

Comprehensive Plan

Morgantown is preparing to rewrite its 10-year comprehensive plan, a process that will occur during Fall 2009 and Winter 2010. In this plan they will establish goals for the city and map out the methods for achieving them in the next ten years. The current plan can be found at <http://www.morgantown.com/plan/toc.htm>. To address the growing issues of a modern city the new plan will need to establish more specific goals and consider new topics in addition to what is already included.

One of the emerging issues that Morgantown wishes to address is that of energy and the environment. The country and the world are working to reduce carbon emissions, eliminate waste and grow in an environmentally sustainable way. To be at the forefront of this effort, Morgantown must take decisive action – actions that must be included in the comprehensive plan. To develop such a set of procedures, the City enlisted the help of the Morgantown City Green Team. The Team is composed of environmental experts and other interested parties who provide a keen view of the City's needs.

With the help of an intern, the Green Team put together a set of recommendations, under the categories of Greenspace, Green Architecture and Recycling. The goals under Greenspace are focused on acquiring more city owned parks and greenways to increase the amount of greenspace in Morgantown. Suggested methods for achieving this include examining paper streets, utility owned land and floodplains for greenway potential; establishing pocket parks in every neighborhood and planting shade trees in city parking lots.

To promote Green Architecture, the Team advocated building all city buildings and facilities to LEED standards as per the 2006 Green Building Municipal Leadership Initiative. All other city buildings should be brought up to LEED standards for existing buildings and should be surveyed for potential green roof installation. To encourage green building in the private sector, a Green Building Program could be established which would incentivize green building practices.

Recycling focuses on removing more items from the waste stream than is currently being done. Suggested expansion areas are apartment complexes which currently have no recycling pickup service. Acting as a liaison between Allied Waste and the complex owners could alleviate this. Enacting an ordinance that requires a certain percentage of construction and demolition waste to be recycled would also have a significant impact. Implementing a composting program would help to remove biodegradable items from the waste stream as well.

These recommendations are only the first step in a process that will continue for several months. Any questions or comments about these recommendations can be sent to sheila.westfall@gmail.com.