

THE CITY OF

WHITE CLOUD

A TRAIL FOR EVERY SEASON

MICHIGAN

GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

Approval Authorities | Application Process | Review Procedure

July 2023

OVERVIEW

About The City of White Cloud

The City of White Cloud is centrally located in Newaygo County; uniquely situated 17 miles west from U.S.-131 with M-37 nearly bisecting the downtown. White Cloud is home to 1,480 residents who enjoy the benefits of a friendly, small-town atmosphere. One of White Cloud's greatest assets is the abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities offered due to the city's proximity to the Manistee National Forest, the North Country Trail, and multiple rivers, such as the White River and the Muskegon River. Additionally, the City of White Cloud prides itself on being affordable, safe, and community oriented.

How to use the Guide to Development

The City of White Cloud has created the 'Guide to Development' to assist developers, community residents, and investors in understanding the process of reviewing and approving development projects. This guide provides an overview of the approval process for various permits and development plans. It includes information on which local authority will be responsible for the review process, an estimate for how long the review process should take, and the potential outcomes from the review process.

The 'Guide to Development' should serve as a reference tool for individuals hoping to undertake development/construction projects in the city. If the 'Guide to Development' does not address a specific question, please contact City Hall or the Zoning Administrator.

City of White Cloud Contact Information

Mailing Address

12 N Charles
PO Box 607
White Cloud, MI 49349

Website

www.cityofwhitecloud.org

Hours

Monday - Thursday
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Phone

(231)-689-1194

Fax

(231)-689-2001



TABLE OF CONTENT

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION	3
BOARDS & COMMISSIONS	4
APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE	5
ZONING ORDINANCE	6
ZONING MAP	6
ZONING TABLE OF USES	6
MASTER PLAN	6
FEE SCHEDULE	7
PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS	7
NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE	7
SITE PLAN REVIEW	8
SPECIAL LAND USE	9
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	10
VARIANCES	13
ZONING PERMIT	14
ZONING AMENDMENT	15
RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT	16
BUILDING PERMITS	17
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	18
PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS	20



KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

City Hall Office

White Cloud City Hall	(231)-689- 1194	www.cityofwhitecloud.org
April Storms, City Manager	(231)-689-1194	citymanager@cityofwhitecloud.org
Kelli Arnold, City Clerk	(231)-689-1194	clerk@cityofwhitecloud.org

Planning and Zoning

John Wallace, Zoning Administrator	(231)-519-5720	zoning@cityofwhitecloud.org
Don Duffey, Rental Inspector	(231)-287-2781	inspector@cityofwhitecloud.org

Assessor

Michael Beach, City Assessor	(866)-921-9293	Beach@michiganassessor.com
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Public Works

Don Barnhard, Supervisor of DPW	(231)-335-6574	dpw@cityofwhitecloud.org
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North Country Inspection

Duane Cruzan, Building Inspector	(231)-224-3960	buildingdept@newaygo.mi.us
Maurie VanNevel, Electrical Inspector	(231)-224-3961	
Steve Smith, Plumbing Inspector	(231)-736-8179	
Ron Larson, Mechanical Inspector	(231)-224-3848	

Wastewater Treatment

White Cloud Sherman Utility Authority	(231)-689-6047	wcsua@sbcglobal.net
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Electric

Consumers Energy	(800)-805-0490	
Great Lakes Energy	(888)-485-2537	

Gas

DTE Energy	(800)-477-4747	
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BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

For more information regarding Boards and Commissions, please visit:
www.cityofwhitecloud.org or call the City of White Cloud at (231)-689-1194.

City Council	
Meets every 1 st Tuesday of the month	Time: 6:00 p.m. Location: City Hall
Planning Commission	
Meets every 4 th Tuesday of the month	Time: 6:00 p.m. Location: City Hall
Board of Review	
Meets in March, July, and December	For the specific time and date, please contact the City Hall. These dates are determined by the City Charter.
Zoning Board of Appeals	
Meets as needed. Contact City Hall for meeting times & scheduling	Time: N/A Location: City Hall
Parks and Rec Committee	
Meets bi-monthly on the 1 st Thursday of the month	Time: 7:30 a.m. Location: City Hall
Marihuana License Board	
Meets as needed. Contact City Hall for meeting times & scheduling	Time: N/A Location: City Hall



APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE

Developers, business owners, and community members should understand the different local authorities who will approve, or decline submitted applications. This table gives a general view of what local authorities will be reviewing land use applications.

APPROVING AUTHORITIES

LAND USE APPLICATIONS	APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE	Zoning Administrator	Planning Commission	Zoning Board of Appeals	City Council	North Country Inspection
	Zoning Permits	X (A)				
	Site Plan Review	X (R)	X (A)			
	Special Land Use	X (R)	X (A)			
	Planned Unit Development	X (R)	X (R)		X (A)	
	Rezoning/ Ordinance Amendment	X (R)	X (R)		X (A)	
	Variance			X (A)		
	Appeal			X (A)		
	Building, Electrical, and other Permits					X (A)

(R) = Recommendation authority (A) = Approval authority



PLANNING & ZONING

Zoning Ordinance

The City of White Cloud's zoning ordinance governs property usage and building regulations, establishing guidelines for new construction and installations. Please contact the Zoning Administrator with any questions regarding the zoning ordinance. To access the complete zoning ordinance, please visit the following link:

[City of White Cloud Zoning Ordinance](#)

Zoning Map

The Zoning Map for the City of White Cloud displays the various zoning districts established within the city. These districts have specific regulations on permitted uses, designs, and development layouts. View the zoning map below to determine which district your site is located in.

[Click here to view the City of White Cloud Zoning Map](#)

Zoning Table of Use

Each zoning district has a unique list of permitted uses, as well as requirements and restrictions on development dimensions and lot size. It is helpful for developers to understand what functions are permitted for sites in each zoning district.

For information regarding ordinances impacting all districts, click the following:

[City of White Cloud Zoning Ordinance – Chapter 3 General Provisions](#)

For Information regarding permitted uses in a specific district, click the desired district:

[7.02 Residential District Table of Use](#)

[12.02 Industrial District](#)

[8.02 Commercial District Table of Use](#)

[13.02 Public Use District](#)

[11.02 Manufactured Home Community](#)

Master Plan

The City of White Cloud's Master Plan represents a vision for how the City of White Cloud will develop. The purpose of the plan is to manage the intensity and configuration of land use so to support economically viable and environmentally sound development. The City of White Cloud encourages all developers to look through the Master Plan and identify how their project fits into the city's vision for future development.

[Click here to view the full Master Plan](#)



PLANNING & ZONING

Fee Schedule

The fee schedule, located on the City of White Cloud's Permits and Forms page, provides the costs for applications submitted for planning and zoning approval.

[Click here to view the Fee Schedule](#)

Pre-Application Meetings

While not required, the City of White Cloud highly recommends scheduling a pre-application meeting prior to the beginning of any development application. These meetings help promote a smooth approval process. To schedule a conceptual review meeting, contact the Zoning Administrator, John Wallace at (231)-519-5720 or email zoning@cityofwhitecloud.org.

Prior to a scheduled meeting, applicants should prepare the following information: the location of the site, the existing use, the intended development, preliminary sketches, and details about the surrounding land use of their site. During the meeting, applicants and the Zoning Administrator will discuss the proposed use of the site with the existing zoning configuration, identifying the appropriate development process, provide feedback on preliminary design, and answer questions the applicant may have about development within the City of White Cloud.

[Conceptual Review Meeting Checklist](#)

Notification Procedures

The City of White Cloud, in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, gives notice of public hearings at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Notifications are printed in a newspaper of general circulation and mail/hand delivered to the subject property and all persons owning property within 300 feet of the boundary of the subject property. Occupants within apartment buildings with less than 12 units and within the 300 feet radius will also be notified.

Notices will provide details about the nature of the request or application, including where and when the application or request will be considered. Additionally, notices will specify the process for submitting written comments for the public hearing.



SITE PLAN REVIEW

What is a site plan?

A site plan provides general information on the property to be developed, details on the existing conditions of the property, and plans for proposed development, engineering, and building details. The City of White Cloud requires all new development proposals to undergo a site plan review, in which either the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission approves or denies the proposed development plans. This is to ensure that new developments meet White Cloud's land use objectives.

What is required to submit a site plan?

To submit a complete site plan application, an applicant must provide:

- ❖ Site plan review application fee ranging from \$175 to \$500
- ❖ In escrow is required for consultant review fee
- ❖ 3 completed and signed copies of the site plan review application
- ❖ 6 individually folded copies of the site plan
- ❖ Proof that other applicable government agencies, with jurisdiction, are reviewing the project.

For more information on site plan submission requirements, visit:

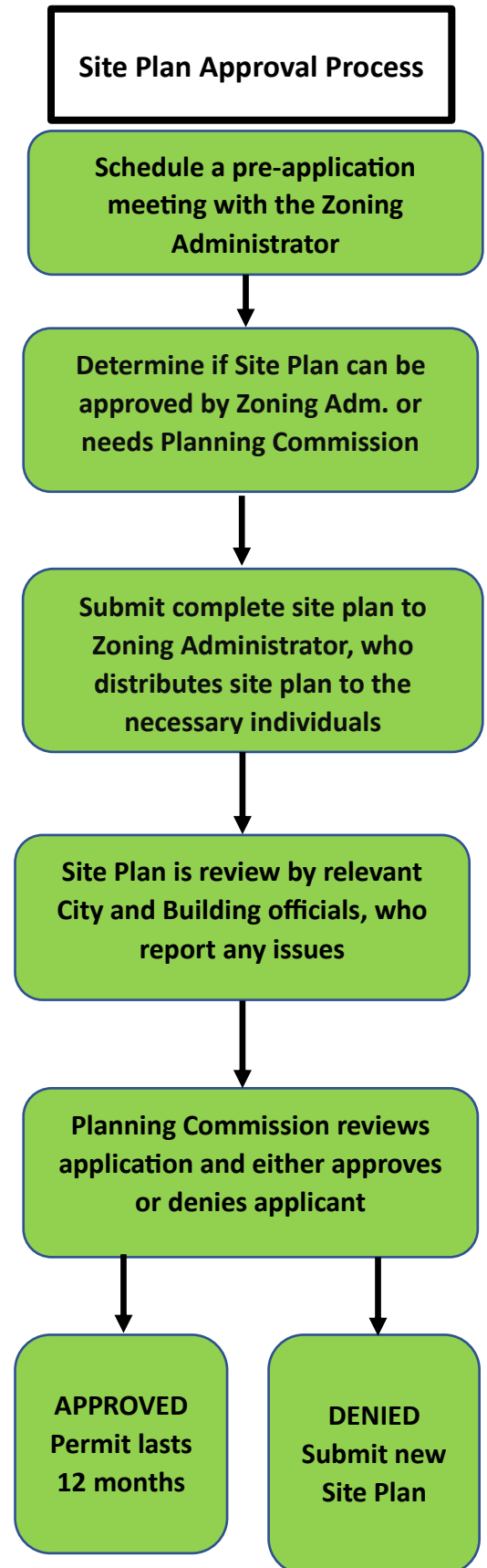
[§15.03 Site Plan Submittal](#)

[Site Plan Review Application](#)

Who approves site plans, and what is the process for approval?

For most site plan reviews, the Planning Commission is the approval authority. However, there are several cases where the Zoning Administrator can approve site plans. See Zoning Ordinance to determine who will review your Site Plan: [Site Plan Applicability](#)

During a site plan review, the first step is to schedule a pre-application meeting with the Zoning Administrator. Then, applicants update and complete all required materials and fees. The site plan is formally submitted to the Zoning Administrator, who reviews it for completeness. The plan is then shared with Building Officials, City planners, Attorney, Engineer, and the Fire Marshal for further review and feedback. Finally, the Planning Commission evaluates the site plan and decides whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny it.



SPECIAL LAND USE

What is a Special Land Use Permit?

A Special Land Use Permit is authorized by the City of White Cloud when a property owner wants to use their land for a specific purpose that is not typically allowed under their zoning district.

How to know if a project requires special land use approval?

To confirm that a Special Land Use Permit is required for your site, please contact the Zoning Administrator, who will indicate whether the proposed use(s) will require a Special Land Use Permit.

How do I apply?

To apply for a Special Land Use Permit, applicants must submit the following forty-five days before the next Planning Commission meeting: the application fee and any required escrow fee(s), a complete Special Land Use application form, complete site plan, a narrative describing the proposed use(s).

[Special Land Use Permit Application](#)

What is the approval process?

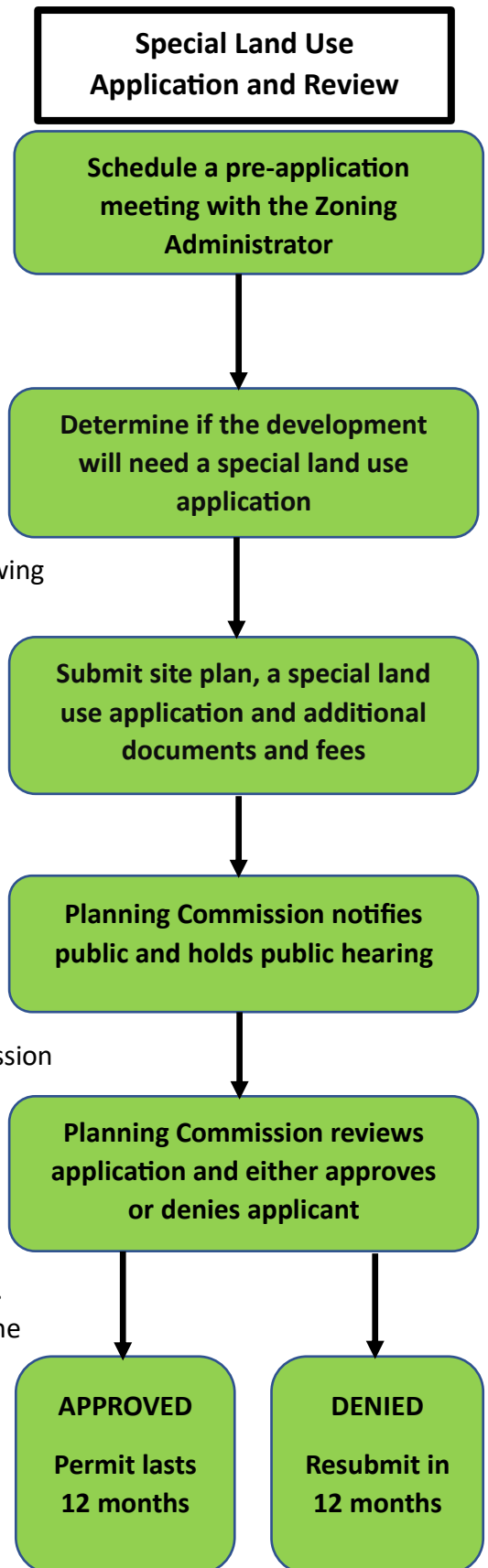
Applications for special land use, along with supporting documents, must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator at least forty-five (45) days before the next Planning Commission meeting. The Zoning Administrator forwards the application to the Planning Commission, who then holds a public hearing. After the hearing, the Planning Commission reviews the application, considering all available information. They either approve or deny the application. If denied, the applicant can resubmit one year later from the date of disapproval.

How long does approval last?

Special Land use approval is valid for one year from the date of approval. Each development or use should be under substantial construction for the Special Land Use Permit to remain valid. The Planning Commission can give a one-time six-month extension.

[§16.04 General Standards](#)

[§16.02 Application and Review](#)



PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

What is a Planned Unit Development?

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is established to facilitate coordinated development on larger sites by allowing for greater flexibility in land regulations. Some of the primary objectives of PUDs are to give more opportunities for mix compatible uses or residential types, provide adequate housing and employment opportunities, and promote efficient uses of public services, utilities, and transportation facilities. For more information regarding the purpose of PUDs, click the link below:

[PUD Overview](#)

What are the requirements for a Planned Unit Development?

To qualify for Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- ❖ The PUD should offer at least one of the following benefits, which cannot be achieved through other zoning districts:
 - a. Preservation of significant natural features.
 - b. Preservation of open space.
 - c. A mix of compatible uses or diverse housing options.
 - d. Common open space for recreational activities.
 - e. Redevelopment of a nonconforming site by creatively addressing unique site constraints.
- ❖ All landowners involved in the proposed PUD must submit a signed agreement, approved by the City's attorney, indicating their consent to the PUD development.
- ❖ In the case of phased construction, each phase should be self-sufficient regarding services, utilities, circulation, facilities, and open space. Every phase must include necessary components to protect natural resources and ensure the well-being of the open space community and surrounding residents.

What are the benefits of a Planned Unit Development?

Because PUDs undergo a more rigorous review process and greater greenspace requirements, they are permitted to have a greater variety of uses than traditional districts. There is also the capacity to allow for greater unit and residential density within the PUD than in other districts, provided extra requirements and commitments are met during the application process.

How do I apply for a PUD?

To apply for a PUD, an applicant must prepare a request for rezoning to the appropriate PUD designation, pay appropriate fees, provide seven copies of a preliminary site plan, a written description of how the plan relates to the purpose of a PUD and the different phases of development.

[Rezoning Application](#)



PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

What is the approval process?

- 1.) Pre-application meeting with Zoning Administrator
- 2.) Zoning Adm. files report about pre-application meeting
- 3.) Submit PUD rezoning request, which is reviewed by Planning Commission
- 4.) Planning Commission holds a public hearing
- 5.) Planning Commission shall review the preliminary PUD site plan and make a recommendation to City Council.
- 6.) Next the City Council shall consider the preliminary-site plan
 - a. If the site plan is not sufficient, the City Council can request additional information.
 - b. If the new information modifies the Planning Commissions recommendation, City Council must hold a public hearing for the site plan and PUD rezoning request.
- 7.) If both the rezoning and preliminary site plan follow the necessary standards and requirements, the Zoning Map shall be changed to show that the site is now a PUD zone.
 - a. If rezoning occurs but the Final site plan is not submitted within 2 years, the right to develop under the approved PUD site plan will be terminated, and a new application must be filed.

PUD review process

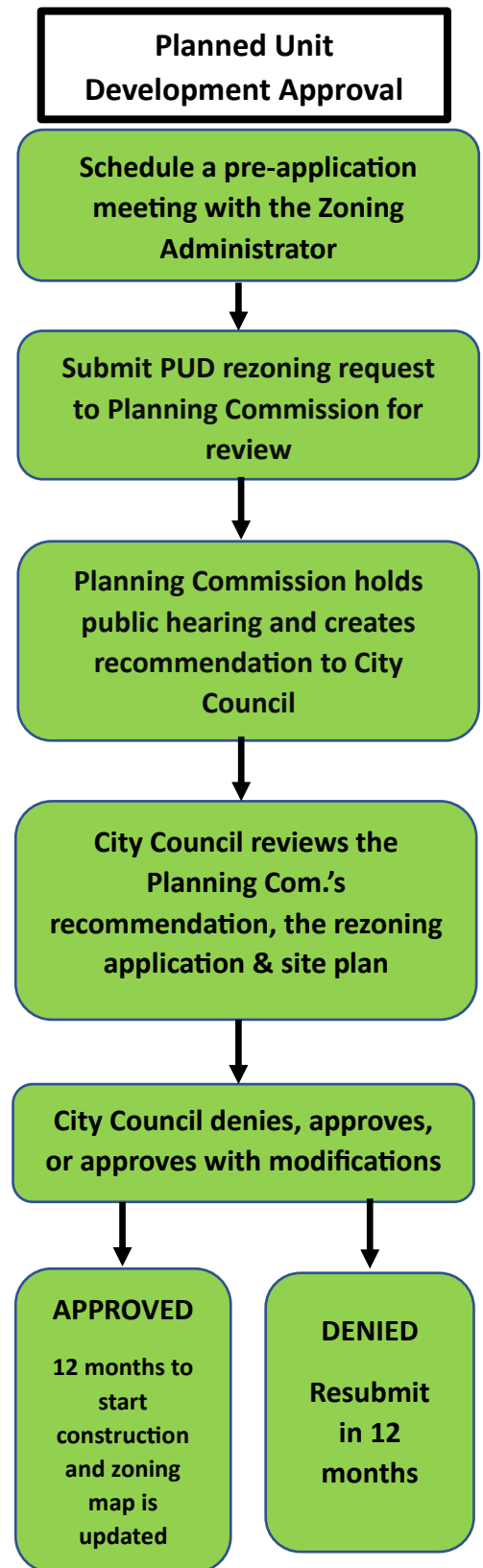
What are the review criteria?

When a PUD rezoning application is submitted, the following criteria is used to determine if the PUD should be approved:

- Is the property eligible for PUD rezoning?
- Are the PUD site plan's design and constructed in a manner harmonious with the surrounding area?
- Can the PUD be adequately served by essential public facilities?
- Does the PUD unreasonably increase the stress on public facilities?
- What is the impact on the street system around the PUD?
- Are nature features preserved, as much as possible while developing the site?
- Are natural drainage ways preserved?
- Does the PUD have an adverse impact on future development that is included in the Master Plan?

For more information regarding PUD, click the link:

[§9 Planned Unit Development District](#)



VARIANCES

What are Variances?

Dimensional Variances are permissions or approvals of specific features and measurements on a property that are not aligned with the standards set in the zoning ordinance.

Use Variances are permissions or approvals of specific land uses of a property that are not aligned with the standards set in the zoning ordinance.

Who approves of variance?

The Zoning Board of Appeals approves or denies variances.

How do I apply for a variance?

To apply for a variance, a complete and valid application must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator. The following is necessary for a complete and valid application:

- ❖ Seven (7) copies of a site plan
- ❖ A completed application form as provided by the city.
- ❖ Payment of the application fee or fees, in accordance with the fee schedule.
- ❖ An escrow deposit, where applicable.
- ❖ A legal description and/or parcel number of the entire property that is the subject of the request.
- ❖ A statement regarding compliance with the standards of Section 17.07, as applicable.
- ❖ Other materials may be required by the ZBA or the City.

[Dimensional Variance Application](#)

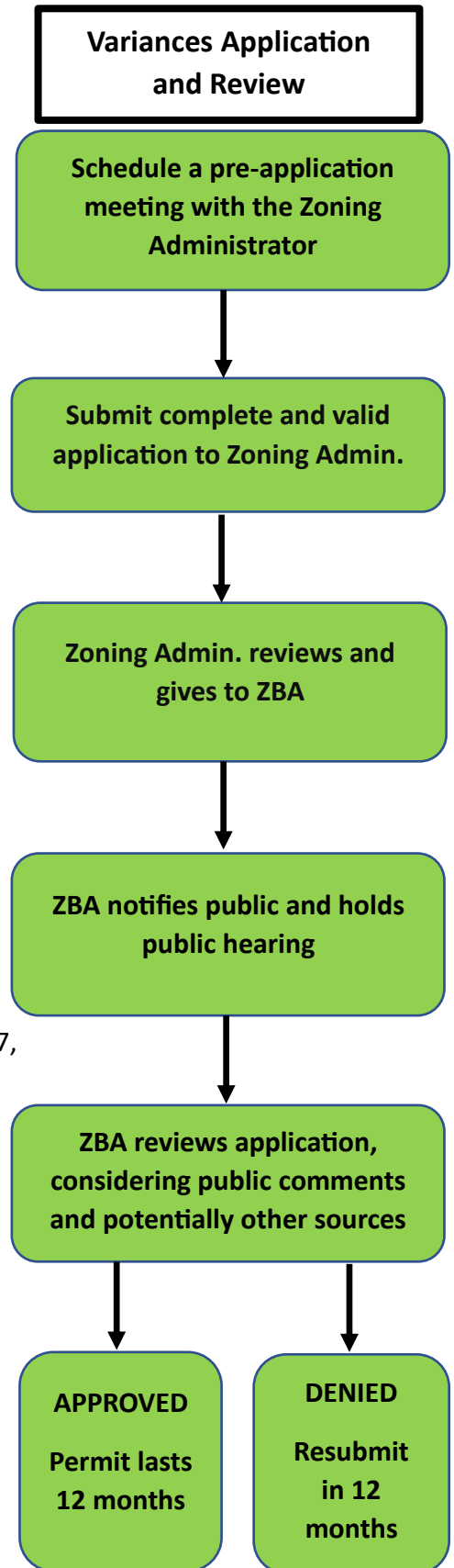
[Use Variance Application](#)

What are the requirements for a variance?

For the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve of a variance, the application must meet standards found in the Zoning Ordinance. Click the link below to read each of the standards used to decide approval:

[Dimensional Variance Approval Standards](#)

[Use Variance Approval Standards](#)



ZONING PERMIT

What is a zoning permit?

A zoning permit serves as a certification that a building being constructed meets the dimensional requirements and permitted use as detailed in the zoning ordinance. Zoning permits are required for any person wishing to start construction of a new, or expansion of an old, residential, or commercial development/addition/operation in the City of White Cloud.

How do I apply for a zoning permit?

To apply for a zoning permit, fully complete the zoning permit application and pay all applicable fees found on the fee schedule. Some projects may require proof of various inspections and certifications before a zoning permit can be granted. To see if your project needs to provide additional documentation, please contact the Zoning Administrator.

[Click here for a zoning permit application](#)

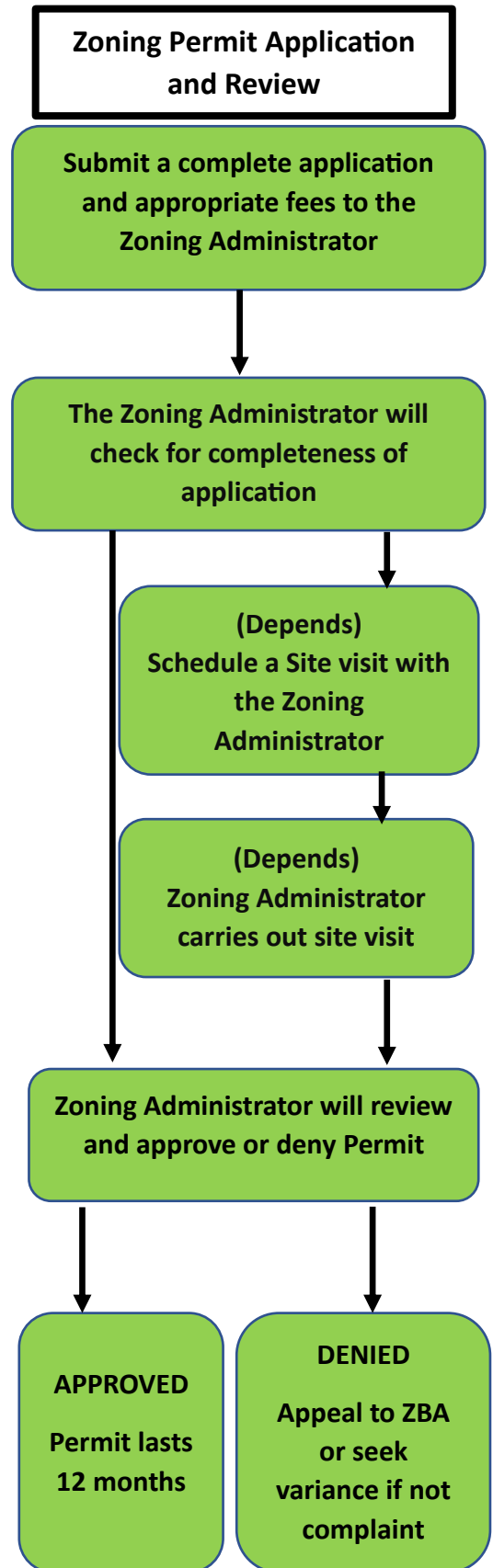
What is the review process?

Once a complete zoning permit application is submitted, the Zoning Administrator will review the application for completeness and adherence to the zoning ordinance. In some cases, the Zoning Administrator requires a site visit to grant a zoning permit. Otherwise, after the application review the Zoning Administrator will approve or deny a zoning permit. To determine if a site visit is required, please contact the Zoning Administrator.

When do zoning permits expire?

A zoning permit will expire one year after being issued if there is no substantial construction undertaken within that year. One extension of one year may be allowed by the Zoning Administrator. A final extension may be granted if 75% of the construction is complete.

[§18.07 Zoning Compliance Permit](#)



ZONING AMENDMENT

Who can initiate a Zoning Amendment/Rezoning?

The City Council, the Planning Commission, and any individual who submits a valid and complete petition can initiate an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance/Map.

What is needed to initiate an Amendment/Rezoning?

To begin the amendment process, an applicant is required to submit 10 signed copies of the petition for amendment. For rezoning, an applicant must complete a rezoning application. For a petition to be considered, the contents must follow the guidelines found in the link below:

[Requirements for Amendment Petition](#)

[Rezoning Application](#)

What is the review process?

Once a petitioned amendment is submitted to the Zoning Administrator, it is forwarded to the Planning Commission. Upon receiving the petition, a public hearing will be held. While considering public comments, the Planning Commission creates a report and recommendation, which is given to City Council, as to whether to approve or deny the petition. Following the Planning Commission's recommendation, the City Council will vote, either to pass or deny the petition.

For a full list of criteria and more information on changing the zoning ordinance, please view the relevant section in the zoning ordinance, linked below:

[§18.05 Zoning Ordinance Amendments](#)



RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Single and two-family dwellings

Standard single-family and two-family dwelling repairs do not require a building permit or site plan application. However, per Michigan Building Code, a building permit is required if creating additions to the building, or improvements that include:

- ❖ Removing or cutting away any wall, partition or portion thereof,
- ❖ Removing or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support,
- ❖ Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement if parts if a structure affecting the exit requirements.
- ❖ Changing, adding, removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical.

For more information on building permits or other permits for improvements, please contact North Country Inspection Services (NCIS).

Multi-family dwellings

Standard multifamily repairs do not require a building permit or site plan application. However, structures containing 3 or more units are subject to site plan review processes with the City of White Cloud in addition to the building permits criteria listed in the Michigan Building Code when making the additions or the following renovations:

- ❖ Removing or cutting away any wall, partition or portion thereof,
- ❖ Removing or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support,
- ❖ Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the exit requirements
- ❖ Changing, adding, or removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical



BUILDING PERMITS

Who approves construction permits such as building, electrical, and plumbing?

All permits and inspections regarding construction utilities are approved and scheduled by North Country Inspection Services.

What is required to apply?

To apply for specific construction permits, please visit the appropriate link in the table. Each permit has an accompanying fee that must be paid. Fee charts can be found at the end of each permit application. Please read each application carefully.

Permit Type	Links
Building Permit	Newaygo County Building Department (ncisllc.org)
Electrical Permit	Electrical Application - Base Document.xls (ncisllc.org)
Plumbing Permit	Plumbing Application - Base Documents.xls (ncisllc.org)
Mechanical Permit	Mechanical Application - Base Document.xls (ncisllc.org)

Where can I find out more about inspections?

Inspections will be required at multiple points throughout a project, for each permit issued. Inspection scheduling is a developer's responsibility, and should occur when the work is ready for the respective inspection. North Country Inspection Services will carry out all inspections and the issuing of various permits. For more information regarding North Country Inspection, please visit the link below:

[North Country Inspection Services, LLC \(ncisllc.org\)](http://ncisllc.org)



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Brownfield Tax increment Financing

Brownfield Tax Increment Financing, through P.A. 381 of 1996, allows developers to receive reimbursement on environmental and non-environmental redevelopment activities. Brownfields are properties and or sites that are contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete or hold historic value. Reimbursement for costs associated with redeveloping Brownfields occurs through the collection of incremental state and local taxes as the taxable value of the property increases through the revitalization process. To benefit from Brownfield TIFs, developers will need to work with their local Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to produce a workplan for state review (Michigan Strategic Fund for non-environmental activities, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for environmental activities).

To learn more about the Brownfield Program, initial evaluations, and workplan development, please contact the Newaygo County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority at (231)-689-7201.

Newaygo County Housing Partnership Fund

Through the Fremont Area Community Foundation and the Newaygo County government, funds are available for housing developments located in Newaygo County. Projects eligible for funding must target homeowners or renters with incomes between 60%-120% area median income. The fund was created to help increase affordable housing in Newaygo County.

To learn more about the Newaygo County Housing Partnership Fund, please contact the Fremont Area Community Foundation at (231)-924-5350 or visit: [Fremont Area Community Foundation \(fcommunityfoundation.org\)](http://fcommunityfoundation.org)

Workforce Housing PILOT Ordinance

The City of White Cloud has created the PILOT ordinance to encourage the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing within the city limits. Through the PILOT ordinance, workforce housing, and the property on which such housing is or will be located, shall be exempt from all ad valorem property taxes from and after the commencement of construction or rehabilitation. Workforce housing is defined as housing that is reasonably affordable to, and occupied by, a household whose total household income is not greater than 120% of the area median income published by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

To learn more about the White Cloud Workforce Housing Pilot Ordinance, please contact the City Manager.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA)

The Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA), PA 146 of 2000, as amended, provides property tax exemptions for commercial and commercial housing properties that are rehabilitated and meet the requirements of the Act. Properties must meet eligibility requirements including a statement of obsolescence by the local assessor. The property must be in an established Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District. Exemptions are approved for a term of 1-12 years as determined by the local unit of government. The property taxes for the rehabilitated property are based on the previous year's (prior to rehabilitation) taxable value. The taxable value is frozen for the duration of the exemption. Additionally, the State Treasurer may approve reductions of half of the school operating and state education taxes for a period not to exceed 6 years for 25 applications annually. Applications are filed, reviewed, and approved by the local unit of government, but are also subject to review at the State level by the Property Services Division. The State Tax Commission (STC) is responsible for final approval and issuance of OPRA certificates. Exemptions are not effective until approved by the STC.

[Application for OPRA](#)

[FAQ's](#)



PARTNER ORGANIZATION

River Country Chamber of Commerce

The River Country Chamber of Commerce is made up of the former Croton-Hardy Business Alliance, Grant Area, Newaygo Area, and White Cloud Area. There are over 275 businesses and organizations that are members of River Country Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber of Commerce helps connect businesses and promote forward-thinking business practices. The River Country Chamber of Commerce also helps promote workforce opportunities that local businesses may need filled.

To learn more about the River Country Chamber of Commerce and the benefits it offers businesses and organizations, please visit: <https://www.rivercountrychamber.com>

Newaygo County Economic Development

Through the Right Place, a non-profit organization, Newaygo County has economic development services. The economic development services offered by The Right Place provided businesses with long-term regional strategic goals.

To learn more about the partnership between Newaygo County and the Right Place, please visit:

<https://www.newaygocountymi.gov/economic-development/economic-development/>

and

<https://www.rightplace.org/>

