



City of White Cloud

Recreation Plan: 2021-2025

FINAL DRAFT

PREPARED FOR:

The City of White Cloud
December 2020

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Introduction



Introduction

Purpose of Plan

The 2021-2025 White Cloud Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide for future land use and programming decisions related to recreation assets and programming. This plan was prepared by the City of White Cloud to:

- Provide an updated inventory of existing facilities, programs and resources
- Gain community input on the strengths and opportunities within the parks and recreation system
- Create a framework for future recreational resource investment and development
- Develop goals and objectives to meet the needs of the community
- Identify a plan of action to meet the recreational and open space needs of the community
- Establish eligibility to apply for Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Grants

Legal Basis

This plan is enabled by Michigan Law, but does not carry the power of statutory law or ordinance. Its principles are derived from Public Act 156 of 1917, which authorizes Townships and Cities to operate and maintain systems of public recreation and playgrounds. A copy of this act is included in the appendix of this document.

Community Profile



Community Profile

The City of White Cloud is located on the west side of Michigan in central Newaygo County, and is encompassed by four surrounding Townships; Everett Township, Lincoln Township, Sherman Township, and Wilcox Township.

- Everett Township does not currently own or operate any park or recreation facilities within the township and subsequently does not have an advisory committee or parks and recreation staff. The Everett Township Supervisor was included on the White Cloud Parks and Recreation advisory committee as a liaison for the community.
- Lincoln Township recreational and maintenance decisions are made by the Lincoln Township Board. The township employs one part-time seasonal employee who reports to the Township Board.
- Sherman Township recreational and maintenance decisions are made by the Sherman Township Board. The Township employs one part-time employee who reports directly to the Township Board.
- Wilcox Township does not currently own or operate any park or recreation facilities within the township and subsequently does not have an advisory committee or parks and recreation staff.

Travel Time

The City of White Cloud is accessible from many of the regions large metro areas. It is about 45 miles, or an hour drive, north of Grand Rapids and about a four hour drive from both Chicago and Detroit. The Regional Drive Time Map (Map 2) on page 9 illustrates the accessibility of the region.

REGIONAL PLANNING

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties. The agency provides programs and resources pertaining to a range of environmental, transportation and hazard mitigation efforts along the western shoreline of Michigan.

"Our mission is to promote and foster regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments."

-West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Community Profile

MAP 1: REGIONAL LOCATION



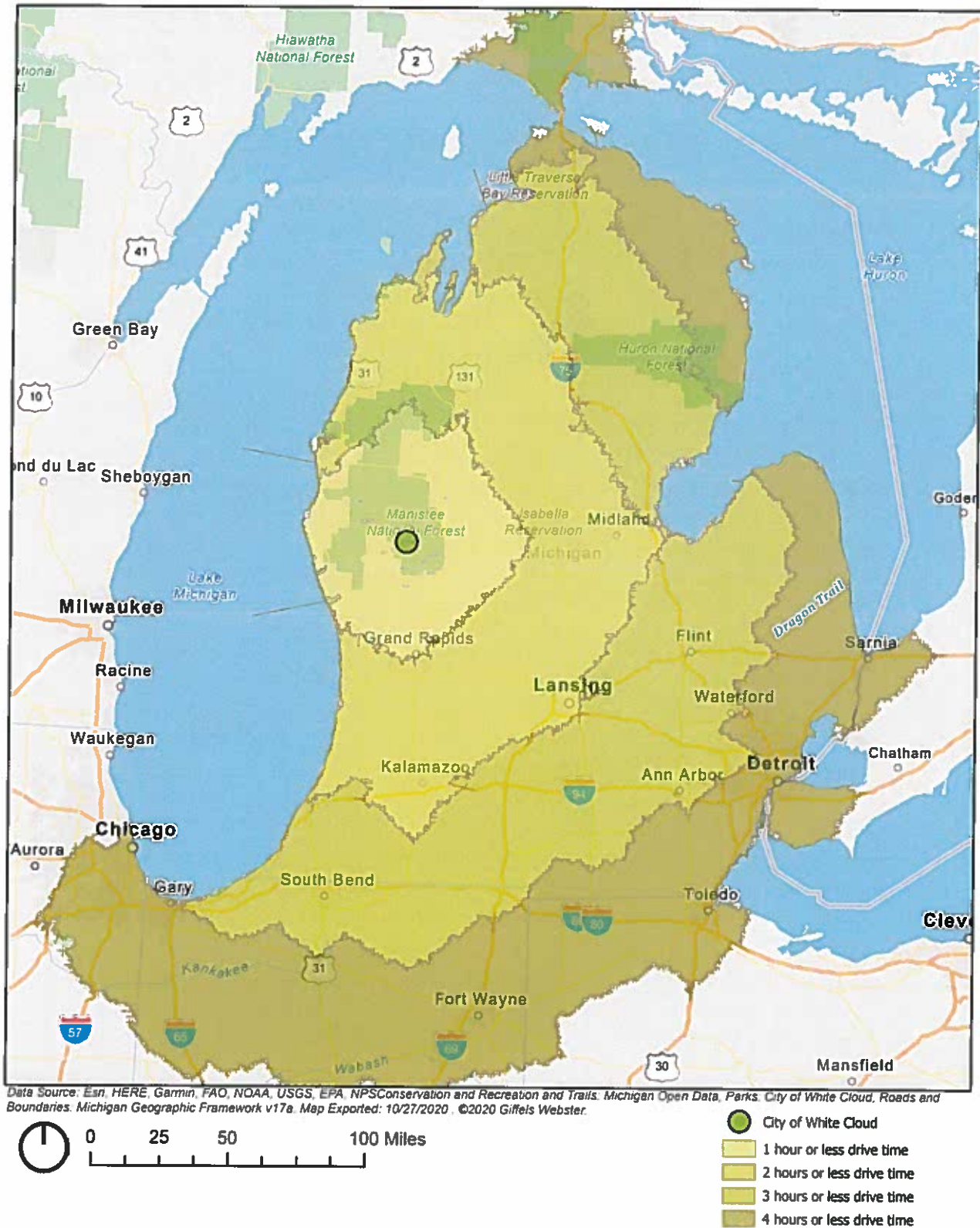
Demographics

The City of White Cloud has seen very little population change since the last recreation plan in 2012. The City, surrounding communities and Newaygo County all have similar projected population declines on less than 1% over the next 25 years.

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTION 1990 - 2045

	1990	2000	2010	2017	2020	2045	Change 2020 to 2045
Newaygo County	38,202	47,874	48,460	48,242	48,230	48,126	-0.22%
City of White Cloud	1,147	1,420	1,408	1,381	1,381	1,378	-0.22%
Everett Twp.	1,519	1,985	1,862	1,831	1,831	1,827	-0.22%
Wilcox Twp.	831	1,145	1,098	1,095	1,095	1,092	-0.27%
Sherman Twp.	1,866	2,159	2,109	2,097	2,096	2,092	-0.19%
Lincoln Twp.	969	1,338	1,275	1,250	1,250	1,247	-0.24%

MAP 2: REGIONAL DRIVE TIME



Administrative Structure

Administrative Structure

Budget

The City of White Cloud has several sources that generate funds for recreational planning, programming and maintenance. The sources include the city's general fund, donations from the city's swimming instruction program, pavilion rental and other private donations.

TABLE 2: PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET: 2020-2022	
Category	2020-2021
Salaries and Wages	\$4,013
Employee Benefits and Insurance	\$2,599
North Street Recreation Complex/ Operation and Maintenance	\$3,300
Swimming Program	\$800
White Cloud Community Picnic	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$12,712

Administrative Structure

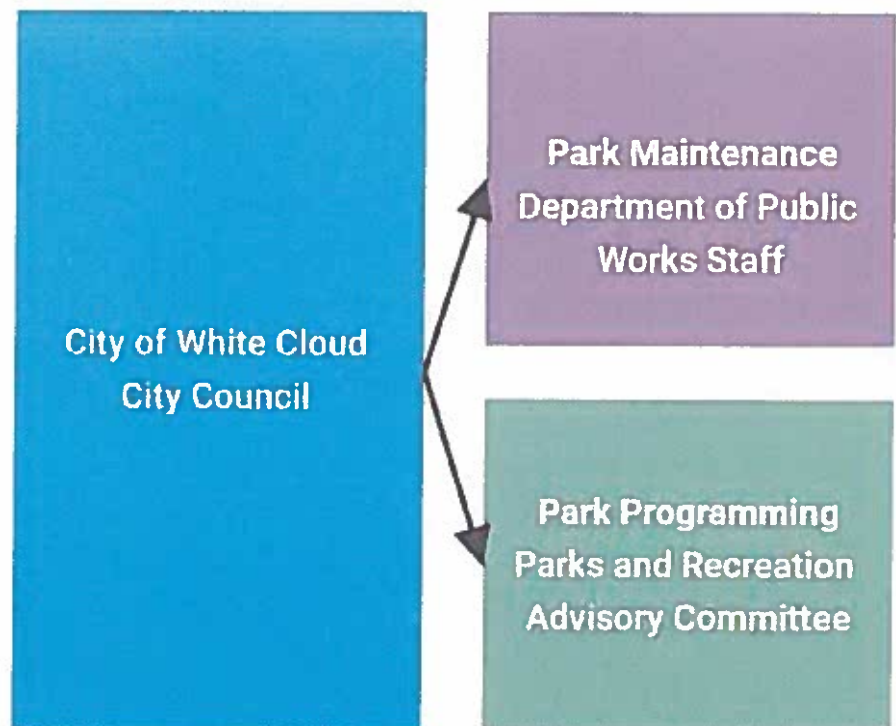
The City of White Cloud has a seven member Parks and Recreation Committee.

Role of Volunteers

Seven members sit on the volunteer Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, with representation from various organizations and roles within the region.

White Cloud Public Schools

The City of White Cloud and the White Cloud Public school system share facilities like the sports field on Wilcox Avenue and the fields at North Street Sports Complex.



Recreation Inventory



Recreation Inventory

The City of White Cloud provides a wide variety of recreation facilities, ensuring that residents and visitors of varying ages and abilities are able to access recreational opportunities. The City's neighborhood play fields draw users from a wider geographic area, and fulfill the recreational needs of both children and adults. Community-wide parks serve the community at large and offer a greater range of activities and facilities, such as hiking, snowmobiling or kayaking (water) trails, ball fields, and playgrounds. Additional recreational facilities are offered at the City's public schools and through partnerships.

The City of White Cloud's parks and recreational facilities are shown in Map 3 on the following page, and a full inventory can be found on the following pages.

The inventory describes the recreational facilities available within the City and throughout the region; future facilities, such as the 19.5 acres of

property on Pine Hill, are included in the action plan. The chapter also includes an analysis of the barrier-free compliance status of the City's parks, outlining how each park could be modified to better accommodate the needs of physically-challenged visitors. Tables 3 illustrates the inventory and accessibility rating for each park.

In addition to local facilities, White Cloud is served by a wide array of school and regional recreation assets, including MDNR snowmobile and hiking trailheads. Table 2 describes the school, regional, state and federal facilities within and surrounding White Cloud.

Newaygo County Parks System includes a marina and five county parks with day use and modern campground facilities. The county is also surrounded by the World Class Muskegon River, North Country National Scenic Trail, 4,000 acre Hardy Pond and the 538,000 acre Manistee National Forest.



Newly installed docks at Mill Pond Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

Barrier Free Analysis

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing barrier-free access to accommodate the needs of both physically and mentally challenged visitors. Barrier-free access includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that adequate barrier-free parking spaces, sidewalks, trails, picnic tables, and playground equipment are provided for renovated or new recreational facilities. Standards from the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) were used to assess barrier-free compliance.

The DNR guidelines require that a barrier-free ranking be given to each facility for assessing its accessibility to persons with disabilities. The assessment considers the accessibility of both the facilities themselves as well as the access routes to them. The following system, provided by the DNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (02/05/09), was used to assess each city park. Refer to Table 3, White Cloud Park & Recreation Facilities Inventory for the City's accessibility ranking of each of the seven parks in the White Cloud system.

DNR ACCESSIBILITY RANKING SYSTEM

Rank 1: None of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 2: Some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 3: Most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

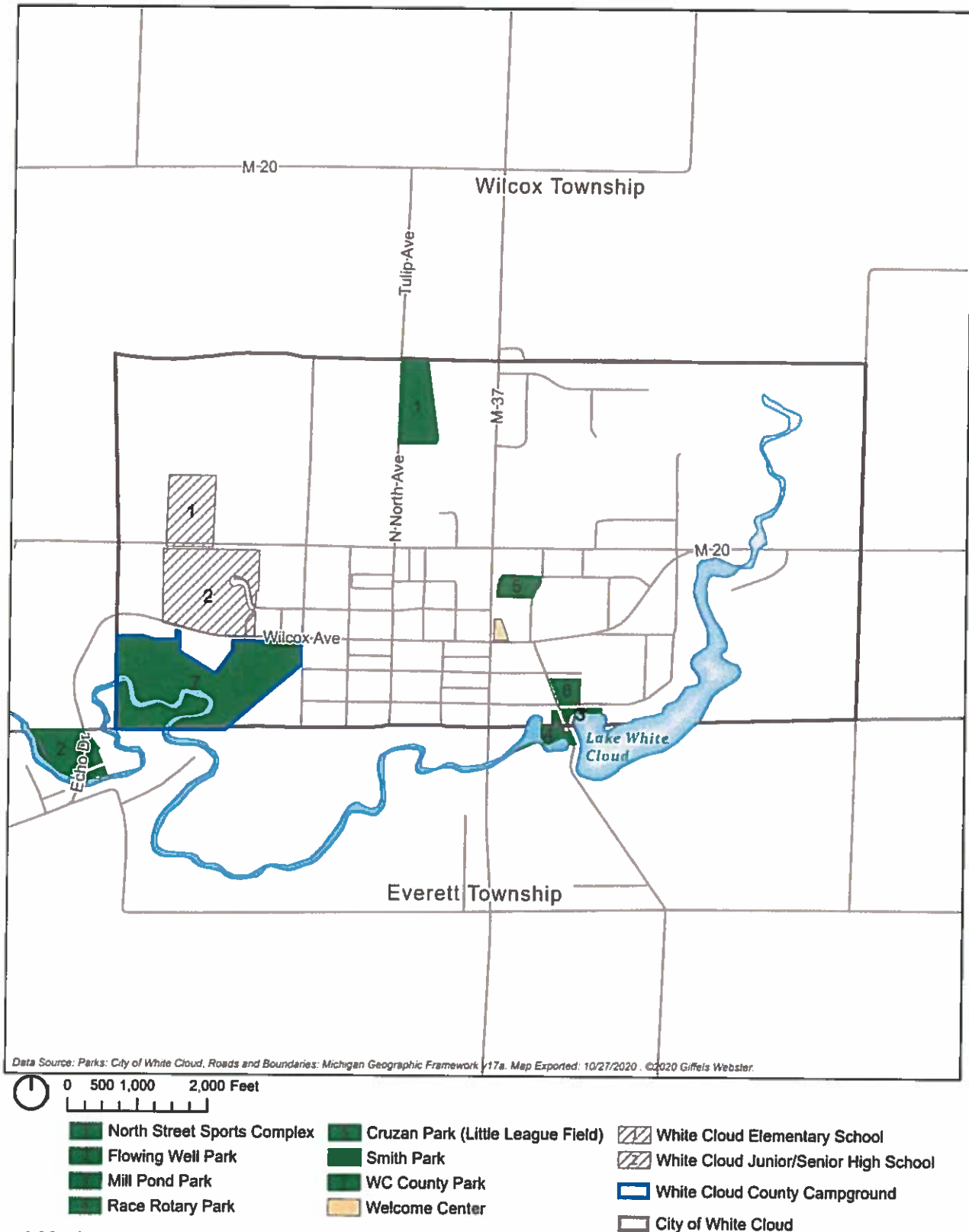
Rank 4: Entire park meets accessibility guidelines.

Rank 5: Entire park was developed/renovated using principals of universal design.

**TABLE 3
CITY OF WHITE CLOUD PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Facility	Acres	Park Type	Amenities	Updates Since Previous Recreation Plan	Needed Improvements	Accessibility Ranking
Smith Park	acres	Mini	Basketball court, bathroom, skate park, large open field and parking lot	Added GaGa Ball Pit, Ice rink		2
White Cloud Rotary Park	acres	Mini	Picnic pavilion, picnic tables, paved walking paths along the river and a playground	Kayak launch installed, Walking path		2
Mill Pond Park	4 acres	Mini	Playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, ADA dock and beach for swimming and swim lessons	Installed docks		
Flowing Wells Park	6.7 acres	Neighborhood	Picnic tables, parking, trail connection	Kayak launch installed		1
White Cloud Campground (County Park)	89 acres	Natural Resource Area	100 campsites, playground area, picnic pavilion and gathering lodge with restroom, White Cloud Campground Connector Trailhead	Kayak launch installed		1
North Street Sports Complex	5.6 acres	Neighborhood	Two lighted softball fields, football practice field (owned by city), concession stand, fenced-in play area, restrooms, shelter buildings and gravel parking lot	Trail Town Designation, North County Trail Loop		2
Cruzan Park - Little League Field (privately owned)	4.5 acres	Neighborhood	Two fenced ballfields, concession stand, storage building			1
White Cloud Schools	-	School	Football field and running track	Track has been resurfaced		N/A

MAP 3: LOCAL PARKS AND SCHOOLS



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Local Parks and Schools

CITY OF WHITE CLOUD

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

White Cloud Rotary [Raceway] Park

This 3.5 acre park is located at the southwest corner of James Street and State Street, directly adjacent to Lake White Cloud where it meets Mill Pond Park at the banks of Lake White Cloud. This community park, equipped with a picnic pavilion, picnic tables, playground and paved walking paths along the river, serves as a popular gathering place for family reunions, weddings and other get-togethers. The park includes a kayak launch and fishing areas. This park is partially located within Everett Twp.

Mill Pond Park

Located on the southeast corner of the James Street and State Street intersection, Mill Pond Park provides playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, and beach for swimming and swim lessons. An ADA dock provides access to Lake White Cloud along the White River. This park is a popular destination for residents and visitors in the summer who are looking for swimming, fishing and kayaking opportunities.



Pavilion at Rotary Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Smith Park

Located on the northeast corner of the James Street and State Street intersection, Smith Park offers a basketball court, bathroom, skate park, large open field and parking lot.

MAP 4: STATE STREET AND JAMES STREET PARKS



Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

Flowing Well Park

This 6.7 acre park is located partially in Everett Twp., along the northern banks of the White River in the southwest portion of the city. This park is conveniently placed along both the White River and the White Cloud Campground Connector Trail, which provides direct connection to the North Country Trail for hikers. Lower Peninsula Trail 3 (LP 3), a snowmobiling trail (open seasonally) runs along the north and west side of Echo Dr, traversing through Flowing Well Park. The park includes a picnic table and kayak launch.

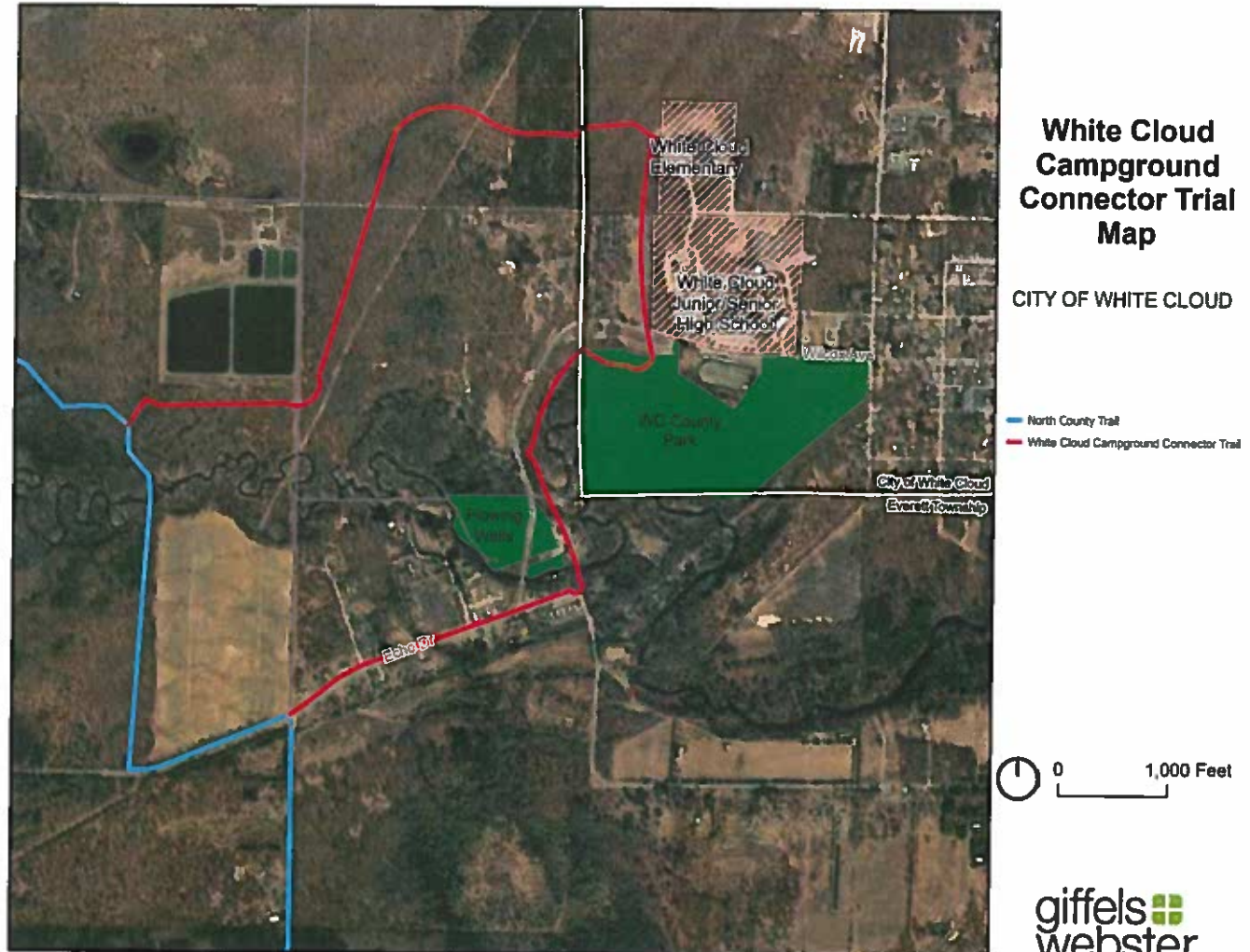


Flowing Well Park fountain and sitting area
Source: Giffels Webster

White Cloud County Campground

This 80+ acre park offers 90 campsites, (electric/water and rustic) and 1 camping cabin on the shores of the White River, with a half mile of scenic river frontage, and connects to the North Country Trail via the White Cloud Campground Connector trail.

MAP 5: WHITE CLOUD CAMPGROUND CONNECTOR TRAIL



Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

North Street Sports Complex

This 5-acre park adjacent to the airport is owned by the City, although it is maintained and used by the local school. The site has two lighted softball fields, a football practice field, concession stand, fenced in play area, restrooms, shelter buildings and gravel parking lot.



North Street Sports Complex
Source: Giffels Webster



North Street Sports Complex Dugout
Source: Giffels Webster

MAP 6: NORTH STREET SPORTS COMPLEX



Cruzan Park - Little League Field

This 4.5 acre park has two fenced ballfields, a concession stand and storage building. The property is owned by the City and the fields are maintained by the Little League Association, at no cost to the city.



Little League Field
Source: Google

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud School Facilities

White Cloud Public Schools

The White Cloud Public School system has two schools located within the city; Elementary School and White Cloud High School. Both are located on the city's west side, just north of the White Cloud County Campground. The school's football facilities are located on the south side of Wilcox Ave, adjacent to the campground. This field, used for soccer and football, is owned by the city but operated, maintained and primarily used by the high school and local soccer clubs.



The sports field on Wilcox Avenue, which is used for school and city activities
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Inventory: Regional and State Park Facilities

TABLE 4
INVENTORY OF SCHOOL REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PARKS & AMENITIES

WHITE CLOUD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary School	The White Cloud Elementary and High Schools shares recreation resources by utilizing the sports field on Wilcox Avenue, which is owned by the city but operated and used by the schools.
High School	

NEWAYGO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Sandy Beach Park	On the backwaters of Hardy Dam, this park overlooks stunning water views. This park offers 176 campsites, 26 of which are full hook-up, and 11 camping cabins. A three-lane modern boat launch and dock rentals are available. Additionally, this park features a sandy swimming beach, picnic area, play areas, and a group camping site. A pavilion is available for reservation.
Ed H. Henning County Park	Located on the world-class Muskegon River, known for excellent Salmon and Trout fishing. This park offers 60 campsites (Electric and Rustic), and 2 camping cabins. Additionally, this park features picnic areas, free covered pavilion, swimming beach, baseball diamonds, play areas, volleyball court, tennis/pickle ball courts, soccer fields, and a group camping. A boat launch is available all year round.
Diamond Lake County Park	On the sparkling waters of Diamond Lake, and adjacent to the Manistee National Forest, visitors are treated to a natural woodland setting. This park offers 60 campsites, 24 of which are full hook-up, and 2 camping cabins. Additionally, this park features a swimming beach, volleyball net, play areas, horseshoe pits, hiking trails, a picnic area, and a group camping area. An enclosed shelter is available for campers to use free of charge.
White Cloud County Park	See White Cloud Campground County Park (Table 2)
Pettibone Lake County Park	On the sandy shores of Pettibone Lake in Northern Newaygo County, approximately 4 miles north and east of Btely. This small 3-acre day park has a picnic shelter, picnic areas, and a boat launch.
Hardy Dam County Marina	Nestled in a protective cove next to the Hardy Dam, the marina offers access to 17 miles of open waterway, with miles of undeveloped shoreline. The marina currently offers 35 boat slips with daily and seasonal slips available. It also houses one of the best daily boat launches on Hardy Pond. The marina also offers potable water, vault restrooms, and a pump-out service.
John Graves Lodge	The historic John Graves Lodge overlooking Little Placid Lake is available for group rentals. The lodge is a partnership between Newaygo County Parks and the Newaygo Community Recreation Authority. It is located behind the Newaygo County Park and Recreation Department Administrative Offices/Newaygo County Welcome Center at 4684 Evergreen Drive (M-37), just 3.5 miles north of Newaygo. The lodge features wood-clad walls, open beam ceilings, accessible restrooms and has a maximum occupancy of 80 people.

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Huron Manistee National Forest	Lying between the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, is the nearly one-million-acre Huron-Manistee National Forests.
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Recreation Inventory: State and Federal Park Facilities

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)
INVENTORY OF SCHOOL REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PARKS & AMENITIES

MOTORIZED VEHICLE TRAILS	
SNOWMOBILE: LP 3 Trail	
Parking LP3 1	Unimproved Trail West of the End of Ferris Ave
Parking LP3	Located adjacent to the Newaygo County Sport Park in Everett Twp., this staging area is located on the west side of Evergreen Drive, north of intersection with Lake Shore Blvd
ORV	
M-20 to Big-O MCCCT	This 16 Mile ORV tail loop is accessed from W. 1 Mile Road, located west of the limits. The ORV portion of the trail loops just north of 6 Mile Rd. The motorcycle trail can be taken further north to Baldwin or Branch Twp.
Whiter Cloud Loop Trail	

Snowmobile Trails

The Michigan DNR oversees nearly 6,500 miles of snowmobile trails throughout the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan. The trails are open from December 1 to March 31 and provide a unique opportunity to explore the state's natural setting along miles of back-road and roadside trails. Newaygo County is very snowmobile-friendly, hosting large groups from throughout the region and beyond who come for the outstanding trails. Snowmobiling routes are abundant throughout the county, including the White Cloud Trail, which embarks from the Newaygo County Sports Complex and winds its way north to the county passing along the western boundary of White Cloud. During snowmobiling season, the trails in the area are groomed up to 4 times and week.



White Cloud and its many parks lie within the Huron Manistee National Forest
Source: Giffels Webster

and snowmobiling hub, with over 600 miles of snowmobile trails regularly groomed and maintained for travel.

Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails

The State of Michigan regulates three designated types of trails, including motorcycle-only trails (24" width), ORV trails (50" width) and ORV routes (72" width or greater). Newaygo County is a popular destination for ORV enthusiasts, as the county's ORV ordinance allows these vehicles on most roads.

Huron Manistee National Forest

The Huron Manistee National Forest includes nearly one million acres of forest located between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in Michigan's lower peninsula. The area offers abundant recreational opportunities that include hiking, hunting, nature viewing, camping, paddling and off road adventuring. In the winter, the area is a popular snowshoeing, cross country skiing

Newaygo State Park

Newaygo State Park is a 99-site rustic campground, which sits atop 20-foot embankments overlooking the Hardy Dam Pond, a six-mile flooding of the Muskegon River. The park caters primarily to campers, anglers and recreational boaters. There are several picnic sites overlooking the reservoir for day users. The campground is nestled in oak and poplar forests and is noted for its large, private sites and scenic beauty. Anglers interested in the Great Lakes species can also fish for trout and salmon downstream in the popular Croton Dam area, just 15 minutes south of the park.

Recreation Inventory: Regional Trail Facilities

White Cloud Campground Connector Trail

The Campground Connector Trail is a 4.3-mile loop that provides a connection for local hikers from the campground through Forest Service lands where it connects with the North Country Trail. The connector returns to the campground, providing a route for hikers on the North Country Trail to access the campgrounds for overnight camping or longer stays so they can use the amenities or enjoy the easy walk to the local restaurants and businesses.

Dragon Trail

This new trail system was first envisioned in 2009 and after it gained funding traction in 2015 the project was quickly designed and implemented. Work began on installing the first segments of the 47-mile trail loop in 2019 and were ready for visitors by the summer of 2020. The trail, when complete, will surround the Hardy Damn Pond and is anticipated to become a significant regional asset located just 8 miles southeast of White Cloud, about a 15-minute drive.



Entrance to White Cloud Campground connector trail
Source: Giffels Webster

Rail Trail: White Cloud to Fremont

Abandoned railroad lines and right-of-ways are excellent opportunities to acquire and install regional connector trails. An abandoned rail line connecting White Cloud to the City of Fremont, located 10 miles southwest of the city, has been/will be converted into a rail trail, providing a key non-motorized connection for the city and region.



Source: North Country Trail Association

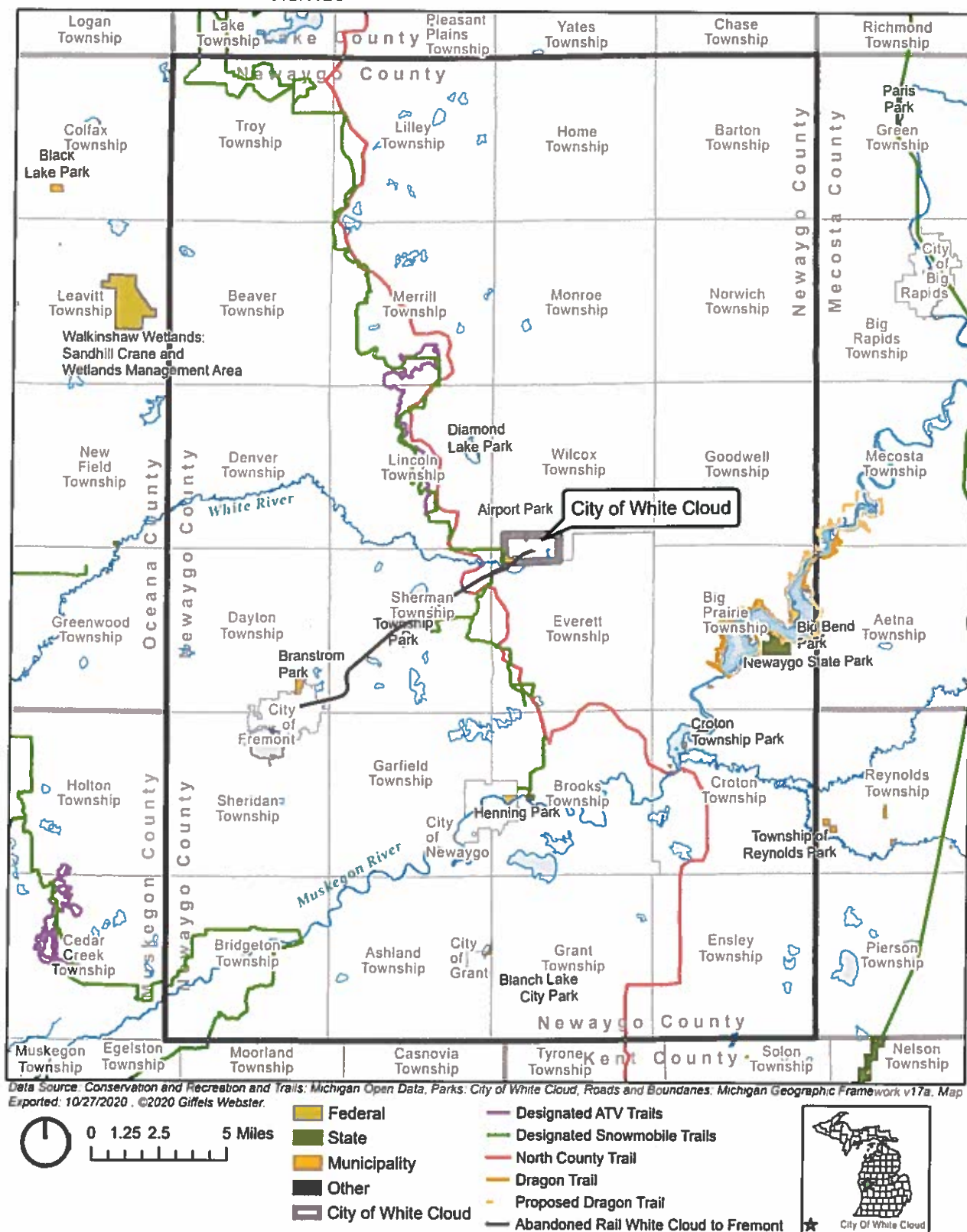
North Country Trail

The North Country National Scenic Trail is the longest in the National Trails System, stretching 4,600 miles across eight states from North Dakota to Vermont. The Trail traverses through more than 160 federal, state and local public lands, including 10 National Forests, four areas of the National Park Service, and over 100 state parks, forests and game areas.

White Cloud is located about an hour's drive north of Grand Rapids, and serves as a base for enjoying the NCT in Newaygo County and the lower Huron-Manistee Forest. White Cloud is about midpoint on the entire NCT, and was the location of the original headquarters for the NCT. In addition to a trailhead in the City of White Cloud, the NCT has access in nearby Everett, Sherman and Lincoln Townships.

Recreation Inventory: Regional Facilities

MAP 7: REGIONAL PARK FACILITIES

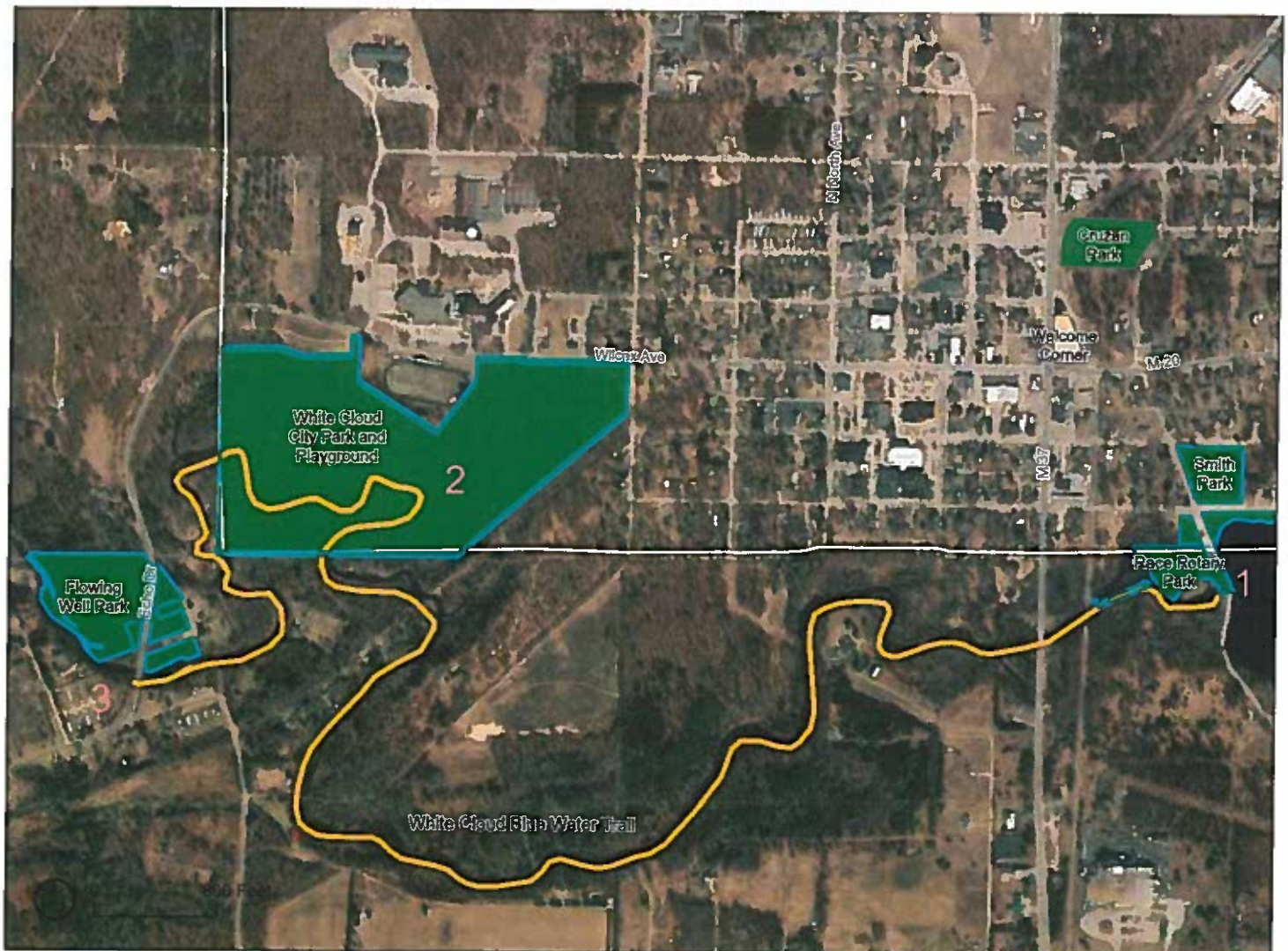


Recreation Inventory: White Cloud Water Trail Facilities

TABLE 5
INVENTORY OF WATERWAYS, DROP-IN AND TAKE-OUT LOCATIONS

WATERWAYS	
White Cloud Blue Water Trail	The three mile White River Blue Water Trail paddle begins at Rotary Park and ends at Flowing Wells park. The trip downstream from Raceway Park to Flowing Wells Park usually takes about an hour to an hour and half depending on water flow. Paddlers may continue down stream to other take-out points at various road crossings or continue to Hesperia. There is signage at each road crossing and take out between White Cloud and Hesperia. Please see map for distances and paddle times.
Rotary Park Drop in	There is ample parking and restrooms at this park. The put in is located on the river and can be reached by walking about 100 yards down a well marked hard surface path.
White Cloud Campground	There is an intermediate take out located in the White Cloud Campground and Park on E Wilcox Ave. It is about half way along the paddle and there is an improved path about 100 yards long that leads to the Camp Ground. There is ample parking, camping, and bath facilities in the White Cloud Campground and Park.
Flowing Wells	The paddle ends at the take out in the Flowing Wells Park located at Herald Street and Echo Drive west of White Cloud. The take out is just past the Iron snowmobile bridge on the right. There are no restrooms here and the parking is somewhat limited

MAP 8: WHITE CLOUD WATER TRAIL FACILITIES





Mill Pond Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Needs Analysis



Recreation Needs Analysis

To analyze the recreational needs of city residents and determine deficiencies within recreation programs, it is helpful to consider standards for recreation service areas, land needs based on future population, and the ultimate size and extent of recreation facilities and their location. These recreation planning standards are a useful tool in making an assessment of future recreation needs. Standards may be used effectively only as a means for comparing present conditions to what is thought to be suitable or desirable, and as a general guide toward estimating future needs and demands. To assess the facilities within White Cloud, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and National Recreation and Park Association standards were referenced.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA developed recommended standards and guidelines for recreation, parks and open space.

Department of Natural Resources The DNR includes a Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional recreation Open Space and Trails

The major types of community recreation facilities recommended by the above organizations include:

- **Playgrounds/Mini-Parks.** Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population, or specific groups such as small children or senior citizens. For example, suggested recreational amenities for an individual mini-park are a tot lot, two picnic tables and ½ acre open space.
- **Play field or Athletic Fields/Neighborhood Park.** Neighborhood parks should offer a variety of activities to accommodate a range of ages, physical abilities, and recreational interests.
- **Community Parks.** Community-wide parks include larger parks with diverse environmental quality. A variety of passive and active uses are provided, including athletic fields, sledding hills, trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds. In addition to parks, the DNR recognizes the important role of trails and pathways for non-motorized travel:
- **Connector Trails.** Connector trails would include a multi-use trail to give non-motorized access to parks and other uses throughout the city and connect to regional trails. Modes of travel include walking, biking, and in-line skating. These trails could be located in an independent right-of-way, such as along the utility corridors, or within the road rights-of-way.

Recreation Analysis: NRPA Annual Agency Review

Each year, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) surveys parks and recreation agencies across the US and shares this data to help communities benchmark their programs and facilities against similar-sized peers. The NRPA recognizes that applying standards and guidelines often prove challenging due to the variety of populations served and funding sources available. Table 6 that follows shows current benchmarks for certain park facilities based on populations under 20,000. The list illustrates the number of facilities that might be expected in White Cloud, based on its current and future population.

TABLE 6 2020 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMPARISON OF COMMUNITIES WITH POPULATIONS UNDER 20,000				
	Number of Residents per Facility: Population Range under 20,000	Benchmark Number of Facilities for 2020 White Cloud Population (1,381)	Benchmark Number of Facilities for Projected 2045 White Cloud Population (1,378)	Current Number of Facilities
Playgrounds	2,523	1	1	3
Basketball courts	4,090	1	1	1
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	3,396	1	1	2
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	5,072	1	1	0
Rectangular fields: multi- purpose	4,683	1	1	1
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	5,691	1	1	2
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	7,804	1	1	0
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	3,294	1	1	1
Rectangular fields: football field	7,500	1	1	1
Multi-use courts -basketball, volleyball	7,866	1	1	0

Recreation Analysis: DNR Classifications

The DNR includes a Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional recreation Open Space and Trails (see Tables 7-8) for the development of recreation plans. On the pages that follow, these standards outline recommendations for developed recreation acreage and for the various types of recreation activities; however, it should be noted that these standards are guidelines and the city should consider other recreation opportunities within the area as well as the ability to maintain community facilities. These standards are compared with the recreation opportunities provided by the city in the table and map on the following pages.

**TABLE 7
RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL
RECREATION OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS**

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Acres / 1,000 Population	
				(Min)	(Max)
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.	0.25	0.5
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼- to ½-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.	1	2
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function.	Variable	
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3-mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.	5	8
Natural Resource Areas	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	Variable	
Regional / Metropolitan Park	Land set aside for preservation of natural beauty or environmental significance, recreation use or historic or cultural interest use.	Located to serve several communities within 1 hour driving time.	Optimal size is 200+ acres, but size varies based on accommodating the desired uses.	5	10
Greenways	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	Variable	
Private Park/ Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable	Variable	
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	Varies			
Connector Trails	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	Varies			

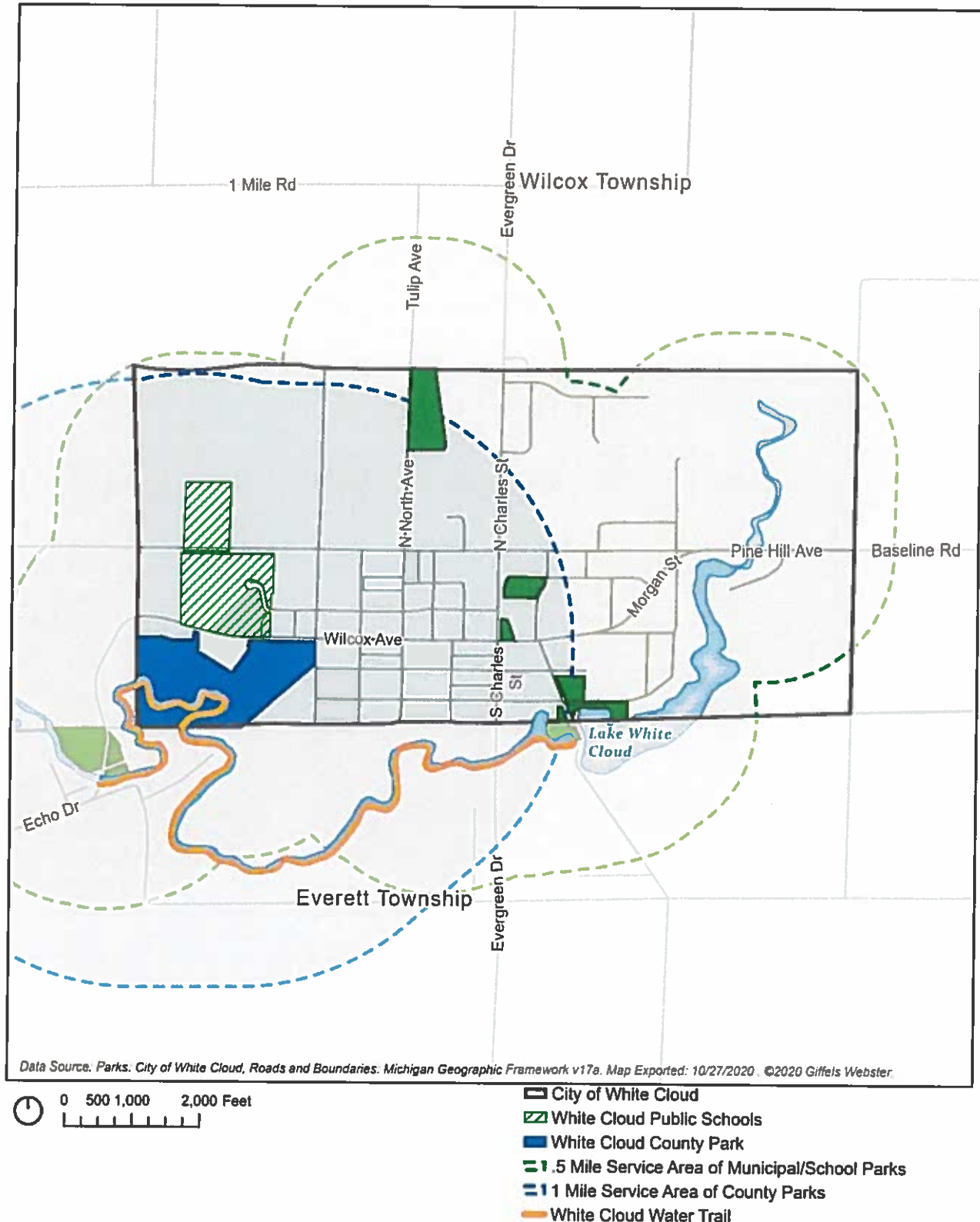
Recreation Analysis: Review of DNR Classifications

TABLE 8
WHITE CLOUD COMPARISON TO MDNR RECOMMENDED
CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL RECREATION
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Classification	White Cloud 2020 Population		White Cloud 2045 Projected Population		Existing (acres)	Recommended (acres)	Comments
	1,381		1,378				
	Min (acres)	Max (acres)	Min (acres)	Max (acres)			
Mini-Park	.5	1	.5	1			James/State parks are all considered neighborhood if viewed individually
Neighborhood Park	1	3	1	3	11.7	3	Explore opportunities to enhance existing neighborhood parks
School-Park		Variable			North Street & field @ campground		The city and school currently share several facilities to meet the recreation needs of the residents;
Community Park					40 acres		Explore opportunities to enhance existing Campground
Large Urban Park					-	-	Not needed
Natural Resource Areas					-	7.5+	Opportunities to add natural resource areas could be explored at existing city owned properties
Regional Metropolitan Park	229	457	260	520	770	-	
Greenways					1	1+	Explore opportunities to expand and connect the trail network where possible
Private Park/ Recreation Facility					4.5		Continue to foster partnership with Little League Association for field maintenance
Park Trail					1-2		Maintain and promote the existing scenic river walk trails Rotary Park and Flowing Wells?
Connector Trails					1		The White Cloud Campground Connector Trail serve as a connection to the North County Trail

Recreation Inventory: Facilities and Park Service Area

MAP 9: WHITE CLOUD LOCAL PARK SERVICE AREA



Planning Process



Planning Process

Planning Process

The recreation planning process in the White Cloud is intended to involve individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the community's population. The City Council is responsible for implementing the Recreation Plan, but the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board provides input, analysis and recommendations. The planning process began with an inventory of all of City, county and regional parks, as well as local school facilities. A survey was developed and posted online.

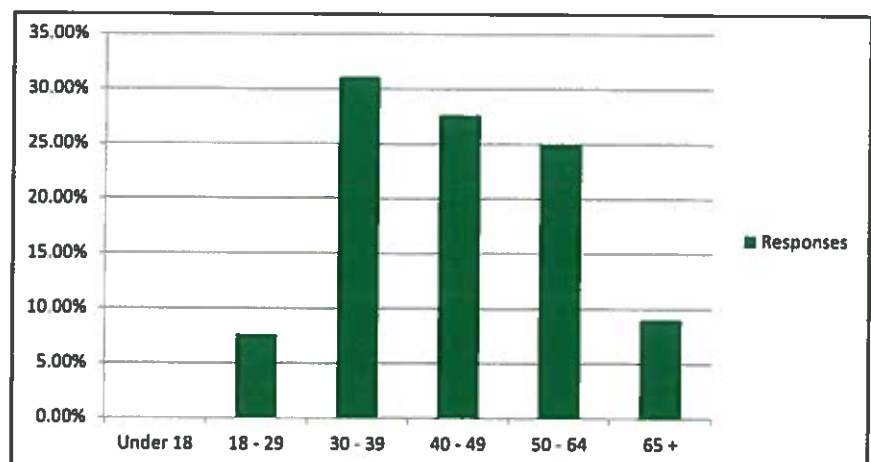
Using the inventory, the results of the survey findings, this Recreation Plan identifies strengths and opportunities of the current parks facilities, along with goals for the future. The draft plan, along with a 5-year action program of priority projects, will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Online Survey

An online survey was posted for residents and stakeholders to provide feedback on the current park system and improvements they would like to see. The survey was available online from November 11 - 17, and 145 participants submitted responses. The key themes are summarized on the following pages. A complete copy of the survey results can be found in the appendix.

Park Use

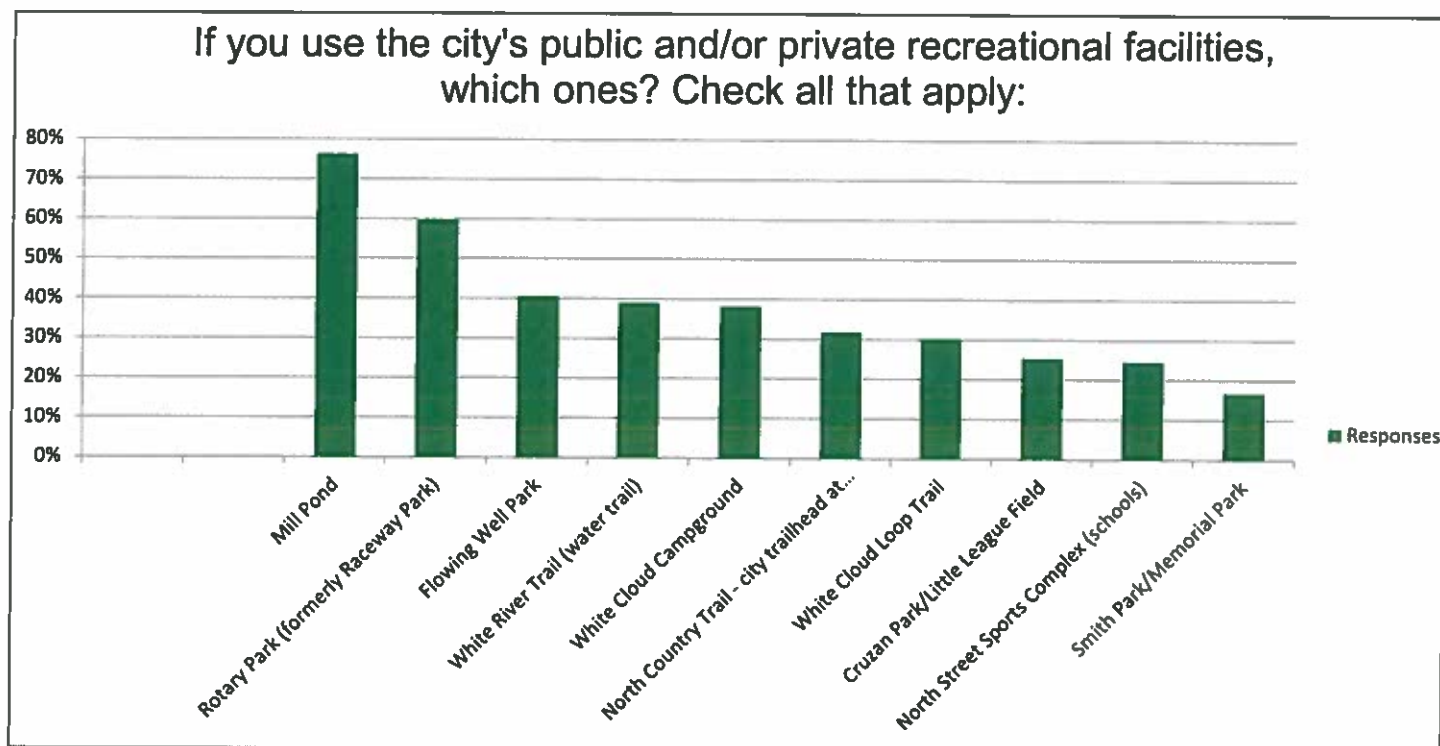
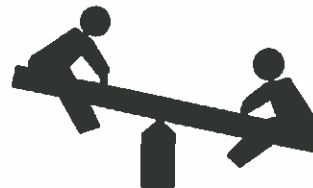
- Just over one half (55%) of the respondents indicated they lived within the city, indicating the facilities are utilized regionally by neighboring communities.
- Responses were split fairly even between the 30-39, 40-49, and 50-64 age brackets.



- Nearly 65% of the survey takers indicated they had children living in their household.
- Over half of the respondents indicated they use the parks on a regular basis, and those who don't indicated is because they don't know that recreation programs are available.
- Waterfront parks are the most frequently utilized

72%

of park users bring their children to the park with them



The top five activities parks are used for include:

1. Walking
2. Attending Special Events
3. Fishing
4. Boating/kayaking/paddling
5. Hiking

When asked to rank satisfactory level of all parks

Residents are most
satisfied with Rotary Park



Residents are least satisfied
with Mill Pond Park

Thirty percent of respondents belong to community organizations or recreational groups like the Special Olympics, AYSO, Little League Baseball, off-road vehicle (ORV) or snowmobile clubs, Boomerang and other community organizations.

Goals & Objectives



Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives formulated by the City are the basis for the recreation planning process and form the framework for decision-making regarding recreational facilities and programs in the City. The purpose of the Recreation Plan is to pursue long-range recreational goals through specific short-range action strategies.

The following goals and objectives were adopted with the 2012 Recreation Plan and found, through the planning process, to continue to be relevant. The goals are based on the findings of the inventory and service areas analysis and have been correlated with the goals of the City's Master Plan.

The recreation goals and objectives are not prioritized. The yearly Action Program that follows will detail the specific actions necessary to achieve those goals that are short-range in nature.

WHAT ARE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES?

- Goals are general guidelines that explain what the community wants to achieve. Goals are usually long-term and represent global visions such as "protect the City's natural resources." Goals define the "what" but not the "how." Goals are established in the Master Plan Use Plan.
- Objectives identify the milestones that mark progress in achieving goals – more of the "how." For example, the goal of "protect the City's natural resources" could be measured in terms of "Maintain the City's tree cover." Objectives are plan-specific and are included here.
- Action items are more specific and define the steps to accomplish objectives and attain the identified goals – these could be considered the "who" and "when." The most effective action strategies will include who will tackle that task and when it should be accomplished.

Goals and Objectives

The City's 2010 Master Plan included a future vision for the community that is useful in guiding recreation planning.

Future Vision

In the years ahead, White Cloud continues to be successful in fostering a strong sense of community through maintaining its small town character. The historic fabric of existing structures is preserved. New development meshes well with the City's small town urban character, rather than inappropriately imposing suburban features on the landscape. Because growth and redevelopment is thoughtfully considered and each development meets City site and building design standards, a level of quality emerges that keeps neighborhood and business areas attractive and healthy for decades to come.

Water resources and non-motorized trails are an important tie among neighborhoods and the downtown. City residents from across the community are able to safely travel from their homes on a sidewalk and trail system into the downtown by bicycle or on foot.

Community amenities like benches, lovely landscaping, and other design features are strategically set throughout the City. This eye for attractive details promotes a high level of community interaction.

Strong single-family neighborhoods and proud institutions underpin the community's pride. Homes are affordable and local institutions are accessible. The housing stock is strong, and well-maintained. A healthy cross-section of young adults, senior citizens, and maturing families live in appreciation of one another. Community ties are strong and people work together to make and keep the City a special place.

Additional higher density residential development is located above main street shops and immediately adjacent to the downtown to promote easy access to community services in the downtown.

Commercial development is limited to small portions of the M-37 corridor and the downtown, with the two districts having purposefully distinct characters. The general commercial district is restricted to M-37 between city hall and the northern City limits which encompasses heavy commercial uses including fast food, gas stations, and convenience shopping for the traveling public. Even though business establishments may be national chains, they respect the character of White Cloud as a small town destination, meeting design criteria for the community.

Although M-37 is a travel route to the north, its design and character will provide features that calm traffic and invite a stop to relax and refresh.

The downtown district provides a niche for specialty tourist business that is also supported by the seasonal and year-round population, promoting a leisurely and unique pedestrian shopping experience. A vibrant and attractive downtown becomes the backdrop for several local events, which foster neighborly interaction.

Goals and Objectives

In addition to the vision provided above, the Master Plan also included several goals and associated objectives that are relevant to guiding recreation planning. These are provided on the following pages. The Action Plan will follow and represent strategies that can be undertaken in the next five years to advance these goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Promote a strong, diverse economy in line with the nature of the community.

OBJECTIVES

1.	More heavily market White Cloud in the Big Rapids, Muskegon and Grand Rapids metro areas as a great day trip or weekend get-away, particularly around special events.
2.	Market the area to kayakers who can more easily travel the White River than canoeists.
3.	More fully utilize the public space on Mill Pond as a "rest stop" for travelers or setting for special events.
4.	Collaborate with key recreational facilities to offer events, services and amenities that enhance visitor's stay (e.g. various resorts and campgrounds).
5.	Consider an overlay zone on a portion of the White River on a limited basis to promote dependent, recreational business.
6.	Work with other small cities/villages to promote a "Sister Town Jaunt" program where tourists are given scenic routes to drive to each community and experience their unique spots. The City of Newaygo is about 10 miles south, and the Village of Hesperia is about 16 miles west and Baldwin is about 30 miles north. Each of these communities could benefit from such a program.
7.	Develop a historic interpretive trail around the city and link this with other historic sites. Preferably the tour should conclude in White Cloud so visitors linger in town and patronize shops.
8.	Continue community events and work to more widely promote them with weekend lodging packages, or event specials in local stores.
9.	Encourage the Chamber to develop an email list of visitors who routinely get information on special community events.
10.	Devise a city map highlighting points of interest in town and in close proximity to town.
11.	Explore, with state and county officials, opportunities to promote meaningful alternative energy.
12.	Develop a business retention program that includes annual visits to local industries to discuss topics of mutual concern.
13.	Identify key specialty businesses that can reasonably be recruited to the downtown.
14.	Consider redeveloping of vacant, obsolete properties on M-37 for a small scale Inn with an upscale restaurant.
15.	Develop a formal and inviting entranceway to Wilcox Avenue to invite travelers to turn west and explore unique local color.
16.	Develop informational kiosks and station them in strategic locations within the City.

Goal: Continue building a vibrant downtown that serves as a hub of community activity, providing a unique and beautiful backdrop for area events, social interaction, and commerce.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Work with the schools and/or jail and consider using a greenhouse to propagate flowers and vegetable plants for community gardens.
2.	Start a community nursery program to propagate street trees. The school campus has ample area to rear nursery trees.
3.	Use public facilities like the library and County grounds to host art fairs, community garage sales, craft lessons, road rallies, scavenger hunts and various other events to generate downtown activity.

Goal: Showcase a park and trail system that is laced through the community and recognized as a gem of the City.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Develop way-finding signs to direct people to points of interest, including trails, parks and public institutions, especially the Mill Pond.
2.	Developing a strong trail and sidewalk system to connect schools and parks with neighborhoods, the campground and the downtown.
3.	Mark "neighborhood walks" in designated areas to promote community walking.
4.	Expand use of interpretive plaques throughout the community to tell the story of White Cloud. Plaques could be placed throughout the business district, along trails, and even in neighborhoods or at the school campus.
5.	Develop more facilities in existing parks to increase activity within them, and to the extent possible, tie the activities to downtown businesses promotions.
6.	Improve signage for visitor using regional amenities, such as the snowmobile and ORV trails.

Goal: Protect natural resources within the City and enhance its natural setting.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Maintain close contact with the White River Watershed Partnership (www.wrwp.org) who can provide technical assistance and potentially, collaboration for grants to enhance and protect the White River area.
2.	Use on-site, low impact storm water management techniques like rain gardens and sunken landscape islands rather than sending storm water as a direct discharge into the White River.
3.	Promote regional detention as a means to reduce storm water system inputs into the White River
4.	Consider developing a storm water management ordinance.
5.	Work with the Soil Conservation District to augment wildlife habitat areas with native species, e.g., in parks and along the river.
6.	Continue to promote and use the county recycling program.
7.	Maintain close contact with the White River Watershed Partnership (www.wrwp.org) who can provide technical assistance and potentially, collaboration for grants to enhance and protect the White River area
8.	Partner with agencies such as Trout Unlimited and Michigan DNR Fisheries Division Staff to enhance the White River Watershed Partnership.

Goal: Encourage City Government and City residents to become a “green” community by participating in recycling and environmental programs.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Encourage all new development, both public and private, to be constructed in a sustainable and environmentally-sensitive manner.
2.	Develop a well marked non-motorized trail network through the community which may or may not include existing sidewalks. The trails should include way finding signs and other special markings to distinguish them from neighborhood routes.
3.	Continue to work with the school district to enhance and maintain the White River campground as a natural area.

Action Plan

The City's long range plan for recreational facilities and programs is based on the goals and objectives developed during the planning process. The Action Program describes what the City hopes to achieve in the near future. The City has identified the following main priorities for the next five years as well as other long-range priorities that require research and preparation in the next five years:

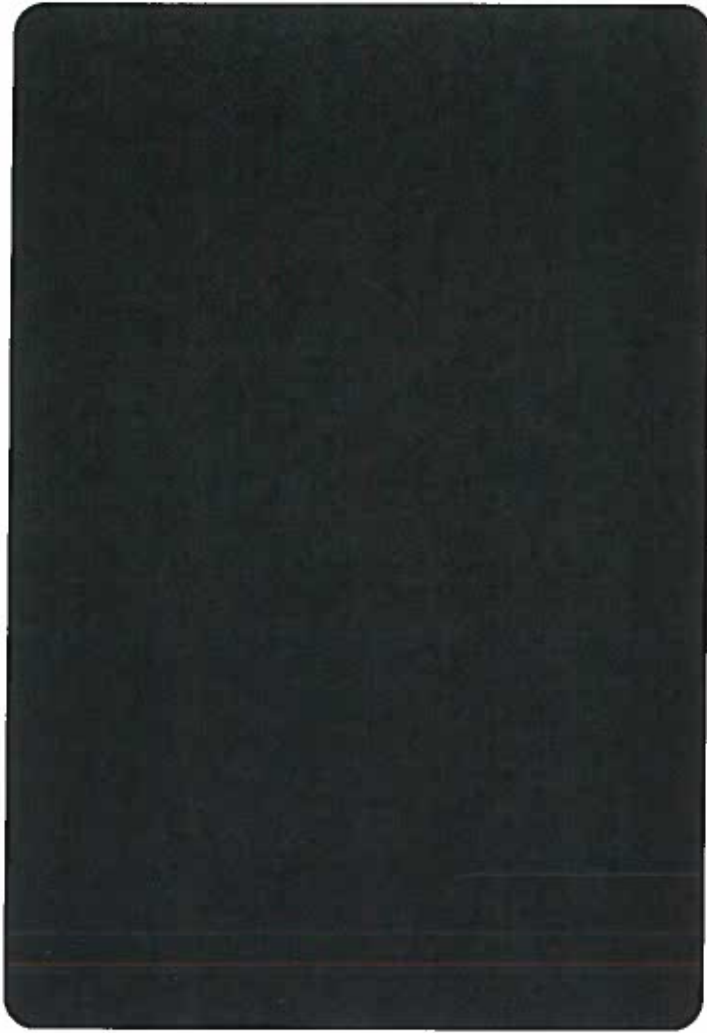
Proposed Park Improvement	Estimated Cost	Priority Status Year
GENERAL PARK SYSTEM NEEDS		
Develop Maintenance Plan: More frequent mowing, trimming, flowers, and trash pickup		High
Develop staffing plan for programming, supervision (i.e., lifeguard, ranger) and park maintenance		High
Hire additional staff per staffing plan		High
Purchase maintenance equipment – Lawn Mower, weed wacker, edger etc; add waste receptacles as needed		High
Work with schools and other regional partners to add/refine programming for kids and adults (including Kayak lessons, Trail Challenge, Photography, Nature Hikes and etc.)		Medium
Add security cameras		Medium
Develop marketing plan for city and its parks: "Love where we Live!!!"		Medium
Work with regional/statewide organizations on specific events related to local recreation, such as Trail Runs (like Community Challenge and other organized races)		Medium
Create signage/wayfinding plan for park system		Medium
Develop plan for installing electricity at parks that currently do not have it		Medium
Develop a landscape and tree planting plan for all parks		Medium
FLOWING WELLS PARK		
Create plan for additional furnishing/improvements		Medium
Add furnishings to park, including picnic tables, signage, lighting and fire feature (such as fire pit), gazebo, fencing and parking lot		Medium
ROTARY PARK		
Add playground equipment, fire feature, signage and lighting		Medium
Add to walking path		Medium
Develop bridge to island		Medium
Add restrooms		Medium
SMITH PARK		
Create plan to update park		High
Redevelop skate park		High
Update basketball court		High
Develop performance stage with sound, concession stand, fire feature and pavilion		Medium
Add lights (including lights over ice rink/skate park)		Medium
Add exercise area		Medium
Add picnic tables		Medium

Proposed Park Improvement	Estimated Cost	Priority Status Year
MILL POND		
Update existing dock and add dock by boat launch		Medium
Update beach area by adding sand, swim markers and bars across the dam		Medium
Update playground equipment		Medium
Add drinking fountain		Medium
Create plan to develop east side of park		Low
NORTH STREET SPORT COMPLEX		
Work with schools to ensure safety and ongoing maintenance of facilities		High
WHITE CLOUD CAMPGROUND		
Add cabins w/ bathrooms		Medium
Add signage for Trail Head and Kayak Launch		Medium
Develop an Information Center with kayak rental		Medium
Add lighting		Medium
Add Fire Feature		Medium
Develop an ORV Staging Area		Medium
Explore the addition of a pool for the campground		Low
OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANS		
Develop River Property on Pine Hill (parking lot, kayak launch, restrooms and picnic area)		Medium
Work with Rails to Trails on White Cloud to Freemont trail		High

Appendix

Appendix Table of Contents

- A. Resolution of Adoption by City Council
- B. Notice of public hearing
- C. Notice of public review period posted to City website with full copy of draft 2021-2025 Plan
- D. City Council, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting minutes (public hearing and adoption)
- E. Press Release announcing availability of survey and Public Input Workshop
- F. Transmittal of adopted plan to Newaygo County
- G. Transmittal of adopted plan to SEMCOG
- H. Survey results
- I. Public Hearing Comment Summary
- J. DNR Post-Completion Certification Reports



Title of Project
Center Project Name within this Space

INSERT
CLIENT LOGO

PREPARED FOR:

NAME OF CLIENT
Client Address

Date 2019



City of White Cloud

Recreation Plan: 2021-2025

FINAL DRAFT

PREPARED FOR:

The City of White Cloud
December 2020

Acknowledgments

City Council Members

Jamie Denslow, Mayor
Herm Becker, Mayor Pro-Tem
Candice Dault
Jeffrey Murchison
Kay Scott
Lori Shears
Ashley Zatalokin

City of White Cloud Office Staff

Jamie Denslow, Mayor
Yvonne Ridge, City Manager
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April Storms, Treasurer

City of White Cloud Parks and Recreation Committee

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Planning Consultants

Giffels Webster
www.giffelswebster.com

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Recreation Inventory
Recreation Needs Analysis
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Introduction



Introduction

Purpose of Plan

The 2021-2025 White Cloud Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide for future land use and programming decisions related to recreation assets and programming. This plan was prepared by the City of White Cloud to:

- Provide an updated inventory of existing facilities, programs and resources
- Gain community input on the strengths and opportunities within the parks and recreation system
- Create a framework for future recreational resource investment and development
- Develop goals and objectives to meet the needs of the community
- Identify a plan of action to meet the recreational and open space needs of the community
- Establish eligibility to apply for Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Grants

Legal Basis

This plan is enabled by Michigan Law, but does not carry the power of statutory law or ordinance. Its principles are derived from Public Act 156 of 1917, which authorizes Townships and Cities to operate and maintain systems of public recreation and playgrounds. A copy of this act is included in the appendix of this document.

Community Profile



Community Profile

The City of White Cloud is located on the west side of Michigan in central Newaygo County, and is encompassed by four surrounding Townships; Everett Township, Lincoln Township, Sherman Township, and Wilcox Township.

- Everett Township does not currently own or operate any park or recreation facilities within the township and subsequently does not have an advisory committee or parks and recreation staff. The Everett Township Supervisor was included on the White Cloud Parks and Recreation advisory committee as a liaison for the community.
- Lincoln Township recreational and maintenance decisions are made by the Lincoln Township Board. The township employs one part-time seasonal employee who reports to the Township Board.
- Sherman Township recreational and maintenance decisions are made by the Sherman Township Board. The Township employs one part-time employee who reports directly to the Township Board.
- Wilcox Township does not currently own or operate any park or recreation facilities within the township and subsequently does not have an advisory committee or parks and recreation staff.

Travel Time

The City of White Cloud is accessible from many of the regions large metro areas. It is about 45 miles, or an hour drive, north of Grand Rapids and about a four hour drive from both Chicago and Detroit. The Regional Drive Time Map (Map 2) on page 9 illustrates the accessibility of the region.

REGIONAL PLANNING

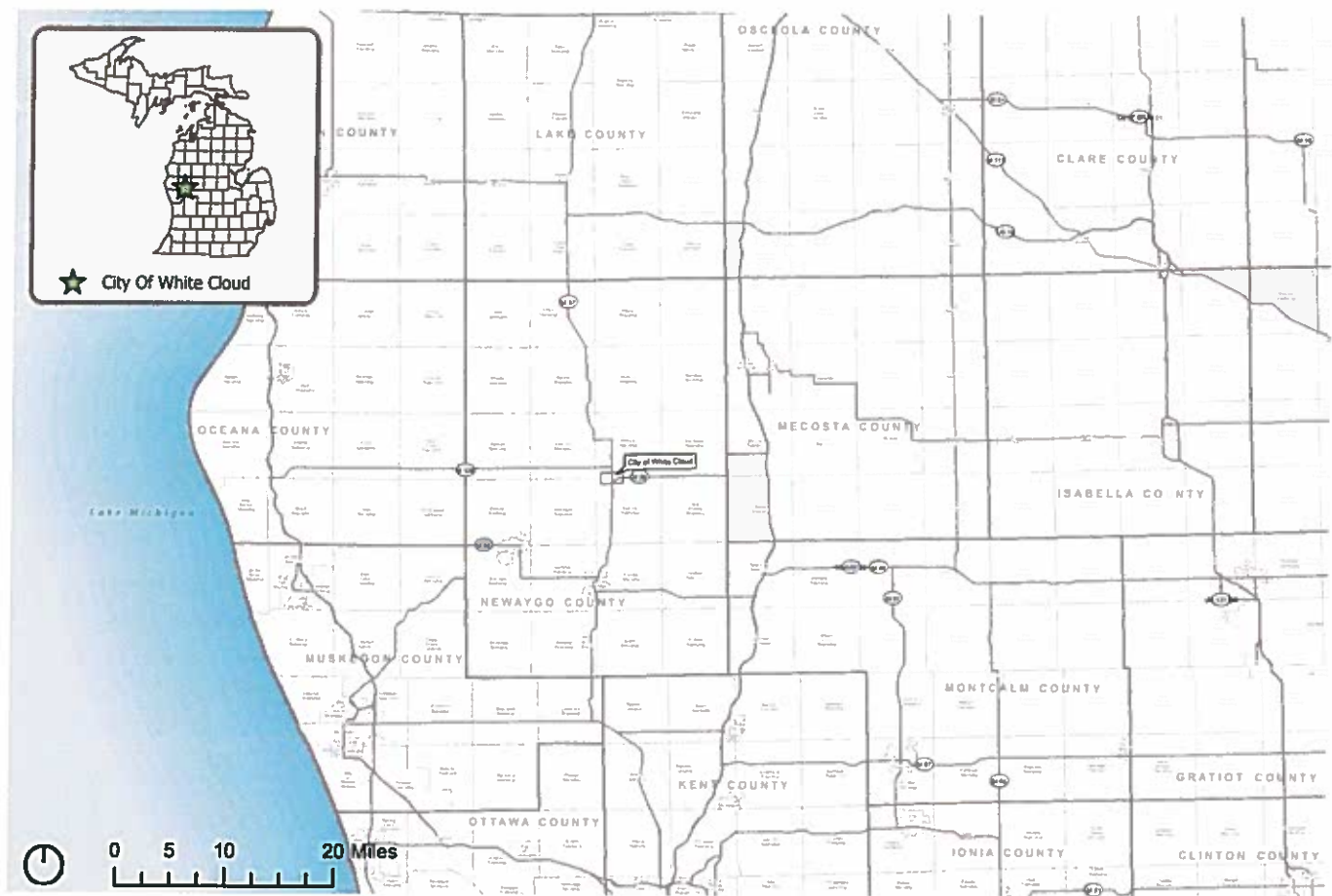
The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties. The agency provides programs and resources pertaining to a range of environmental, transportation and hazard mitigation efforts along the western shoreline of Michigan.

"Our mission is to promote and foster regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments."

-West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Community Profile

MAP 1: REGIONAL LOCATION



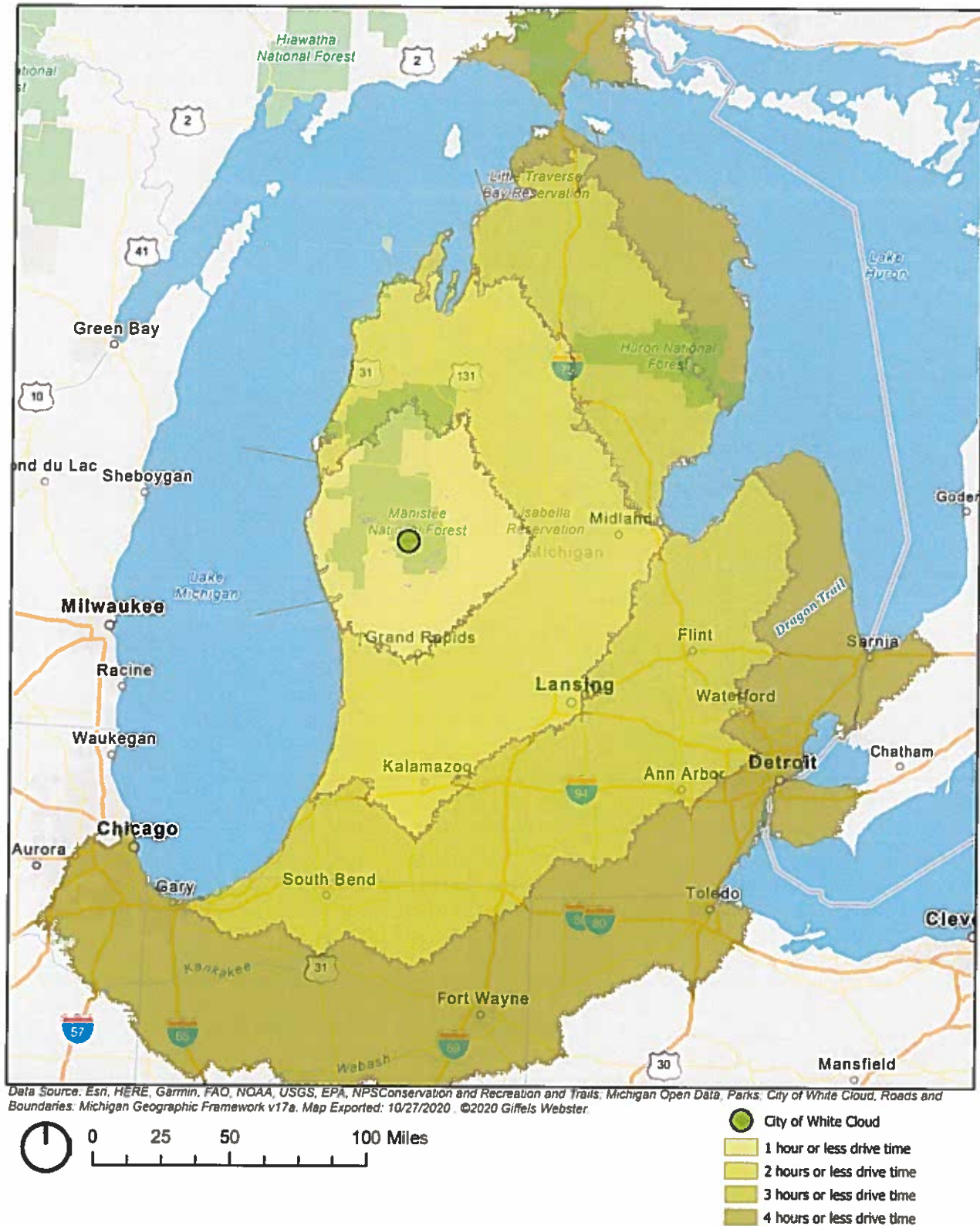
Demographics

The City of White Cloud has seen very little population change since the last recreation plan in 2012. The City, surrounding communities and Newaygo County all have similar projected population declines on less than 1% over the next 25 years.

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTION 1990 - 2045

	1990	2000	2010	2017	2020	2045	Change 2020 to 2045
Newaygo County	38,202	47,874	48,460	48,242	48,230	48,126	-0.22%
City of White Cloud	1,147	1,420	1,408	1,381	1,381	1,378	-0.22%
Everett Twp.	1,519	1,985	1,862	1,831	1,831	1,827	-0.22%
Wilcox Twp.	831	1,145	1,098	1,095	1,095	1,092	-0.27%
Sherman Twp.	1,866	2,159	2,109	2,097	2,096	2,092	-0.19%
Lincoln Twp.	969	1,338	1,275	1,250	1,250	1,247	-0.24%

MAP 2: REGIONAL DRIVE TIME



Administrative Structure

Administrative Structure

Budget

The City of White Cloud has several sources that generate funds for recreational planning, programming and maintenance. The sources include the city's general fund, donations from the city's swimming instruction program, pavilion rental and other private donations.

TABLE 2: PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET: 2020-2022	
Category	2020-2021
Salaries and Wages	\$4,013
Employee Benefits and Insurance	\$2,599
North Street Recreation Complex/ Operation and Maintenance	\$3,300
Swimming Program	\$800
White Cloud Community Picnic	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$12,712

Administrative Structure

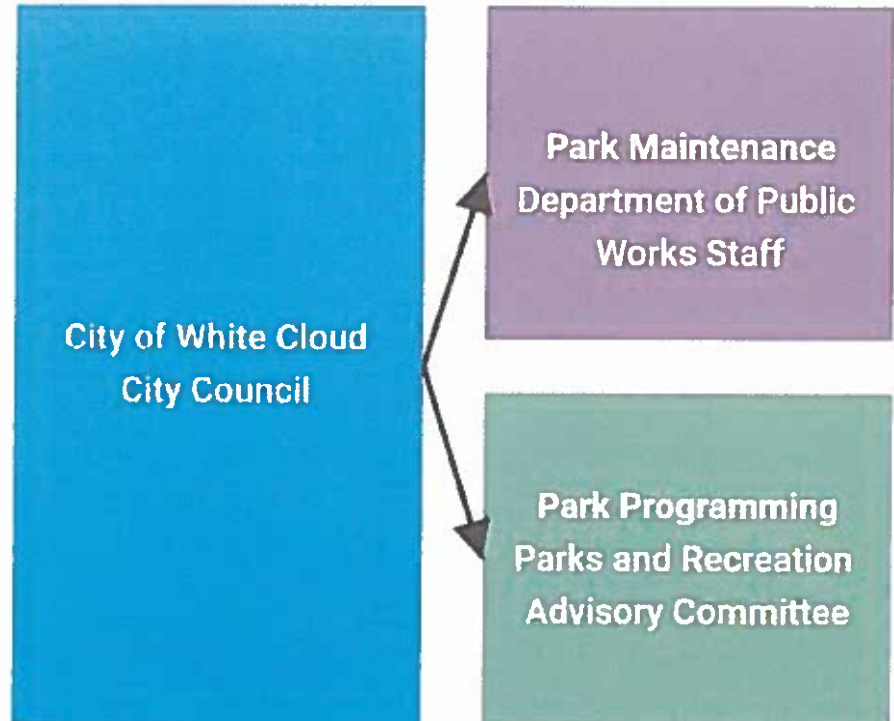
The City of White Cloud has a seven member Parks and Recreation Committee.

Role of Volunteers

Seven members sit on the volunteer Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, with representation from various organizations and roles within the region.

White Cloud Public Schools

The City of White Cloud and the White Cloud Public school system share facilities like the sports field on Wilcox Avenue and the fields at North Street Sports Complex.



Recreation Inventory



Recreation Inventory

The City of White Cloud provides a wide variety of recreation facilities, ensuring that residents and visitors of varying ages and abilities are able to access recreational opportunities. The City's neighborhood play fields draw users from a wider geographic area, and fulfill the recreational needs of both children and adults. Community-wide parks serve the community at large and offer a greater range of activities and facilities, such as hiking, snowmobiling or kayaking (water) trails, ball fields, and playgrounds. Additional recreational facilities are offered at the City's public schools and through partnerships.

The City of White Cloud's parks and recreational facilities are shown in Map 3 on the following page, and a full inventory can be found on the following pages.

The inventory describes the recreational facilities available within the City and throughout the region; future facilities, such as the 19.5 acres of

property on Pine Hill, are included in the action plan. The chapter also includes an analysis of the barrier-free compliance status of the City's parks, outlining how each park could be modified to better accommodate the needs of physically-challenged visitors. Tables 3 illustrates the inventory and accessibility rating for each park.

In addition to local facilities, White Cloud is served by a wide array of school and regional recreation assets, including MDNR snowmobile and hiking trailheads. Table 2 describes the school, regional, state and federal facilities within and surrounding White Cloud.

Newaygo County Parks System includes a marina and five county parks with day use and modern campground facilities. The county is also surrounded by the World Class Muskegon River, North Country National Scenic Trail, 4,000 acre Hardy Pond and the 538,000 acre Manistee National Forest.



Newly installed docks at Mill Pond Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

Barrier Free Analysis

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing barrier-free access to accommodate the needs of both physically and mentally challenged visitors. Barrier-free access includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that adequate barrier-free parking spaces, sidewalks, trails, picnic tables, and playground equipment are provided for renovated or new recreational facilities. Standards from the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) were used to assess barrier-free compliance.

The DNR guidelines require that a barrier-free ranking be given to each facility for assessing its accessibility to persons with disabilities. The assessment considers the accessibility of both the facilities themselves as well as the access routes to them. The following system, provided by the DNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (02/05/09), was used to assess each city park. Refer to Table 3, White Cloud Park & Recreation Facilities Inventory for the City's accessibility ranking of each of the seven parks in the White Cloud system.

DNR ACCESSIBILITY RANKING SYSTEM

Rank 1: None of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 2: Some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 3: Most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

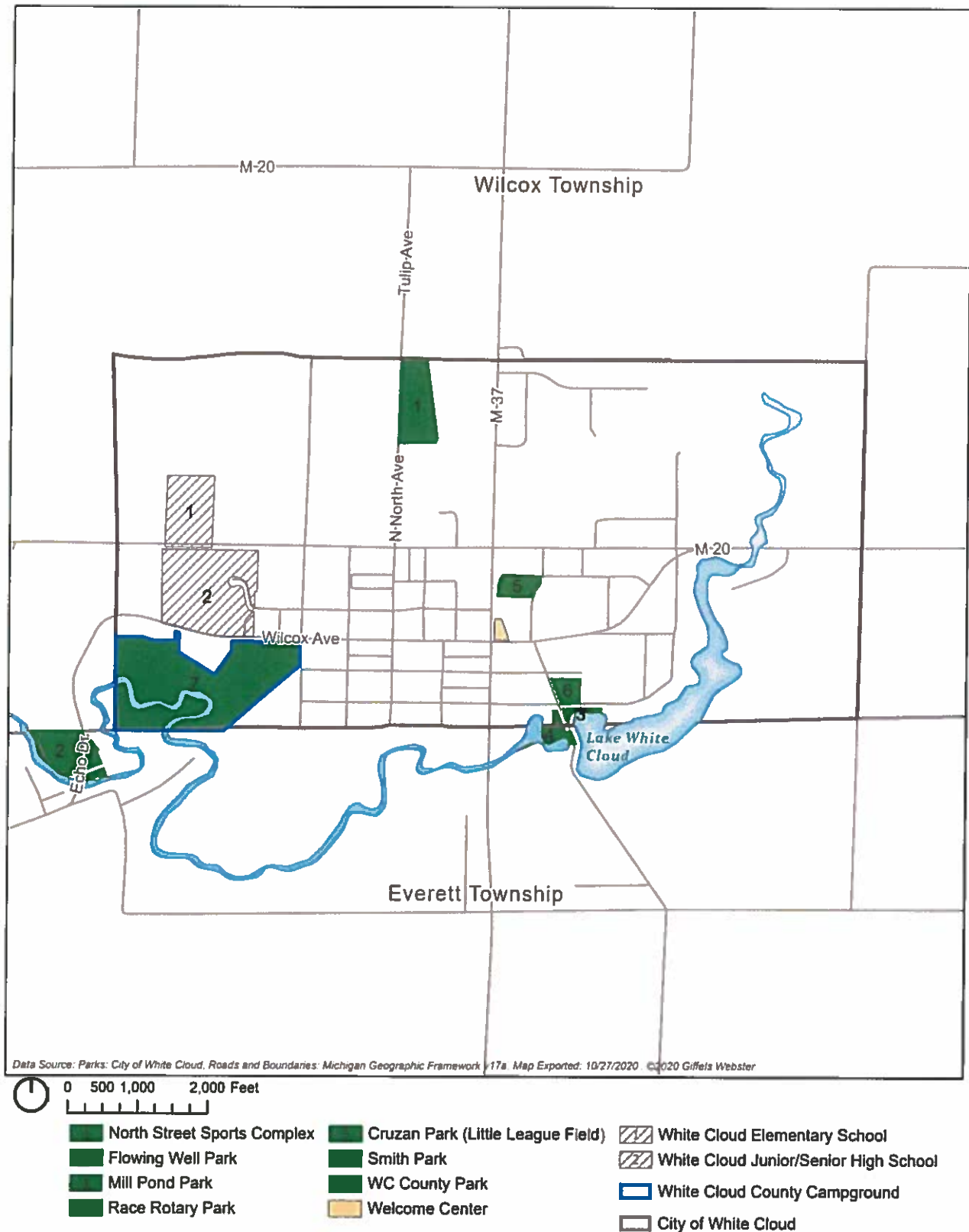
Rank 4: Entire park meets accessibility guidelines.

Rank 5: Entire park was developed/renovated using principals of universal design.

TABLE 3
CITY OF WHITE CLOUD PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Facility	Acres	Park Type	Amenities	Updates Since Previous Recreation Plan	Needed Improvements	Accessibility Ranking
Smith Park	acres	Mini	Basketball court, bathroom, skate park, large open field and parking lot	Added GaGa Ball Pit, Ice rink		2
White Cloud Rotary Park	acres	Mini	Picnic pavilion, picnic tables, paved walking paths along the river and a playground	Kayak launch installed, Walking path		2
Mill Pond Park	4 acres	Mini	Playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, ADA dock and beach for swimming and swim lessons	Installed docks		
Flowing Wells Park	6.7 acres	Neighborhood	Picnic tables, parking, trail connection	Kayak launch installed		1
White Cloud Campground (County Park)	89 acres	Natural Resource Area	100 campsites, playground area, picnic pavilion and gathering lodge with restroom, White Cloud Campground Connector Trailhead	Kayak launch installed		1
North Street Sports Complex	5.6 acres	Neighborhood	Two lighted softball fields, football practice field (owned by city), concession stand, fenced-in play area, restrooms, shelter buildings and gravel parking lot	Trail Town Designation, North County Trail Loop		2
Cruzan Park - Little League Field (privately owned)	4.5 acres	Neighborhood	Two fenced ballfields, concession stand, storage building			1
White Cloud Schools	-	School	Football field and running track	Track has been resurfaced		N/A

MAP 3: LOCAL PARKS AND SCHOOLS



Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

White Cloud Rotary [Raceway] Park

This 3.5 acre park is located at the southwest corner of James Street and State Street, directly adjacent to Lake White Cloud where it meets Mill Pond Park at the banks of Lake White Cloud. This community park, equipped with a picnic pavilion, picnic tables, playground and paved walking paths along the river, serves as a popular gathering place for family reunions, weddings and other get-togethers. The park includes a kayak launch and fishing areas. This park is partially located within Everett Twp.

Mill Pond Park

Located on the southeast corner of the James Street and State Street intersection, Mill Pond Park provides playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, and beach for swimming and swim lessons. An ADA dock provides access to Lake White Cloud along the White River. This park is a popular destination for residents and visitors in the summer who are looking for swimming, fishing and kayaking opportunities.



Pavilion at Rotary Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Smith Park

Located on the northeast corner of the James Street and State Street intersection, Smith Park offers a basketball court, bathroom, skate park, large open field and parking lot.

MAP 4: STATE STREET AND JAMES STREET PARKS



Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

Flowing Well Park

This 6.7 acre park is located partially in Everett Twp., along the northern banks of the White River in the southwest portion of the city. This park is conveniently placed along both the White River and the White Cloud Campground Connector Trail, which provides direct connection to the North Country Trail for hikers. Lower Peninsula Trail 3 (LP 3), a snowmobiling trail (open seasonally) runs along the north and west side of Echo Dr, traversing through Flowing Well Park. The park includes a picnic table and kayak launch.

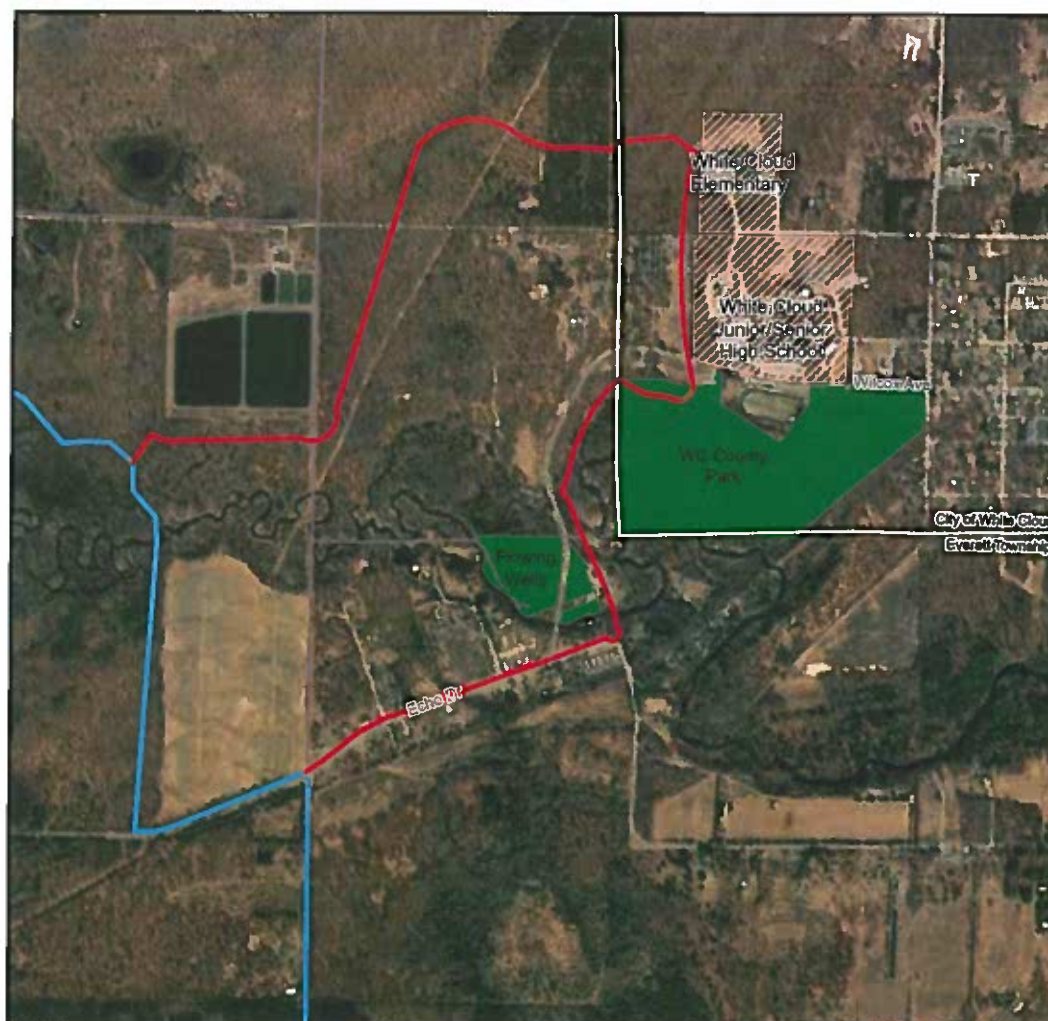


Flowing Well Park fountain and sitting area
Source: Giffels Webster

White Cloud County Campground

This 80+ acre park offers 90 campsites, (electric/water and rustic) and 1 camping cabin on the shores of the White River, with a half mile of scenic river frontage, and connects to the North Country Trail via the White Cloud Campground Connector trail.

MAP 5: WHITE CLOUD CAMPGROUND CONNECTOR TRAIL



White Cloud Campground Connector Trail Map

CITY OF WHITE CLOUD

— North Country Trail
— White Cloud Campground Connector Trail

0 1,000 Feet

giffels
webster

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud Park Facilities

North Street Sports Complex

This 5-acre park adjacent to the airport is owned by the City, although it is maintained and used by the local school. The site has two lighted softball fields, a football practice field, concession stand, fenced in play area, restrooms, shelter buildings and gravel parking lot.



North Street Sports Complex
Source: Giffels Webster



North Street Sports Complex Dugout
Source: Giffels Webster

MAP 6: NORTH STREET SPORTS COMPLEX



Cruzan Park - Little League Field

This 4.5 acre park has two fenced ballfields, a concession stand and storage building. The property is owned by the City and the fields are maintained by the Little League Association, at no cost to the city.



Little League Field
Source: Google

Recreation Inventory: City of White Cloud School Facilities

White Cloud Public Schools

The White Cloud Public School system has two schools located within the city; Elementary School and White Cloud High School. Both are located on the city's west side, just north of the White Cloud County Campground. The school's football facilities are located on the south side of Wilcox Ave, adjacent to the campground. This field, used for soccer and football, is owned by the city but operated, maintained and primarily used by the high school and local soccer clubs.



The sports field on Wilcox Avenue, which is used for school and city activities
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Inventory: Regional and State Park Facilities

TABLE 4
INVENTORY OF SCHOOL REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PARKS & AMENITIES

WHITE CLOUD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary School	The White Cloud Elementary and High Schools shares recreation resources by utilizing the sports field on Wilcox Avenue, which is owned by the city but operated and used by the schools.
High School	

NEWAYGO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Sandy Beach Park	On the backwaters of Hardy Dam, this park overlooks stunning water views. This park offers 176 campsites, 26 of which are full hook-up, and 11 camping cabins. A three-lane modern boat launch and dock rentals are available. Additionally, this park features a sandy swimming beach, picnic area, play areas, and a group camping site. A pavilion is available for reservation.
Ed H. Henning County Park	Located on the world-class Muskegon River, known for excellent Salmon and Trout fishing. This park offers 60 campsites (Electric and Rustic), and 2 camping cabins. Additionally, this park features picnic areas, free covered pavilion, swimming beach, baseball diamonds, play areas, volleyball court, tennis/pickle ball courts, soccer fields, and a group camping. A boat launch is available all year round.
Diamond Lake County Park	On the sparkling waters of Diamond Lake, and adjacent to the Manistee National Forest, visitors are treated to a natural woodland setting. This park offers 60 campsites, 24 of which are full hook-up, and 2 camping cabins. Additionally, this park features a swimming beach, volleyball net, play areas, horseshoe pits, hiking trails, a picnic area, and a group camping area. An enclosed shelter is available for campers to use free of charge.
White Cloud County Park	See White Cloud Campground County Park (Table 2)
Pettibone Lake County Park	On the sandy shores of Pettibone Lake in Northern Newaygo County, approximately 4 miles north and east of Bitely. This small 3-acre day park has a picnic shelter, picnic areas, and a boat launch.
Hardy Dam County Marina	Nestled in a protective cove next to the Hardy Dam, the marina offers access to 17 miles of open waterway, with miles of undeveloped shoreline. The marina currently offers 35 boat slips with daily and seasonal slips available. It also houses one of the best daily boat launches on Hardy Pond. The marina also offers potable water, vault restrooms, and a pump-out service.
John Graves Lodge	The historic John Graves Lodge overlooking Little Placid Lake is available for group rentals. The lodge is a partnership between Newaygo County Parks and the Newaygo Community Recreation Authority. It is located behind the Newaygo County Park and Recreation Department Administrative Offices/Newaygo County Welcome Center at 4684 Evergreen Drive (M-37), just 3.5 miles north of Newaygo. The lodge features wood-clad walls, open beam ceilings, accessible restrooms and has a maximum occupancy of 80 people.

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Huron Manistee National Forest	Lying between the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, is the nearly one-million-acre Huron-Manistee National Forests.
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Recreation Inventory: State and Federal Park Facilities

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)
INVENTORY OF SCHOOL REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PARKS & AMENITIES

MOTORIZED VEHICLE TRAILS	
SNOWMOBILE: LP 3 Trail	
Parking LP3 1	Unimproved Trail West of the End of Ferris Ave
Parking LP3	Located adjacent to the Newaygo County Sport Park in Everett Twp., this staging area is located on the west side of Evergreen Drive, north of intersection with Lake Shore Blvd
ORV	
M-20 to Big-O MCCCT	This 16 Mile ORV tail loop is accessed from W. 1 Mile Road, located west of the limits. The ORV portion of the trail loops just north of 6 Mile Rd. The motorcycle trail can be taken further north to Baldwin or Branch Twp.
Whiter Cloud Loop Trail	

Snowmobile Trails

The Michigan DNR oversees nearly 6,500 miles of snowmobile trails throughout the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan. The trails are open from December 1 to March 31 and provide a unique opportunity to explore the state's natural setting along miles of back-road and roadside trails. Newaygo County is very snowmobile-friendly, hosting large groups from throughout the region and beyond who come for the outstanding trails. Snowmobiling routes are abundant throughout the county, including the White Cloud Trail, which embarks from the Newaygo County Sports Complex and winds its way north to the county passing along the western boundary of White Cloud. During snowmobiling season, the trails in the area are groomed up to 4 times and week.



White Cloud and its many parks lie within the Huron Manistee National Forest

Source: Giffels Webster

and snowmobiling hub, with over 600 miles of snowmobile trails regularly groomed and maintained for travel.

Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails

The State of Michigan regulates three designated types of trails, including motorcycle-only trails (24" width), ORV trails (50" width) and ORV routes (72" width or greater). Newaygo County is a popular destination for ORV enthusiasts, as the county's ORV ordinance allows these vehicles on most roads.

Huron Manistee National Forest

The Huron Manistee National Forest includes nearly one million acres of forest located between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in Michigan's lower peninsula. The area offers abundant recreational opportunities that include hiking, hunting, nature viewing, camping, paddling and off road adventuring. In the winter, the area is a popular snowshoeing, cross country skiing

Newaygo State Park

Newaygo State Park is a 99-site rustic campground, which sits atop 20-foot embankments overlooking the Hardy Dam Pond, a six-mile flooding of the Muskegon River. The park caters primarily to campers, anglers and recreational boaters. There are several picnic sites overlooking the reservoir for day users. The campground is nestled in oak and poplar forests and is noted for its large, private sites and scenic beauty. Anglers interested in the Great Lakes species can also fish for trout and salmon downstream in the popular Croton Dam area, just 15 minutes south of the park.

Recreation Inventory: Regional Trail Facilities

White Cloud Campground Connector Trail

The Campground Connector Trail is a 4.3-mile loop that provides a connection for local hikers from the campground through Forest Service lands where it connects with the North Country Trail. The connector returns to the campground, providing a route for hikers on the North Country Trail to access the campgrounds for overnight camping or longer stays so they can use the amenities or enjoy the easy walk to the local restaurants and businesses.

Dragon Trail

This new trail system was first envisioned in 2009 and after it gained funding traction in 2015 the project was quickly designed and implemented. Work began on installing the first segments of the 47-mile trail loop in 2019 and were ready for visitors by the summer of 2020. The trail, when complete, will surround the Hardy Damn Pond and is anticipated to become a significant regional asset located just 8 miles southeast of White Cloud, about a 15-minute drive.



Entrance to White Cloud Campground connector trail

Source: Giffels Webster

Rail Trail: White Cloud to Fremont

Abandoned railroad lines and right-of-ways are excellent opportunities to acquire and install regional connector trails. An abandoned rail line connecting White Cloud to the City of Fremont, located 10 miles southwest of the city, has been/will be converted into a rail trail, providing a key non-motorized connection for the city and region.



Source: North Country Trail Association

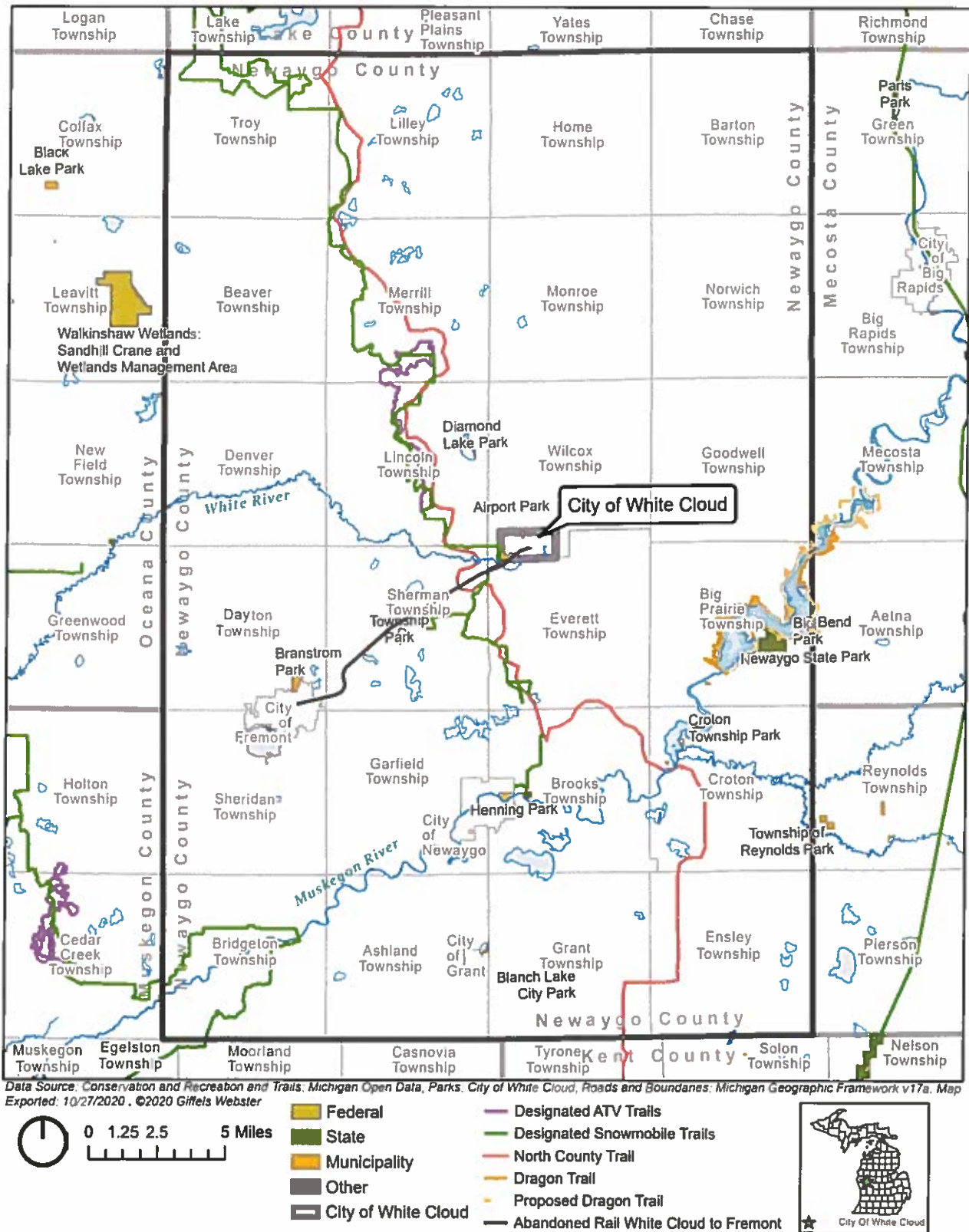
North Country Trail

The North Country National Scenic Trail is the longest in the National Trails System, stretching 4,600 miles across eight states from North Dakota to Vermont. The Trail traverses through more than 160 federal, state and local public lands, including 10 National Forests, four areas of the National Park Service, and over 100 state parks, forests and game areas.

White Cloud is located about an hour's drive north of Grand Rapids, and serves as a base for enjoying the NCT in Newaygo County and the lower Huron-Manistee Forest. White Cloud is about midpoint on the entire NCT, and was the location of the original headquarters for the NCT. In addition to a trailhead in the City of White Cloud, the NCT has access in nearby Everett, Sherman and Lincoln Townships.

Recreation Inventory: Regional Facilities

MAP 7: REGIONAL PARK FACILITIES



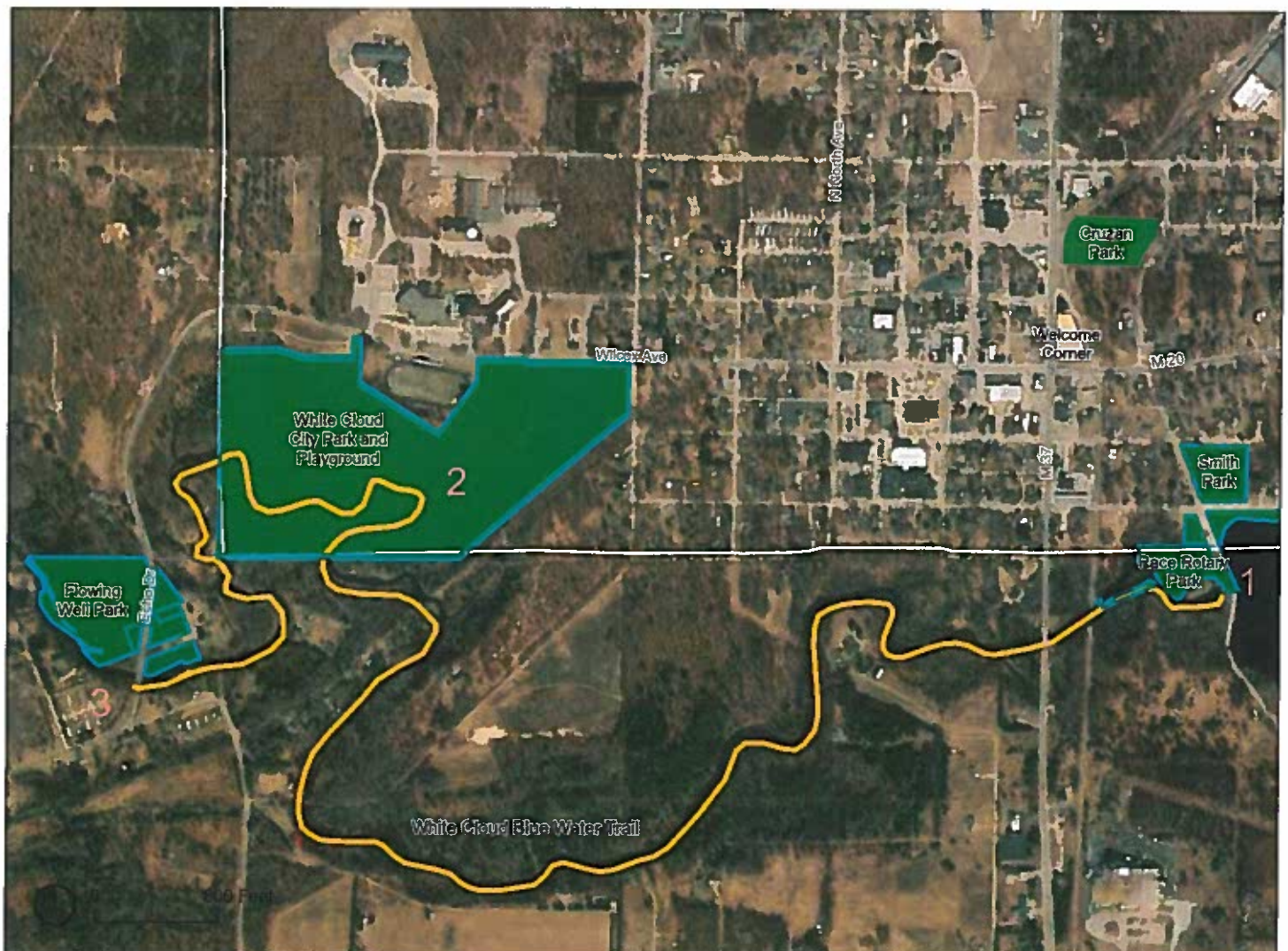
Recreation Inventory: White Cloud Water Trail Facilities

TABLE 5
INVENTORY OF WATERWAYS, DROP-IN AND TAKE-OUT LOCATIONS

WATERWAYS

White Cloud Blue Water Trail	The three mile White River Blue Water Trail paddle begins at Rotary Park and ends at Flowing Wells park. The trip downstream from Raceway Park to Flowing Wells Park usually takes about an hour to an hour and half depending on water flow. Paddlers may continue down stream to other take-out points at various road crossings or continue to Hesperia. There is signage at each road crossing and take out between White Cloud and Hesperia. Please see map for distances and paddle times.
Rotary Park Drop in	There is ample parking and restrooms at this park. The put in is located on the river and can be reached by walking about 100 yards down a well marked hard surface path.
White Cloud Campground	There is an intermediate take out located in the White Cloud Campground and Park on E Wilcox Ave. It is about half way along the paddle and there is an improved path about 100 yards long that leads to the Camp Ground. There is ample parking, camping, and bath facilities in the White Cloud Campground and Park.
Flowing Wells	The paddle ends at the take out in the Flowing Wells Park located at Herald Street and Echo Drive west of White Cloud. The take out is just past the iron snowmobile bridge on the right. There are no restrooms here and the parking is somewhat limited

MAP 8: WHITE CLOUD WATER TRAIL FACILITIES





Mill Pond Park
Source: Giffels Webster

Recreation Needs Analysis



Recreation Needs Analysis

To analyze the recreational needs of city residents and determine deficiencies within recreation programs, it is helpful to consider standards for recreation service areas, land needs based on future population, and the ultimate size and extent of recreation facilities and their location. These recreation planning standards are a useful tool in making an assessment of future recreation needs. Standards may be used effectively only as a means for comparing present conditions to what is thought to be suitable or desirable, and as a general guide toward estimating future needs and demands. To assess the facilities within White Cloud, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and National Recreation and Park Association standards were referenced.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA developed recommended standards and guidelines for recreation, parks and open space.

Department of Natural Resources The DNR includes a Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional recreation Open Space and Trails

The major types of community recreation facilities recommended by the above organizations include:

- **Playgrounds/Mini-Parks.** Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population, or specific groups such as small children or senior citizens. For example, suggested recreational amenities for an individual mini-park are a tot lot, two picnic tables and ½ acre open space.
- **Play field or Athletic Fields/Neighborhood Park.** Neighborhood parks should offer a variety of activities to accommodate a range of ages, physical abilities, and recreational interests.
- **Community Parks.** Community-wide parks include larger parks with diverse environmental quality. A variety of passive and active uses are provided, including athletic fields, sledding hills, trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds. In addition to parks, the DNR recognizes the important role of trails and pathways for non-motorized travel:
- **Connector Trails.** Connector trails would include a multi-use trail to give non-motorized access to parks and other uses throughout the city and connect to regional trails. Modes of travel include walking, biking, and in-line skating. These trails could be located in an independent right-of-way, such as along the utility corridors, or within the road rights-of-way.

Recreation Analysis: NRPA Annual Agency Review

Each year, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) surveys parks and recreation agencies across the US and shares this data to help communities benchmark their programs and facilities against similar-sized peers. The NRPA recognizes that applying standards and guidelines often prove challenging due to the variety of populations served and funding sources available. Table 6 that follows shows current benchmarks for certain park facilities based on populations under 20,000. The list illustrates the number of facilities that might be expected in White Cloud, based on its current and future population.

TABLE 6 2020 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMPARISON OF COMMUNITIES WITH POPULATIONS UNDER 20,000				
	Number of Residents per Facility: Population Range under 20,000	Benchmark Number of Facilities for 2020 White Cloud Population (1,381)	Benchmark Number of Facilities for Projected 2045 White Cloud Population (1,378)	Current Number of Facilities
Playgrounds	2,523	1	1	3
Basketball courts	4,090	1	1	1
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	3,396	1	1	2
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	5,072	1	1	0
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	4,683	1	1	1
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	5,691	1	1	2
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	7,804	1	1	0
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	3,294	1	1	1
Rectangular fields: football field	7,500	1	1	1
Multi-use courts -basketball, volleyball	7,866	1	1	0

Recreation Analysis: DNR Classifications

The DNR includes a Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional recreation Open Space and Trails (see Tables 7-8) for the development of recreation plans. On the pages that follow, these standards outline recommendations for developed recreation acreage and for the various types of recreation activities; however, it should be noted that these standards are guidelines and the city should consider other recreation opportunities within the area as well as the ability to maintain community facilities. These standards are compared with the recreation opportunities provided by the city in the table and map on the following pages.

**TABLE 7
RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL
RECREATION OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS**

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Acres / 1,000 Population	
				(Min)	(Max)
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.	0.25	0.5
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼- to ½-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.	1	2
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function.	Variable	
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3-mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.	5	8
Natural Resource Areas	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	Variable	
Regional Metropolitan Park	Land set aside for preservation of natural beauty or environmental significance, recreation use or historic or cultural interest use.	Located to serve several communities within 1 hour driving time.	Optimal size is 200+ acres, but size varies based on accommodating the desired uses.	5	10
Greenways	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	Variable	
Private Park/ Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable	Variable	
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	Varies			
Connector Trails	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	Varies			

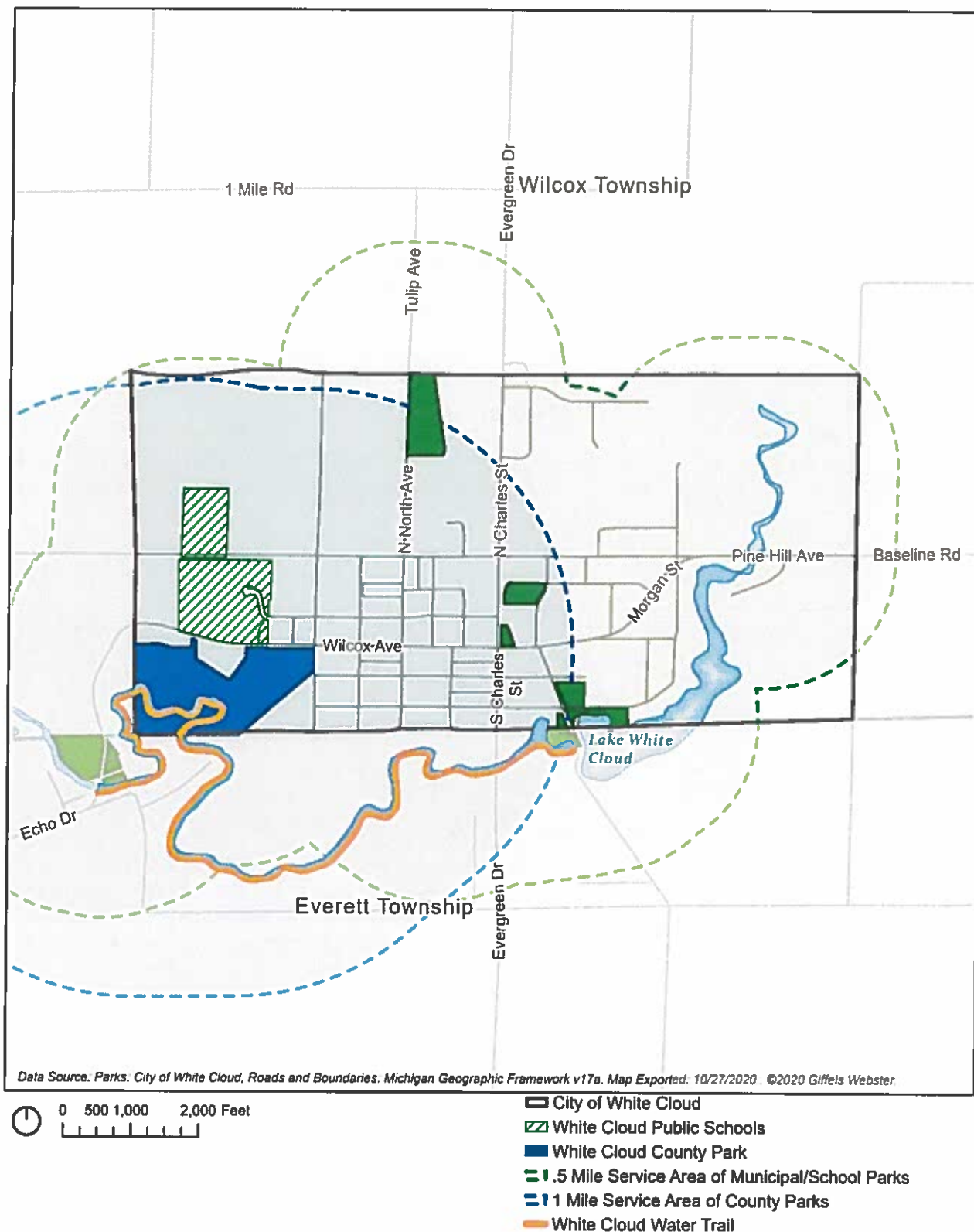
Recreation Analysis: Review of DNR Classifications

TABLE 8
WHITE CLOUD COMPARISON TO MDNR RECOMMENDED
CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL RECREATION
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Classification	White Cloud 2020 Population		White Cloud 2045 Projected Population		Existing (acres)	Recommended (acres)	Comments
	1,381		1,378				
	Min (acres)	Max (acres)	Min (acres)	Max (acres)			
Mini-Park	.5	1	.5	1			James/State parks are all considered neighborhood if viewed individually
Neighborhood Park	1	3	1	3	11.7	3	Explore opportunities to enhance existing neighborhood parks
School-Park		Variable			North Street & field @ campground		The city and school currently share several facilities to meet the recreation needs of the residents;
Community Park					40 acres		Explore opportunities to enhance existing Campground
Large Urban Park					-	-	Not needed
Natural Resource Areas					-	7.5+	Opportunities to add natural resource areas could be explored at existing city owned properties
Regional Metropolitan Park	229	457	260	520	770	-	
Greenways					1	1+	Explore opportunities to expand and connect the trail network where possible
Private Park/ Recreation Facility					4.5		Continue to foster partnership with Little League Association for field maintenance
Park Trail					1-2		Maintain and promote the existing scenic river walk trails Rotary Park and Flowing Wells?
Connector Trails					1		The White Cloud Campground Connector Trail serve as a connection to the North County Trail

Recreation Inventory: Facilities and Park Service Area

MAP 9: WHITE CLOUD LOCAL PARK SERVICE AREA



Planning Process



Planning Process

Planning Process

The recreation planning process in the White Cloud is intended to involve individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the community's population. The City Council is responsible for implementing the Recreation Plan, but the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board provides input, analysis and recommendations. The planning process began with an inventory of all of City, county and regional parks, as well as local school facilities. A survey was developed and posted online.

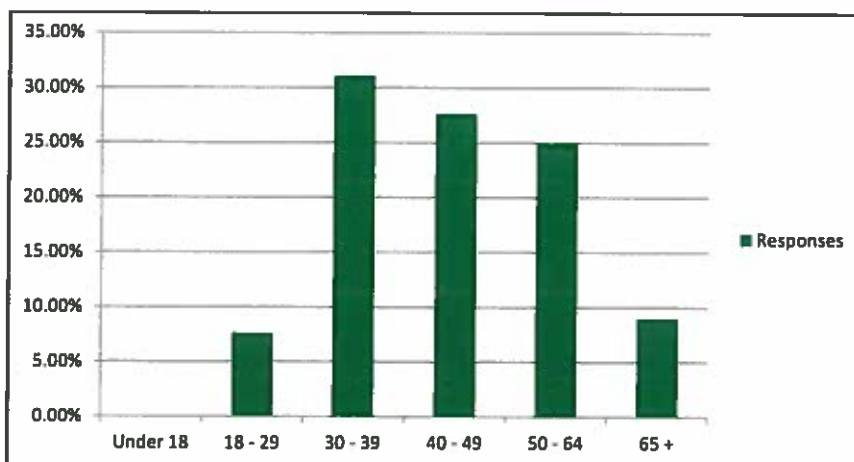
Using the inventory, the results of the survey findings, this Recreation Plan identifies strengths and opportunities of the current parks facilities, along with goals for the future. The draft plan, along with a 5-year action program of priority projects, will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Online Survey

An online survey was posted for residents and stakeholders to provide feedback on the current park system and improvements they would like to see. The survey was available online from November 11 - 17, and 145 participants submitted responses. The key themes are summarized on the following pages. A complete copy of the survey results can be found in the appendix.

Park Use

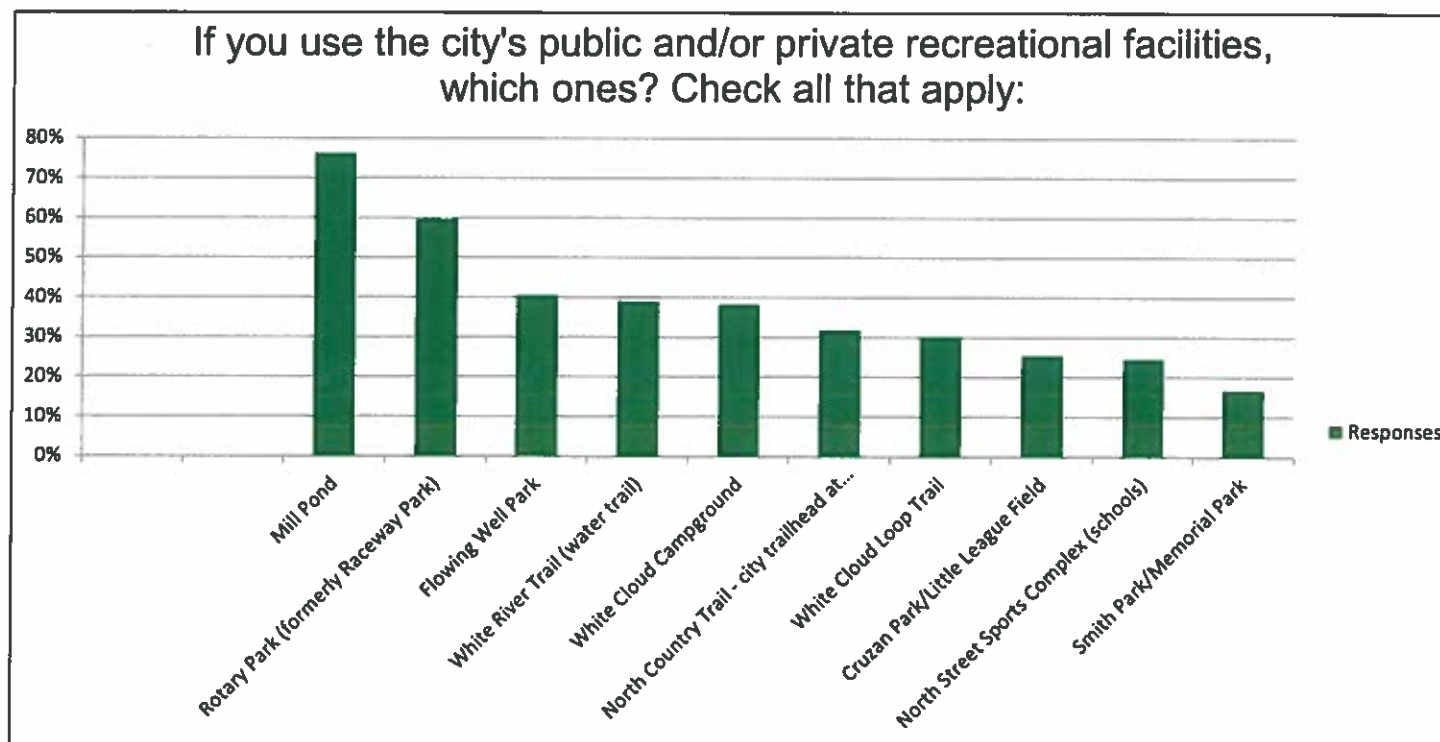
- Just over one half (55%) of the respondents indicated they lived within the city, indicating the facilities are utilized regionally by neighboring communities.
- Responses were split fairly even between the 30-39, 40-49, and 50-64 age brackets.



- Nearly 65% of the survey takers indicated they had children living in their household.
- Over half of the respondents indicated they use the parks on a regular basis, and those who don't indicated is because they don't know that recreation programs are available.
- Waterfront parks are the most frequently utilized

72%

of park users bring their children to the park with them



The top five activities parks are used for include:

1. Walking
2. Attending Special Events
3. Fishing
4. Boating/kayaking/paddling
5. Hiking

When asked to rank satisfactory level of all parks

Residents are most satisfied with Rotary Park



Residents are least satisfied with Mill Pond Park

Thirty percent of respondents belong to community organizations or recreational groups like the Special Olympics, AYSO, Little League Baseball, off-road vehicle (ORV) or snowmobile clubs, Boomerang and other community organizations.

Goals & Objectives



Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives formulated by the City are the basis for the recreation planning process and form the framework for decision-making regarding recreational facilities and programs in the City. The purpose of the Recreation Plan is to pursue long-range recreational goals through specific short-range action strategies.

The following goals and objectives were adopted with the 2012 Recreation Plan and found, through the planning process, to continue to be relevant. The goals are based on the findings of the inventory and service areas analysis and have been correlated with the goals of the City's Master Plan.

The recreation goals and objectives are not prioritized. The yearly Action Program that follows will detail the specific actions necessary to achieve those goals that are short-range in nature.

WHAT ARE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES?

- Goals are general guidelines that explain what the community wants to achieve. Goals are usually long-term and represent global visions such as "protect the City's natural resources." Goals define the "what" but not the "how." Goals are established in the Master Plan Use Plan.
- Objectives identify the milestones that mark progress in achieving goals – more of the "how." For example, the goal of "protect the City's natural resources" could be measured in terms of "Maintain the City's tree cover." Objectives are plan-specific and are included here.
- Action items are more specific and define the steps to accomplish objectives and attain the identified goals – these could be considered the "who" and "when." The most effective action strategies will include who will tackle that task and when it should be accomplished.

Goals and Objectives

The City's 2010 Master Plan included a future vision for the community that is useful in guiding recreation planning.

Future Vision

In the years ahead, White Cloud continues to be successful in fostering a strong sense of community through maintaining its small town character. The historic fabric of existing structures is preserved. New development meshes well with the City's small town urban character, rather than inappropriately imposing suburban features on the landscape. Because growth and redevelopment is thoughtfully considered and each development meets City site and building design standards, a level of quality emerges that keeps neighborhood and business areas attractive and healthy for decades to come.

Water resources and non-motorized trails are an important tie among neighborhoods and the downtown. City residents from across the community are able to safely travel from their homes on a sidewalk and trail system into the downtown by bicycle or on foot.

Community amenities like benches, lovely landscaping, and other design features are strategically set throughout the City. This eye for attractive details promotes a high level of community interaction.

Strong single-family neighborhoods and proud institutions underpin the community's pride. Homes are affordable and local institutions are accessible. The housing stock is strong, and well-maintained. A healthy cross-section of young adults, senior citizens, and maturing families live in appreciation of one another. Community ties are strong and people work together to make and keep the City a special place.

Additional higher density residential development is located above main street shops and immediately adjacent to the downtown to promote easy access to community services in the downtown.

Commercial development is limited to small portions of the M-37 corridor and the downtown, with the two districts having purposefully distinct characters. The general commercial district is restricted to M-37 between city hall and the northern City limits which encompasses heavy commercial uses including fast food, gas stations, and convenience shopping for the traveling public. Even though business establishments may be national chains, they respect the character of White Cloud as a small town destination, meeting design criteria for the community.

Although M-37 is a travel route to the north, its design and character will provide features that calm traffic and invite a stop to relax and refresh.

The downtown district provides a niche for specialty tourist business that is also supported by the seasonal and year-round population, promoting a leisurely and unique pedestrian shopping experience. A vibrant and attractive downtown becomes the backdrop for several local events, which foster neighborly interaction.

Goals and Objectives

In addition to the vision provided above, the Master Plan also included several goals and associated objectives that are relevant to guiding recreation planning. These are provided on the following pages. The Action Plan will follow and represent strategies that can be undertaken in the next five years to advance these goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Promote a strong, diverse economy in line with the nature of the community.

OBJECTIVES

1.	More heavily market White Cloud in the Big Rapids, Muskegon and Grand Rapids metro areas as a great day trip or weekend get-away, particularly around special events.
2.	Market the area to kayakers who can more easily travel the White River than canoeists.
3.	More fully utilize the public space on Mill Pond as a "rest stop" for travelers or setting for special events.
4.	Collaborate with key recreational facilities to offer events, services and amenities that enhance visitor's stay (e.g. various resorts and campgrounds).
5.	Consider an overlay zone on a portion of the White River on a limited basis to promote dependent, recreational business.
6.	Work with other small cities/villages to promote a "Sister Town Jaunt" program where tourists are given scenic routes to drive to each community and experience their unique spots. The City of Newaygo is about 10 miles south, and the Village of Hesperia is about 16 miles west and Baldwin is about 30 miles north. Each of these communities could benefit from such a program.
7.	Develop a historic interpretive trail around the city and link this with other historic sites. Preferably the tour should conclude in White Cloud so visitors linger in town and patronize shops.
8.	Continue community events and work to more widely promote them with weekend lodging packages, or event specials in local stores.
9.	Encourage the Chamber to develop an email list of visitors who routinely get information on special community events.
10.	Devise a city map highlighting points of interest in town and in close proximity to town.
11.	Explore, with state and county officials, opportunities to promote meaningful alternative energy.
12.	Develop a business retention program that includes annual visits to local industries to discuss topics of mutual concern.
13.	Identify key specialty businesses that can reasonably be recruited to the downtown.
14.	Consider redeveloping of vacant, obsolete properties on M-37 for a small scale Inn with an upscale restaurant.
15.	Develop a formal and inviting entranceway to Wilcox Avenue to invite travelers to turn west and explore unique local color.
16.	Develop informational kiosks and station them in strategic locations within the City.

Goal: Continue building a vibrant downtown that serves as a hub of community activity, providing a unique and beautiful backdrop for area events, social interaction, and commerce.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Work with the schools and/or jail and consider using a greenhouse to propagate flowers and vegetable plants for community gardens.
2.	Start a community nursery program to propagate street trees. The school campus has ample area to rear nursery trees.
3.	Use public facilities like the library and County grounds to host art fairs, community garage sales, craft lessons, road rallies, scavenger hunts and various other events to generate downtown activity.

Goal: Showcase a park and trail system that is laced through the community and recognized as a gem of the City.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Develop way-finding signs to direct people to points of interest, including trails, parks and public institutions, especially the Mill Pond.
2.	Developing a strong trail and sidewalk system to connect schools and parks with neighborhoods, the campground and the downtown.
3.	Mark "neighborhood walks" in designated areas to promote community walking.
4.	Expand use of interpretive plaques throughout the community to tell the story of White Cloud. Plaques could be placed throughout the business district, along trails, and even in neighborhoods or at the school campus.
5.	Develop more facilities in existing parks to increase activity within them, and to the extent possible, tie the activities to downtown businesses promotions.
6.	Improve signage for visitor using regional amenities, such as the snowmobile and ORV trails.

Goal: Protect natural resources within the City and enhance its natural setting.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Maintain close contact with the White River Watershed Partnership (www.wrwp.org) who can provide technical assistance and potentially, collaboration for grants to enhance and protect the White River area.
2.	Use on-site, low impact storm water management techniques like rain gardens and sunken landscape islands rather than sending storm water as a direct discharge into the White River.
3.	Promote regional detention as a means to reduce storm water system inputs into the White River
4.	Consider developing a storm water management ordinance.
5.	Work with the Soil Conservation District to augment wildlife habitat areas with native species, e.g., in parks and along the river.
6.	Continue to promote and use the county recycling program.
7.	Maintain close contact with the White River Watershed Partnership (www.wrwp.org) who can provide technical assistance and potentially, collaboration for grants to enhance and protect the White River area
8.	Partner with agencies such as Trout Unlimited and Michigan DNR Fisheries Division Staff to enhance the White River Watershed Partnership.

Goal: Encourage City Government and City residents to become a “green” community by participating in recycling and environmental programs.

OBJECTIVES

1.	Encourage all new development, both public and private, to be constructed in a sustainable and environmentally-sensitive manner.
2.	Develop a well marked non-motorized trail network through the community which may or may not include existing sidewalks. The trails should include way finding signs and other special markings to distinguish them from neighborhood routes.
3.	Continue to work with the school district to enhance and maintain the White River campground as a natural area.

Action Plan

The City's long range plan for recreational facilities and programs is based on the goals and objectives developed during the planning process. The Action Program describes what the City hopes to achieve in the near future. The City has identified the following main priorities for the next five years as well as other long-range priorities that require research and preparation in the next five years:

Proposed Park Improvement	Estimated Cost	Priority Status Year
GENERAL PARK SYSTEM NEEDS		
Develop Maintenance Plan: More frequent mowing, trimming, flowers, and trash pickup		High
Develop staffing plan for programming, supervision (i.e., lifeguard, ranger) and park maintenance		High
Hire additional staff per staffing plan		High
Purchase maintenance equipment – Lawn Mower, weed wacker, edger etc; add waste receptacles as needed		High
Work with schools and other regional partners to add/refine programming for kids and adults (including Kayak lessons, Trail Challenge, Photography, Nature Hikes and etc.)		Medium
Add security cameras		Medium
Develop marketing plan for city and its parks: "Love where we Live!!!"		Medium
Work with regional/statewide organizations on specific events related to local recreation, such as Trail Runs (like Community Challenge and other organized races)		Medium
Create signage/wayfinding plan for park system		Medium
Develop plan for installing electricity at parks that currently do not have it		Medium
Develop a landscape and tree planting plan for all parks		Medium
FLOWING WELLS PARK		
Create plan for additional furnishing/improvements		Medium
Add furnishings to park, including picnic tables, signage, lighting and fire feature (such as fire pit), gazebo, fencing and parking lot		Medium
ROTARY PARK		
Add playground equipment, fire feature, signage and lighting		Medium
Add to walking path		Medium
Develop bridge to island		Medium
Add restrooms		Medium
SMITH PARK		
Create plan to update park		High
Redevelop skate park		High
Update basketball court		High
Develop performance stage with sound, concession stand, fire feature and pavilion		Medium
Add lights (including lights over ice rink/skate park)		Medium
Add exercise area		Medium
Add picnic tables		Medium

Proposed Park Improvement	Estimated Cost	Priority Status Year
MILL POND		
Update existing dock and add dock by boat launch		Medium
Update beach area by adding sand, swim markers and bars across the dam		Medium
Update playground equipment		Medium
Add drinking fountain		Medium
Create plan to develop east side of park		Low
NORTH STREET SPORT COMPLEX		
Work with schools to ensure safety and ongoing maintenance of facilities		High
WHITE CLOUD CAMPGROUND		
Add cabins w/ bathrooms		Medium
Add signage for Trail Head and Kayak Launch		Medium
Develop an Information Center with kayak rental		Medium
Add lighting		Medium
Add Fire Feature		Medium
Develop an ORV Staging Area		Medium
Explore the addition of a pool for the campground		Low
OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANS		
Develop River Property on Pine Hill (parking lot, kayak launch, restrooms and picnic area)		Medium
Work with Rails to Trails on White Cloud to Freemont trail		High

Appendix

Appendix Table of Contents

- A. Resolution of Adoption by City Council
- B. Notice of public hearing
- C. Notice of public review period posted to City website with full copy of draft 2021-2025 Plan
- D. City Council, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting minutes (public hearing and adoption)
- E. Press Release announcing availability of survey and Public Input Workshop
- F. Transmittal of adopted plan to Newaygo County
- G. Transmittal of adopted plan to SEMCOG
- H. Survey results
- I. Public Hearing Comment Summary
- J. DNR Post-Completion Certification Reports



Title of Project
Center Project Name within this Space

PREPARED FOR:

NAME OF CLIENT
Client Address

Date 2019

INSERT
CLIENT LOGO