# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

# Village of Montfort

March 8, 2021









PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY



## **Resolution # 2021-01**

## **Resolution Adopting the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

WHEREAS, the Village of Montfort has recognized the need for a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan based upon an inventory of outdoor recreation facilities and natural resources within the Village, Grant and Iowa Counties, and Southwest Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the development of the plan will serve as a guide for making future decisions related to outdoor recreation in the Village of Montfort and through its adoption will make the Village eligible to participate in state and federal recreation aid programs; and

WHEREAS this comprehensive outdoor recreation plan has been prepared for the Montfort Village Board by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and

WHERAS, this recreation plan is based on sound planning principles and long-range goals and objectives for the Village's recreational development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board for the Village of Montfort hereby goes on record to adopt the Village of Montfort Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as the Village's guide for future outdoor recreation improvements and development;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village board requests the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to provide eligibility to the Village of Montfort for participation in the state and federal cost-sharing programs for an additional five-year period.

Dated this 8 day of March, 2021

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James Schmitz, President

Shelly Kazda, Clerk/Treasurer

#### ATTEST:

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the resolution passed by the Village Board of the Village of Montfort at the regular meeting thereof held on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_ arch 2021.

Shelly Kazda, Clerk/Treasurer

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## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Goals and Objectives	7
Definitions and Classifications	8
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	11
Planning Process	12
Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation Plans	14
Description of Planning Region	15
Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory	27
Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment	32
Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation	37
Appendix A: Capital Improvement Schedule	41
Appendix B: Maps	43

# **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the 2021 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is to act as a guide for the Village Council, Village Park Committee, Village Staff, interested residents, and volunteers in decision-making related to park programs and improvements over the next five years. Actual public policy decisions are contingent on funding sources, new opportunities, changing growth patterns, budget priorities, and shifting community goals. For this reason, the plan should be reviewed annually and a detailed update should be completed every five years.

This plan is the result of an extensive public outreach process. In view of public health concerns arising from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the public input stage of the process was adjusted to reduce in-person meetings. The survey period was extended to provide ample time for more community members to respond to the survey. Also, open-ended questions were included in the survey to solicit for detailed responses regarding needed improvements to the parks, recreational facilities, and amenities. In total, the Southwestern Wisconsin Planning Commission (SWWRPC) collected 171 completed surveys representing an estimated 23% sample size of the total population.

This document includes specific park-by-park recommendations as well as proposals to enhance accessibility of parks along paths and trails. Expanding recreational walking and biking opportunities is not only a local priority, but is a top priority indicated by the SCORP. More detailed information on recommendations for outdoor recreation within the Village of Montfort can be found in the section "Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation" (Page 37).

Policy decisions regarding park development should be guided by the goals, objectives, and recommendations of this adopted plan. The following are the Goals and Objectives of the Plan organized around three topic areas:

**GOAL**: Continue to provide excellent maintenance to Montfort's parks and recreational facilities.

- o Provide additional park amenities and facilities in existing parks including playground equipment, sports equipment, picnic tables, grills, benches and others.
- Continue to provide excellent equipment maintenance, repairing and replacing items like trash cans, water fountains, and recycling bins.
- Continue to make Montfort parks handicap accessible, by incorporating updates into the formal maintenance schedule.

**GOAL**: Develop new parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of Montfort residents

- Provide safe and adequate accessibility to the Village parks for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Develop park facilities based on recommended standards and community needs.
- Provide park and recreation facilities to accommodate all user groups, including the unique needs of the elderly and disabled.

GOAL: Continue to efficiently utilize existing funding streams and find new funding solutions for Montfort's park systems.

- Continue to cooperate and coordinate work with the school district, county, and state agencies to provide efficient outdoor recreation programs and opportunities.
- Leverage local support to develop more external grant funding for additional parks, recreation amenities, equipment, and maintenance.





## Introduction

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) for the Village of Montfort is an expression of the community's current goals and future objectives for recreational facilities. The intent of this document is to plan for the maintenance and improvement of Montfort's recreational and open space resources. This will be accomplished by outlining a strategy to manage existing resources and to develop new resources to meet future needs and demands.

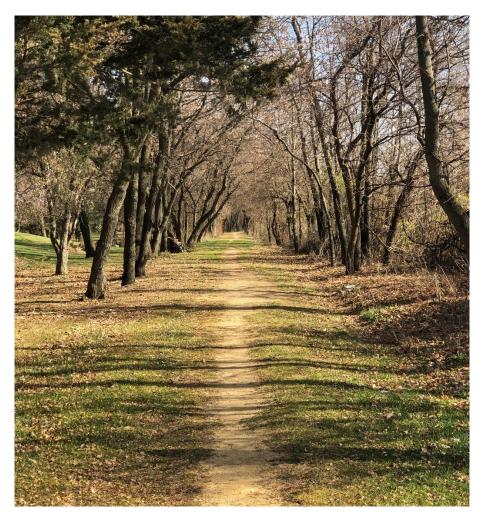
Parks can serve a limited neighborhood area, the entire community, and the region as a whole. This provides outdoor recreation for both residents and visitors. Open spaces are not limited to parks but also include greenbelts, wetlands, and floodplains. Open space can also serve many functions for a community other than recreation, such as the following:

- Preservation of scenic and natural resources
- Flood management
- Protecting the area's water resources
- Preserving prime agricultural land
- Limiting development that may occur
- Buffering incompatible land uses
- Structuring the community environment

A parks and facilities plan incorporates private as well as public open space areas in the community. The development and continual updating of the CORP becomes a valuable asset to a community contributing to its ongoing stability and attractiveness.



Image 1: Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail



## **Plan Purpose**

This plan is an update of the Montfort Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan prepared in 2009. The specific purpose of this plan is to guide the development and improvement of the Village's outdoor recreation facilities over the next five years to meet the recreational needs and demands of residents.

Policy decisions made by the Montfort Village Council for park programs and improvements should be guided by the goals, objectives, findings, and recommendations of this adopted plan. Actual public policy decisions are contingent on funding sources, new opportunities, changing growth patterns, budget priorities, and shifting community goals. For this reason, the plan should be reviewed annually and a detailed update should be completed every five years. Updating the plan every five years is a requirement of the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) to remain eligible for matching government funds for parkland acquisition and facility improvements. But just as importantly, the Village of Montfort needs to set a course of action for continued improvement of its parks and outdoor recreational system.

# **Goals and Objectives**

The Village of Montfort takes pride in its excellent park system. This portion of the updated Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan provides Village officials with general policies to guide future growth and development of Montfort's park system and outdoor recreation facilities. The goals and objectives below are vital to the efforts in providing this important service.

**GOAL**: Continue to provide excellent maintenance to Montfort's parks and recreational facilities.

- o Provide additional park amenities and facilities in existing parks including playground equipment, sports equipment, picnic tables, grills, benches and others.
- Continue to provide excellent equipment maintenance, repairing and replacing items like trash cans, water fountains, and recycling bins.
- Continue to make Montfort parks handicap accessible, by incorporating updates into the formal maintenance schedule.

**GOAL**: Develop new parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of Montfort residents

- Provide safe and adequate accessibility to the Village parks for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- o Develop park facilities based on recommended standards and community needs.
- Provide park and recreation facilities to accommodate all user groups, including the unique needs of the elderly and disabled.

GOAL: Continue to efficiently utilize existing funding streams and find new funding solutions for Montfort's park systems.

- Continue to cooperate and coordinate work with the school district, county, and state agencies to provide efficient outdoor recreation programs and opportunities.
- Leverage local support to develop more external grant funding for additional parks, recreation amenities, equipment, and maintenance.

Image 2: Montfort Village Park Shelter



## **Definitions and Classifications**

## **Open Space Need Standards**

Standards are a good starting point or reference when determining a community's outdoor recreation land and facility needs. However, each community's needs are different based on such factors as a community's demographic profile and what types of facilities and outdoor recreation priorities the citizenry deem important. Resident input in the form of surveys and/or public hearings are also important when recreation and park planners look at future development and/or preservation of public lands.

The Village of Montfort has a total of 38 acres of park and recreational space, with approximately 12 acres of the total intensively developed for recreational purposes. The remaining 26 acres was recently acquired by the Village and is currently being developed as the Montfort Arboretum. The arboretum will feature pre-european settlement vegetation (including oak savanna, prairie, and wetland) complete with a trail network for the benefit of residents.

Based on recommendations from the WIDNR and SWWRPC, the standard of 12 acres of developed park lands/open space per 1,000 population is used throughout this plan. This figure is viewed as a target number when recreation and park planners analyze a community's park, recreation land, and open space composition. Based on that standard, Montfort has more than enough developed park space for its residents because it only requires approximately 8.9 acres of developed park land for its population of 749 people. This analysis does not take into consideration the impact of park users residing outside the Village, which may be considerable, particularly on such facilities as the swimming pool.

All parks, recreation lands, and open space under the jurisdiction of the Village of Montfort have been assigned one primary classification or code using the following titles and abbreviations:

- M-P: Mini Park (or Tot Lot)
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 acre or less.
  - Service Area: 1/8 1/4 mile.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 0.5 1.0 acre.
  - Use: Specialized facilities to serve a concentration of limited population or groups such as senior citizens or young children.
  - Site Characteristics: Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to concentrations of family or senior housing.
- NP/P: Neighborhood Park/Playground
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 to 10 acres.
  - Service Area: 1/4 1/2 mile radius.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 2 3 acres.
  - Use: Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, ice skating, picnicking, volleyball, etc.
  - Site Characteristics: Suited for intense development; easily accessible to neighborhood population; geographically centered with safe walking and biking access. May be developed as a joint school/park facility.



#### C/CP: Community Park

- Desirable/Typical Size: 10 to 25 acres.
- Service Area: 1 2 miles.
- Acres/1,000 Population: 6 9 acres.
- Use: Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes or large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking. May be any combination of the above depending on site suitability and community need.
- Site Characteristics: May include natural features such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. Easy access by all modes of transportation.

#### SU: Special Use Area

- Desirable/Typical Size: Variable depending on type of facility.
- Service Area: Entire Community.
- o Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
- Use: Areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservancies, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, and downhill ski areas. Also includes plazas or squares in or near commercial centers, boulevards, or parkways.
- Site Characteristics: Located within the community.

#### LP: Linear Park

- Desirable/Typical Size: Sufficient width to protect resources and to provide maximum use.
- Service Area: No applicable standard.
- o Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
- Use: Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel or activity such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, fitness trails/cross-country skiing and canoeing. May include active play areas.
- Site Characteristics: Built on natural corridors such as utility or railroad right-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.



## **Development of Recreational Facilities Need Standards**

Standards for the development of recreation facilities, similar to open space standards are expressed in facility units per population ratio. The purpose of evaluating a recreation system is to determine the amount of needed facilities in each recreation area.

Problems related to using facility development standards is the assumption of desired opportunities by the resident population. For example, an examination of the facilities standards may show that a horseshoe area is needed based on the municipality's population. In reality, it is possible that very few people in the community enjoy playing horseshoes, which eliminates the need for this type of facility. Another problem with using standards is they are developed primarily for urban communities and have limited application to rural areas.

Despite these problems, community leaders can use them to approximate the adequacy of their park systems. A listing of recreational facility development standards, prepared by the American Planning Association and the United States Access Board can be found on their respective websites:

> American Planning Association Outdoor Recreation Facility Standards: https://www.planning.org/pas/reports/report194.htm

> > United States Access Board:

http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developedareas



# **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

"Our effectiveness in meeting future recreation needs will be shaped by many factors including the shifting demographics of our population, the quality of habitats and the impacts from invasive species and changing climate conditions, our ability to improve the compatibility between and among recreation participants, and sustainable financial resources. Parks and nature preserves, wildlife areas and refuges, and forests and trails connect people to the natural environment. These places, from small neighborhood parks to the large national, state and county forests, are the stages on which we enjoy the outdoors, improve our health, protect our air and water, and provide a large economic boost, particularly to our rural areas. - Wisconsin Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), provides recommendations to guide public outdoor recreation policy, planning decisions, the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund money, and other WIDNR administered grant programs.

High-quality outdoor recreation experiences available in Wisconsin contribute to our exceptional quality of life; reflected in sustained economic growth and in outdoor recreation traditions passed down through generations. From community river walks to expansive public forests, public recreation lands and facilities enhance our lives, draw millions of visitors, and support businesses large and small. The economic, social, and health benefits of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin far outweigh our investment.

To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as opinions about future needs. In addition, WIDNR undertook an assessment of recreation opportunities and needs in each region of the state. Together, these supporting documents show that an estimated 95% of Wisconsin adults participate in some type of outdoor recreation in the past year. Activities in which residents most frequently engaged tend to be those that require little preparation or travel time and can provide a high-quality experience in a limited amount of time. Examples include hiking and walking on trails, fishing, bicycling, dog walking, and bird/wildlife watching.

#### SCORP goals include:

- Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
- Grow partnerships.
- Provide high-quality experiences.
- Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
- Enhance funding and financial stability.

Additionally, the SCORP highlights regional recreational demands that supports Montfort's priorities for its location in the Mississippi River Corridor Region. The top five (5) most frequently identified recreation opportunities, needed in the Mississippi River Corridor Region, based on public input gathered during the SCORP Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA) process include:

- More hiking/walking/running trails
- More natural surface (dirt) bicycling trails
- More paved bicycling trails
- More rustic/quiet campgrounds (pit toilets, no electricity or generators)
- More public shore access to lakes & streams



## **Plan Process**

There are four essential baseline functions in developing a Community's Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP):

- 1. Understanding historical budget trends.
- 2. Creating an inventory of existing community recreational assets and facilities.
- 3. Development of relevant data and trends.
- 4. Coordinating outreach to the population that uses Montfort's outdoor recreation facilities.

To develop Montfort's CORP, SWWRPC tackled these four baseline functions, while receiving guidance from WIDNR. These four elements were used to develop priorities with the Village of Montfort Park Committee. These priorities became the plan goals and objectives listed in this document.

Figure 1: Plan Process



Each baseline function provided the planning process with essential insight into the community's assets, needs, and priorities; and were essential for the development of the final plan. To understand Montfort's budget, SWWRPC examined Montfort's parks budget from 2016 to 2020. This process was used to recognize patterns and the consistency between the amounts budgeted, and the amounts spent.

To create an inventory of existing community recreational assets, SWWRPC staff conducted an on-site inventory of existing parks, facilities, and equipment by using state-provided metrics for ranking recreation assets. The results of the inventory were presented to the Montfort Park Committee and used to develop priorities, plan goals, and objectives.

Data compilation and mapping was done throughout the planning process. SWWRPC compiled data related to the Village's age, demographics, and economic makeup and mapped it in relation to the existing parks.

Finally, outreach is the most important plan activity. SWWRPC developed a survey and distributed it widely within the community. Copies were available in print and online. Over 171 responses were compiled by the end of the planning process. This information and a summary from all plan activities were presented in a public forum to the Montfort Park Committee on February 15th, 2021. Plan goals and objectives were also developed for the final planning document during the public forum. Park Committee feedback from the February 15th, 2021 were compiled and added to the plan, incorporating implementation strategies for formal adoption and approval.

Table 1: Plan Activities

Activity	Date Conducted
Park Inventory	November 2020
Budget Analysis	January 2021
Data and Mapping	December 2020 – February 2021
Outreach	November 2020 – February 2021
Plan Development	November 2020 – March 2021
Approval	March 2021

## **Amending the Plan**

Plan amendments are common, represent good implementation or plan usage, and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision makers. Amendments must follow the same process as when the original plan was prepared. Amendments generally prolong the effectiveness of the original plan.

The following steps will ensure the new amendment is approved with respect to state statues and to the citizens of Montfort.

- 1. Initial meetings/framing the amendment: Depending on the size and scope of the amendment, the Park Committee will meet several times to discuss the proposed amendment.
- 2. Opportunity for Public Input: A public forum should be provided with ample time for the community to know about the proposed changes to the plan. Then a public meeting should be held so the community can understand the need for amendment and have an opportunity to provide direct feedback on the proposed changes.
- 3. Draft Amendment: The Park Committee develops a draft amendment that captures the need for the amendment and feedback from the public.
- 4. Amendment Adoption: At an official public meeting, with 30 days of notice, the Village Council will vote to approve the plan amendment with the recommendation of the Park Committee.
- 5. DNR Approval: The council action on the plan amendment should be sent in writing to the Department of Natural Resources for re-certification of the Village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with the new changes. The plan amendment will not be effective until a letter is received from DNR indicating their approval.



# **Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation Plans**

Image 4: Farmland Purchased for the Montfort Arboretum



The Village of Montfort had its first Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) prepared in 1989. Many improvements have been made to the Village parks since that initial plan was prepared. The plan was updated in 1996 and 2009 to maintain the Village's eligibility for park and recreation cost-sharing funds available through the WIDNR. Montfort's previous CORP update completed in 2009 by the Village Park Committee determined that while the Village did not need to increase the amount of park space, however improvements to facilities and equipment were required. Recommendations of the 2009 CORP largely focused on creating additional amenities in Montfort's parks. The 2009 plan also recommended constructing a new neighborhood park, three to five acres in size, on the east side of the community adjacent to the recreation trail to serve residents of Montfort living north of the Highway 18 and east of County Line Road.

# **Description of the Planning Region**

#### Social characteristics of Montfort

According to the 2019 US Census estimates, the population of the Village of Montfort is 749, which is up 13% from the 2000 US Census count. Montfort's racial composition is largely homogenous; 99.3% of the Village's population being white. The remaining 0.7% is split between the "Black" and "Some other race alone "categories. Montfort's lack of racial diversity is standard for the southwestern Wisconsin region, and lags behind the state average, with 85% white and a 15% split of other races, black being the highest at 6%.

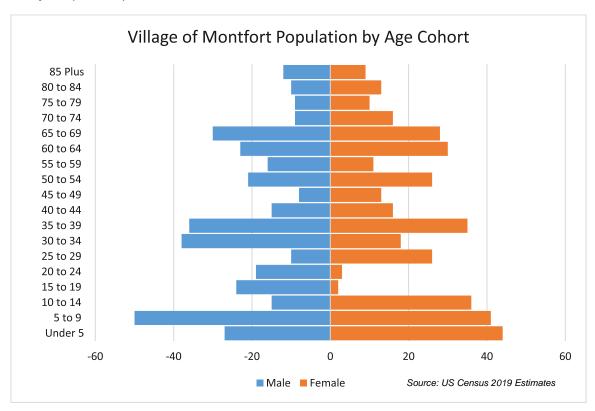
The Village of Montfort maintains a median age of 37.2, similar to many communities in southwestern Wisconsin. Table 2 illustrates that roughly 49% of the community is between 20 and 64 years old. This wide working-age base helps ground the community economically and provides stability. The relatively large youth population also suggests the Village will have sustainable long term growth.

Table 2: Montfort Age Cohorts

	Total P	opulation	Total N	⁄lale	Total Female				
Total Population	749	100.0%	372	49.7%	377	50.3%			
Under 5 years	71	9.5%	27	7.3%	44	11.7%	Total youth	<b>31.9%</b> of	
5 to 9 years	91	12.1%	50	13.4%	41	10.9%	population	total	
10 to 14 years	51	6.8%	15	4.0%	36	9.5%	239	population	
15 to 19 years	26	3.5%	24	6.5%	2	0.5%			
20 to 24 years	22	2.9%	19	5.1%	3	0.8%			
25 to 29 years	36	4.8%	10	2.7%	26	6.9%	Total	<b>48.6%</b> of	
30 to 34 years	56	7.5%	38	10.2%	18	4.8%	working-	total	
35 to 39 years	71	9.5%	36	9.7%	35	9.3%	age	population	
40 to 44 years	31	4.1%	15	4.0%	16	4.2%	population		
45 to 49 years	21	2.8%	8	2.2%	13	3.4%	364		
50 to 54 years	47	6.3%	21	5.6%	26	6.9%			
55 to 59 years	27	3.6%	16	4.3%	11	2.9%			
60 to 64 years	53	7.1%	23	6.2%	30	8.0%			
65 to 69 years	58	7.7%	30	8.1%	28	7.4%	Total	<b>19.5%</b> of	
70 to 74 years	25	3.3%	9	2.4%	16	4.2%	retired-age	total	
75 to 79 years	19	2.5%	9	2.4%	10	2.7%	population	population	
80 to 84 years	23	3.1%	10	2.7%	13	3.4%	146		
85 years and over	21	2.8%	12	3.2%	9	2.4%			
Source: US Census 2019 Estimates									

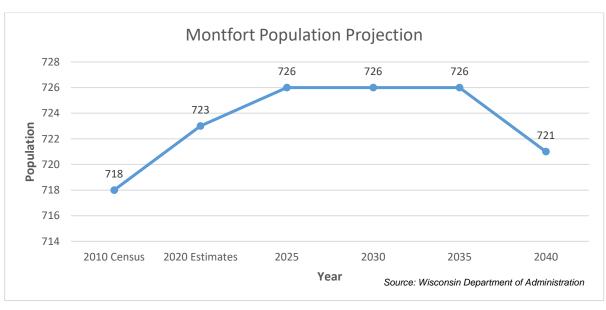
Figure 2 is a population pyramid that shows a snapshot of Montfort's population taken from the 2019 US Census Estimates. As mentioned previously, the largest portion of the pyramid is the "working-age" population between 20 and 64 years. The middle and bottom sections of the pyramid are bloated and the top is narrow. This means that the Village's population is likely to remain stable in the future if residents continue to reside within the Village and birth rates remain constant or appreciate.

Figure 2: Montfort Population Pyramid



These findings are consistent with information from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), which is believed to provide a more accurate reflection of population growth estimates. The Wisconsin DOA estimates are based on the prior census and analysis of contemporary data including housing units, dormitory and institutional populations, automobile registrations, and other indicators of population change. According to the DOA, Montfort's population will increase slightly from 2020 to 2025, and will consistently remain stable from 2025 to 2035 as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Montfort Population Projection



## Economy

While Montfort is too small of a community to have a designated "Metropolitan Statistical Area," it is the only municipality within the 53569 zip code. So while, the 53569 zip code is larger than Montfort's municipal boundary, some data can be used to gain an understanding of the local economy, even if it is not 100% defined by Montfort's Village limits. Within the 53569 zip code, the local economy is driven by businesses within the Dairy Product Manufacturing, Local Government (Excluding Education and Hospitals), and Other Amusement and Recreation Industries. The Village of Montfort has an estimated 0.5% unemployment rate according to the 2019 US Census estimates and approximately 106 people at or below the poverty level. The median household income for people living within the Village is \$56,429 according to the 2019 US Census estimates. However, results from the Montfort CDBG Street Projects survey showed that the US Census Estimates median household income value for Montfort is too high.

## **Physical Characteristics of the Region**

#### Location

The Village of Montfort is approximately 0.54 square miles of territory on the shared border between Grant and Iowa Counties in the State of Wisconsin. The Iowa County portion of Montfort is part of the Madison Metropolitan Statistical Area, while the Grant County portion is part of the Platteville Micropolitan Statistical Area. Montfort's proximity to unique natural features actively contributes to the visual identity that shapes the Village.

Figure 4 is a map depicting Montfort's distance to other recreation areas. Montfort is well-positioned to provide residents with nearby recreation activities. Within 25 miles, residents can utilize the Tower Junction Bowling Alley, Iowa-Grant School District Fitness Center, Snow Bottom and Big Spring Fishery areas, Governor Dodge State Park, Blackhawk Lake Recreational Area, Yellowstone Lake State Park and Wildlife Area, and others.

Figure 5 is a map that illustrates the local recreational assets within the Village of Montfort. Even though Montfort is a relatively small community, residents can enjoy recreation at the two local parks and other Villageowned open spaces, or enjoy the immediate natural recreation areas such as the newly acquire Montfort Arboretum site.



Figure 4: Montfort's Distance to other Recreation Areas

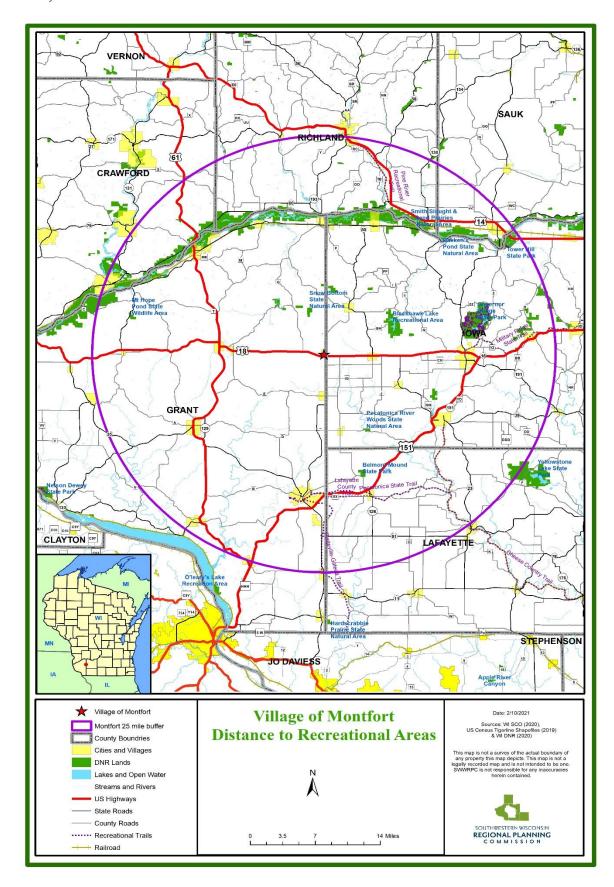
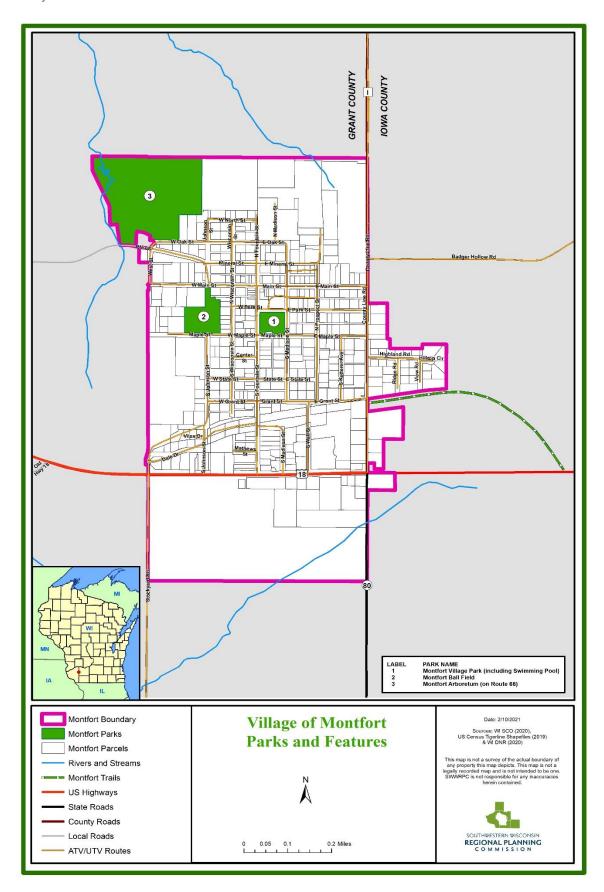


Figure 5: Montfort Parks and Features

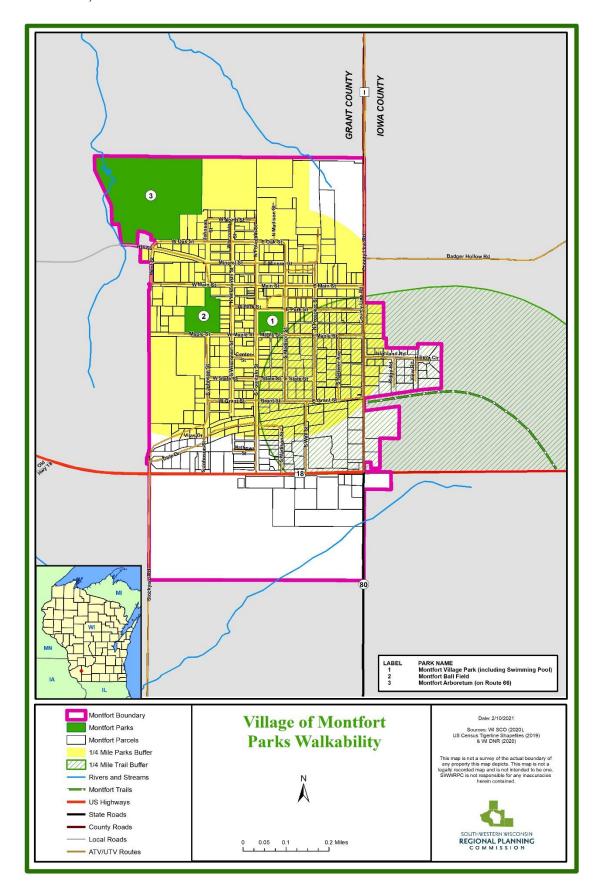


#### Walkability

In terms of access, approximately 94% of the residential portions of the Village are within one-quarter mile walking distance of a park or recreational asset. Figure 6 is a map depicting pedestrian access to each of Montfort's recreation areas. A yellow buffer was drawn around every park area in the Village, while a green hatched area represents the trail buffer. These highlighted sections represent the quarter-mile distance to a park or trail. A quarter-mile is conventionally considered to be "walkable" in most communities. This map indicates the majority of the Village is within walking distance of a park or trail. Exceptions include some residential areas on the west side of the Village just north of Highway 18. To correct this deficiency, walkway connections to these residential areas have been constructed along South Fountain Street to alleviate hazardous conditions for young children walking to the Village Park and Ballfield.



Figure 6: Park Walkability



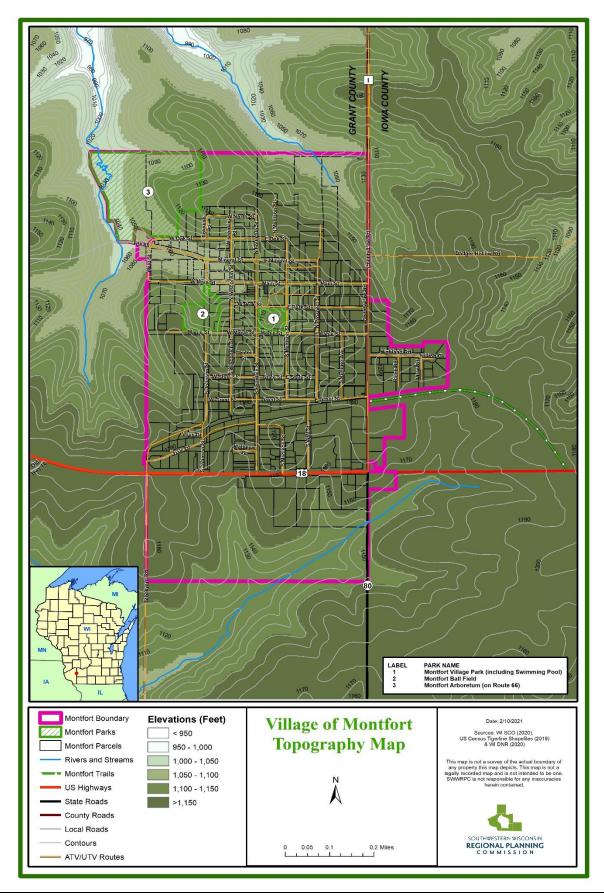
#### **Topography**

Montfort and the surrounding areas in Grant and Iowa counties are located within the Western Upland, a thorough dissected highland. The average elevation in the region is between 900 to 1,200 feet above sea level, where the area immediately adjacent to the highland averages 600 to 900 feet in elevation. Aside from the Upland itself, the strongest topographic features of the region are the trenches of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers and their numerous branches. One of the most dominant topographic features of the region is Military Ridge. The Ridge is the divide between the north flowing tributaries of the Wisconsin River and the south flowing steams of streams tributary to the Rock and Mississippi Rivers. The entire region, with the exception of the eastern half of Green County and a small portion of southeast Lafayette County, is characterized by rugged, steep-walled valleys and high relief. The region is generally referred to as the Driftless Area which preserves a large sample of what the rest of Wisconsin, as well as the northern and eastern United States were like before the Glacial Period.

Figure 7 is a Topography map for the Village of Montfort. Montfort is a prime example of the topography of the Driftless Region with elevations ranging between 1,000 to 1,200 feet above sea level.



**Figure 7:** Montfort Topographic Features



#### Climate

The climate of Montfort and the surrounding area in Grant and Iowa Counties is continental and typical of the central areas of a continent in the middle latitudes. Winters are relatively cold and snowy with extended periods of rain during the spring and autumn and intermittent periods of hot, humid summer weather. Air temperatures within the region are subject to large seasonal changes and yearly variations. Precipitation in the region for the six-month period from April through September falls largely as rainfall and may range in intensity and duration from light showers to destructive thunderstorms. The snowfall average for the region is about 40 inches annually. Prevailing winds are westerly in winter and southerly in summer.

#### Soils

Throughout the Driftless Area the work of weathering has continued since long before the Glacial Period and has produced a deep mantle of residual soil. This forms a notable contrast with the remainder of the state, where the continental glacier scraped away nearly all the residual soil and left a sheet of transported soil. Generally, the soils of the region have been classified as the Grayish-Brown Unglaciated Silt Loam, hilly or steep. The soils were formed from parent materials reflecting native vegetation such as prairie, oak-hickory forestry, and oak savannas. Their basic materials include clay residue from weathered limestone, weathered sandstone, loess, and stream-laid sand and gravel. The latter occurs in valleys of large streams, while the first three are wide spread. The entire southwest Wisconsin region is covered with a thick blanket of loess (windblown silt and sand). Over most of the region the loess is largely silt and is two to three feet thick. In addition, some sandy areas along the Wisconsin River have active dunes.

#### Flora and Fauna

Montfort is located within the Southwest Savanna ecological landscape in Wisconsin. The Southwest Savanna was once dominated by fire-dependent natural communities of Prairie, Oak Savanna, Oak Woodland and Oak Forest. It is now predominately dominated by agriculture, however, remnants of the former natural communities do exist but typically in low-quality. Less than one-percent of the land in this eco-region are in public ownership so care for the public lands are important. The WIDNR believes this landscape offers the best opportunity in the state for large scale grassland management and restoration. Small and scattered remnants of prairie and oak savanna exist and harbor many rare plant species. High quality streams also exist in this eco-region making buffer zones adjacent to them important.

Threats from invasive plant species have been increasing and control of them should be considered. Invasive plants reduce opportunities for recreation, increase chances for erosion, decrease habitat, and lessen the aesthetics of areas. Some of these invasive plants include: Alliaria petiolata (Garlic mustard), Centaurea stoebe (Spotted knapweed), Cirsium arvense (Canada thistle), Coronilla varia (Crown vetch), Dipsacus sylvestris (Common teasel), Elaeagnus umbellata (Autumn olive), Euonymus alatus (Burning bush), Hesperis matronalis (Dame's rocket), Lonicera tatarica (Tartarian honeysuckle), Lythrum salicaria (Purple loosestrife), Morus alba (White mulberry), Pastinaca sativa (Wild parsnip), Phalaris arundinacea (reed canary grass), Robinia pseudoacacia (Black locust), Rosa multiflora (Multiflora rose). Any plant that is dominating an area could be considered as invasive.

Common trees of the area historically would include fire tolerant Oaks, Shagbark Hickory and Hazelnut undergrowth. Ravines and near waterways would have been Maple, Basswood dominated. However, due to mesophication, woodlands are becoming dominated by other low-quality tree species and stocking rates are much higher today than historical standards.



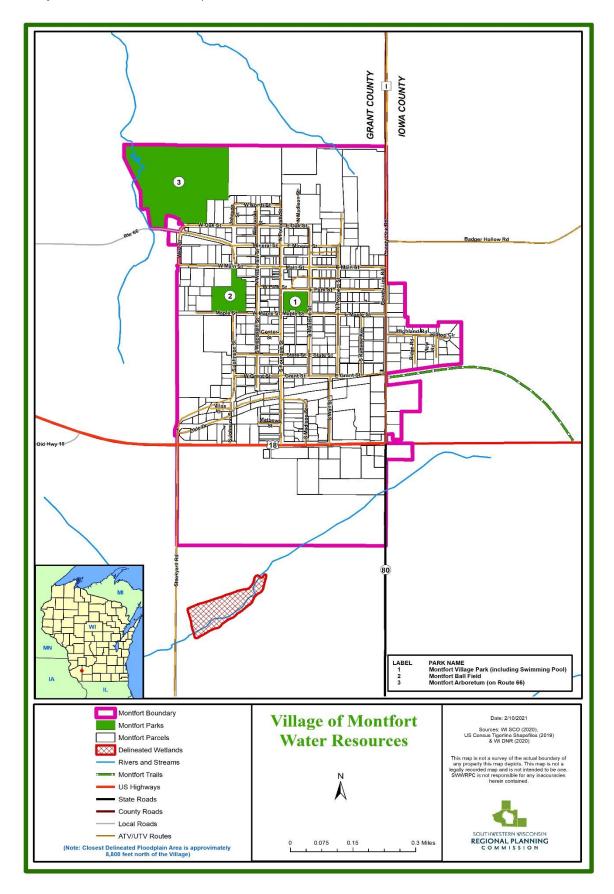
Most of the landscape (70%) is covered in agricultural crop production. Grassland, forest and residential areas comprise the remainder. The grasslands are primarily pasture, with some containing scattered open-grown oaks. These pastures mimic the historical oak savanna structure. Prairie remnants persist in areas poorly suited to agriculture. The area provides much potential for grassland and savanna restoration.

The Southwest Savanna contains public lands which provide abundant recreation opportunities with some of the most popular being surface trail bicycling, paddlesports, fishing and hiking, and walking or running on trails. The Southwest Savanna also contains nine Class I waters, 78 Class II waters, and four Class III waters. The protection of these waterways in imperative to any land use plan.

#### **Water Resources and Floodplain**

Two major rivers form boundaries of counties within the region. The Wisconsin River forms the northern boundary of Iowa and Grant counties, and the southern boundary of Richland County; and the Mississippi River forms the western boundary of Grant County. In addition, the area is traversed by a number of smaller rivers and streams that flow to either the Wisconsin or Mississippi Rivers. As mentioned above, there are no natural lakes in Southwestern Wisconsin due to the fact that the area was never covered by glaciers. However, there are a few man-made lakes in the region, most of which are located in state parks or other public recreation areas. Figure 8 illustrates the availability of water within the Village of Montfort. The closest delineated floodplain area to Montfort is approximately 8,800 feet north of the Village.

Figure 8: Montfort Water Resources and Floodplain



# **Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory**

To determine what course of action Village officials must take to provide a comprehensive recreation program, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of existing areas and facilities in meeting demands for recreation. This section of the report provides an inventory of Montfort's recreational facilities. The location of all park and recreation areas is recorded on Figure 5.

The Village of Montfort has three Village-owned developed recreation areas. Additionally, Montfort recently acquired a 26 acres piece of farmland which is currently being developed as the Montfort Arboretum. It is planned that the arboretum will feature pre-european settlement vegetation (including oak savanna, prairie, and wetland) complete with a trail network for the benefit of residents.

The following is a short description and inventory of existing Village-owned parks and recreational assets, as well as potential assets for future recreation.





## **Montfort Village Park**

Village Park is the focal point for outdoor recreation activity in Montfort. The park is a popular spot in the summer time with the public pool, basketball court, playground, shelter, and open space area. Montfort's Village Park is shared with adjoining towns and Villages.

## Classification: Village/Community Park

- 2 Acres
- Swimming Pool (fenced) and bath house
- 1 Shelter Building
- 5 Picnic tables
- 7 Park Benches
- 1 Drinking fountain
- 3 Trash cans
- Restrooms (handicapped accessible)
- Playground apparatus
- 2 Sets of swings
- Large landscaped open area with many trees
- 1 basketball court
- Sidewalk to provide better access to shelter building

Image 6: Montfort Village Park Playground Area



## **Montfort Ballfield**

The Montfort Ballfield is mostly used during the summer for practice and tournaments. The terraced open space is almost entirely grass covered, suitably maintained, and with good potential for further recreation development.

Classification: Village/Community Park

- 4 Acres
- 3 Benches
- Lighted baseball diamond (Fenced, 5 Bleachers)
- Concession stand
- 5 picnic tables
- Playground apparatus
- Restrooms

Image 7: Playground Area at the Montfort Ballfield



## **Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail**

The current location of the recreational trail on the eastern edge of the Village was previously used as a railroad right-of-way by the Chicago and North Western (C&NW) Railroad. This one-half mile trail starts at County Highway "I" and extends easterly about a half mile where it curves to the south to make connection with U.S. Highway 18. It is used for passive recreation, such as walking, hiking and nature study.

Classification: Linear Park

6 Acres

Image 8: Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail Sign



## **Montfort Arboretum**

Montfort recently acquired a 26-acres piece of farmland which is currently being developed as the Montfort Arboretum. The total area of land currently consists of the following:

- 14 acres are pasture consisting of cool season grasses and sparse trees
- 10 acres of cropland in row crop production
- 2 acres of former feedlot, seeded with warm season grasses and alfalfa.
- A small stream that runs along the west and northwest portions of the property that flows into the Blue River
- Storage buildings occupy the southwest area of the site.

The purchase of the farmland was very cost effective, and restoring the area into a wetland, oak savanna, and prairie using a series of phases is integral and in accordance with the Village's phosphorus mitigation strategy. This will be accomplished by using a variety of native seed mixes suited for each habitat. These seed mixes will prevent soil erosion and provide crucial habitat for native species.

The arboretum will feature pre-european settlement vegetation (including oak savanna, prairie, and wetland) complete with a trail network for the benefit of residents. There will be access to garbage/recycling containers, benches in four different locations along the trail, and possibly bathrooms when water or sewer service is made available on the property in the future.

Image 9: Stream that runs through the Montfort Arboretum



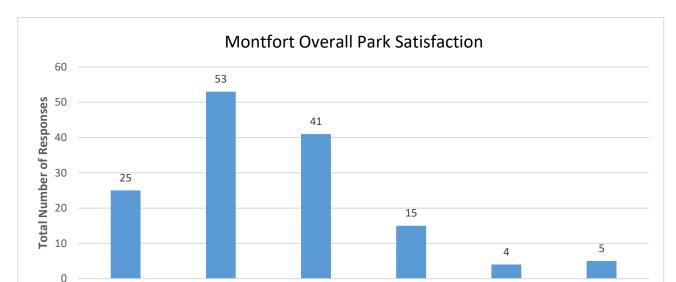
## **Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment**

To compose the Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment, SWWRPC developed a comprehensive outreach strategy for the Village of Montfort. The survey was created electronically and open from November 16th to December 28th, 2020. Survey access information was distributed with the water bill to residents in the Village. Paper copies were available upon request and in the clerk's office. In total, SWWRPC collected 171 completed surveys with an estimated 23% sample size of the total population. However, some questions within the survey were not answered by all respondents.

These survey results were compiled, distributed, and presented in a meeting with the Montfort Parks Committee on February 15th, 2021. The results of the survey, public forum, and on-site evaluation for SWWRPC's inventory process were instrumental in framing the Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment.

## Survey

The two primary purposes of the survey effort were to (1) identify the quality of existing parks, facilities, and recreation spaces, and (2) identify the need for future parks, facilities, and recreational spaces. Overall, park satisfaction in Montfort is high (Figure 9). The Village Park, Ballfield and Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail are all rated as moderate in frequency of use and of high quality, as shown in Figures 10 and 11 respectively. Of all the recreational facilities, the Village Park had the highest indication of "needing improvement" or "unacceptable".



Neutral

Level of Satisfaction

Somewhat

Dissatisfied

Figure 9: Overall Montfort Park Satisfaction

Very Satisfied

Somewhat

Satisfied

Very Dissatisfied

Do not visit

Figure 10: Montfort Park Visit Frequency

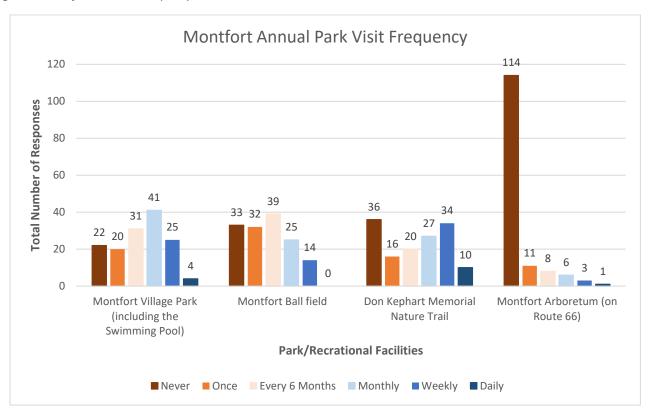
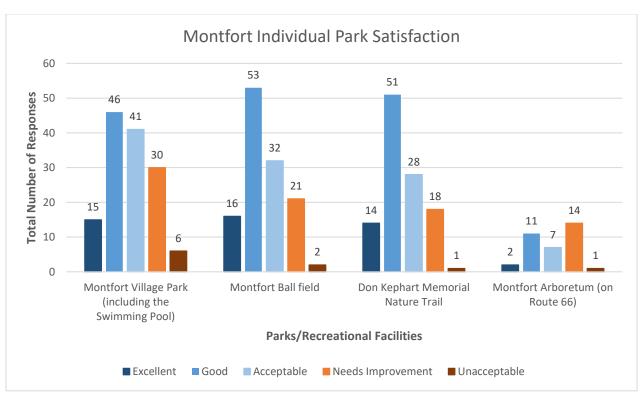


Figure 11: Montfort's Individual Park Satisfaction



In terms of addressing future needs, survey participants indicated their top-3 highest priorities for park maintenance, as shown in Figure 12. These priorities include maintaining amenities (including picnic tables, trash cans, water fountain, etc.), facilities (including park shelters, restroom, etc.), and equipment (including playgrounds, basketball court and hoops, etc.). Of these three top priorities each were indicated as being "needed now," rather than sometime within the next five years. Survey participants had the following comments:

"Safer walking areas!"

"The pool needs major attention. Many children and adults with slivers and cuts from the bottom of the pool. Pool railing was wobbly last year and pool is a bit rough in places."

"A dog park will be a great addition so people have a place to go with their dogs instead of all over the park and not cleaning up after them. A more appropriate place for the dog park may be on the existing walking trail"

"We need a new pool, this pool needs updating bad, needs more for little kids, the pool is boring and needs an update, this is why it isn't getting a lot of service"

"Please make walking trails in Montfort arboretum with signage. Also shrubs in Park need trimming and weeding-clean up. Be glad to help. Maybe a friends of Montfort parks group???"

"Better maintenance of bike trail (mowing and weed control) and possible garbage cans to help with littering ."

"The swimming pool is the most important to us to be open and functioning every summer."

"Montfort park shelter is cracked cement, dirty. Tables in bad shape, one old garbage can. Need more garbage cans in park. Needs attention. Shelter needs better lighting and updating - maybe paint it a bright color like white."

"I have been told that the city park near the pool is not safe, because of suspicious activity. Especially in the evening"

"The park has not had any new equipment for years. Needs more baby swings. Maybe a climbing gym. Some single play items."

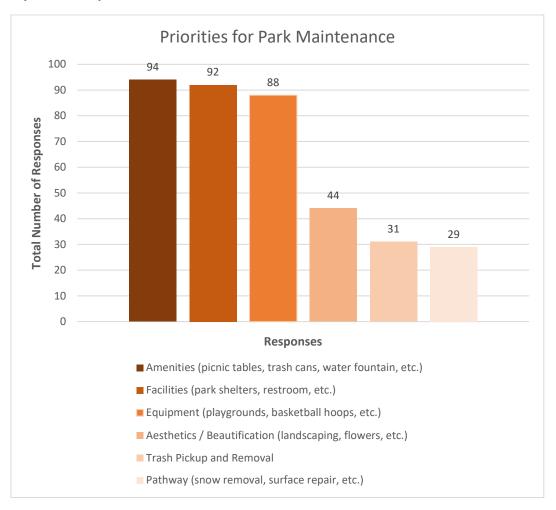
"Maybe Annual Park clean up improvement day to get community buy in"

"Beautification of the parks. Low maintenance landscaping, colorful flowers, etc."

"I think we need more community based activates, then the normal beer tent during big days, the location of our community has the ability to let our Village grow and potentially bring in more businesses or tourism. Utilize that and bring something great to this community."



Figure 12: Montfort's Priorities for Park Maintenance



## **Summary of Public Outreach**

Public input sessions are often a statutory requirement or prerequisite to the adoption of certain ordinances and plans at the local government level. In light of public health concerns arising from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the public input stage of the process was altered to reduce in-person meetings. Due to this, the survey period was extended to provide ample time for more community members to respond to the survey. Also, open-ended questions were included in the survey to solicit for detailed responses regarding needed improvements to the parks, recreational facilities, and amenities. In total, SWWRPC collected 171 completed surveys with an estimated 23% sample size of the total population.

At a Parks Committee meeting held on February 15th, 2021, SWWRPC shared data gathered from the surveys. The Parks Committee reviewed the material, identified Montfort's critical issues, provided additional feedback on the survey, reviewed recommendations, and developed plan goals and objectives. The Plan was reviewed and adopted by the Village at their March 8th board meeting.

Needs identified through public participation include the following:

- Continuous pool improvements and maintenance is needed. The last major update to the pool was done in the 1980's. The survey results showed that the pool needs major attention. Due to the pool being rough in different places, many children and adults have been injured with slivers and cuts. The pool railings are also reported to be wobbly. Some residents also mentioned that other amenities could be provided to make the pool more family friendly, which will increase patronage.
- Parks need regular equipment and maintenance improvements. Priorities for park maintenance should be: improving amenities, restroom maintenance, equipment maintenance, facility maintenance, as well as increasing efforts like landscaping and beautification.
- Montfort residents need more walking, hiking, and biking opportunities.
- Provide additional park amenities and facilities in existing parks including playground equipment, picnic tables, benches and others.
- Designate an area along the current walking trail or at the Montfort Arboretum for a dog park
- Parks need to continue to be updated to become more handicap accessible.
- Park attendance needs to be improved.
- Montfort residents need access to indoor recreational facilities during the winter months.
- Continual funding is critical for the existing and future needs of the Montfort Parks system.

# **Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation**

#### **Action Program**

Under the existing park and open space classification system, Montfort has enough open space for its population of 749 people. In terms of access, approximately 94% of residential areas within the Village are within onequarter mile walking distance of a park or recreation asset. Some residential areas on the west side of the Village just north of Highway 18 are identified as not being within the one-quarter mile walking distance of a park or recreation asset. To correct this deficiency, walkway connections to these residential areas have been constructed along South Fountain Street to alleviate hazardous conditions for young children walking to the Village Park and Ballfield.

The following section features two sets of recommendations 1) to strengthen existing park assets through ongoing maintenance improvements and by providing additional park amenities, and 2) to strategically enhance walking, biking, and hiking opportunities in and around the Village.

### **Recommendations by Park**

#### **Montfort Village Park**

Several improvements are needed at Village Park. Recommendations for individual projects or activities are listed below:

- Continuous pool improvements and maintenance is needed. The last major update to the pool was done in the 1980's. The survey results showed that the pool needs major attention. Due to the pool being rough in different places, many children and adults have been injured with slivers and cuts. The pool railings are also reported to be wobbly. Some residents also mentioned that other amenities could be provided to make the pool more family friendly, which will increase patronage.
- Provide more playground equipment within Village Park (including monkey bars, baby swings etc.) Replace worn playground equipment with new and innovative playground apparatus.
- Update existing shelter by cleaning it up, painting, and upgrading lighting system. Replace/restore worn picnic tables.
- Another shelter building is needed in the park, as well as more picnic tables (handicapped accessible).
- Provide more recycling bins within the park.

#### **Montfort Ballfield**

Several improvements are needed at Village Park. Recommendations for individual projects or activities are listed below:

- Expand play area to include more playground equipment
- Install Disc golf course
- Add a sand volleyball area
- Terrace hillside to provide seating for the ballfield



#### **Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail**

Several improvements are needed at Village Park. Recommendations for individual projects or activities are listed below:

- Resurfacing of trail to facilitate the use of strollers and bicycles.
- Providing better maintenance of trail (including mowing, weed control, snow removal).
- Recycling bins should be provided to help with littering.
- Install more permanent park benches intermittently along trail.
- Trail Sign Restoration

#### **Montfort Arboretum**

The Montfort Arboretum project proposes to restore the former farmland and pasture area into a wetland, oak savanna, and prairie using a series of phases in accordance with a phosphorus mitigation strategy. This will be accomplished by using a variety of native seed mixes suited for each habitat. These seed mixes will prevent soil erosion and provide crucial habitat for native species. To ensure the public can utilize the space the following park and recreational components will be provided at the arboretum:

- There will be a trail system implemented on the site. These trails will be made of Kentucky bluegrass which will be mowed periodically to allow for ease of access for visitors as well as serve as firebreaks.
- Garbage/recycling containers will also be provided to put remnants in. This will reduce the amount of trash and debris on the trail to keep it healthy and functioning properly without harm to the wildlife.
- Benches in four different locations along the trail. The proposed bench locations will provide users the opportunity to look out over a sloped hill at the creek/wetland or simply off in the distance to take in the breathtaking scenery.
- There is also interest in creating a buffalo wallow depression in the northwest corner of the site.

#### **Additional Recreation Spaces**

Other additional recreational needs include:

- Constructing a sidewalk to connect the walking path that ends on East Mineral Street along North Fountain Street to the newly acquired arboretum site. This will help alleviate hazardous conditions for young children and adults walking to the arboretum.
- Designating bikeway lanes on South Madison Street and South Wisconsin Street to connect to Oak Street through to the Montfort Arboretum.
- Providing a designated area for a dog park. Additional comments from the survey indicated that many residents are either (1) concerned that there is not any appropriate facility for dog-owners and their pets or (2) dogs allowed within the parks create a nuisance for regular park visitors. It is recommended that the parks committee engage in a conversation with Montfort residents to establish rules about access of dogs in parks and to establish if a dog park is the best possible solution to the problem. Suggestions about providing a dog park area along the existing trail or at the Montfort Arboretum were proposed by residents during the survey.

Figure 13 shows the locations of future recreational improvements within the Village of Montfort.



Figure 13: Future Improvements Map

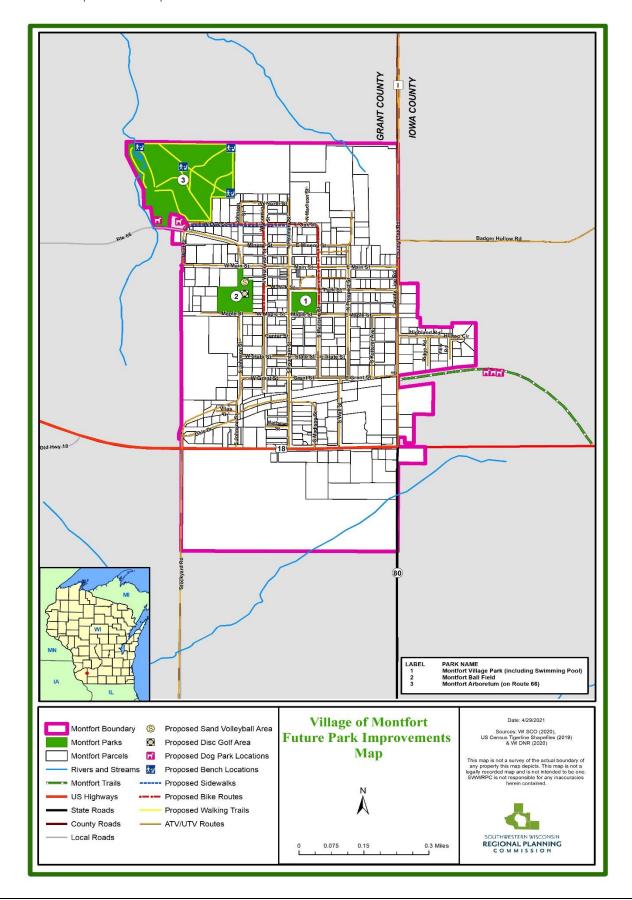
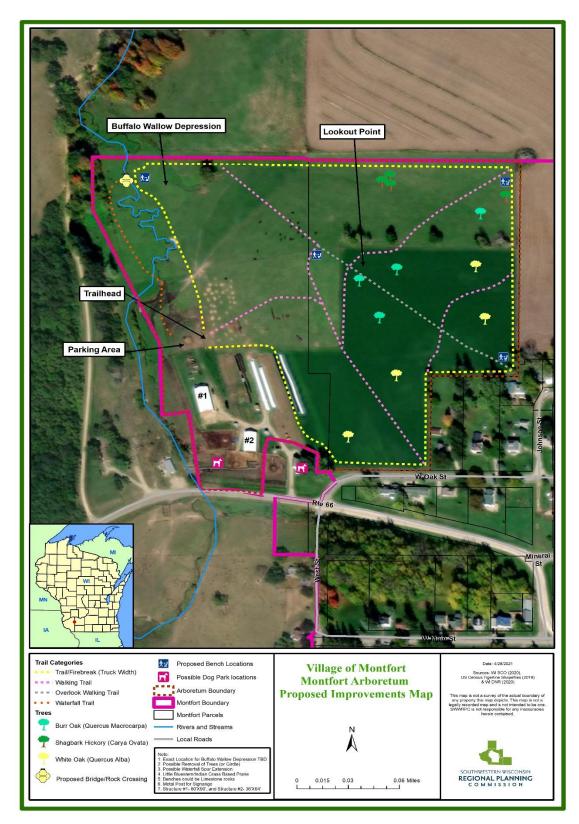


Figure 14: Proposed Improvements at the Montfort Arboretum



# **Appendix A: Capital Improvement Schedule**

Over the next five years, the Village of Montfort will focus on the improvements outlined in the previous section. These recommendations are in addition to the standard operations and maintenance schedule under which the Village currently operates. The highest priority outlined in the Capital Improvement Schedule include the parkspecific recommendations to the Montfort arboretum and the Montfort Village Park. Table 3 is the Capital Improvement Schedule which shows the park specific recommendations, priorities, and the number of years the plan recommendation will be completed by.

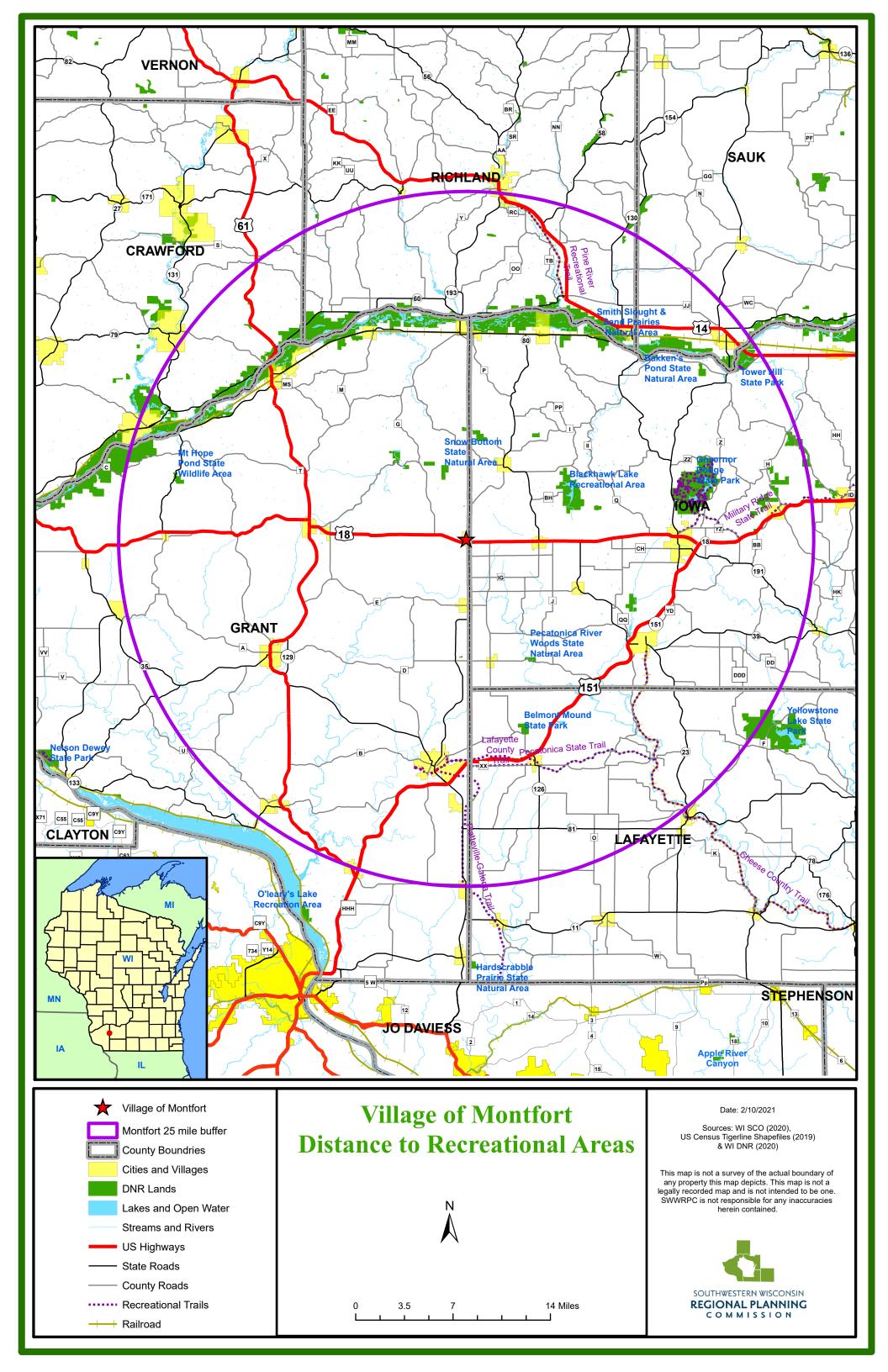
**Table 3:** Capital Improvements Schedule

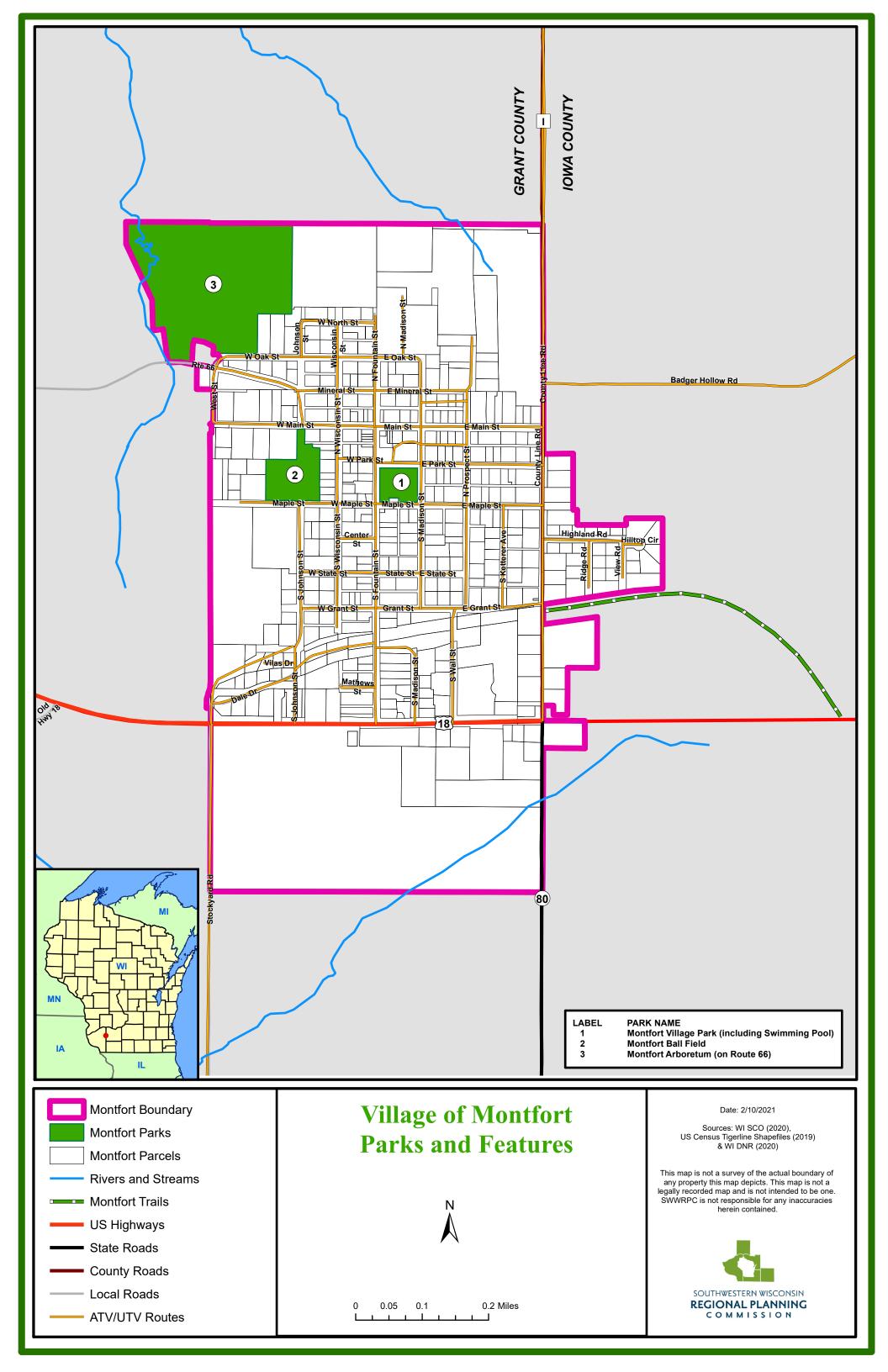
Park/Recommendation	Priority	Timeline
		Within 1 year
	1-5	2 years
	1 being highest priority	3 years
		4 years
		5 years
Montfort Village Park		,
Place Recycling bins in all recreational areas within the park	3	Within 1 year
Add more playground equipment within Village Park (including monkey bars, baby swings etc.)	2	Within 3 years
Update existing shelter by cleaning it up, painting, and upgrading lighting system. Replace/restore worn picnic tables.	1	Within 2 years
Add another shelter as well as more handicapped accessible picnic tables.	4	Within 5 years
Renovate Swimming pool and provide continuous maintenance.	1	Within 3 years
Montfort Ballfield		
Expand play area to include more playground equipment	4	Within 3 years
Install Disc golf course	5	Within 5 years
Add a sand volleyball area	5	Within 5 years
Terrace hillside to provide seating	3	Within 2 years
Don Kephart Memorial Nature Trail		
Resurface trail to facilitate the use of strollers and bicycles	2	Within 3 years
Providing better maintenance of trail (including mowing, weed control, snow removal)	1	Periodically
Place Recycling bins at vantage points along the trail	2	Within 1 year
Install more permanent park benches intermittently along trail	2	Within 2 years
Trail Sign Restoration	1	Within 2 years
Montfort Arboretum		
Restore the former pasture and farmland into a wetland, oak savanna, and prairie using a series of phases in accordance with a phosphorus mitigation strategy	1	Within 3 year
Construct a walking/hiking trail that crosses through all the different ecosystems within the arboretum.	1	Within 3 years

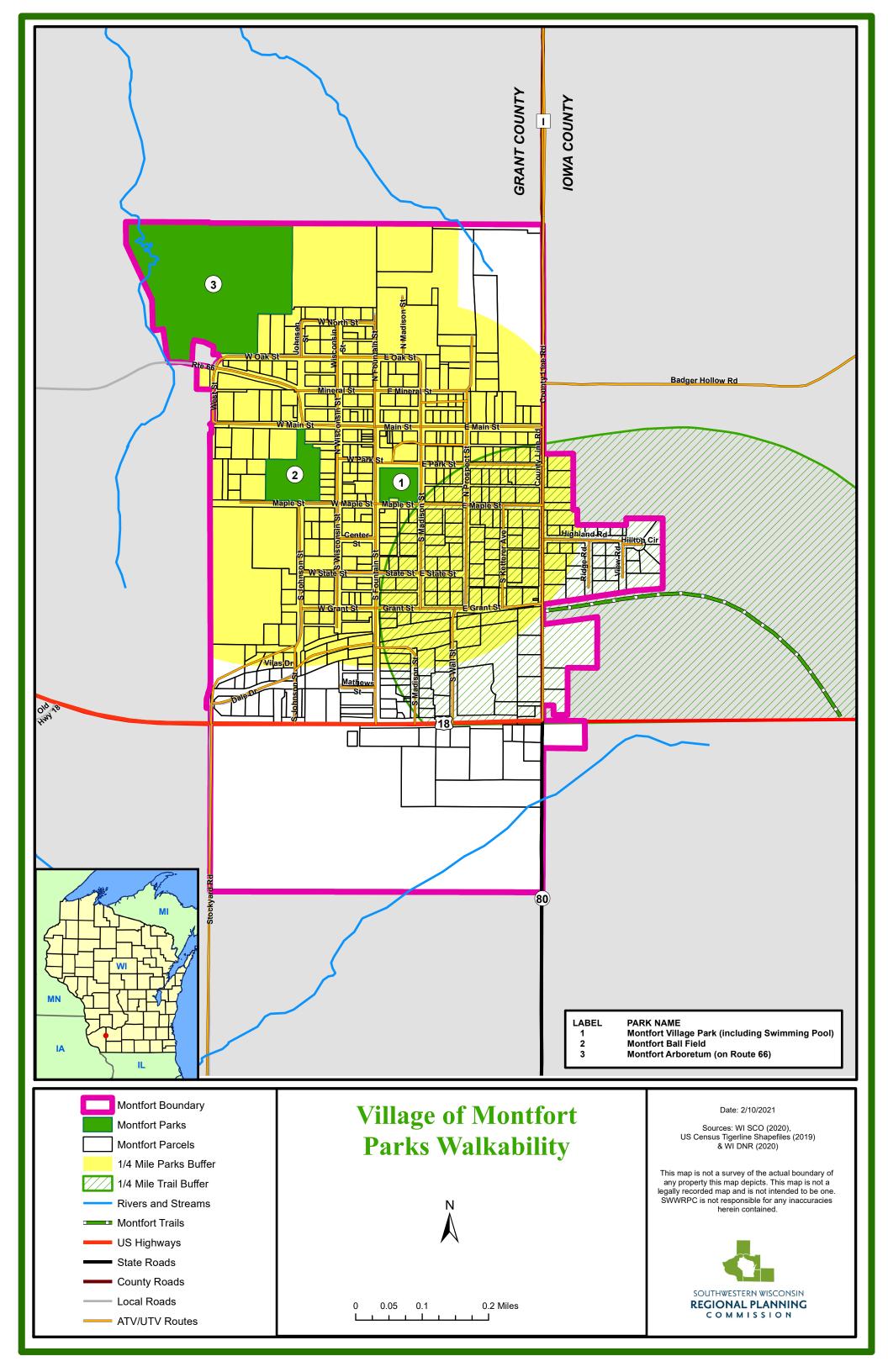
Add a gazebo at the proposed lookout point	1	Within 3 years
Provide benches in 4 different locations	1	Within 3 years
along the trail		
Place Recycling bins in all recreational areas	1	Within 3 years
within the arboretum		
Additional Recreation Spaces		
Construct a sidewalk to connect the walking	2	Within 3 years
path that ends on East Mineral Street along		
North Fountain Street to the arboretum site.		
Designate bikeway lanes on South Madison	2	Within 3 years
Street and South Wisconsin Street to connect		
to Oak Street through to the Montfort		
Arboretum		
Designate an area to be used as a dog park	2	Within 3 years
along the trail or at the Montfort Arboretum		

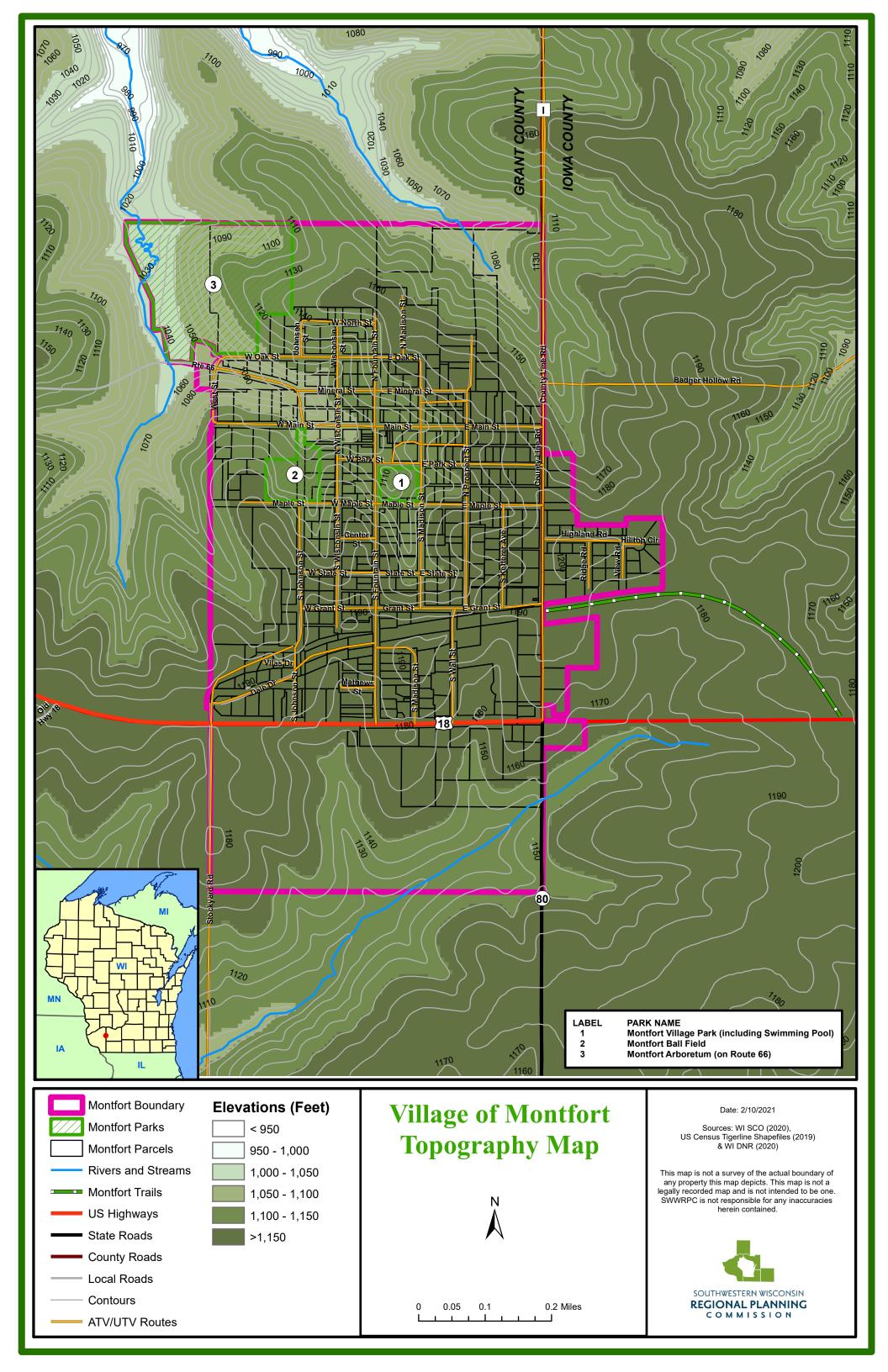
# **Appendix B: Maps**

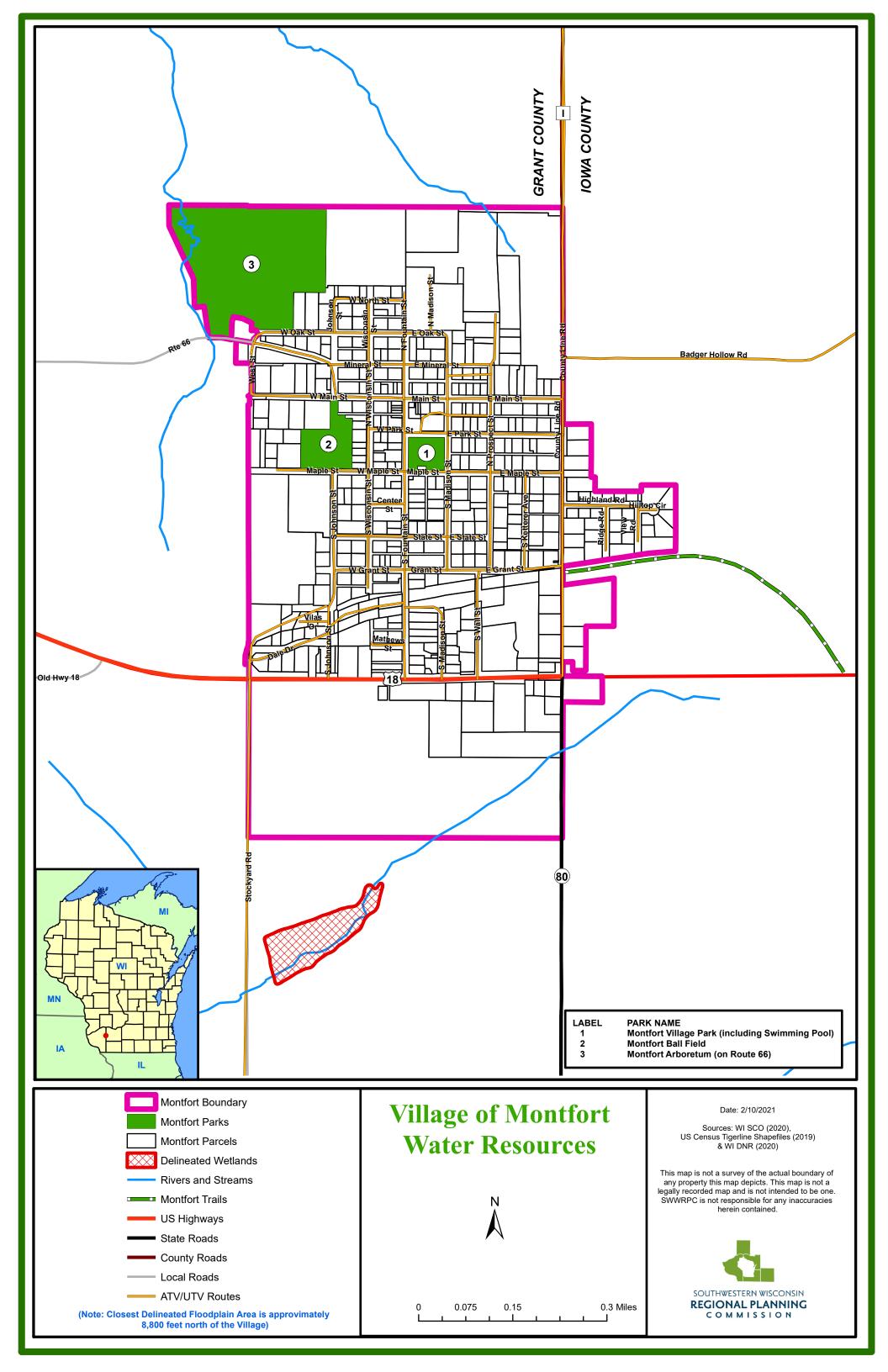


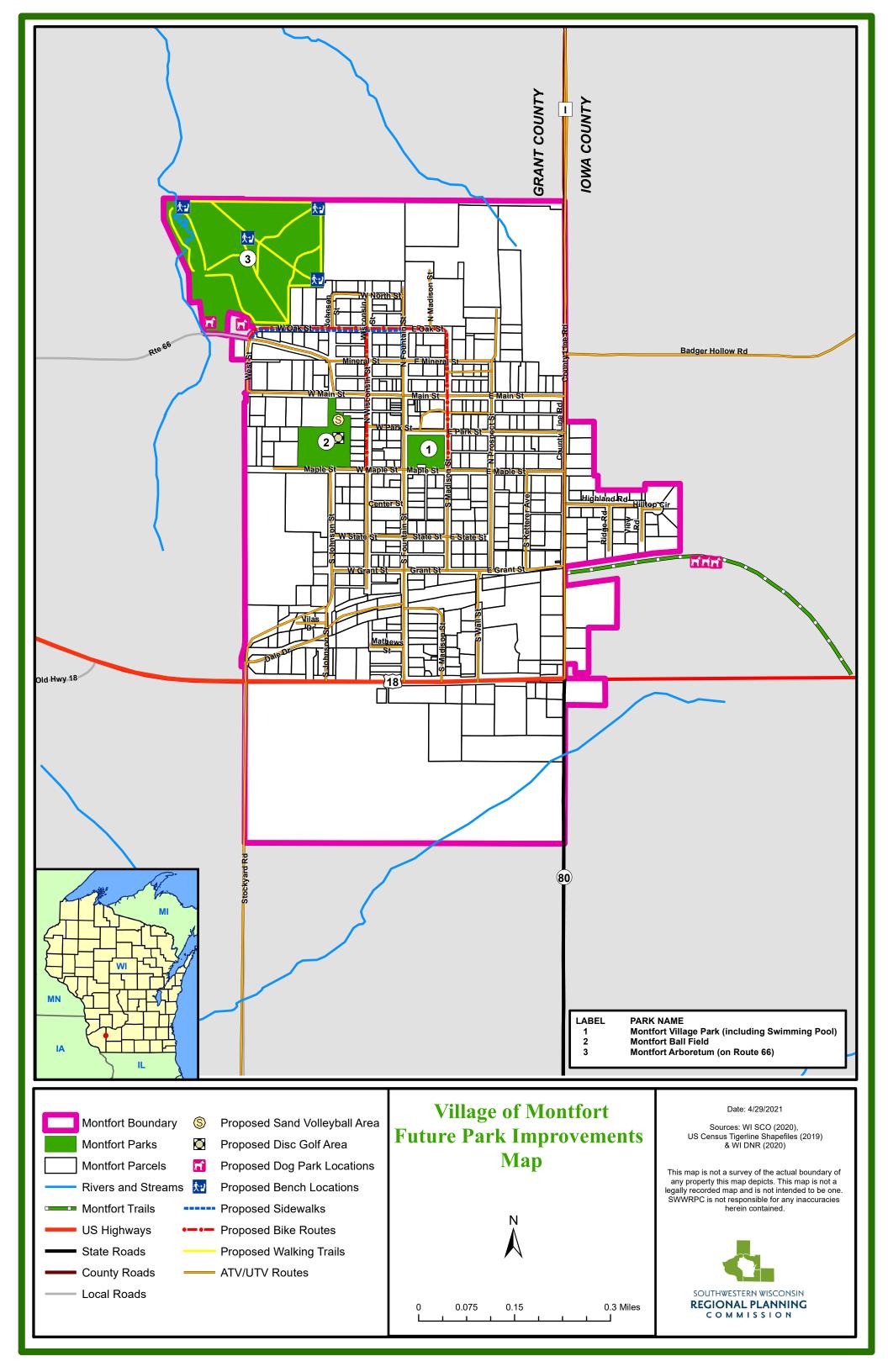


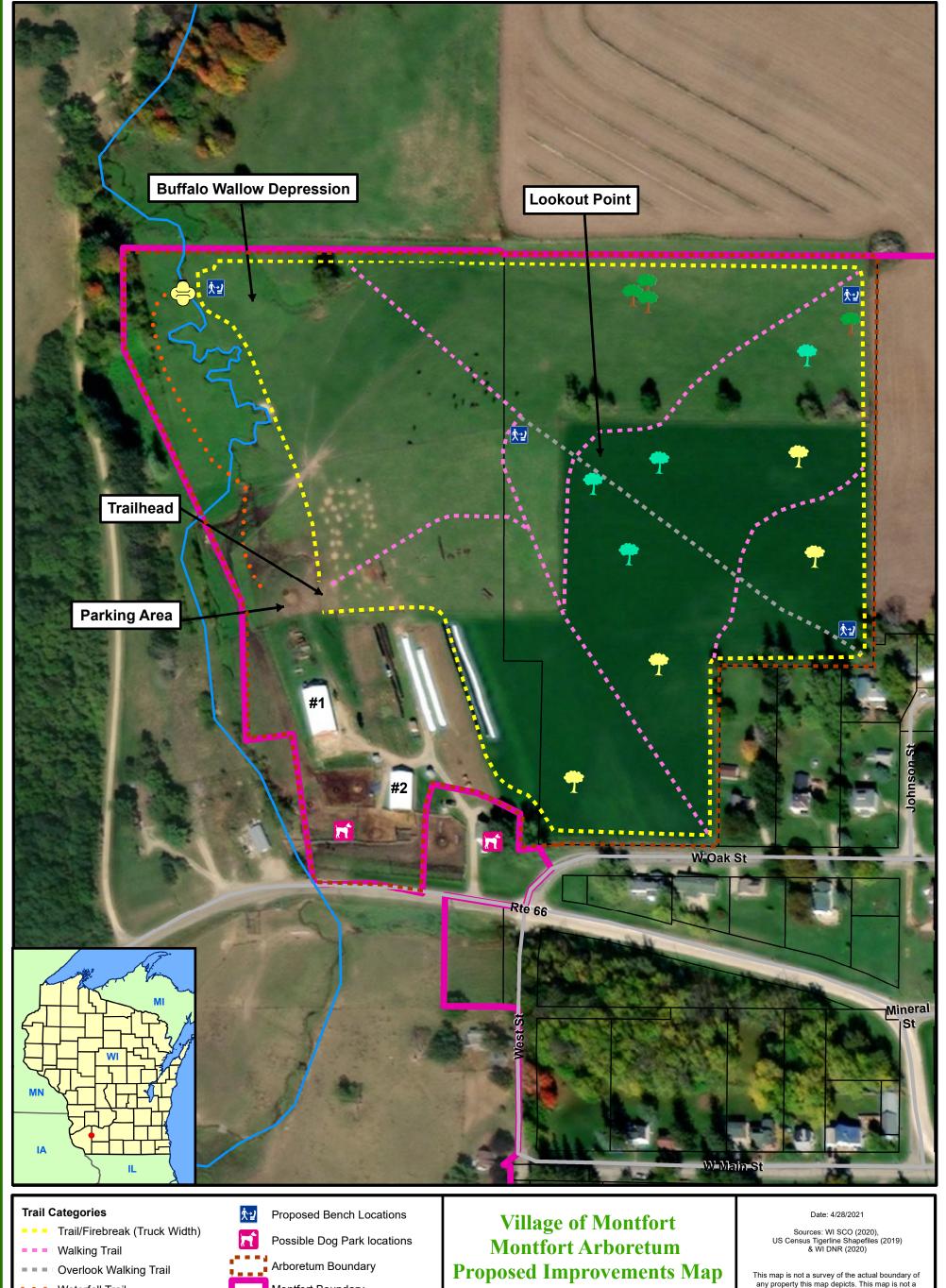












Waterfall Trail

#### **Trees**



Burr Oak (Quercus Macrocarpa)



Shagbark Hickory (Carya Ovata)



White Oak (Quercus Alba)



Proposed Bridge/Rock Crossing

Montfort Boundary

Montfort Parcels

Rivers and Streams

Local Roads

## Note:

- Note:

  1. Exact Location for Buffalo Wallow Depression TBD

  2. Possible Removal of Trees (or Girdle)

  3. Possible Waterfall Spur Extension

  4. Little Bluestem/Indian Grass Based Prarie

- S. Benches could be Limestone rocks
   Metal Post for Signange
   Structure #1- 80'X90', and Structure #2- 36'X64'



0.015 0.03 0.06 Miles This map is not a survey of the actual boundary of any property this map depicts. This map is not a legally recorded map and is not intended to be one. SWWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

