Park Board to make changes. As an example, in 1972, 1973 and 1976 the Park Board exercised this option to change the Superintendent's proposed budget in the following ways: On July 11, 1972 the Superintendent was directed to "set up a more detailed and exact figure for irrigation projects and to submit same at the next meeting." On June 5, 1973, the Park Board directed the Superintendent to include in the budget someone to supervise the tennis courts. And on April 21, 1976, the Park Board deleted \$8,550 from the budget for salaries of ten instruction positions. After the Park Board has approved the budget, the Finance and Audit Committee of the City Council will make the final approval. This committee may also change the proposed budget. It is the Finance and Audit Committee that considers the Parks and Recreation Department's budget along with all the other city departments and incorporates it into the total city budget for City Council approval. The Finance and Audit Committee does not keep minutes of their meetings. However, the present Superintendent has said that the Finance and Audit Committee does not cut specific programs but alters the final budget amount allowing the Superintendent to determine specifically where the reduction should be made. The City Council does not approve individual departments' budgets but rather the city budget as a whole.

Unlike the county, the City of Missoula has not been limited by state law concerning expenditures for park maintenance or development. Table 4 shows park budgets for the years 1971-1976.

While administration and maintenance operations show a steady increase over the five-year period, park development and capital outlay budgets are largely dependent upon Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funds received. The BOR grants and funds carried over year to year from these grants explain the increases and decreases in budgets for capital outlay and park development. The great increase in the 1974-75 budgets in these areas was due to the hiring of a new superintendent who saw the need for many improvements in the parks such as irrigation systems, additional tennis courts, and play equipment. Also during his administration several new parks have been developed or are in the process of being developed.

In summary, it is important to note the difference between the city and the county in regard to park service. The city has a well organized and competent administration compared to the county, which has left most administration to the various park associations. The City Department has been able to develop a well planned system of parks to meet the needs of city residents whereas the park associations have met with various difficulties resulting in an inadequate system of county parks. As shown by the surveys presented

TABLE 4

CITY BUDGET

Fiscal Year and Total Budget	Administration	Maintenance and Operations	Capital Outlay	Park Development	Bureau of Recreation Funds
1971					
\$194,821.12	\$116,577.00	\$25,220.00	\$3,149.12	\$16,500.00	\$33,375.00
1972					
\$237,967.00	\$129,677.00	\$29,175.00	\$1,375.00	\$26,850.00	-0-
increase or decrease amount and %	+\$13,100.00 +11.7%	+\$3,955.00 +15.7%	-\$1,774.12 -56.3%	+\$10,350.00 +62.7%	
1973					
\$247,040.00	\$152,505.00	\$31,150.00	\$2,400.00	\$4,250.00	\$56,735.00
increase or decrease amount and %	+\$22,828.00 +17.6%	+\$1,975.00 +6.8%	+\$1,025.00 +74.5%	-\$22,600.00 -84.2%	
1974					
\$308,434.00	\$167,848.00	\$40,350.00	\$5,370.00	\$28,340.00	\$66,526.00
increase or decrease amount and %	+\$15,343.00 +10.1%	+\$9,200.00 +29.5%	+\$2,970.00 +123.7%	+\$24,090.00 +566.8%	
1975					
\$352,107.50	\$196,287.50	\$52,970.00	\$14,750.00	\$33,100.00	\$55,000.00
increase or decrease amount and %	+\$28,439.00 +16.9%	+\$12,620.00 +31.3%	+\$9,380.00 +174.6%	+\$4,760.00 +16.8%	

the greatest need for more parks is in the urban areas of the county just outside the city limits of Missoula. It is the county's responsibility to meet this need, yet, the county does not have sufficient funds or administration to meet this need. Therefore, both entered into a Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for park purposes to help solve the problem. However, the agreement is limited to regional parks. Details of this agreement will be analyzed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Formulation

An interlocal cooperation agreement was formalized on July 8, 1975, but there had been previous informal cooperation between the City of Missoula and Missoula County for facility development. Moreover, the county had contributed to the city's park fund for several years for their part in city park programs in recognition that county residents did use city parks.

Since July 8, 1975, the City Parks and Recreation Department has been working in cooperation with Missoula County in "administering, planning, developing, servicing and maintaining regional park facilities" as outlined in the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.* The Missoula County Commissioners initiated this agreement in their assistance request from the City Department for the purpose of developing the Fort Missoula Participatory Sports Complex.¹ The wording of the agreement includes all regional park facilities, although

*The full text is found in Appendix A.

¹Personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, March 2, 1976.

the Fort Missoula Park is the only area classified as a regional park at the time of this writing.

The three county commissioners all agree that potential development of the Fort Missoula Park instigated the agreement with the city. After the decision was made to develop the park, the county commissioners thought it would be most logical to use the expertise of the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent to draw up the plans.² In February of 1975, the county approached Garry Kryszak for assistance in planning the Fort Missoula Park.

Terms of the Agreement

Authority

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement specifically states that there shall be no separate entity created because of the agreement and that the City Superintendent of Parks and Recreation will be in charge of providing the necessary administration needed to uphold the agreement. The Superintendent is also "vested with all the rights, power, duties, and obligation necessary to effectually implement the purposes of policies contained within this agreement."³ The county will cooperate with the city and be of assistance in supporting the agreement.

The general fund budget or other lawful sources of both

²Ibid.

³Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, Appendix A.

agencies will finance projects generated by the agreement. Each year both parties will review the budget for the agreement and the appropriate funding from the county will be agreed upon at that time. Funding from the county will be used to provide the City Parks and Recreation Department with "administrative and planning and certain maintenance costs for each fiscal year mutually agreed upon between the agencies as necessary to effectually implement this agreement for that fiscal year."⁴ The City Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the proper administration of the agreement's budget.

On July 1 of each year either or both parties may dissolve the agreement. In the event that this should occur, any personal property and equipment acquired through the agreement will become the property of the City Parks and Recreation Department.

In general, the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is very flexible and informal in character. The agreement, reviewed annually, can be terminated on July 1 of any year by either or both parties. As stated in chapter one, an interlocal agreement broadens the geographic base for administering services. In this particular case, the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement enlarged the jurisdiction of the City Parks and Recreation Department to include regional

⁴Ibid.

park facilities. This allows the county to use existing professionals in the local area without having to hire their own personnel and purchase additional equipment to develop Fort Missoula Park.

Scope of the Agreement

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement states that the only park lands affected by the agreement are regional park facilities (i.e., the Fort Missoula Park). However, in discussing the extent of the agreement with both the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation and the county commissioners, two slightly different opinions emerged. The Missoula County Commissioners stated that development of Fort Missoula Park was their main concern at the present time. Therefore, the agreement pertained only to this park "in terms of practice."⁵ However, the commissioners also mentioned that park problems arising in the county are now referred to the City Superintendent. Although the Park Associations in the county continue to function, the City Parks and Recreation Department will give any guidance or assistance that they might request. Since the enactment of the agreement the City Park Planner has visited several of the county parks and given assistance in long-range planning and development. Linda Vista Park Association also worked

⁵Personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, March 2, 1976.

with the City Park Planner to draw up a long-range plan of development. The park planner allots half his time to county park problems. However, the commissioners gave the impression that emphasis of the agreement is on the Fort Missoula Park, and any other park development or improvement in the county is incidental.

City Parks and Recreation Superintendent Garry Kryszak, views the agreement as placing more emphasis on total county park development rather than just the Fort Missoula Park. Kryszak spends 15 to 20 percent of his individual time on county park problems. Departmentally, he allots two man-year wages each year for county park purposes. The county's interlocal agreement budget provides the funding of a park planner hired by the City Department. In addition to assisting in city park planning the park planner works with county park development, coordinating plans with the park associations or other groups of interested persons (such as Valley View Park).

Although there is difference concerning emphasis of the agreement, both parties expressed satisfaction with cooperation thus far.⁶ Development of Fort Missoula Park is the immediate goal of the agreement. However, the county commissioners acknowledge that other county park problems are being handled by the city. Neither the city nor the county

⁶Ibid., April 21, 1976; and personal interview with Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, May 4, 1976.

object to this. This indicates the agreement works informally as well as formally. This good initial relationship will benefit future negotiations for park development between the city and the county.

Effects of the Agreement

Park Management

In the time since the enactment of the agreement no drastic change or transition in the normal operations of either the City Parks and Recreation Department or the County has occurred.⁷ Since the agreement the duties and responsibilities of the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent have increased the most. In effect, he works with two entities instead of one. The Superintendent communicates with the county commissioners at least once a week to keep them informed on park developments. Informal interaction with the county created a "good understanding" between the two parties according to Garry Kryszak, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, and has been a key to its success.⁸ The county commissioners implied in a March 2, 1976, interview that they communicated with Superintendent Kryszak

⁷Personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, March 2, 1976; and Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, January 1976.

⁸Personal interview with Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, March 9, 1976.

frequently to discuss their park problems and plans with him. The Superintendent stated that the addition of a park planner enables him to be involved with county park problems without hindering the City Department since previously he was the only qualified park planner in the department.⁹ The new park planner assumes some planning and drafting responsibilities including designing park facilities, playground equipment and working individually with the park associations. He spends 50 percent of his time on county planning.

One area of considerable confusion pertains to policy making for county parks. The City Superintendent stated "policy effecting county parks was ultimately the county commissioners' responsibility."¹⁰ All county commissioners gave different opinions. Lud Browman said, "the Park Board handles it;"¹¹ Richard Ostergren said, "the county makes policy if requested to do so;"¹² and Wilfred Thibodeau said, "the City Superintendent advises on county park policy decisions or the county commissioners will if help is needed."¹³

⁹Ibid., May 4, 1976.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Personal interview with Lud Browman, Missoula County Commissioner, April 21, 1976.

¹²Personal interview with Dick Ostergren, Missoula County Commissioner, April 21, 1976.

¹³Personal interview with Wilfred Thibodeau, Missoula County Commissioner, April 21, 1976.

When asked about policy making since the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, five of the seven Park Board members replied the county commissioners still had the responsibility to make policy decisions regarding county parks and it was not the responsibility of the Park Board. Of the other two, one did not know for sure and the other member had only been on the Park Board since late July and could not say if policy making had changed since the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. This lack of uniformity between the city and the county on policy-making powers leads to the conclusion that the lines of authority set out in the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement are not clearly defined or understood. The potential consequence when a policy decision must be made is that each either assumes the other party will be responsible or conflicting policies will be made. In addition, accountability for policy decisions is absent because the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement does not specify which party has that responsibility. However, due to such amiable communication between the City Park and Recreation Department and Missoula County problems such as these have not arisen.

Park Planning, Land Acquisition and Use

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement states planning as one purpose of its existence. Paragraph six of the agreement further reinforces this purpose by listing planning as one of the areas of cooperation for which the county will provide financing for the city.

All persons interviewed agreed that park planning would definitely be affected by the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. The county commissioners stated in a March 2, 1976, meeting that "the agreement will help to enhance creative park development; program diversity; and equality in terms of age, interest, and location." Overall, the commissioners believed that the agreement would result in a better coordinated program to offer all county residents. Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, expressed the opinion that by jointly working with the county, park planning now will be more comprehensive and will encourage creativity and diversity.¹⁴ The Park Board members emphasized that park planning will now be more comprehensive and because of this, better parks and programs can be offered to more citizens. Several Park Board members mentioned the addition of a park planner as an asset for future coordination of planning efforts with the county.

Since the agreement has been in effect for little more than a year, the visible evidence that park planning will be more comprehensive is still in its formative stage. However, a preliminary assessment suggests that:

First, the atmosphere of the agreement is favorable to comprehensive planning because of the provision for a park planner in the 1975 fiscal agreement's budget. The actual

¹⁴Personal interview with Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, March 9, 1976.

enactment of the agreement reveals that county and city officials have a mutual interest in park and recreational development and feel a need for expanding the existing City Parks and Recreation Department. This cooperation indicates both parties are willing to work together.

Second, the development of Fort Missoula Park is progressing in accordance to its twenty-year plan. Planning of the park has included many recreational activities in order to meet the needs of more than one recreational interest. In other words, many individuals will be able to participate in different activities at the facility. Thus far, the development includes four softball fields, an automatic irrigation system, 2500 feet of fence, seeding of forty-two acres including a football field, and restrooms.

Third, the informal and flexible aspects of the agreement may actually be a hindrance to comprehensive park planning rather than an asset. In order to achieve and maintain a comprehensive park plan, there needs to be continuous effort and updating to keep up with community needs. Although one of the purposes of the agreement is for planning, many of the negotiations between the City Superintendent and the county commissioners are through verbal communications. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement does not state specifically what development shall take place. At monthly meetings, the county commissioners, the Park Board and the City Superintendent discuss actual plans and pro-

cedures concerning the progress of Fort Missoula Park. If either the City Superintendent or a county commissioner should leave, there is no guarantee that these verbal agreements would be carried out.

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement did not create a new entity or separate department to carry out its purpose. Land acquisition is not mentioned in the agreement. Consequently, both the city and the county will maintain their own policies for acquiring land. Neither expected the agreement to have any effect on this area.¹⁵ If the agreement should at some future time be broadened, and land acquisition becomes a factor, priorities such as location, size, needs of the community, and the condition of the land would have to be established.

The Fort Missoula Park is expected by the city and the county to receive considerable use because of its size and location but also because its design will appeal to many different interests and activities. Garry Kryszak, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, predicts Fort Missoula Park will receive 40,000 to 45,000 visits during the summer months.¹⁶ Although construction is just beginning, in the summer of 1976 the Parks and Recreation Department permitted

¹⁵Ibid., and personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, April 21, 1976.

¹⁶Personal interview with Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, December 8, 1976.

a cross county race to be held at the park and in the spring of 1977 the softball fields will be usable. Neither the city officials nor the county commissioners believe park usage, other than Fort Missoula, will be effected by the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. The county keeps no records of park use and the city only keeps records in six parks during the summer months. Even though the agreement will provide more parks, this does not promise that park usage will increase.

Budgeting

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement cost the county approximately \$34,000 for the first year and \$36,874 for fiscal year 1976. Monies for the first year's agreement came entirely from the County General Fund of which city taxpayers contribute 44 percent. Revenue sharing finances fiscal year 1976's budget. The City Parks and Recreation Department contributes to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement through time spent by the superintendent, park planner and park laborers rather than financing. County funds buy new equipment, hire a park planner, and pay for time spent by the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent on Fort Missoula Park.

In formulating the agreement's budget the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent sends his recommendation to the county commissioners. The commissioners analyze the

proposal and make changes according to the funds available. This is not just a procedure, for the county commissioners make substantial alterations. For instance, the Superintendent recommended a budget for \$46,873 for fiscal year 1976 and the county commissioners cut the amount by \$10,000.¹⁷

Both the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent and the county commissioners freely state that the cost of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is less than if the county would have had to acquire a park planner and the necessary equipment on its own.¹⁸ In a telephone conversation with County Commissioner Lud Browman, he estimated that the initial cost of a county park department would be approximately \$50,000. This \$50,000 would cover such things as the hiring of a director and the purchase of vehicles and equipment. Mr. Browman stated that this figure would increase as the department expanded. It is the author's estimate that a county park department for just the urban area, including the communities of Frenchtown, Lolo, Bonner, and Clinton, would cost approximately \$110,500. This estimate is based on current salaries of the staff of Parks and Recreation Department and equipment prices from the

¹⁷Garry Kryszak, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, to Missoula County Commissioners, June 7, 1976.

¹⁸Personal interview with the Missoula County Commissioners, March 2, 1976; and Garry Kryszak, City Parks and Recreation Superintendent, March 9, 1976.

County Road Department. The \$110,500 includes a full-time director, part-time secretary, two full-time laborers, two summer laborers, one pickup truck with radio, one dump truck with radio, one loader, one mower, tools, vehicle maintenance, and gasoline and oil. This amount does not include any funds for park development or construction, but just the fundamental items necessary for starting a park department. The author based this amount of personnel and equipment on the acreage of the county urban parks that would be serviced by such a department. A telephone interview with Bob Martin of the County Road Department revealed it would not be feasible for another county department to borrow County Road Department equipment without complex and detailed scheduling.¹⁹ In other words, it would be necessary for a projected county park department to be independent of any other county department in terms of equipment.

In conclusion, the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement offers the following advantages:

1. This agreement formalizes previous unofficial interaction between the city and the county thereby making both parties more responsible to each other.

2. The change incurred because of the agreement is a gradual one allowing for future expansion. Because the agreement is subject to annual review, both parties have the

¹⁹Telephone interview with Bob Martin, County Road Department, February 17, 1977.

opportunity to make alterations in the agreement regularly so that it does not become outdated or impossible to maintain. However, at the end of the first year no changes were made. Both parties seemed satisfied.

3. Both the city and the county are receiving benefits from the agreement at a low cost. The city is gaining from the use of additional county funds enabling them to hire a park planner and purchase needed equipment whereas the county is benefiting from the use of the expertise of the City Department.

Disadvantages of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement are:

1. The scope of the agreement is very limited and not clearly defined. The agreement, when initiated, involved only the Fort Missoula regional parks. However, the county refers most of their park problems to the City Department regardless of what type of park it is. Since this is not stipulated in the agreement, no funds are being provided for this service. However, thus far neither party is objecting to the City Department handling county park problems other than Fort Missoula Park.

2. The terms of the agreement are not specific in outlining what each party can and cannot do. This is similar to disadvantage number one since the lines of authority are not clear. This could lead to conflicts in decision making, poor accountability of officials, or confusion concerning

responsibilities but has not thus far because of good verbal communication.

3. The county should establish a permanent source of revenue to fund the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. For fiscal year 1975, the county commissioners took money from the county general fund. This proves to be a disadvantage for city taxpayers since they contribute 44 percent to the county general fund through their taxes. In other words, they support the City Parks and Recreation Department through taxes and are also contributing to the development of a county park while county residents' taxes are only for the county parks, and county residents use city parks free of charge. Revenue-sharing funds provided fiscal year 1976 agreement's budget. The future of funding programs such as this with revenue-sharing funds is uncertain. The bill providing revenue-sharing funds has presented problems throughout its existence in terms of the exact amount that each local government would receive. These problems have come about due to the allocation formulas which distribute and redistribute the funds available.²⁰ Also, state and local governments may not always use these funds as they were intended to be used. To date, no definite long-term source has been set aside for funding the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.

²⁰A detailed discussion of the allocation formulas is given in Paul R. Dommel, The Politics of Revenue Sharing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 175.

Although the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement does have disadvantages, an important aspect is that the City Parks and Recreation Department and the county commissioners express satisfaction with the results and expect this to continue in the future. This satisfaction shows the agreement is working in the direction desired by city and county officials. Both parties are communicating with each other and are willing to cooperate. Informal communication has been an important factor in the success for this agreement. In this particular case, informal communication has been an advantage but it can also be a disadvantage. For example, there is no assurance that good informal communications would continue if either or both parties should change personnel. Lines of authority need to be institutionalized in the agreement to provide for continuing progress. This requires more depth and detail be added to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.

The key benefit the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement offers is a foundation on which to build and expand future unification. Annual review insures the agreement can be made more comprehensive and detailed if both parties wish. The City Parks and Recreation Department and/or county commissioners may correct any shortcomings of the agreement on a regular basis. Possible adjustments include formalizing lines of authority, clarifying policy-making procedures, broadening the scope and providing county representation on

the Park Board. The agreement allows for gradual change since it is general and informal. The agreement has initiated cooperation between the city and the county for regional parks and provides a basis for future growth. Although this agreement is limited to just regional parks, it is providing the necessary planning and development of Fort Missoula Park which, according to the City Parks and Recreation Superintendent and the county commissioners, will prove to be an excellent recreational park for many area residents. It is the author's assessment that due to the location, size and varied recreational interests included in Fort Missoula Park, this park will be extensively used. It is reasonable to assume that the success of the Fort Missoula Park will encourage future expansion of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement since it has benefited both the county and the city. The county saves time and money through this agreement. For the county to develop and plan this park without city aid would have been highly expensive because they have neither the equipment nor the laborers to do the required work. If at some future time the City of Missoula and Missoula County would consolidate, this transition would not be as difficult for the Parks and Recreation Department because of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. Although the voters of Missoula County rejected a proposal for consolidation on June 1, 1976, it is a viable alternative which may be presented again at some future time. Therefore, chapter four investigates

consolidation as it would affect the park situation in Missoula County. Montana's constitution allows service transfers, another consideration in chapter four. The next chapter will discuss these in terms of park authority, park planning, land acquisition, park use, and budgeting.

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSED CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

In 1972 the voters of Montana passed the new Montana Constitution which includes a new local government article requiring each of Montana's towns, cities, and counties to review its form of government. The purpose of governmental review, as determined by members of the Constitutional Convention, is to make municipal and county governments responsive, accountable, and flexible. Voter review offers citizens of Montana cities and counties the opportunity for change in their form of local government. Citizens elected to Local Government Study Commissions study their present form of government. At the end of their two-year study they must propose an alternative form of government and the residents of the community are given the chance to vote for the alternative form or to retain the present form of government. Missoula City-County Study Commissions proposed a consolidated government for the City of Missoula and Missoula County which is relevant to this study since it would affect the administration of parks. Had this proposal been approved by the voters, the local governments would have experienced considerable change. This chapter focuses on the City Parks

and Recreation Department and an analysis of the effects it would have sustained from the proposed Charter.

The Proposal

The Missoula City-County Study Commissions proposed to the citizens on June 1, 1976, an alternative government form called the Missoula City-County Charter. Article I of the proposed Charter states: "The city of Missoula and Missoula County are hereby consolidated into a single government unit known as Missoula City-County, which shall have the status of an incorporated municipality and the status of a county for all purposes."¹ In addition to the powers of a municipality and a county, the new government would also have self-government powers. Self-government powers include the exercise of any power not specifically denied by the Montana Constitution. This allows local officials greater authority to act on problems unique to their community. By allowing self-government powers, city-county officials could create a park and recreation department which is more adaptable to their situation than state law now allows, since state law strictly outlines the procedure for formation of these departments.

Article 9, section 9.05 deals specifically with the continuation of the present forms of government. It states, in part, that: "City and County organization, structure, ordinances, resolutions, and regulations in effect on May 2, 1977,

¹Missoula City-County Charter, as distributed in The Missoulian, April 1, 1976.

shall continue in effect until reaffirmed, amended, or repealed." It continues declaring that by May 2, 1979, all the above-mentioned aspects of the City/County governments shall be either reaffirmed, amended, or repealed. In order to maintain the same level of services, section 9.09 deals with the creation of Interim Service Areas. This section establishes two service areas to begin on May 2, 1977. The interim general service area would include the entire county and the interim special service area would include just the city of Missoula. Both service areas would receive the same level of service as before the adoption of the Charter and would continue until the new council changed them. Thus, in the interim, the City Parks and Recreation Department would have continued to serve the City of Missoula and the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the county for regional park development would also remain in effect until changed or reaffirmed by the county.

The proposed Charter would have provided a certain level of services to all citizens of Missoula County. If an area wanted more services or a higher level of service they would be organized into a Special Service Area. Funds for the Special Service Area would be obtained through a tax placed on those residents within that area or other sources if first approved by the council. Special Service Areas allow a possibility for providing services not previously offered. Capital improvements would be provided through Special

Improvement Districts. Financing for Special Improvement Districts would be the same as for Special Service Areas. Special Service Areas or Special Improvement Districts are significant in that service areas could be created to meet the specific needs of the community. For example, the council could create one Special Service Area for parks and recreation to include the city of Missoula and its surrounding urban area. Residents within this area would receive equal service and would pay equally. This would eliminate tax inequities caused by county residents' use of city parks. In their discussion on consolidation Lopach and McKinsey state "unless there is areawide orderly growth planning, present tax and service inadequacies could continue far into the future."² Since there are only two developed parks in the "fringe" area, it would be possible to develop more parks in this area through consolidation. This would eventually equalize the park to population ratio in the total Missoula urban area.

Boards and commissions would continue to function under the Charter as they did under the two separate governments. The Charter also authorizes the formation of neighborhood associations. The purposes of neighborhood association is to "provide an additional structure for participation to encourage more citizens to become involved."³ Although the

²Lopach and McKinsey, Handbook on Montana Forms of Local Government, p. 169.

³Missoula City-County Charter, in The Missoulian, April 1, 1976.

Park Board would remain intact, any neighborhood associations created would greatly enhance citizen input. These associations would provide the impetus for park creation and development and maintenance now limited to the park associations. These neighborhood associations would deal directly with a Park Board interested in their park problems rather than having to go to a higher official who has to deal with a variety of interests. The Charter does not state that neighborhood associations are mandatory so the extent of their use would be determined by citizen interest.

Effects of the Proposed Charter

Park Management

Unlike many other departments, the City Parks and Recreation Department does not have a corresponding county department to consolidate with. Therefore, it would not be necessary to merge employees, combine equipment, or establish new procedures and goals. The structure of the City Department would remain the same as before the Charter. Until changed by the new council the level of service would also remain the same. If the new council would drastically increase the service area to be covered by the department, it is most likely that the following changes would have to be made in the operation of the department depending, of course, on the degree of increase: 1) hiring of new personnel; 2) reorganization of the department to best handle the increase of

territory through personnel changes, scheduling of improvement projects, addition of maintenance crews, and long-range planning goals; 3) creation of extension offices, boards, or personnel to completely represent the service area; and 4) acquiring of additional equipment to properly maintain all facilities within the service area. Had the new council decreased the service area the obvious result would be to cut back on the present department operationally until its capacity was balanced to the needs of the service area.

Regional park management as provided under the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement would be simplified through consolidation because the City Department would no longer have to consult and work with two levels of government. There would be less confusion concerning who makes policy decisions that now exist under the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. Only one department would be responsible for most or all services provided, services would be provided more equitably to all residents, and the establishment of service areas would allow residents to determine the level of service they desired.

Regarding the county, establishment of service areas would greatly benefit the smaller towns surrounding the city of Missoula and the urban fringe since a service area would give them just the level of park service they desired and they would only have to pay for the service they received. Up until the time of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement,

the county had not taken an active interest in park development leaving county residents on their own to provide and plan park areas and facilities. Likewise, the urban resident would also benefit from the Special Service Area by determining what level of service they wanted. Neither the urban residents or the rural residents would have to feel burdened with excess taxes because of one another.

Overall, park authority would not be greatly affected by the Charter. The City Department would be the only department involved with park authority after consolidation and, until changed by the council, its operation would continue as before.

Park Planning, Land Acquisition and Use

Consolidation would have little effect on city park planning since the city presently has a fully developed park department. This department has already developed its own procedures for park development and criteria for land acquisition. The main effect that the park department would feel is the greatly broadened geographic base of operations. Additional equipment and personnel would be employed as this base was enlarged.

In regard to park planning in Missoula County, there would not be any immediate effect because the service to be provided would remain essentially the same as before the consolidation. However, the long-range effects would be highly beneficial. Once the extent of services provided

was determined, the City Department would then be in the position to devise comprehensive plans for future development. Comprehensive planning would be a great improvement in park development for Missoula County--something never before accomplished. This would enable parks and facilities to be put where needed and benefiting the most people rather than scattered about without any coordination. The county commissioners have made no attempt at park planning. Presently, county parks are only developed where there has been active citizen interest shown through park associations, resulting in inadequate placement.

Land acquisition would be more critical as a county-wide comprehensive plan develops. Park developers need to set criteria backed by city-county ordinances regarding location and size in order that parks would not be all in one area or an inappropriate size for the purpose needed. Under the present State Park Dedication Law there is no criteria set for what land should be set aside for parks and recreation. Unfortunately, land that is totally unacceptable for any other purpose is sometimes the land given to parks without consideration given to the location, size, or condition. The only recourse that the parks department has is to accept cash in lieu of land with the hope of finding a more desirable site to purchase. A revision of this law would necessitate a change in state legislation. Although it could not change the law at the state level, the new council elected

under the Charter which would have self-governing powers, could pass an ordinance to enforce land qualifications for parks and recreation dedication. Two other means of acquiring park lands are donation and purchase. Both of these have resulted in acquiring more desirable and usable park sites.

Not only would comprehensive planning be beneficial to land acquisition but it would also aid in the distribution and placement of facilities. A properly placed facility is just as important as the facility itself. Accessibility is most important, likewise the facility needs to be placed where the most people that would use it are located. Coordination of all park and recreation activity would result from comprehensive planning to provide a better service.

Whether or not the Charter would have any direct effects on park use is almost impossible to discern. Park usage depends upon many outside forces such as: the economy, trends in recreation, cost of living increases, and population growth or decline. However, the Charter does provide two means for encouraging citizen participation which could promote new park development and, in turn, park use. The first is the authorization of neighborhood associations which provides an additional structure in the local government where citizens can make their needs known. Also, the provision for Special Service Areas and Special Improvement Districts allows

citizens to determine what level of service they need. Only residents within the service area would be involved, so their needs could be clearly defined. If an area wanted additional parks they could organize just for that purpose. Through neighborhood associations, special service areas, and improvement districts the Charter would allow citizen interest to be constructively channeled to park development.

Budgeting

In a personal interview with Garry Kryszak, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, on May 4, 1976, he stated that city-county consolidation would be more economical for the taxpayer because parks could be put where needed and they would also be receiving better service. By placing parks where needed, increased benefits and use could result. A study by Frank M. Bryan, former Associate Professor of Political Science at Montana State University, noted that parks and recreation is the service area most likely to have funds cut if it is necessary. At the same time, parks and recreation is a service rated by residents as one of the most satisfactory.⁴ This is not a unique problem to Bozeman. Since parks and recreation is a luxury service and not a necessity service such as police and fire departments, it rates at the top of the priority list for fund cutting. This could be overcome

⁴Frank M. Bryan, "Assessing Public Opinion on Policy Options: Potentials and Dangers in Survey Research for Governmental Officials," in Local Government: Problems and Prospects, eds., Peter Koehn and Thomas Payne (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1976), pp. 118-119.

by the special service area concept. Establishment of service areas could eliminate the need to increase the budget for parks and recreation drastically because of consolidation. It would be unlikely for costs of the Parks and Recreation Department to decrease if it was necessary to include a larger service area because only the City Department would be involved in the expansion. The feasibility of service to remote portions of the county is also questionable. Would these remote areas be taxed differently for the same service due to their distance from the Parks and Recreation Department?

Consolidation would only involve one existing department, a disadvantage since only one department will need to cover a larger geographic base and henceforth will likely incur greater expansion costs. The consolidation concept basically depends on two departments consolidating thereby benefiting from the combined personnel and equipment to help serve the area. The City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department will need to cover a greater area without assistance from a county department. This will mean that more funds will be needed for expansion.

In contrasting the cost of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement against consolidation for park services there would be no difference since there is only a City Department involved in the provision of this service. Neither the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement nor consolidation mandates that

park services enlarge. Any expansion of service under either arrangement would affect only one department. Concerning funding, the county funded the fiscal year 1976 Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with revenue-sharing funds and the previous year's agreement from the county general fund. There is no definite long-term funding for the agreement. Consequently, the permanency of the agreement is uncertain if adequate funds cannot be obtained. Through the provision of special service areas, the Charter for consolidation provides an assured means of funding for those residents desiring park service. This is an advantage of consolidation over the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.

In summary, city-county consolidation would have little, if any, immediate effect on the administration and operation of the City Parks and Recreation Department. However, long-range effects would include such things as more comprehensive planning, greater emphasis on land acquisition and coordination of existing parks and recreational programs. The authorization of special service areas and special improvement districts in the Charter would enable the Parks and Recreation Department to provide improved service to more residents. Costs could increase in order to acquire additional personnel and equipment if the scope of the present department would be enlarged. However, the tax base for parks and recreation would also increase so that one area is not being overly taxed.

City-county consolidation would be an asset to improving

park services to Missoula County. County residents have had no service provided with the exception of two park associations that have financed park maintenance through Rural Special Improvement Districts. RSID's provide only financial assistance to the park associations. Park associations also need assistance in park planning and development techniques at the county level.⁵ Consolidation could provide this needed assistance through the existing City Parks and Recreation Department. Special service areas allow residents to determine the level of service they want without burdening others with increased taxes. Residents of a special service area also receive the benefit of having the expertise of a Parks and Recreation Department handle their park problems. In this manner both the rural and urban segments of Missoula County could benefit from consolidation in regard to park services. As discussed in chapter one, an acknowledged disadvantage of consolidation is the difficulty of implementing a consolidated government. Also, the political difficulty as seen in 1976. However, in this case consolidation would involve only one existing department. In practice this simply would amount to expansion of the existing City Parks and Recreation Department in correspondence with the increased area to be serviced. As this chapter notes, consolidation would offer advantages for the provision of a park service to the Missoula urban area.

⁵Personal interview with Roy Mix, April 20, 1976, and telephone interview with Gretchen Rooney, March 23, 1976.

In comparing consolidation with the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, consolidation offers a permanent change to the provision of services to the total urban area. At this time the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is only concerned with regional parks. The biggest asset consolidation offers to parks and recreation is the provision of special service areas. Through these areas residents may choose their desired level of service. Most significantly, consolidation of Missoula County and the City of Missoula would help eliminate tax inequities found when urban fringe residents obtain free benefits from use of city facilities, such as parks, paid for through city taxes.⁶

Similar to consolidation, service transfers offer a more permanent change but involves only one service. In this particular case that service would be the provision of park planning and development. In an essay on service transfers, Arlene Loble sets forth three criteria for determining which local government should assume the transfer.⁷ The first consideration involves transferring the service to the county

⁶Thomas Payne, "Consolidation: Equity, Efficiency and Responsiveness through Unified Government," in What This Community Needs . . . an Anthology of Advocate's Views, eds. James Lopach and Lauren McKinsey (Helena, Montana: State Commission on Local Government, 1976), p. 81.

⁷Arlene Loble, "Service Transfers: A First Step to Rational Service Delivery," in What This Community Needs . . . an Anthology of Advocate's Views, as cited in *ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

because of the larger geographic base covered by the county. The second considers which government has had the most practice in delivering the service, and the third is which one is currently the dominate provider. Using these considerations the county most likley would transfer park service to the City Parks and Recreation Department since that department is now the only provider of a park service and has had the most experience. A service transfer is a permanent change as contrasted to the flexible change of an interlocal agreement. In discussing the use of service transfers, McKinsey points out, "service transfers should be used only when the service area can be clearly delineated."⁸ With constantly changing population in the Missoula urban area, it would be difficult to determine boundaries for the service transfer assuming the transfer would not include the entire county of Missoula. Once the service area was delineated, fringe areas could develop causing a problem identical to the present situation.

An advantage of service transfers is that duplication can be eliminated. This is not a factor in the Missoula situation because only one department is providing a park service. Service transfers can also increase accountability of government officials because only one government unit

⁸Lauren S. McKinsey and Michael Halligan, "Service Agreements in Voter Review," in Local Government Review Bulletin (Helena, Montana: State Commission on Local Government, 1976), pp. 9-10.

provides the service. This is a current problem of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement since it does not clearly outline specific duties and responsibilities of each party. However, the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is adaptable enough to correct this problem (discussed in chapter five). Although a service transfer would establish a single administrative head, at present, the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is successful because of a high degree of cooperation and excellent communication. At some future time a service transfer may be advantageous but presently both the county commissioners and the City Parks and Recreation Department are satisfied with the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. It appears to the author that both parties are not in favor of a larger, more permanent change at this time.

CHAPTER V

PROPOSAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement was reviewed by both parties in May of 1976 and at that time no changes were made for the coming year. Progress has been made on the development of the one regional park, Fort Missoula, affected by the agreement although it is not yet completed.

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement offers many advantages compared to the past situation. In terms of park management the agreement provides a flexible base allowing incremental changes. The agreement does not provide clear lines of authority, but because of the provision of annual review this can be improved. However, to date this has not created any problems because of excellent communication between the county commissioners and the City Parks and Recreation Department. In the past any cooperation between the county and the city occurred in an informal manner. The Interlocal Cooperation formalizes this unofficial cooperation. The agreement allows the county commissioners to meet their obligation concerning park problems of residents in the county urban area. Park planning both for the county and the city is an area that receives a great benefit under the

Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. Although the county did hire William C. Hollenbaugh to draw up an overview plan of the county park situation, the agreement can aid in the planning and development of specific parks. The park planner who was hired through the agreement devotes his time to both the city and county parks, therefore benefiting the park situation in the total urban area. At this time land acquisition is not affected by the agreement because the agreement only includes an existing regional park. If future expansion does occur the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement will allow for more coordinated land acquisition and use as compared to past situations. Concerning budgeting, although the county is paying more than it previously did for county park development, it is paying far less for the City Department to develop Fort Missoula Park than if the county had to create a department to develop the park. The city benefits from the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement since the city receives money from the county facilitating the hiring of an additional park planner and the purchase of new equipment.

In summary, the advantages of Interlocal Cooperation Agreement offer over the previous situation include a basis for future growth, provision for comprehensive park planning and low cost benefits for both parties.

Although consolidaton offers another alternative to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, a consolidated form of government was rejected by the voters of Missoula County in

June of 1976. Compared to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement in terms of park management, consolidation creates clear lines of authority since only one level of government would be involved in the provision of park services. Even though clear lines of authority can be drafted into an interlocal agreement, the present agreement does not have these clear lines. Likewise, policy decisions would come from only one department. Normally an interlocal agreement would involve two departments with the possibility of some confusion. Under consolidation, however, one department would be created lessening administrative confusion. Consolidation greatly enhances long-range comprehensive park planning and land acquisition because only one government unit would be involved rather than two or more working independently of each other. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement has the potential for developing comprehensive park planning and land acquisition goals but the scope would have to be broadened in order to do so. As noted in chapter four, the cost of providing a park service would remain the same with either consolidation or the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. As shown by these comparisons, consolidation creates a governmental situation in which park administration would be superior to either the present Interlocal Cooperation Agreement or the past situation. However, since it is not likely that consolidation will be presented in the near future the author proposes the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement be revised and expanded to better meet the

park problems of the Missoula urban area.

Recommendations

The points that need to be addressed in proposing a park system are the existing park problems and needs of the urban resident outside of the Missoula city limits. It is the author's proposal that the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is the most satisfactory alternative to providing park service to the urban area. This proposal is based on the following facts:

1. The agreement is adaptable and subject to annual review. Because of the provision demanding annual review, both parties have the opportunity to make desired changes. In addition, at that time either or both parties may terminate the agreement.
2. Better long-range comprehensive planning is achieved compared to the past situation. Area-wide planning is advantageous since it allows parks and facilities to be placed where maximum use will occur. It also eliminates hit and miss planning when future development and goals are determined.
3. Coordination of expertise and personnel is improved. Missoula County is benefiting greatly from the expertise of the City Department and at a much lower cost than if they would have hired their own park planner. Likewise, the City Department is profiting from the additional funds received

from the county to purchase needed equipment and to hire a park planner.

4. A gradual change results from the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. The transition incurred by the agreement was small enough that it was easy for both parties to work with and also easy for residents to accept. Since the county commissioners are just beginning to be interested in park development, the agreement allows them to become involved gradually using the expertise of a developed parks department.

5. The development of Fort Missoula Park is progressing according to schedule and both parties express satisfaction with the agreement.

6. Because of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, park associations in the county urban area are receiving assistance in planning from the City Parks and Recreation Department on an informal basis.

Although the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement does offer the above advantages, the author suggests several recommendations regarding future use of the agreement. First, the agreement as it is now written does not establish clear lines of authority on certain issues such as: policy making, status of county park associations, and who should manage current county park problems other than those considered a regional park. These areas need to be defined in order to avoid confusion and possible conflict in the future. Second, if the agreement is to be the means of providing park service to the entire

urban area, it should be broadened in scope to include that area officially. As it now exists, the City Parks and Recreation Department is advising on all county park problems. The total urban area should be included in the agreement so that county residents and park associations could benefit from the services of the park planner, maintenance crews, and equipment to properly develop their parks. This thesis has demonstrated that the county-commission form of government has not provided effective leadership in terms of park administration at the county level. Should the agreement be expanded to include the entire urban area the City Parks and Recreation Department could supply this much needed leadership. Having this source of leadership and expertise available would provide incentive for future park development to the county park associations. Regional park sites may have been a good area to start the agreement, but a question of concern to this thesis is what happens to the agreement once the regional park has been developed? It is this author's contention that the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is the most satisfactory means to providing park service to the urban area, therefore, it is necessary to include the total urban area in the agreement. Although authority will not be taken from the park associations, the associations will benefit by the planning and development expertise of the City Department.

The following are the changes in the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement recommended by the author. In order not to

incur a drastic change, this proposal outlines two stages in the broadening of the agreement. These stages could be undertaken whenever both parties felt they were warranted and sufficient funds were available.

Before the expansion stages were accepted, several details of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement should be examined and acted on immediately. These details include policy-making decisions, status of county park associations and broadening of scope covering other county park problems.

Concerning policy-making decisions, a paragraph should be inserted following the existing paragraph four:

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that policy decisions affecting county parks shall remain with the cooperating agency.

Concerning county park associations (following the above paragraph):

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that no previously developed county parks shall be affected by this agreement.

This pertains to existing park associations and insures that they will remain in effect and retain control over their park.

Concerning the scope of the agreement (following existing paragraph five):

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that the City Superintendent of Parks and Recreation will advise on other county park problems.

Two expansion stages will gradually broaden the scope of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement to include the total

populated area surrounding Missoula. This is conceived to provide equalized park services to the urban area.

Stage one includes the selecting of additional county parks to be developed. Additional county parks should be incorporated into the jurisdiction of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement within the next two years. This should be a goal of the county commissioners to be included within the county budget. The comprehensive plan adopted on November 16, 1976, by the county commissioners outlines priority projects and would serve as a guideline to implementing stage one. While this thesis is not in agreement with other policies outlined in this plan, the priority projects seem acceptable. By selecting certain parks to develop, the gradual expansion of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is continued. Criteria for selecting parks to be developed should include location in relation to other parks, needs of the community and priority of facilities. However, highest priority should be given to those areas that have attempted to develop a park through a park association, such as Linda Vista and Valley View.

Stage two would expand the scope to include the urbanized area of Missoula. This stage should be attempted by 1981. This would include all parks in the urban area. Boundaries of this urban area will be determined by the county commissioners. Park associations will still remain unaffected in terms of authority. However, these associations could request that future expansion of their parks be considered in

the county budget along with the other county parks. With the development of all the urbanized area parks, the gradual expansion of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement would continue. The same criteria used in stage one for selection of parks would also be applicable here. At this time, a county park board could be created in accordance with state law to advise and assist the county commissioners.

These two stages were developed with two factors in mind. First, to obtain full use from the agreement by using it as a basis for expansion rather than adopting a totally new alternative such as create a county park department. Since the City Parks and Recreation Department and the county are currently cooperating so well it is logical to expand upon this. It must be emphasized the basic Interlocal Cooperation Agreement remains the same, the scope simply expands. Second, to expand the agreement gradually enough so that no complications arise. Complications might include placing too many demands on the Parks and Recreation Department too rapidly and not allowing sufficient time for the county to develop their own park and recreational goals since the county has just begun to develop their park potential. These recommendations do not include rural areas of the county because there has been no indication that these residents would support a county park system.

Summary

This thesis has revealed that there is a definite need for parks in the urbanized area surrounding the city of Missoula. Since the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for regional park development was established on July 8, 1975, it has been a viable instrument in the development of Fort Missoula Park. Both the City Parks and Recreation Department and the Missoula County Commissioners have been pleased with the results of this agreement. The capacity of this document is not sufficient to meet the needs of the total urban area. In light of this situation, this chapter included the above proposal and recommendations designed to correct that problem.

Chapter one of this thesis outlined important aspects of the park situation in the city of Missoula and the surrounding urbanized area. One such aspect is the provision of park services in relation to the form of city and county governments. This chapter concluded that the county commission form of government now in operation in Missoula County does not provide effective leadership in the area of parks administration. Park associations provide the only source of park administration in the county. However, the difficulties the associations encounter when developing a park stem from the lack of leadership in park development and expertise at the county level. Should the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement be broadened as suggested in chapter

five, the City Parks and Recreation Department would provide the necessary expertise and leadership.

Chapter two, an historical analysis of past park administration in the city of Missoula and Missoula County, focused on park management, park planning, land acquisition, use and budgeting. The county lacks leadership at this level of government and does not have a park department or a county park system. The city has developed and maintained a park system for approximately sixteen years through a Park and Recreation Department governed by a Park Board. This chapter accentuated the need for a park system for the county urbanized area surrounding the city of Missoula. Park associations have been organized for the purpose of developing parks in the county, however, in several instances the problems they have encountered have been too great to overcome. Only two park associations have achieved their goal of developing a usable park. In recognition of the park situation in the county, the county commissioners instigated an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the City Parks and Recreation Department for the purpose of developing Fort Missoula Park. Chapter three discussed the terms and scope of this agreement and also its advantages and disadvantages. The most significant advantage of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is that it provides a basis on which further unification may be modified and enlarged as is necessary. Although the present agreement is limited to the Fort Missoula Park, both parties are receiving benefits

at a low cost.

Consolidation, a governmental alternative presented to the voters of Missoula County and the City of Missoula in June of 1976, was examined in chapter four. Although voters defeated this proposal, it does present a viable alternative. Consolidation would offer a more permanent change to the provision of services to the total urbanized area. Special service areas would be provided allowing residents to choose their desired level of service. Consolidation would help eliminate tax inequities found when urban fringe residents obtain free benefits from use of city facilities. Since only one park department would be involved in the consolidation, confusion would be lessened as the transition took place. Park services would benefit by more comprehensive planning, greater emphasis on land acquisition and coordination of existing parks and recreational programs. Overall, consolidation would offer advantages in the provision of park services to the total urban area. However, it is impossible to determine when it will be considered again as an alternative to the existing governmental structures.

The greatest disadvantage of consolidation in relation to parks administration is that it forces a drastic and permanent change. Contrasted to this drastic change, an interlocal agreement allows the parties involved to make incremental changes at their own pace. Analyzing the particular situation in Missoula, the Interlocal Cooperation

Agreement enables the county to gradually become involved in park administration and development.

This thesis concludes that the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement is the superior administrative alternative compared to the previous situation for the provision of park services to the Missoula urban area. Both the City of Missoula and Missoula County are benefiting from such an agreement. Competent leadership is provided to the park associations in the county through the expertise of the City Parks and Recreation Department. The changes suggested in this chapter further ensure that leadership and expertise in terms of park planning and maintenance would be available to the county park associations. Cost effectiveness of the agreement is seen in terms of sharing equipment, combining of personnel, and coordinating of existing parks.

Under the present governmental structure the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement best serves the urbanized area of Missoula in regard to park services. The potential of the agreement, including the changes recommended in chapter five, greatly enhances the possibility for leadership in park management and comprehensive park planning and land acquisition throughout the county. This is accomplished by the City of Missoula and Missoula County working together as one administrative unit.

A P P E N D I X

CITY OF MISSOULA-COUNTY OF MISSOULA
INTER-LOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 8th day of July, 1975, by and between the County of Missoula, Montana, hereinafter referred to as "cooperating agency" and the City of Missoula, Montana, hereinafter referred to as "prime agency".

IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED by and between the parties hereto that the purpose of this agreement shall be to provide cooperation and assistance to the prime agency in administering, planning, developing, servicing, and maintaining regional park facilities.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the aforementioned parties that this agreement shall remain in full force and effect for an indefinite period of time subject to annual review.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that no separate entity need be created by virtue of this agreement, there being sufficient administrative ability within the existing public entities involved to insure proper supervision of the activities and financial matters to be undertaken.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that the City Superintendent of Parks and Recreation will provide the administration necessary for this agreement and he is hereby vested with all of the rights, power, duties, and obligations necessary to effectually implement the purposes and policies contained within this agreement.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that the financing of projects undertaken by virtue of this agreement shall be by appropriations from the general fund budget, or other lawful sources, of the cooperating agency and of the prime agency. The cooperating agency hereby agrees to provide to the prime agency administrative and planning and certain maintenance costs for each fiscal year mutually agreed upon between the agencies as necessary to effectually implement this agreement for that fiscal year. The prime agency shall be responsible for the financial administration of this agreement.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between the parties hereto that upon the termination of this agreement that title to any personal property and equipment acquired pursuant to this agreement shall remain in the prime agency.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED by and between parties hereto that this agreement may be terminated on July 1 of each year by either or both parties upon providing a thirty (30) day written notice.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the elected officers of the respective agencies have this 8th day of July, 1975, affixed their signatures hereto in approval of this agreement.

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