



# AGENDA

for the

## 2015 - MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MPAC)

City Hall Council Chambers/Community Room – 16860 Main Street

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

(Two (2) Hour Time Limit Will Be Honored)

### **Re: First Draft of the 2016 Master Plan**

- I. Welcome To Group Members And Opening Comments By Mayor Woerther And The Department Of Planning
- II. Review And Action On The Minutes From November 30, 2015 Meeting

Documents: [II. DRAFT MINUTES 11-30-15 MPAC.PDF](#)

- III. Public Comment

- A. Request From Pulte Homes/Stock & Associates Conceptual Land Use Classification Change - 2121 Quaethem Drive, 2443 & 2485 Valley Road

- IV. Discussion Of Topics And Consideration Of Information By The Committee

- A. Presentation And Discussion Of First Draft Of The 2016 Master Plan

Documents: [IV.A. MASTER PLAN - FIRST DRAFT - 1.12.16.PDF](#)

- B. Discussion Of Format And Assignments For Final Public Input Session On Wednesday, January 20, 2016

- C. Comments And Questions From Committee Members

Documents: [HOUSEAL LAVIGNE REPORT - SECTION 5 - ACTION ITEMS.PDF](#)

V. Next Meeting Date Of The Committee – January 20, 2016 – Wednesday (7:00 P.m.) – At  
The St. Louis Community College – Wildwood Campus – Multi-Purpose Room

VI. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

***If you would like to submit a comment regarding an item on this meeting agenda,  
please visit the [Form Center](#).***

*Note: The Master Plan Advisory Committee will consider and act upon these matters listed above  
and any such others as may be presented at the meeting and determined appropriate for  
discussion at that time.*



## 2015 MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MPAC)

TEN (10) YEAR UPDATE PROCESS

### RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2015 - 7:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.**

City Hall Community Room – 16860 Main Street

#### I. **Welcome to Group Members and Opening Remarks by Mayor Woerther and the Department of Planning**

The Committee's Facilitator, Dr. Terry Jones, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. He then requested a roll call of attendees, which was completed with the following results:

Master Plan Advisory Committee Members present: David Geile, Sam Visintine, Harry LeMay, Susan Wright, David Beattie, Larry Feuerstein, Dennis Welker, Ed Kohn, Fran Gragnani, Kevin Liddy, Ron Peasley, Jon Bopp, Rick Archeski, Michele Bauer, Debra Smith McCutchen (Council Member Ward 5), Greg Stine (Council Member Ward 7), and Mayor Woerther.

Staff Members present: City Administrator Ryan Thomas, Director of Planning and Parks Joe Vujnich, Director of Public Works Rick Brown, and Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Kathy Arnett.

Mayor Woerther and Director Vujnich thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

#### II. **Review and Action on the Minutes from the November 3, 2015 Meeting**

Dr. Jones questioned if any Committee Members wished to propose changes to the minutes. Hearing no modifications, the minutes were approved.

#### III. **Public Comment and Input**

There was no public comment.

#### IV. **Discussion of Topics and Consideration of Information by the Committee**

##### a. **Presentation of Policies and Revised Goals and Objectives of the [Economic Development Element](#) of the Master Plan**

Director of Planning Vujnich noted it was time to discuss the draft policies, since the recommendations by the City's economic development consultant had been provided to the Committee.

A motion was made by Mayor Woerther, seconded by Committee Member Bopp, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #1, *(Conduct research to determine what attracts people to Wildwood and develop a promotional campaign highlighting these features.)*.

Discussion was held regarding who would pay for the research costs.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion. Hearing no opposition, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved and the policy adopted.

A motion was made by Committee Member LeMay, seconded by Committee Member Visintine, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #2 *(Identify key strategies for promoting and marketing Wildwood and then implement them.)*.

Discussion was held regarding the following: the differences between Policy #1 and #2; the avenues that can be used for these types of promotions; and the possibility of City officials attending the International Conference of Shopping Centers, as a way to raise awareness and advertise Wildwood to potential businesses.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to adopt the policy. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A motion was made by Committee Member Archeski, seconded by Committee Member Beattie, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #3 *(Establish partnerships and sponsorships with organizations/businesses that hold unique community assets, which helps in creating Wildwood's unique character.)*.

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the extent of these proposed partnerships; the options in addition to financial expenditures; the limitation by State Statute on the use of public funds for private entities; and the concern with the wording of partnerships and sponsorships being misinterpreted as financial support only.

A motion was made by Committee Member Liddy, seconded by Committee Member Gragnani, to substitute 'relationships' for 'partnerships and sponsorships' in Economic Development Element Policy #3.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to modify the policy. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A voice vote was taken regarding the adoption of the policy, as amended. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A motion was made by Committee Member Peasley, seconded by Committee Member Welker, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #4 *(Optimize the utilization of the City website, e-newsletter, and social media, including the possible development of new smartphone applications.)*.

A motion was made by Council Member Stine, seconded by Mayor Woerther, to substitute 'smartphone' with 'mobile' in Economic Development Element Policy #4.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to modify the policy. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A voice vote was taken regarding the adoption of the policy, as amended. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A motion was made by Committee Member Beattie, seconded by Committee Member Archeski, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #5 *(Complete the third phase of the Manchester Road Streetscape Project and facilitate the development of Main Street from its current terminus, at Market Drive, to State Route 109.)*

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the possibility this item is more related to the Transportation Element than Economic Development Element; the timing of these projects; the ability of the City to install infrastructure as an economic development tool; and the potential for including a target date on the projects.

A motion was made by Committee Member Beattie, seconded by Committee Member Welker, to remove all of the text from 'complete' to 'and' in Economic Development Element Policy #5.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to modify the policy. Hearing more nays than ayes, Dr. Jones declared the motion failed.

A motion was made by Council Member Stine to change the wording of Economic Development Element Policy #5 to facilitate the development of streets to promote and encourage economic development. The motion failed, being a lack of a second.

A motion was made by Council Member Stine, seconded by Committee Member Visintine, to modify Economic Development Element Policy #5 to read as follows: *Invest in public infrastructure to facilitate economic development on Wildwood's arterials.*

Discussion was then held regarding if Economic Development Element Goal #4 already covers this policy and if the wording is repetitive to other policies in the Transportation Element.

The motion, and second, were then withdrawn.

A voice vote was taken on adopting Economic Development Element Policy #5, without any changes. Hearing only one (1) nay, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved and the policy adopted.

A motion was made by Committee Member Visintine, seconded by Committee Member Bopp, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #6 *(Develop promotional materials, in conjunction with community representatives, which can be disseminated to desired businesses, restaurants, employers, development interests, and others to market Wildwood as a great place to live, work, and play.)*

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the thought this policy duplicates Policy #2; and the business directory the City had completed in the past.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to adopt the policy. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A motion was made by Committee Member LeMay, seconded by Mayor Woerther, to adopt Economic Development Element Policy #7 (*Implement the adopted Action Items the City Council has identified as necessary from the economic development consultant's report on these matters (Houseal Lavigne).*).

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the timeline for when the City Council would adopt the plan from Houseal Lavigne; the process used for the economic development consultant; the desire to see the specific Action Items outlined in the report; and the possibility of delaying action on this item to a later meeting.

A motion was made by Committee Member Archeski, seconded by Committee Member Gragnani, to table this policy discussion to a later meeting.

A voice vote was taken regarding the motion to table this item. Hearing eight (8) ayes and eight (8) nays, Dr. Jones declared the motion failed for lack of affirmative action.

Discussion was then held regarding the following items: the importance of retaining this policy to ensure future reference to the economic development consultant's plan; the desire for goal-objective-policy congruity; the request to modify the text 'consultant's report' to include the name of the document in the final wording of this policy; and the possibility of including a reference to Houseal Lavigne or other consultants/experts relative to implementation.

A motion was made by Mayor Woerther, which was seconded by Committee Member Peasley, to call the question.

A voice vote was taken on calling the question. Hearing more ayes than nays, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

A voice vote was taken on the adoption of Economic Development Element Policy #7. Hearing more ayes than nays, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

Director Vujnich then asked if the Committee had any additional comments on the Economic Development Element.

A request was made to move Policy #5 to the bottom of the policy list. Dr. Jones deemed this matter an administrative task, which did not require a vote.

Discussion began on Policy #7, but no one who voted in the affirmative wished to make a motion to reopen discussion and reconsideration of it.

A motion was made by Council Member Stine, seconded by Committee Member Archeski, to add a Economic Development Element Policy #8, which would read as follows: *All policies of the economic development element shall be consistent with the rest of the Master Plan.*

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the intent for this policy to serve as a check of the plan, once the City Council has acted on the Houseal Lavigne report; the proposed action items in the report, none of which are in conflict with the Master Plan; and the repetition of this policy, since it is in the Master Plan, as are all items it references.

The motion, and second, were withdrawn.

A motion was made by Council Member Stine, seconded by Mayor Woerther, to add Economic Development Element Goal #6, which would read as follows: *Economic development activities within the City should be consistent with the Master Plan.*

Discussion was then held on the redundancy of this goal.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to add this goal. Hearing more nays than ayes, Dr. Jones declared the motion failed.

**b. Presentation of Policy #2 of the Planning Element of the Master Plan**

Director Vujnich noted this policy had been postponed previously, given the Committee's desire to have the land use discussion completed. Now that the land use portion of the plan is finished, this policy relative to density in the Suburban Residential Area can be decided. He noted the Department's recommendation is to retain the one (1) acre density in the Suburban Residential Area due to the remaining tracts of lands' topography, stormwater issues, surrounding land uses, and other considerations.

A motion was made by Committee Member Welker, seconded by Committee Member Liddy, to retain the wording of the Planning Element Policy #2.

Discussion was then held regarding the two (2) modifications to the Suburban Residential Area text in the Master Plan, since the City's incorporation, which included the commercial node of properties at the intersection of Clayton and Strecker Roads in 1997 and the Stone Mill Subdivision in 2015.

A voice vote was taken on the motion. Hearing no objections, Dr. Jones declared the motion approved.

**c. Three (3) Revised Final Elements of the Master Plan –Community Services, Transportation, and Open Space and Recreation**

No additional changes were proposed to the final elements. A couple of typographical errors were identified and Dr. Jones deemed those as administrative revisions that did not require a motion. Department of Planning staff will review the spelling and grammar of each element, prior to their inclusion in the draft of the Master Plan.

**d. Review of Final Meeting Calendar**

Director of Planning Vujnich provided a calendar with the remaining meetings, noting the final adoption of the revised Master Plan by the Committee could be anticipated sometime in February.

**e. Comments and Questions from Committee Members**

None

V. **Next Meeting Date of the Committee – *Tentative* - December 16, 2015 – (Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.)**

VI. **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

A motion was made by Committee Member Archeski, seconded by Committee Member Bopp, to adjourn the meeting.

There being nothing else for discussion, Dr. Jones adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

CITY OF WILDWOOD

# Master Plan



Photograph of Community Park

**Original Master Plan approved: February 26, 1996**

**1<sup>st</sup> Revision: February 21, 2006**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Revision: ????, 2016**



**WILDWOOD**

**Planning Tomorrow Today**

## Acknowledgments

The City of Wildwood began 2015 with a major effort in updating its Master Plan. It is a major effort, in that, this document, more so than in any other created and/or adopted by the City, guides the decision making process of Wildwood officials and staff in a range of areas. These areas include the environment, planning, community services, transportation, open space and recreation, and economic development. This plan contains goals, objectives, and policies in each of these areas or elements. Accordingly, updating these important goals, objectives, and policies is essential for the City to maintain the values, character, and direction its original founders defined in 1995.

State Statute and the City's Charter mandate this ten (10) year update process for all of its long-range planning documents. This ten (10) year cycle began with the incorporation of the City in 1995, continued with the first of these updates in 2005 to 2006, and now 2015 to 2016. In each instance of these collective processes referenced here, the City's leaders sought public input and participation in them. Public participation came in many forms, but the consistent element has been the formation and use of a group of citizen volunteers that manage this process of updating the plan. This year's process included a committee of twenty-three (23) residents, business owners, and others to oversee, address, and recommend changes, updates, and/or additions/deletions to the current Master Plan adopted by the Planning and Commission in 2006.

This committee began the update process in January 2015, conducted public input sessions in March and April (over two hundred (200) participants), reviewed all of the existing five (5) elements, created a new element (Economic Development), and held the necessary land use meetings, where over twenty (20) plus property owners presented requests for possible changes to their current land use designations. Collectively, this process took over one (1) year to complete and create the final document for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

During this process, three (3) Citywide mailings were also conducted to all residents, information on the process was available on the City's website ([www.cityofwildwood.com](http://www.cityofwildwood.com)), thereby allowing for participation in all meetings for any interested party, and all of its social media was integrated into this effort to promote and invite anyone, with interest, to comment and assist. The committee of volunteers wanted to ensure that no interested party would be excluded from this process, or any component of it, could add input, comment, suggestion, and review. Therefore, via direction from the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission, the committee worked to create an environment of participation in this process.

With the conclusion of this process, the committee provided a document, which has been updated on this collective input of its participants. The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council want to recognize the thoroughness of the committee's work and the process it employed to create this updated Master Plan 2016 and its related components. Additionally, the committee understood that changing conditions, here in Wildwood, but also across the St. Louis Region, State, and country, has a role in this update process. These changing conditions presented challenges and opportunities to the committee, but City officials are confident they have been addressed in an appropriate manner for the purposes of keeping Wildwood a great place to live, work, and play.

The individuals that formed this committee are listed on the next page.

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## Master Plan Advisory Committee Members

Timothy Woerther	Mayor
Fran Gragnani, Ward One	Planning & Zoning Commission
Kevin Liddy, Ward Two	Planning & Zoning Commission
Ron Peasley, Ward Three	Planning & Zoning Commission
Michael Lee, Ward Four	Planning & Zoning Commission
Alan Renner, Ward Five	Planning & Zoning Commission
R. Jon Bopp, Ward Six	Planning & Zoning Commission
Rick Archeski, Ward Seven	Planning & Zoning Commission
Michele Bauer, Ward Eight	Planning & Zoning Commission
David Geile, Ward One	Resident Member
Joe Frazzetta, Ward Two	Resident Member
Samuel Visintine, Ward Three	Resident Member
Gary Bohn, Ward Four	Resident Member
Harry LeMay, Ward Five	Resident Member
Jane Wright, Ward Six	Resident Member
Kristy Hull, Ward Seven	Resident Member
David Beattie, Ward Eight	Resident Member
Larry Feuerstein, At-Large	Resident Member
Dennis Welker, At-Large	Resident Member
Ed Kohn	Business/Development Entity
April Porter	Business/Development Entity
Debra Smith McCutchen, Ward Five	City Council Liaison
Greg Stine, Ward Seven	City Council Liaison

Along with these individuals, city staff, specifically Kathy Arnett, Joe Vujnich, and Liz Weiss, was instrumental to this successful update process. Finally, providing needed and valuable input, were a group of service providers and utility companies that were asked to provide comments and other input on their service needs and changes that might have an impact, either positive or negative, on the City. To this group of participants, the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission would like to extend its appreciation in this regard and acknowledge the integral and important role each played in this update process of the Master Plan.

Although the City of Wildwood is just twenty (20) years of age, much has happened in that period to further memorialize its commitment to “Planning Tomorrow Today.” These happenings included the further development of refined plans to address a host of needs, priorities, and improvements to the community of Wildwood, which all originates from the desire to provide the best place in all of the country for its residents. These plans have led to wide community support for efforts and projects, none of which could have been accomplished without the work of many volunteers, like those individuals who spent the last year working on this update of the Master Plan. To them, the City and its residents owe a debt of gratitude and acknowledgement. Job well done.

Respectfully submitted,  
CITY OF WILDWOOD, MISSOURI

The Honorable Timothy Woerther, Mayor

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## Introduction

The City of Wildwood was incorporated on September 1, 1995. This City occupies a 68 square-mile area in western St. Louis County that is generally bounded on the west by the Franklin County line; on the south by Interstate 44, the City of Eureka, and the Meramec River; and on the east and north by the Cities of Ellisville, Clarkson Valley, and Chesterfield, and the Missouri River. **The major focal point of the City is its Town Center Area, which includes many of the City's commercial land uses, institutional uses, and unique architecture and streetscapes.** An integral part of the Town Center Area is the intersection of State Route 109 and State Route 100, the center of its four (4) recognized quadrants: northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast, which includes the Town Center Area. These quadrants extend from this intersection outward to the corresponding City boundaries.

### The Purpose of the Master Plan

This Master Plan is part of a continuous, on-going process to implement the *Plan of Intent for Wildwood* by outlining policies that conserve, preserve, and protect the natural environment; assure the integrity of the greenbelt created by the four (4) regional public parks in the western part of the City; provide safe and functional roads and bridges, and establish a framework for residential, institutional, and commercial development that is consistent with community-based, long-range planning goals and prudent land utilization practices.

**The Master Plan addresses issues of environmental protection, planning, transportation, community services, public space and recreation, and, now, economic development. These elements that form the core of the Master Plan that is applied in all circumstances by City officials, when decisions must be made, funds allocated, and actions taken in these specific regards.** As the community's vision is implemented and new conditions arise, the Master Plan may be reviewed and, if necessary, modified to reflect the City of Wildwood's response to new circumstances. The City of Wildwood's land use

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decision-making process and other public actions shall include careful consideration of the extent to which proposed actions are consistent with the Master Plan's goals, objectives, and policies.

## **Public Participation Process**

The need to engage residents, property owners, and businesses in the activities of the City is important and always an on-going goal and challenge for elected officials and staff. One (1) of the forums to obtain this input has been the City's three (3) Master Plan efforts; the first being its initial adoption, the second, the 2006 update, and the third in 2015. In these instances, City staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council employed a number of different techniques to obtain participation in establishing the direction of Wildwood for the next decade. Without public participation, the document would suffer, as well as lack the community's support for it, particularly those components of the Master Plan that affect each household on a day-to-day basis.

To achieve participation, as part of the Master Plan 2016 Update Process, the City employed a number of different approaches to obtain the comments and input from stakeholders within and around the community. These options included two (2) series of public input sessions totaling three (3) different meetings within Wildwood, which were attended by over three hundred (300) residents. Additionally, a mailing was sent to each home in Wildwood seeking input regarding future land use considerations. Along with those efforts, the City utilized its website significantly to allow for review and comments of work products and the efforts of the Committee relating to the Master Plan 2015 Update Process.

The culmination of this approach was the design and implantation of two (2) internet surveys that were posted on the City's website for review and comment by any resident and then any local business. These surveys were prepared by an outside consultant to the City, who focused a number of questions and requested responses on the level and appropriateness of services, allocations of funds, attentive-

ness to residents' needs, and improvements necessary for the next ten (10) years of the City. These surveys, and the collated results, are contained in an appendix of this plan for review and on-going reference in the future.

As part of the Public Input Sessions for the Master Plan 2006 Update, many residents noted the need for better communication with the City. Numerous responses indicated that residents and others were not up-to-date on the issues facing the City and how decisions on these items were being made. The Master Plan 2006 Update Process has made it clear that more needs to be done to help residents, property owners, and businesses access information and participate in the City's decision making processes, as well as understand their role in keeping the City of Wildwood a great place to live, work, and play.

## **Interpretation and Revisions**

The Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council of Wildwood, in accordance with State Statute and local Charter, shall make interpretations and revisions regarding the Master Plan's goals, objectives, and policies, as well as undertake their implementation.

## **Relationship of the Master Plan to Other City Planning Documents and Development Regulations**

Given the comprehensiveness and applicability of the City's Master Plan to all aspects of Wildwood's governance, it sets the direction that all other plans and processes that exist in the City of Wildwood must follow. As part of the work program for updating the Master Plan, other major City planning initiatives and documents were utilized in this process, including the Town Center Plan, the Town Center Development Manual, the Parks and Recreation Plan, the **Action Plan for Parks and Recreation 2007**, and the Five Year Capital Improvement Program. These major planning initiatives that occurred in the City's last twenty (20) years were often in direct response to objectives and policies contained in the 1996 and 2006 versions of the Master Plan and reflected in their implementations.

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Additionally, the Master Plan 2016 update process considered amendments to the Zoning Code, the Subdivision and Development Regulations, the Grading Code, Tree Preservation and Restoration Code, Historic Preservation and Restoration Code, and Model Telecommunications Code that had been adopted and applied, either for the entirety of the last twenty (20) years or a portion thereof. Along with legislative considerations, the City completed a 5-Year Annexation Plan for the St. Louis County Boundary Commission, which did not anticipate any modifications to Wildwood's boundaries in that period and none were completed relative to any nearby-unincorporated area of St. Louis County.

All of these data resources were included in this update process for the Master Plan to guarantee its timeliness and prepare it for the upcoming decade, which will offer new challenges and opportunities. As a leader in implementing new initiatives, the City of Wildwood must always be cognizant of the need to review and update these plans, codes, and other documents to meet new demands or changing conditions, which may arise from all types of sources, i.e. the courts, the State legislature, resident organizations, and others. "Planning Tomorrow Today" demands staying ahead of circumstances that affect the overall quality of life in this City and meeting them with ideas, not delays.

## Synopsis of Planning History

### History of Planning in Wildwood

1. From its earliest settlers to today's newest residents, the area of Wildwood has been admired and valued for its unique natural beauty and character.
2. The first major planning initiative in the area, which would become the City of Wildwood, began in 1938 with the reservation of regional public parks to form a greenbelt.
3. All St. Louis County planning documents, from the first *County Plan* in 1962 to the incorporation of the City of Wildwood, described the area as primarily rural in character.
4. St. Louis County's first comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1965 designated much of what is now the City of Wildwood as NU - Non Urban District.
5. *The 1973 Land Element of St. Louis County's General Plan* showed that only a small portion of the land in the City of Wildwood would be suitable for urbanization. This finding was affirmed in subsequent *St. Louis County Plan Updates* in 1985 and 1993.
6. St. Louis County's first stated policies for the urbanization of the Wildwood area date from the *St. Louis County Plan Update of 1985*. In that plan, most of what is now the City of Wildwood continued to be shown as rural, but its northeast quadrant was designated as the western edge of an urbanizing area centered on the intersection of Highway 40/Interstate 64 and Clarkson/Olive Street Road.
7. St. Louis County planning documents acknowledged the potential conflict between urbanization policies and the ecology of the City of Wildwood, where the vast majority of the land area is not suitable for traditional development densities. County plan-

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ning documents enumerated the necessary safeguards that should be used, as urbanization in the northeast quadrant took place.

8. These environmental safeguards were not incorporated sufficiently into developments approved in the City of Wildwood, with the result being increased erosion and incidences of localized flooding within the area's watersheds. These same St. Louis County planning documents predicted these impacts.
9. Dissatisfaction with State and County roadway plans and the latter's continuing disregard for citizen concerns regarding new development led to the incorporation of Wildwood on September 1, 1995. The *Plan of Intent for Wildwood* included the following five (5) objectives, which are also the basis for this Master Plan:
  - ◆ Preservation and conservation of the natural environment.
  - ◆ Accountability to the people of the area.
  - ◆ Residential and commercial development consistent with long-range planning and prudent land utilization.
  - ◆ Protection of the greenbelt formed by Babler, Rockwoods Reservation and Range, and Greensfelder Parks.
  - ◆ The creation of a model community that serves its constituents but minimizes bureaucracy.
10. After the approval of the City's incorporation in 1995, the voters of Wildwood approved two (2) taxes – re-adoption of an existing Gross Receipts Tax on utility consumption and a new Capital Improvements Pool Sales Tax for road, bridge, and other public improvement projects.
11. To increase the standing of local governance, the voters of the City of Wildwood approved a Charter in 1997. The Charter was particularly significant to the Master Plan, since it created the needed mechanism to elevate its land use component to the

standing of law.

12. With the approval of the Master Plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 1996, and subsequent ratification by the City Council one (1) month later, the Town Center concept was created. The Town Center concept, based on the principles of 'New Urbanism,' led to a plan for an area of the City where higher density residential and commercial development would be encouraged, which was approved in final form in 1998. Some seven (7) years later, the Town Center Development Manual was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission defining specific standards and guidelines for this area.
13. In response to growing demand from residents, a Parks and Recreation Plan was adopted in 2001, which identified the existing and future need to acquire property in the City for future active recreational facilities and endorsed the concept of requiring new residential and commercial developments to accommodate dedications as part of any future project(s).
14. Based upon its 5-Year Annexation Plan, the City of Wildwood annexed a four hundred seventy-five (475) acre area of unincorporated St. Louis County in 2006, after successful votes in the annexation area and within the City. This area is bounded by the City of Ellisville to the north, City of Wildwood to the west, the community of Sherman to the south, and generally by St. Paul Road to the east.
15. After the adoption of the *Parks and Recreation Plan* in 2001, a subset process was established by the City Council, which led to the *Action Plan for Parks and Recreation 2007*, which set four (4) major goals, along with 57 recommendations, for immediate action. Each of these four (4) goals have been implemented to some level, including the action to purchase a large parcel of ground for the City's desired community park.
16. After ten (10) years of application, the Town Center Plan began

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an update process in 2008, with the creation of a citizen volunteer committee, which would lead this eighteen (18) month process, culminating in a recommendation by these volunteers for major changes to the plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission adopted this recommendation and accompanying updated plan in March 2010. The two (2) major changes was a simplification of the plan and the decrease in workplace/commercial designated properties and a corresponding increase in residential land use designations.

17. The City Council received the updated Town Center Plan in March 2010 and spent the next two (2) years debating the merits of four (4) proposed land use designation changes to four (4) properties, two (2) of these sites constituting over one hundred thirty (130) acres of the overall eight hundred (800) acre boundary. In 2012, the majority of the updated plan was endorsed and ratified by the City Council, with the four (4) properties remaining undecided.
18. The City's Historic Preservation Commission spent all of 2014 and the majority of 2015 updating its enabling ordinance to improve its function, while completing the survey of 350 historic properties located in Wildwood, along with developing the histories of the original eleven (11) historic communities that predated the City's incorporation and are now a part of it.
19. In 2015, the City began its second major update of its Master Plan, led again by a group of twenty-three (23) resident and business volunteers from the community. New focuses of the plan that were identified by community input are economic development and developing internet-based telecommunication options for residences and businesses.

## A Brief History of Planning and Development Policies and Practices in Wildwood

### Historic Character of Wildwood

St. Louis County was formed in 1812, while the area was still part of the Louisiana Territory. Missouri became a State in 1821. The western portions of St. Louis County, then called the Meramec Township, later divided into the Meramec and Chesterfield Townships, remained rural in character until the late 1970's, when the first of new residential subdivisions were approved and began construction. The area that was to become Wildwood contained a few small villages organized along roads, many of which were trails that had been used by Shawnee, Delaware, Osage, and other Native American tribes and then adopted by the early settlers.

Of these early trails, three (3) retain a relative level of significance today. These three trails are now the following roads:

Old State Road follows one of these early trails from the days before the Spanish and the French came to the area. It runs southward from Manchester Road, just west of Ellisville, "past the Ninian Hamilton Place, now the Catholic Orphan Protectorate [and today the LaSalle Institute], north of Eureka, Allenton, and Dozier's, to Mary and Mac's...a very early and rare house of entertainment near the site of the present town of Pacific and near the St. Louis County Line." (William Muir, 1893, quoted in *History of St. Louis City and County*, 1919).

Manchester Road, in the middle of the City, was designed in 1835 as part of the main link between St. Louis and Jefferson City. It runs westward from Ellisville through Grover and Pond, then dips south to Fox Creek, and continues westward across the Franklin County line. In general, this road follows the

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ridge line that separates the area's drainage networks into the Meramec River to the south and the Missouri River to the north. From about 1926 through 1932, a portion of this road was designated Route 66, while the permanent right-of-way for it was still under construction. The Big Chief Hotel in Pond dates from the days when this stretch of highway was part of the main route westward from the City of St. Louis.

Wild Horse Creek Road, near Wildwood's northern boundary, runs westward from what was originally the small village of Chesterfield past Westland Acres, an early black community, through Orrville, and then south towards Melrose; an area planned as a resort, which failed and was sold at a Sheriff's sale in 1879.

Two (2) major railroad rights-of-way follow the City's northern and southern boundaries. The St. Louis Southwestern Railroad (adjacent to the Chicago Pacific-Rock Island Railroad) right-of-way runs along the northern edge of Wildwood, just south of Howell Island and Steamboat Island, past the historic town of Centaur, once the center of limestone and stave manufacturing. The Missouri Pacific Railroad follows the gradient of the Meramec River through the western part of the County, going through St. Paul, Glencoe, Eureka, Allenton and on to Pacific, just over the Franklin County Line.

Most of these old place names are still used today, and many of the surviving historic buildings still exist in these early settlements.

### **First Initiatives to Protect Wildwood's Environment**

The first major planning initiative in what is now the City of Wildwood, other than the building of roads and railroads and the platting of small towns, was the creation of the permanent park reservations. Rockwoods Reservation, originally part of an 1800 Spanish land grant to Ninian Hamilton, was purchased by the State of Mis-

souri in 1938 from the bankrupt Cobb-Wright-Case Mining Company. The Reservation is currently managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. The Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park was dedicated on October 1, 1939. It was financed, developed, and donated to the State of Missouri by a private non-profit trust established by Jacob Babler in memory of his brother. The trust continues to manage the park. The Greensfelder family gave 1700 acres to St. Louis County to establish Greensfelder Park in 1963.

In 1946, St. Louis County adopted its first zoning ordinance, although accompanying maps were not prepared until 1955. Property was not zoned based upon its particular use at that time, but was either designated “A” small farm or “B” one-acre residential in this area.

*Guide for Growth-The Land Use Plan*, the first official County General Plan, was published in 1962. The plan showed two districts in the western part of St. Louis County, with District 11 essentially north of Manchester Road and District 12 to the south. In District 11, the area immediately around Chesterfield, was seen as appropriate for development; the rest of the district was designated an open-space reserve. In District 12, the area between Eureka and Allenton was designated for urbanization, while the policy for the remaining part stated development should be discouraged in flood plains or areas of rugged topography.

St. Louis County's 1965 publication *The Challenge of Growth - A Study of Major County and Regional Park Needs* suggested extending the Rockwoods Reservation and Range, Babler, and Greensfelder Park properties to create a greenbelt that would link the Meramec and Missouri Rivers. In addition, the study suggested the greenbelt could be extended to Steamboat Island, Howell Island, and ultimately toward the northwest to the Busch Wildlife Preserve in St. Charles County. This concept has drawn strong support from ecologists, preservationists, and area residents but has never been actively implemented, except for the 34.4 acres St. Louis County added to

Greensfelder Park between 1971 and 1980.

## **Historical Zoning Initiatives and Planning Policies to Protect Wildwood's Environment**

In 1965, a new comprehensive zoning ordinance, reflecting for the first time land use designations based upon a planning document, was adopted by St. Louis County. In this 1965 report, much of what is now the City of Wildwood was zoned NU Non-Urban District; a new classification originally meant to be a conservation zone. St. Louis County planning officials suggested the NU District designation permit only one (1) residence for every twenty (20) acres, but the final version, which was approved, permitted one (1) residence for every three (3) acres. As a result, the NU District turned out not to be a conservation zone, but, in effect, a low-density residential development zone.

As growth pressures from the westward movement of development from the inner-ring communities of St. Louis County intensified, the *Land Element of the 1973 St. Louis County General Plan* was devised to create land suitability classifications based on soil type, topography, forest cover, hydrology, and geology. After subtracting out land that had already been urbanized or protected by park or other institutional controls, the 1973 Plan set the following categories of property in order of suitability for development:

*Prime, Secondary, Marginal, Restrictive, Protection, and Production* (vacant class 1 agricultural land located in flood plains). Only land in two (2) of the six (6) categories (*Prime and Secondary*) was considered suitable for urban or sub-urban type development densities. It further suggested that land in the *Secondary* category should generally be reserved for agricultural uses only. In addition, only a small proportion of the area that was to become the City of Wildwood was shown in the 1973 map as having *Prime and Secondary* land; these areas occurring mostly in the hilly uplands of the northeastern quadrant of the City or immediately adjacent to Manchester Road in the unincorporated communities of Grover and Pond. As the cate-

gories were derived from the ecosystem, the boundaries of the categories followed the natural systems and did not conform to the lot lines of individual pieces of property. Although the 1973 Plan was published and distributed to the public, these maps were never officially adopted by St. Louis County, but their existence shows that planning officials were very much aware that a high proportion of the land in the Wildwood area was not suitable for development at traditional urban densities.

The 1985 *St. Louis County General Plan Update* intensified this theme of growth by stating that land within the County was becoming an increasingly scarce resource.

*"This presents a particular problem in areas where environmentally sensitive land is now being considered for urban uses. Although factors such as flood plains and steep slopes do not completely rule out urban uses in these areas, they do require special considerations and construction techniques." (1985 General Plan Update, Pg. 19, Italics added)*

### **Urbanization Policies of St. Louis County within the Wildwood Area**

St. Louis County's 1985 *General Plan Update* was the first official planning document that showed substantial development anticipated for the area now known as the City of Wildwood. The southern and western areas of the City were shown as *Rural*, while an area slightly larger than the existing parkland was shown as *Preservation*. However, the northeast quadrant of the City of Wildwood was shown as *Urbanizing*. *Urbanizing* was defined by this plan as having a minimum population density of one thousand (1,000) persons per square mile.

An area around the intersection of State Routes 100 and 109 was also identified at this time as a future *activity center* - an *activity center* being defined in the 1985 Plan Update as having a scale of employment or daily trip attractions comparable to a regional shopping

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center (over 500,000 square feet in size). However, the principal activity center shown in this plan for the western part of St. Louis County is now the location of Chesterfield Mall and its surrounding office buildings, hotels, and high density housing. The activity center in Wildwood was shown as a satellite to this much larger counterpart. Urbanized development west of Chesterfield, according to the 1985 County Plan, was to stop within the northeast quadrant of what is now known as Wildwood, thereby forming the western edge of a larger urbanized region centered on the intersection of Highway 40/61 and Clarkson/Olive Street Road.

This change in St Louis County planning policies reflected changes already happening on the ground. Interstate 44 was connected to State Route 109 in 1971, thereby making the Wildwood area far more accessible from St. Louis and the eastern part of the County. Development was also moving westward from the area of Chesterfield with its direct access to Interstate 64/40 and the City of Ellisville on the State Route 100 corridor.

In 1977 alone, according to information assembled by the City of Wildwood, St. Louis County approved 1,521 sub-urban lots (one acre and denser lots), as distinguished from non-urban (three acre minimum lot) subdivisions, in Wildwood. Traditional sub-urban lots totaled 373 lots in 1978, 679 lots in 1979, and 159 lots in 1980. In 1981, 1982, and 1983, however, no sub-urban subdivisions were approved.

County policy makers expressed concern in their 1985 plan document that the boom development conditions which had prevailed in St. Louis County since World War II were coming to an end. The population growth in St. Louis County had leveled off and was now taking place elsewhere in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, notably St. Charles and Jefferson Counties. St. Louis County's share of new housing construction in the metropolitan area had dropped from sixty percent (60%) in 1970 to twenty-nine percent (29%) in 1980. The reason for concern over these statistics is made clear in the 1985 *Plan Update*:

“A 1983 study of revenue and services revealed that while the unincorporated areas generated 37 percent of County Government revenues, they received slightly more than 27 percent of the service expenditures.” (1985 *General Plan Update*, Pg. 15)

Revenue from new development taking place in unincorporated areas helped finance the delivery of services in older parts of St. Louis County. The County brought its regional share of new housing construction up to thirty-five percent (35%) in the mid 1980s. After the three-year lull in the Wildwood area, the County approved 664 new suburban lots in 1984 and 710 lots in 1985.

### **Impact of County Urbanization Policies in Area of Wildwood**

One set of special environmental considerations outlined in the 1985 *General Plan Update* was the list of 10 planning principles for storm-water drainage that should be followed in the design and construction of new development described in detail in the next chapter of this Plan.

While these provisions are meant to apply to all of St. Louis County and do not take into account all of the special environmental conditions prevailing in the Wildwood area, an analysis completed in the preparation of this Master Plan indicates that, had the St. Louis County Planning Commission and County Council required the kinds of precautions outlined in their own planning document, much of the serious, irreversible environmental damage in the City of Wildwood that is described in the next chapter of this Plan could have been avoided. Instead, the St. Louis County Government continued to approve developments in the area of Wildwood that were regraded and designed in ways that have proven inappropriate to the steep terrain and soils sensitive to erosion.

From 1965, when St. Louis County first adopted its current zoning categories, to September 1, 1995, it approved subdivisions totaling 5,565 residential lots in the City’s northeast quadrant alone, and a total of 11,437 lots in residential subdivisions in the whole communi-

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ty. Of these lots, 4,878 were in urban residential subdivisions approved after 1985. From 1989 to September 1, 1995, the County issued 3,778 building permits in the City of Wildwood.

Following a surge in new development in the western reaches of the County, the connection of an improved State Route 100 to State Route 109 was completed in 1989. Subsequently, an improved State Highway 40 was connected to Clarkson Road in 1992 and the widening of Clarkson Road to Manchester Road was completed in 1994. These road improvements coincided with the increased pace in new development.

*The 1993 St. Louis County Plan Update* repeated the general statement that development in areas of flood plains and steep slopes required special considerations and construction techniques; it did not repeat the more detailed statements about stormwater drainage and other issues from the previous 1985 Plan. However, the 1993 Plan Update did include a map showing all of the area of what is now Wildwood as having different categories of environmentally sensitive land. (*The 1993 St. Louis County Plan Update*, Pg. 24)

The St. Louis County Department of Planning prepared two detailed Community Area Studies for districts within the area that became Wildwood: The Pond-Grover Study, published in December 1990, and the Wild Horse Valley Study, published in June 1993. These studies cover the areas within the City of Wildwood identified as urbanizing in the 1985 Plan Update. The process of producing these documents involved numerous meetings with residents of these areas to gain their input, although the St. Louis County Planning Commission and Council were given the authority for making the final decisions regarding land use policies as they applied to individual petitions for rezoning. These two studies went beyond the level of traditional master plan research and principles to suggest land use policies for individual subareas within each plan area.

By September 1995, a high proportion of the development anticipat-

ed in the 1985 General Plan Update had already been approved, including a large commercial site in the eastern end of the proposed Town Center Area. The pace of development was extraordinarily rapid. As will be discussed in more detail later in this document, the population of the City of Wildwood virtually doubled between the 1990 and 2000 census.

### **The Incorporation of Wildwood**

Wildwood was officially incorporated on September 1, 1995. The incorporation was the culmination of a large grassroots effort on the part of residents and a four (4) year legal battle to stop plans for a north-south, multiple-lane divided highway along a corridor that paralleled the existing State Route 109. The groups included the Babler/Rockwoods Preservation Association, the West Chesterfield Citizens for Responsible Development, the South Wild Horse Creek Homeowners Association, the Northwest Jefferson County Association, and the Wild Horse Creek Valley Association. The Wild Horse Valley and Pond-Grover Community Area Studies undertaken by St. Louis County were also a catalyst for incorporation as they provided a forum for discussing planning issues. Much of the continued support for incorporation came from the general dissatisfaction with fragmentary urbanization and degradation of the natural environment as a consequence of the way that the St. Louis County Government had been administering the rapid development of the Wildwood area.

*The Plan of Intent for Wildwood* was filed on December 18, 1992 with the St. Louis County Boundary Commission. The *Plan of Intent for Wildwood* listed five essential reasons for incorporation:

1. Preservation and conservation of the natural environment;
2. Accountability to the people of the area;
3. Residential and commercial development consistent with long-range planning and prudent land utilization;
4. Protection of the greenbelt formed by Babler, Rockwood and

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Greensfelder parks;

5. The creation of a model community that serves its constituents but minimizes bureaucracy.

The St. Louis County Boundary Commission voted 6 to 2 in 1993 not to place the issue of Wildwood's incorporation on the ballot. However, in May of 1994, the Missouri Supreme Court declared the Boundary Commission statute unconstitutional, thereby negating their previous actions. During the following summer, attempts to get the St. Louis County Council to put Wildwood's incorporation to a vote in the community were unsuccessful. However, by the beginning November 1994, Circuit Court Judge Kenneth Romines had ordered the issue of Wildwood's incorporation placed on the February 7, 1995 ballot.

On February 7, 1995, sixty-one percent (61%) of the registered voters of Wildwood voted yes to form the new City. On June 29, 1995, the St. Louis County Council dropped its efforts to continue opposing the issue of the incorporation in the courts. Under Missouri State statutes, the St. Louis County Council had the authority to appoint the City's first Council to act as its interim government until the April 1996 municipal election.

## Population Description

At the time of the City's incorporation, information was provided from several competent resources estimating its population. Due to the City's size (it encompassed all or a portion of seven (7) postal zip codes and numerous census blocks and tracts), making an accurate population count was difficult to complete. Based upon the 1990 census tract information, and best available records from building permits issued by St. Louis County, the population at the time of the City's incorporation was estimated at 24,000 residents. This area was in the middle of a housing boom that would continue unabated for several years after the incorporation.

Upon the City's incorporation, it gained a multitude of lots that had been recently approved by St. Louis County. The estimate completed at that time reflected approximately 2,650 vacant lots. Through 1998, the number of building permits issued each year maintained a steady pace. That year also reflected the first accurate population estimate provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Following a population estimate of 18,123 being provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the City challenged this figure based upon building permit information and was successful in convincing the federal government to revise their numbers. Their estimation, in support of City records, established Wildwood's population at 30,967 as of July 1, 1998 (accurate population information is critical to the City, given sales tax distribution is based on such).

Between July 1, 1998 and April 1, 2000, estimates of the City's population were again based upon the number of building permits issued. Department of Planning staff estimated the City's population at the time of the decennial census in 2000 to be approximately 32,700. This estimate was verified by the census, which revealed the 2000 population of the City to be 32,884. In 2010, however, growth in population slowed substantially, as reflected on the official census count that was provided by the federal government to the City. This ten (10) year period included the Great Recession, which virtually stopped all new residential projects abruptly. Despite the recession,

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the City of Wildwood was one (1) of a handful that did have an increase in population growth from 2000 to 2010, which was 3,200 people. Therefore, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of the City of Wildwood in 2010 as 35,887.

This U.S. Census Bureau figure has been the baseline for subsequent projections in each year following 2010. These estimates use the census' calculation of 2.97 people per household (reduced from 2000, when the figure was 3.02 people per household) and are as follows:

Year	# of New Households Authorized	Estimated Population at Years' End
2010		
2011		
2012		
2013		
2014		
2015		

The growth in the area has slowed based upon a number of factors, including the City of Wildwood's land use policies, the aforementioned Great Recession, and banking trends. The area's population doubled in just ten (10) years, from 1990 to 2000, while over the next ten (10) years grew at a rate of ten (10) percent, which equates to approximately a two (2) percent growth each year. Not surprisingly, the number of vacant lots available for new homes decreased since the incorporation of the City. However, more recently, in the last two (2) years, residential activity has accelerated, with the potential of over six hundred (600) new homesites being considered by the City. This number of new homesites does not take into account new multiple family units that are now also being considered in Wildwood's Town Center Area, which could increase the number

of new households in the City by four hundred (400) units. This estimate, as of December 2005, identifies 1,682 parcels as vacant, approximately one thousand (1,000) less than at the time of incorporation. Additionally, a significant area was annexed into the City on January 1, 2006 including about 75 residences. This area increased the City's population by approximately 226 people.

To calculate future population projections, the Department of Planning has considered a number of factors, including the amount of available land, the City's land use policies, and the number of new lots approved each year, to determine a conservative growth rate estimate of one point six (1.6) percent. Eventually growth rates in the City may slow further, if land use policies remain unchanged. Currently, the projections for the next five (5) years are:

Year	Projected Population
2016	
2017	
2018	
2019	
2020	

The population projections provided in the above table indicate the City of Wildwood will continue its managed growth and will approach a total of almost forty thousand (40,000) residents, which, under the City's Charter, will require the establishment of a ninth ward, with two (2) additional ward representatives added to the current City Council. At this point, the City Council will be a total of eighteen (18) City Council members.

## Environmental Element

Preservation and conservation of the natural environment is the first of the five (5) policies highlighted in the Plan of Intent as the reason for the incorporation of Wildwood.

### The Ecology of Wildwood

The long steep hillsides, narrow convex summits, erodible soil surfaces, slowly permeable and restrictive subsoil layers, existing young and mature woodlands with abundant native vegetation, and numerous creek beds of the City form an ecology substantially different from the more gentle and rolling topography and permeable soils of other nearby areas of the County. Compounding these sensitive physical attributes of the land, the St. Louis Metropolitan Area receives a substantial amount of its rainfall in the form of high-intensity thunderstorms, with large amounts of rain within a relatively short period of time. These kind of rainfall events lead to serious erosion problems given the aforementioned terrain and soils found in the City of Wildwood. **Although progress has been made in the last twenty (20) years, vigilance is needed in all regards of the land use decision-making process to protect Wildwood property.**

### The Need for Watershed Management Practices in the City of Wildwood

Areas of the City that are still in their natural state do not suffer significant erosion even after unusually heavy and sudden rainstorms. The ecosystem, although fragile, has reached a state of equilibrium and protects itself. Downstream from more dense residential and commercial developments in other areas of the City, the landscape tells a different story: hundreds of tons of soil and rock have shifted, streams and hillsides have eroded severely, and the damage continues, despite the efforts of the City to curtail it.

There are two (2) very dramatic examples of these differences in the City: Wild Horse Creek and Caulks Creek. Wild Horse Creek currently exists in a state of natural equilibrium as a properly functioning

streambed. Caulks Creek has sustained severe damage from stormwater runoff and is an unhealthy streambed due to this degradation. The first of these two (2) watersheds to be discussed is Wild Horse Creek.

The upper reaches of Wild Horse Creek Watershed, whose source-area remains largely forested, is an example of a properly functioning forest stream ecosystem. Even after the relatively long dry spell from the end of the summer of 2005 through the fall, this stream had flowing water. Banks were stable, the streambed was a mixture of rounded gravels and sands - indicating they had remained in place long enough to be smoothed by the action of the water - and the width-to-depth ratio was small. After a rain, the upper Wild Horse Creek ecosystem retains much of the water, thereby allowing it to filter slowly and gradually to the stream while maintaining an even, continuous flow.

In direct contrast, the second watershed to be discussed is Caulks Creek. Within Caulks Creek from Clayton and Prospector Ridge Roads to Kehrs' Mill Road, this stream has seriously deteriorated from its natural state. It has an extremely wide channel-to-depth ratio. Active erosion is taking place along all of its banks. The bottom of the streambed has an enormous load of angular chert fragments that exceed fifteen (15) feet in depth. When rain falls in the badly damaged Caulks Creek ecosystem, stormwater turns into a series of concentrated, high-energy flows, moving great quantities of soil into the creek and then pouring quickly down its bed, causing rapid, violent erosion as it goes. In many places, roads and bridges are being undermined. Underground power cables and sewer lines have also been exposed by erosion.

The Caulks Creek Watershed has had extensive clearing of vegetation and topsoil due to the re-grading practices of the many subdivisions previously constructed in its drainage area. This previous pattern of development practices have been curtailed in Wildwood, but damage persists from them due to the inadequate standards that

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were in place when many of these projects were constructed. In direct contrast, the Wild Horse Creek Watershed, which has not sustained the same level and type of development as the Caulks Creek Watershed, remains a properly functioning streambed.

After the adoption of the Master Plan, the City Council continued to prioritize the need to address the Caulks Creek situation. For a period of approximately seven (7) years, a scientific study was funded by the City to better understand how to arrest the on-going erosion problem. This study, yet completed, indicates the need to retrofit older detention/retention facilities upstream to hold the stormwater runoff in place for longer periods of time and capture smaller storm events as well. Until these retrofits are completed, on-going degradation of the Caulks Creek will continue, despite the City limiting the density of development on remaining infill properties located in this watershed.

~~As witness to the on-going need to be diligent in addressing the City's top priority relating to the environment, a recent problem experienced in a new development within the Caulks Creek Watershed provides an excellent example. With the development of the former Cherry Hills Golf Course site, the City, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District imposed all of the required regulations onto this residential subdivision. The goal was to manage stormwater from this site in a manner that would limit on-site and downstream impacts. With a large-sized site like this property, the need was clear to control runoff to protect the environment.~~

~~Since the initial grading began on this property, problems have been experienced both on the site and downstream. These problems, based upon weather, poor application of siltation control techniques, and ineffective standards, have created unwanted and negative impacts in the watershed. Therefore, the Master Plan 2006 Update recognizes the on-going need to maintain vigilance in protecting the environment of Wildwood through thoughtful regulations~~

and improved land use policies.

## **The Treatment of Sewage Effluent in This Environmentally Sensitive Area**

Developments in the Non-Urban Residence District zoned areas of the City, where the lot sizes are three acres or larger, have far fewer erosion problems, particularly where the access road and building sites are confined to the ridge lines. However, despite this fact, Non-Urban Residence District zoned properties and other development outside Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District boundaries raise another serious environmental problem regarding sewage treatment.

The soils in much of the City are unsuitable for individual septic systems, and lots in urban residential zones [R-1 District (43,560 square foot lots) to R-6A District (4,500 square foot lots)] are, in any case, too small for these systems. While a percolation test has been required, it is not clear these tests have been administered correctly, as their results can vary significantly depending upon the saturation of the soil and where on the property the test was made. Improper placement in the landscape, lack of required inspections, and sporadic maintenance of individual septic systems can adversely affect the quality of both the aquifer and the streams in the western part of the City. Newer State legislation allows for a soil morphology test to substitute for the previous percolation analysis, which would appear to be a better means to ascertain the suitability of locations on properties for wastewater treatment, given the soils conditions in the City of Wildwood.

The alternative to individual septic systems the City has employed in these unserved areas are small sewage treatment plants. These "package plants" can serve an entire residential subdivision. Several residential subdivisions in the City of Wildwood already have package plants. Package plants are also necessary for commercial development outside the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District boundaries. Package plants are required to be periodically inspected (monthly) by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). There-

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fore, the maintenance of the plant and evaluation of the effluent are more regulated than individual systems.

Although package plants are a better alternative than individual septic systems, they are not an effective substitute for a regional public sewer system. Their maintenance is variable and, at best, usually provides only secondary treatment, meaning the effluent can still pollute the local aquifer or stream where they are located. However, with certain permitting requirements by the State, the potential for discovering and correcting a plant that is not functioning well is greater than an individual septic system on a privately-owned property.

It is also important to note that many property owners west of State Route 109, and some to the east, are on well water. If an improperly functioning septic system exists on the property with a well, the potential exists for contamination. This contamination can also extend to other well sites downstream. One (1) alternative to protect the public's health and safety is to promote the extension of public water lines.

Given the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District's limitations, and the constraints of individual septic systems and package plants in this environment, there are difficulties in approving sub-urban densities for residential development or major commercial uses outside the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District's boundaries for the foreseeable future.

## **Application of Wildwood Codes and Policies (1995-2005)**

On the first day of Wildwood's incorporation, and over the next seven (7) months, its City Council worked to create two (2) new codes and modify others to address the problems noted above relating to grading and tree removal in the City's nine (9) different watersheds. These two (2) new codes, the Grading and Excavation Code and Tree Preservation and Restoration Code, and the revised Zoning Code and Subdivision and Development Regulations were intended to

stop the past practices of mass grading, tree removal, and poor land use decisions that led to increased stormwater runoff, erosion, and siltation of the natural drainage areas of the City. Each of these codes, whether new or revised, took into account the problems facing the City and focused on identifying steps to lessen grading on development sites, preserve more trees, reduce densities in sensitive environmental areas, and promote higher stormwater management standards.

Additionally, along with these actions, the City also took the bold step of creating a one-of-a-kind regulation called the Natural Resource Protection Standards. These standards were developed by Dr. David Hammer, a Professor of Soil Science at the University of Missouri-Columbia, to assist in understanding the relationship between the soil and the climate of Wildwood. Utilizing five (5) different variables of the soil, areas of development and non-development were to be determined on a site-specific basis. All of this work was to be completed on the property by a qualified Professional Soil Scientist. The City has been applying these standards for over nine (9) years and saved hundreds and hundreds of environmentally sensitive acres of land from disturbance.

The City also took into account that density is a major determinant on the extent of impact on the environment. In creating the three (3) residential land use categories for the City, the community noted that only one (1) should accommodate higher densities: the Town Center. The other two (2) categories, the Suburban and Non-Urban Residential Areas, would have densities ranging from one (1) unit per every three (3) acres to no more than **one (1) ~~two (2)~~ units per acre**. It was hoped these limited densities would further lessen impacts in the City's watersheds. **Although partially successful, the City discovered in its review of development data, as part of this 2006 update of the Master Plan, that Suburban Residential Area densities were still be too substantial in those designated locations and, as part of this revised plan, changed it, which led to the establishment of the aforementioned one (1) unit per acre density.** This step was intend-

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ed to provide further protections to Wildwood’s unique and fragile environment.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS**

1. Wildwood’s unique environment is one of its greatest assets and needs to be preserved and protected. (2006)
2. Wildwood’s topography and soils, part of nine different watersheds, make it unusually vulnerable to erosion, siltation, and flooding caused by storm events, which necessitates regulations to safeguard it. (2006)
3. Wildwood should promote, through its regulations and day-to-day activities, the prudent use of its natural resources looking to the needs of the community. (2006; Modified in 2016)
4. Connections to public sanitary sewer systems should be a priority of the City of Wildwood, whether for new development, redevelopment, or any other land use activities, to advance improved public health and environmental benefits of such service. (2016)
5. Environmental legacy sites, whether identified or discovered at some later date, should only be considered for future use, after health risks to users have been eliminated. (2016)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES**

1. The environmental damage resulting from future development should be controlled to the greatest extent possible. (1996; Modified in 2016)
2. The wastewater effluent from systems, both individual and community, not managed by the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, should be prevented from polluting streams and aquifers in the City.

3. The natural systems of the environment, particularly its soil layers and tree and vegetative covers, should be utilized to retain and absorb stormwater runoff.
4. The primacy of the watershed as a planning unit should be acknowledged in this community and a coordinated approach for stormwater and wastewater management should be fostered between the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District and neighboring municipalities in each of them.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES**

1. Adopt and apply all applicable standards and regulations [Phase II Stormwater Rule and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)] for the management of stormwater within the City of Wildwood, as promulgated by those responsible federal, state, or local jurisdictions (Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District), with such being consistent with the Master Plan's goals, objectives, and policies for protecting public and private properties from damage. (1996; Modified in 2016)
2. Recognize that terrain in the City of Wildwood varies from relatively flat land, with soils suitable for development, to landforms and soils highly unsuitable for development. These variations in terrain generally do not correspond to property boundaries and, while more environmentally sensitive land is located in the western and southern quadrants of the City, they exist throughout the community.
3. Require that natural drainageways remain undisturbed and the system of existing detention/retention basins and associated improvements within the boundaries of the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD) be accepted by MSD for their maintenance and eventually upgraded to reduce current deficiencies in terms of design and function, when funding resources are available.

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4. Require that areas of steep slopes and highly erodible soils remain in their natural undisturbed state.
5. Continue to employ the current procedure that is part of the City's development regulations for mapping the landforms and soil conditions on individual pieces of property and then evaluating their suitability for development.
6. Maintain the current flexible procedure within the development regulations that allows an owner of a property to better utilize a site's natural characteristics through the application of innovative design and construction practices and the clustering of units, while offering community amenities and useable open space. The application of this procedure should be consistent with the environmental parameters of the site.
7. Require all developments to submit a site plan that includes the delineation of the property's natural drainageways and the location of all proposed retention and detention basins necessary to meet new stormwater standards to minimize runoff and control its downstream impacts.
8. Develop appropriate grading and soil reconstruction techniques to minimize site disturbance by the promulgation of new regulations that better reflect a greater level of stewardship and respect for the land.
9. Maintain and improve current grading and tree preservation ordinances that require the retention of natural vegetation and topsoil and an approved site plan or preliminary plat before land disturbance or grading can commence on a property. Coordinate regulations promulgated by State and federal agencies to better implement these laws and ensure compliance by the City and developers to such requirements and practices. (Modified 2006)
10. Stabilize Caulks Creek, either through remediation measures, or

its rehabilitation to a more stable ecosystem by damming the creek at intervals and creating ponds and wetlands or other equally environmentally sound methods, on its periphery to reduce the volume and velocity of runoff entering the waterway. Avenues of federal, state, and local funding should be explored to assist the City of Wildwood in this project.

11. Require the installation of individual household wastewater treatment systems to meet environmental standards based upon the area's physical characteristics as defined by soil scientists and adopted by the City of Wildwood, as a means to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.
12. Inspect individual septic systems periodically to ensure their operations meet minimum health standards and through a program of mandatory inspections upon any re-occupancy or sale of a single-family residence.
13. Establish an effective inspection system for package wastewater treatment plants. (1996; Modified in 2016)
14. Require the treatment of wastewater effluent from individual systems or packaged plants to meet current governmental standards, when changes are considered, adopted, and implemented via the City's applicable codes and regulations. (1996; Modified in 2016)
15. Extend public potable water to all areas of the City to prevent future health and safety problems relating to wastewater effluent and from non-public systems, while providing fire hydrants for public safety purposes. (1996; Modified in 2016)
16. Enact new legislation that creates incentives for the recycling of surplus construction materials from commercial, residential, and institutional development projects, while expanding bulk pick-up services within all residential neighborhoods located in the

# Master Plan

City. (2006)

17. Complete the extension of the public sanitary sewer, public potable water, and stormwater management systems to the Town Center Area, particularly into the Pond Historic District, including the development of any studies necessary for support of these utilities extensions. (2006; Modified in 2016)
18. Protect groundwater resources, and the aquifer, which is its source, from contamination, waste, or overuse through the consistent application of federal, state and city laws, regulations, and standards that preserve the soil and vegetation layers, while ensuring new development does not exceed the carrying capacity of the land. (2016)

## Environmental Element Cross-References

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Obj. 1	X	X	X	X	
Obj. 2	X		X	X	
Obj. 3	X	X	X		
Obj. 4	X	X		X	
Pol. 1	X	X	X	X	
Pol. 2	X	X	X		
Pol. 3	X	X	X		
Pol. 4	X	X	X		
Pol. 5	X	X	X		
Pol. 6	X		X		
Pol. 7	X	X	X		
Pol. 8	X		X		
Pol. 9	X		X		
Pol. 10	X	X			
Pol. 11	X		X		
Pol. 12	X		X		
Pol. 13	X		X		
Pol. 14	X		X		
Pol. 15	X		X		
Pol. 16	X		X		
Pol. 17	X			X	
Pol. 18	X		X		

## Planning Element

Three (3) of the five (5) objectives noted in the Wildwood's *Plan of Intent* were specific to land use policy:

*Residential and commercial development consistent with long-range planning and prudent land utilization;*

*Protection of the greenbelt formed by Babler, Rockwood Reservation and Range, and Greensfelder Parks; and*

*Preservation and conservation of the natural environment.*

Protection of the natural environment was one (1) of the five (5) objectives outlined in the *Plan of Intent* and has already been discussed in the Environmental Element of this Master Plan.

### **Benefit (and Need) of the Non-Urban Residence District to the Larger St. Louis Metropolitan Area**

The Non-Urban Residence District zoned land in the City serves an important regional function by preserving open space in some of the most complex ecology of the region and enhancing, by contrast, the character of more densely settled areas of the community and surrounding municipalities. By promoting a diverse character of development in St. Louis County, the rural areas of the City of Wildwood permit other parts of the region to "borrow" open space that has been preserved through its planning policies.

### **Major Initiatives in the City of Wildwood (1995-2015)**

Over the last **twenty (20)** ~~ten (10)~~ years, the City has engaged in a number of major planning initiatives to achieve the adopted objectives and policies of the Master Plan. The efforts can be summarized as follows:

1. Completed Model Telecommunication Code in December, 1997.

2. Completed Town Center Process and Plan in February, 1998.
3. Completed Historic Preservation and Restoration Code in August, 1999.
4. Completed Outdoor Lighting Requirements in August, 1999.
5. Completed Architectural Review Board Ordinance and Standards in May, 1999 and June, 2001.
6. Completed Parks and Recreation Plan in June, 2001.
7. Completed Town Center Development Manual in June, 2004.
8. Completed Public Space Ordinance in January, 2006.
9. Completed the Action Plan for Parks and Recreation in 2007.
10. Completed the update of the Town Center Plan in March 2010 and October 2012 (City Council).

Along with these plans and associated efforts overseen by the Department of Planning, the Departments of Administration and Public Works have also undertaken extensive planning activities. These efforts have focused on the creation of transportation priorities in its Annual Capital Improvement Budget and its 5-Year Capital Improvements Program. In the past ten (10) years, several of these planned major initiatives have improved the safety of the City's streets, rural roadways, and bridges. Additionally, the major upgrades have occurred establishing appropriate stormwater management criteria and standards for areas located outside the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District's boundaries.

Since the incorporation of the City, and the passage of the City's Charter, planning efforts have led to improved developments in terms of their character, respect for the environment, and functionality. Development continues to be a major influence in the City, particularly as the Town Center Area continues to grow in popularity and interest. Although the relative number of single family dwelling permit issuances may have declined from their peak levels prior to the City's incorporation, the number of permits still being issued is significant, **increasing in total, particularly over the last two (2) years**, and continue to reflect the desirability of Wildwood as a place to locate a home or business.

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## Master Plan Processes and Updates

Under the City’s Charter, the Comprehensive Zoning Plan must be updated every ten (10) years. The update process is intended to keep this important planning document germane to changing conditions and reflect residents’ vision of their community. Additionally, the update of the entire Master Plan is also an excellent time to consider the new opportunities and challenges that may face the City has made in the previous ten (10) year period. Along with these considerations, the Master Plan process is always necessary to keep pace with new technologies and other conditions that occur, which were not anticipated in the previous ten (10) year period.

*Updates, however, must be respectful of maintaining a common consistency, so residents, property owners, and businesses have some level of expectation regarding future actions or changes within the community.* This expectation, which is derived from a Master Plan that is supported by the elected and appointed officials, is critical to achieving support for new initiatives to meet the goals, objectives, and policies of the document. **Accordingly, changes to the plan, with the exception of the properties expressly referenced in Appendix VI as having potential for modification, if an appropriate plan were submitted, after its adoption, should only be considered in the most unique or pressing circumstances or when such provides a clearly definable community benefit meeting the goals, objectives, and policies of this document.**

## PLANNING GOALS

1. Improve the quality of life in the City of Wildwood by implementing, updating, and maintaining land use regulations. (2006; Modified in 2016)
2. Planning efforts in Wildwood must be coordinated with other jurisdictions, service providers, and utilities. (2006; Modified in 2016)

3. Land use and planning decisions need to be related closely to environmental quality, community services, transportation systems, and open space/parks considerations. (2006)

## **PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

1. The overall rural character and fragile ecology of the City of Wildwood should be preserved.
2. The greenbelt of regional parks should be protected by preserving existing zoning and land use patterns on their periphery, thereby ensuring a protective transitional landscape around each one. (1996; Modified in 2016)
3. The expansion of suburban-type densities within this community should be limited to those locations, and associated parcels of ground, identified as “Suburban Residential Area” on the Conceptual Land Use Categories Map of the Master Plan. (1996; Modified in 2016)
4. Commercial and industrial development should be promoted within the City as a means to provide an adequate tax and service base for its citizens, but they should be strictly defined and limited to very specific locations in the community, i.e. the Town Center for commercial activities and the Chesterfield Valley Area of the City for industrial uses.
5. Programs to improve communication about, and enforcement of, planning and zoning regulations, should be implemented by the City. (2006; Modified in 2016)
6. The City of Wildwood should continue to encourage life-cycle housing opportunities to all age groups. (2006; Modified in 2016)
7. Within The Town Center Area of Wildwood, application of its required Neighborhood Design Standards and Architectural Guide-

lines, from the *Town Center Plan*, shall be met or exceeded by development interests. (2016)

## **PLANNING POLICIES**

1. Consolidate future commercial development within the boundaries of the City of Wildwood's Town Center.
2. Relate changes in the mapped zoning density within the two suburban residential areas to the pattern on adjacent properties, but the densities of new developments should not be in excess of one (1) unit per acre. Higher residential densities may be appropriate within the Town Center Area, if part of that overall plan (see Conceptual Land Use Map). (Modified 2006)
3. Continue Non-Urban Residence District zoning designation as the major land use category in the City of Wildwood. The Non-Urban Residence District designation of land performs an important regional function for the more developed communities in St. Louis County. Through the preservation of this zoning designation around the regional parks, the protection of the regional greenbelt is furthered. In addition, maintaining an existing Non-Urban Residence District designation is especially appropriate in areas of steep topography and highly erodible soil profiles. (1996; Modified in 2016)
4. Incorporate the Land Use Categories of the Regulating Plan in the Town Center Development Manual, as part of the City's Zoning Code, in accordance with the map contained therein.
5. Maintain the policy of preserving historic buildings/sites and archaeological areas through their designation as landmarks. (1996; Modified in 2016)
6. Maintain land use and environmental policies to protect the regional park system from erosion and pollution. (2006; Modified

in 2016)

7. Promote the development of consistent regulations between other service providers (fire and school districts) and utilities and the City's land use standards and requirements, particularly for the Town Center and Non-Urban Areas of Wildwood. (2006)
8. Maintain design criteria and standards for the use of land and for the architecture of buildings and structures, so that new construction complements the surrounding natural and built environments and minimizes harm or damage to them. (2006; Modified in 2016)
9. Any land use related matter must be reviewed and acted upon by the Planning and Zoning Commission, before City Council Committee or City Council can take an action upon it. (2016)

## Planning Element Cross-References

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Obj. 1			X
Obj. 2			X
Obj. 3	X		X
Obj. 4	X		
Obj. 5		X	X
Obj. 6	X		
Obj. 7	X		
Pol. 1	X		
Pol. 2	X		
Pol. 3	X		X
Pol. 4	X		
Pol. 5	X		
Pol. 6	X		X
Pol. 7	X	X	
Pol. 8	X		
Pol. 9	X		

## Community Services Element

The City of Wildwood began on a premise of providing needed services in a different manner than other communities' located within St. Louis County. This approach was to employ a group of staff that would be small in its relative size, which would be offset by utilizing the private sector to deliver all other services through a series of managed contracts. The quality of the services delivered by the private sector, along with their prices, could then be reviewed each year to ensure the highest quality and the least cost. City staff would manage these contracts for the community and make the necessary determinations of efficiency, cost, and need on an annual basis. Therefore, over the last twenty (20) years, community services have always been offered to residents and businesses utilizing this model, which has resulted in all necessary services being provided to them with assurances on quality, cost, and experience of the providers annually guaranteed. In the original Master Plan adopted in 1996 by the Planning and Zoning Commission and ratified by the City Council, this element was named "Urban Services." In the Master Plan 2006 Update Process, the name of this element was changed to "Community Services" to better reflect the character of Wildwood. With the City of Wildwood maintaining its unique character and creating opportunities for residents to better identify with this area through a number of different initiatives and efforts, the term "community" is much more suitable, since creating ownership in this City is critical to its success well into the future.

### Major Initiatives in the City of Wildwood (1995-2005)

This element represents the administration of government and the provision of important services to residents, property owners, and businesses living, working, or otherwise located in the City of Wildwood. These services add to the quality of life, maintain property values, and provide a safe and secure environment for everyone. Many of these services that are essential to a vibrant and safe City environment are provided by other entities or utilities not affiliated with Wildwood. These partnerships are key to the success of the City

# Master Plan

and its residents, property owners, and businesses benefit from the expertise of these other entities and providers.

Over the past **twenty (20)** years, the City has made many upgrades and improvements to the service levels residents, property owners, and businesses receive relative to the previous jurisdiction - **St. Louis County**. These upgrades and improvements were promised as part of the incorporation effort and integral to the *Plan of Intent's* stated direction. A summary of upgrades and improvements is as follows:

1. Resurfaced over **63** miles of rural roadways in the City.
2. Replaced over **12,000** slabs of concrete street sections.
3. Replaced over **thirteen (13)** deficient or deteriorating bridges.
4. Promoted household recycling efforts in the City, while managing a sole-source single-family residential solid waste collection contract with a single provider.
5. Participated, and partially funded, **three (3) two (2)** major safety improvements on State Route 109; **the last of which added two (2) roundabouts at major street intersections to facilitate safer and more efficient travel along one (1) of the more congested lengths of roadway located in the City.**
6. Established **and upgraded** the City's website, **while publishing the** Wildwood Gazette and weekly e-newsletter.
7. Installed over **sixteen (16) fourteen (14)** linear miles of multiple-use trails.
8. Restored Old Pond School and created a neighborhood-sized park in association with it.
9. Constructed Anniversary Park.
10. Established recreational programs, including **nineteen (19) nine (9)** major events.
11. Directed annexation of additional Town Center Area into the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District's boundaries, **via a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID).**
12. Adopted codes, ordinances, and regulations to improve efficiency of City's financial management.
13. Established sound investment policies.
14. Created **and updated** meeting policies and procedures to comply with Missouri Sunshine Laws and requirements and allow residents to have open access to all government activities.

15. Partnered with other local governments to provide services and programs to **all residents, including senior citizens.**
16. Established Board of Ethics, Board of Public Safety, Architectural Review Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Administrative Review Board, and ad-hoc committees to assist in major initiatives, since the incorporation of the City in 1995.
17. Added **nineteen (19)** police officers to the City's force, **thereby allowing for a minimum of four (4) beats to be offered at all times within Wildwood by the St. Louis County Police Department.**
18. **Designed and constructed the City's community park - phase one - project, which included the City's first dog park component and an all-inclusive playground for all abilities of children.**
19. **Partnered with St. Louis County's Department of Parks and Recreation to open Bluffview Park, with its 2.3 mile long trail system, while beginning a long-term lease for a Belleview Farms site - a historically significant one hundred (100) acre open space located in the Meramec River Valley.**
20. **Assisted in the provision of high-speed internet service to over four hundred (400) households in the rural areas of the community, which still have no other options than the two (2) providers engaged by Wildwood through its eight (8) year effort in this regard.**
21. **Completed two (2) segments of the Manchester Road Streetscape Project, while finishing the design and engineering for the third, and final, segment of this Town Center improvement effort slated for construction in 2017.**

Meeting the needs of the City's constituents has been the primary goal of four (4) Mayors, numerous City Council Members, and staff over the twenty (20) years. In the public input sessions, many of the participants noted **the level and quality improved of services offered by the City**, since it incorporated, and wanted them to continue into the future. Additionally, many of the service providers and utilities responding to the request for information from the Department of Planning for this update of the Master Plan noted improved service levels and expanded networks of utilities had been achieved in the area of Wildwood over the past twenty (20) years, with other improvements planned in the next decade (see Appendix IV).

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## Major Challenges Facing the City of Wildwood (2005-2015)

The ability of the City to undertake and complete those major initiatives over the last twenty (20) years has been premised on the availability of funding from a number of dedicated and predictable resources. Primarily this source of funding has been the City's sales tax received from its participation in St. Louis County's pool distribution formula. The City receives this pool sales tax revenue, which is based upon a per capita formula of total residents in the community. Since the City of Wildwood experienced substantial growth between 1995 (its incorporation) to 2010, a marked increase occurred in revenues from the sales tax. The City has continued to grow since the 2010 Census was completed and is anticipating adding approximately six thousand (6,000) more residents by the end of this decade. Under the current sales and other formulas, the City would receive an increase in revenues from this growth in population.

Over the past several years, an on-going discussion has been held at the State Legislature among municipal and State leaders about the distribution of pool sales tax revenues and how it might be changed to address what certain cities have claimed are inequities in its structure. These discussions have led to numerous bills and other legislative initiatives to be proposed and debated for possible consideration, introduction, and passage. The City of Wildwood has and must continue to address attempts to change this tax structure, since it is the major source of operating and capital improvement revenues. Any changes to this tax structure could impact the City in a negative manner, which might lead to reductions in community services. Therefore, the City needs to be prepared to participate in any discussions on this matter, while maintaining vigilance in monitoring any legislative initiatives on possible changes to the taxing formulas and encouraging equity to all parties, (if changed).

During the last ten (10) years, the City Council adopted a specific policy and associated procedures for the consideration of requests for development incentives. Development incentives, such as Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NID), Transportation Development

Districts (TDD), Community Improvement Districts (CID), and Tax Increment Financing (TIF), may be appropriate planning strategies, when applied as a means to achieve community goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the Master Plan and policies established by the City Council consistent with the same. However, in evaluating such mechanisms, the inherent costs to federal and state taxpayers from tax-exempt financing or other public costs should be fully weighed against the private and public benefits sought in order to ensure that the City uses, such tools only to promote the overall public good for its residents, while adhering to the City's **twenty (20) year** commitment to regionalism.

As the City of Wildwood matures, pressures will also mount on maintaining the current level of services it provides to its residents, property owners, and businesses. These pressures could lead to the Mayor and City Council members having to make decisions about the level of services, the providers of these services, and the character of these services under duress. Since the City contracts with private providers for many of its services, costs are competitive due to the bidding processes associated with them. In the next ten (10) years, overarching all decisions must be the need to protect the public's health, safety, and general welfare, while maintaining the high level of services and their delivery.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES GOALS**

1. Appropriate police, fire, EMS, sanitation, and other municipal services need to be maintained. (2006)
2. Development levels, and accompanying service responsibilities, should not exceed available municipal service capabilities. (2006; Modified in 2016)
3. Internet-based communication services should be improved, as an essential part of daily living and working throughout Wildwood. (2006; Modified in 2016)

4. Residents and businesses need to be well informed about Wildwood's government activities and its fiscal condition. (2006)

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES OBJECTIVES**

1. The allocation of future capital investments by the City should be planned and managed in such a way the established character of the community is maintained and improved.
2. The constraints on development imposed by the fiscal and geographic limitations of all service providers, i.e. utilities and other jurisdictions, must be accepted by the City and related parties. (1996; Modified in 2016)
3. The concept of concurrency for new developments in the City of Wildwood should always be considered, so the capacity of existing infrastructure or government services is not exceeded, thereby ensuring they are commensurate with the level of population and physical growth.
4. The use of private contractors for services in the City should be continued, but premised on cost-effectiveness, performance and quality evaluations in terms of citizen satisfaction. (2006; Modified in 2016)
5. The City should preserve and enhance property values by implementing plans, regulations, and standards for maintenance of its housing stock and land areas. (2006)
6. The network of existing and future utilities should be constructed underground and coordinated with other providers and public infrastructure to the extent feasible by technology, type of service, and proximity to buildings, trees, or denser development. (2006)

## COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES

1. Maintain a long-range capital improvements program for the City of Wildwood based upon its own fiscal resources, grants from the federal and state government, and other sources of outside funding. (Modified in 2016)
2. Follow a policy of fiscal prudence in considering major new development initiatives, while creating specific procedures governing the review and processing of development incentive requests submitted to the City.
3. Continue contractual arrangement for police services, while seeking improvements and better efficiencies whenever possible. (2006)
4. Infrastructure for new or upgraded telecommunication services should be consistent with the rural appearance of the community and combine the use of pre-existing structures and rights-of-way, as the preferred methods of providing these facilities. (2006; Modified in 2016)
5. Develop opportunities, foster partnerships with providers, and create incentives for the provision of internet-based communication services to all households and businesses in the City of Wildwood. (2006; Modified in 2016)
6. Seek a library facility in the Town Center Area of the City. (2006)
7. Submit all publicly-funded projects to the City's review processes to guarantee compliance with its regulations and requirements. (2006)
8. Address the aging of housing stock within the City by the design and implementation of a re-occupancy permit inspection pro-

## Master Plan

gram associated with the sale of any existing single family dwelling beginning with wastewater and well water inspections at the time of their resale. (2006) **TABLED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION**

9. Residents and business owners need to be well informed about Wildwood's government and its activities and the City should utilize all available media forums in this effort, including, but not limited to, direct mail, internet-based communication opportunities, and local newspapers. (2006; Modified in 2016)
10. Complete 5-Year Annexation Plans that are required by the St. Louis County Boundary Commission in keeping with State Statute and their procedures, as adopted, for potential additions of land area to the City's current boundaries. Decisions relating to annexation proposals should consider a number of factors, including fiscal, service, and community of interest benefits and/or costs. (2006)
11. Establish programs for senior citizens in the community, including partnerships with other local entities, with the resources to help support said efforts. (2016)

## Community Services Element Cross-Reference

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
Obj. 1		X		
Obj. 2	X	X		
Obj. 3	X	X		
Obj. 4	X	X		
Obj. 5		X		
Obj. 6		X		
Pol. 1		X		
Pol. 2		X		
Pol. 3	X			
Pol. 4			X	
Pol. 5			X	
Pol. 6				
Pol. 7				X
Pol. 8				
Pol. 9				X
Pol. 10		X		
Pol. 11				

## Transportation Element

### Major Transportation Issues – Then and Now

Proposals to create a major north-south highway paralleling State Route 109 helped convince area residents of the need to take control of their own future in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The current regional transportation plan of the East-West Council of Governments (the St. Louis Metropolitan Area's official coordinating body for transportation improvements) does not include a new north-south highway on or near State Route 109. It does, however, identify State Route 109 as part of a Major Transportation Investment Corridor requiring short-term safety improvements. Concerns remain in the community regarding the extension of State Route 109 into the Chesterfield Valley Area, along with the addition of traffic lanes and proposed interchanges, under the guise of a safety-improvement program, which could ultimately lead it to becoming a part of a third metropolitan by-pass with links south to Interstate 44, Highways 30 and 21, and Interstate 55, and a link north to Interstates 64 and 70.

State Route 109 is already connected to Interstate 44, but its northern end currently terminates at Wild Horse Creek Road; a two-lane, east-west arterial. There are no official plans for improving Wild Horse Creek Road. However, State Route 109 could become a regional highway if it were connected to a widened Eatherton Road in the City of Chesterfield and then extended northward to a new interchange with Interstate 64. This route appears to be part of the traffic improvement corridor shown in the East-West Gateway Council of Government's short-term plan. This major regional planning initiative should not be created in the guise of short-term traffic improvements. If a third-ring bypass is built, its regional planning consequences on the entire metropolitan area should be fully assessed and its route determined based on these considerations.

The effect of making this link would be to open up Jefferson, Franklin and St. Charles Counties to more intensive development, most of

which is likely to be drawn from the inner areas of St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis. The benefits of taking this initiative are debatable. Spending money on this new infrastructure could well encourage people to stop using existing facilities. The third-ring bypass is likely to accelerate the process of drawing development out of the older parts of the region, in complete contradiction to policies of regional integration and of preserving the Cities of St. Louis and Clayton as the centers of the metropolitan area.

Even if a third-ring bypass is ultimately to be constructed, there are strong arguments against using the State Route 109 corridor for this purpose. The unusual soil conditions in the City, detailed in the Environmental Element of this Master Plan, make it an inappropriate area in which to create major new highways. The enemy of ecological stability in the City is rapid runoff. The more impervious surfaces, particularly continuous highway lanes in hilly areas, the more rapid runoff is generated. State Route 109 adjoins the regional parks and actually goes through one (1) of them. The City of Wildwood has an obligation to protect the regional parks located within it; building a major highway through part of these parks and subjecting them to accelerated surges of rainwater polluted by motor oil and petroleum combustion products is counter to all other efforts to protect the regional park system.

### **Major Initiatives in the City of Wildwood (1995-2005)**

In the past two (2) decades, the City's Departments of Administration, Public Works, and Planning have established a Capital Improvement Program for Wildwood. Along with an annual budget, a five (5) year program has also been established to guide the development of infrastructure in the City. These improvements are funded by a 1/2¢ Capital Improvement Sales Tax approved by the voters of Wildwood in 1998, federal and state grants, and general revenue funds. Overall goals of the Capital Improvement Program are to provide safe streets and bridges and reduce commuting time between local locations by offering logical connections of existing and proposed streets. Management of traffic by limiting curb cuts on major arterial

streets has also been a policy of the City of Wildwood.

Since the update of the Master Plan in 2006, the City has created many opportunities for multi-modal transportation options to serve its residents and visitors. This approach includes making existing streets and roadways more accommodating to other users than vehicles, along with designing and constructing new infrastructure that promotes the same. Additionally, the availability of public transit to the Town Center, including the St. Louis Community College - Wildwood Campus, has been a priority and recently realized. Along with these efforts and programs, the City has continued in the last ten (10) years to construct trails and make connections to Town Center Area, public space areas, and residential communities located throughout Wildwood. More so, than other point in the history of Wildwood, this community is interconnect, linked, and poised to be a recreational center for the entire metropolitan region and beyond.

## **TRANSPORTATION GOALS**

1. Safe streets, sidewalks/trails, and bridges need to be maintained throughout Wildwood. (2006)
2. Roadway projects need to be appropriate to the character of Wildwood. (2006; Modified in 2016)
3. Wildwood should encourage multi-modal options for transportation for residents, visitors, and guests, and businesses. (2006; Modified in 2016)
4. Support the founding vision of ‘Save the Greenbelt, Stop the Outerbelt.’ (2016)

## **TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES**

1. The existing and proposed roadway network in the City of Wildwood should be designed and maintained so that it is safe and

efficient, but also consistent with the community's long-standing, historic rural character. Roadway modifications shall be commensurate with expected traffic volumes and City standards established for these specific land use categories. (1996; Modified in 2016)

2. Changes to the regional roadway network, if proposed, should proceed only after the land use and economic costs and benefits (including the effects on the St. Louis Region) are fully understood and evaluated. (1996; Modified in 2016)
3. The City's topography, its associated fragile and rocky soils, and the linked group of outstanding regional parks located here, should be protected from the erosion and pollution caused by the construction and use of major roadway corridors.
4. The development of future alternatives to automobile transportation in the City of Wildwood should be explored. (1996; Modified in 2016)
5. The natural vegetation and scenic views located along the City's network of roadways should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of both residents and visitors. (1996; Modified in 2016)

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

1. Promote a policy for the City of Wildwood's traffic needs, which supports the primary creation of a network of safe and ecologically responsible, two-lane, local arterial roadways. Make only improvements required for traffic safety, such as adding shoulders, improving the configuration of intersections, replacing sub-standard bridges, installing traffic signals, and other topical measures.
2. The City of Wildwood should promote the State Route 109 Corridor Study (Missouri Department of Transportation – July 1999)

as a guide for future modifications to this roadway, while prioritizing topical improvements to facilitate the safe movement of local traffic within the community. This policy is premised on the negative impacts an outerbelt would have upon this community, particularly with respect to the environmental degradation associated with its construction and increased traffic, the loss of parkland through direct acquisition for roadway right-of-ways, the promotion of greater inter-County traffic movements, and the division of this community into two parts. (1996; Modified in 2016)

3. Oppose construction of major new highways within the City of Wildwood.
4. Support the City's existing highway and street network by adopting and implementing land use policies that will promote a compact concentration of development in the Town Center and the two suburban residential areas. These policies should enable more people to walk to their destinations, while also encouraging the Town Center to be served by other forms of access besides the automobile.
5. Require local access streets within individual subdivisions to be built to City standards, but consider having such roadways remain private and maintained by the homeowners to further encourage greater control over their ultimate use and appearance, except in the two suburban residential areas and Town Center, where local access streets should be publicly maintained.
6. Identify safety improvements necessary to all City-maintained roadway, as part of Wildwood's Capital Improvement Program. Such improvements may include the following: replacing antiquated bridges that are too narrow and subject to flooding; improving road alignments in places where there have been repeated crashes; widening roads where necessary and feasible to provide shoulders; correcting unsafe intersections; and provid-

ing a network of multiple links, so there is always more than a single way of going from one destination to another. (1996; Modified in 2016)

7. Protect existing bridges by implementing such measures as the posting of weight limits to protect them from excessive loads, identify potentially dangerous approaches with appropriate warning signs, and prohibit truck traffic on roadways where weight-restricted crossings are located.
8. Preserve and enhance the scenic environmental qualities, which exist along many of the City's roadways and their intersections, through the application of appropriate design standards reflecting a sensitivity toward the area's unique environmental characteristics. These standards should be applied in the planning, construction, and maintenance of all roadways.
9. Designate certain roadways (listed in the Transportation Element and shown on the Transportation Plan) for the City of Wildwood's arterial system and provide an improvement policy for each of them. Roadways necessary to support the City of Wildwood's Town Center will be identified in conjunction with its own detailed plan. (1996; Modified in 2016)
10. Continue to promote safe roadways for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists (Safe Streets Initiative). (2006)

## Roads

### **East-West Arterials<sup>1</sup>**

*Clayton Road* (County). **A two to three-lane arterial road.** Improvements to Clayton Road have been completed from the eastern boundary of the City to Strecker Road. This roadway now accommodates three (3) lanes of traffic, with vertical curbs, stormwater management facilities, and sidewalks. Clayton Road, west of Strecker Road, remains a two-lane roadway.

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*Wild Horse Creek Road (State).* **A two-lane arterial road.** There are no official plans for adding lanes. Topical safety improvements should be planned.

*Manchester Road (Wildwood).* City plans are for **a two-lane arterial**, with widenings for turn-lanes or other safety improvements, as required. The design of this road within the Wildwood Town Center has been studied in detail and these levels of improvement are included as part of that plan. West of the Town Center, this road should remain **two-lanes in width**.

*State Route 100 (State).* **A limited-access four-lane road** from the Westglen Farms Drive/Manchester Road intersection to State Highway T. There are long-term safety improvements proposed for the section west of State Highway T to Interstate 44 in the current East-West Gateway Council of Governments' plan.

*State Highway T/St. Albans Road (State).* This road should remain a **two-lane arterial**, with topical safety improvements, as needed.

*Main Street (Wildwood).* City plans are for a two-lane boulevard, with adjacent on-street parking, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and streetscape enhancements in accordance with the Town Center Plan.

*Melrose Road (from Allenton Road to State Route 100) (Wildwood).* **A two-lane arterial that should remain substantially unchanged, except for topical safety improvements.**

## North-South Arterials<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arterial - For the purposes of this plan, an arterial designation does not infer the street or roadway is part of a regional system serving the larger metropolitan population, but more the immediate West County Area and Wildwood. This designation is intended to define these roadways as major transportation corridors within the City that provide logical connections from the hierarchy of collector and local streets, require access management practices, and receive priority in terms of revenue resources for maintenance, repair, and upkeep.

*Allenton Road (Wildwood).* **A two-lane arterial** that should remain substantially unchanged, except for topical safety improvements.

*Fox Creek Road (Wildwood).* **A two-lane arterial** that should remain substantially unchanged, except for topical safety improvements.

*Old State Road (County).* Built on a narrow ridge, this road should remain **a two-lane arterial**. Shoulders should be added, where possible, and other topical safety improvements made. A section of this roadway, located in the City of Wildwood, is to be improved to a three (3) lane arterial level, as part of a St. Louis County project (from Ridge Road on the north end to Old Fairway Drive on the south end).

*Ossenfort/Wild Horse Creek Road (Wildwood).* The north-south portion of Wild Horse Creek Road, west of State Route 109, is part of the City's roadway network. It should remain substantially unchanged as **a two-lane arterial** road, except for topical safety improvements.

*State Route 109 (State)/North Eatherton Road (County).* Currently, a two-lane arterial. Safety improvements should be made, but the **two-lane configuration should be retained**. No new connections should be made north to Interstate 64.

*Strecker Road (Wildwood).* **A two-lane arterial**. A portion of this roadway was rebuilt during the last ten (10) year period of time and now contains sidewalks, improved stormwater management facilities, planting and landscape islands, and improved lane surfaces. **Limit any new improvements to topical safety enhancements.**

*Shepard Road (Wildwood).* **A two-lane arterial that should remain substantially unchanged, except for topical safety improvements.**

*Thunderhead Canyon Road and West Glen Farms Road (Wildwood).* These roads are necessary traffic links, but their speed limits should

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be strictly enforced.

*Valley Road (Wildwood)*. **A two-lane arterial** that should remain substantially unchanged, except for topical safety improvements.

*Taylor Road (Wildwood)*. A two to four-lane boulevard, with adjacent on-street parking, sidewalks, and streetscape enhancements in accordance with the Town Center Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Arterial - For the purposes of this plan, an arterial designation does not infer the street or roadway is part of a regional system serving the larger metropolitan population, but more the immediate West County Area and Wildwood. This designation is intended to define these roadways as major transportation corridors within the City that provide logical connections from the hierarchy of collector and local streets, require access management practices, and receive priority in terms of revenue resources for maintenance, repair, and upkeep.

## Transportation Element Cross-Reference

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
Obj. 1	X	X		X
Obj. 2	X	X		X
Obj. 3	X	X		
Obj. 4			X	
Obj. 5	X	X		
Pol. 1	X	X		X
Pol. 2		X		X
Pol. 3				X
Pol. 4	X		X	
Pol. 5	X			
Pol. 6	X			
Pol. 7	X			
Pol. 8	X			
Pol. 9	X	X		
Pol. 10	X		X	

## Open Space and Recreation Element

### Major Initiatives in the City of Wildwood (1995-2005)

In 2001, the City Council approved a *Parks and Recreation Plan* for Wildwood. This plan was the beginning of a major effort on the part of the City to begin providing comprehensive recreational programming to its residents and visitors, while undertaking the development of park properties with facilities. Since that time, the growth in programs and facilities has been substantial. These programs include over sixty (60) annual events for the community, two (2) neighborhood style parks with facilities, and several other passive areas serving as open space, which have been acquired and improved. Along with programs and park facilities, the City has installed over fourteen (14) miles of multiple use trails, while partnering with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and St. Louis County in opening the *Al Foster Memorial Trail* along the Meramec River. Many other activities, facilities, and programs are planned in the years to come.

Along with these City efforts in the more traditional areas of parks and recreation planning and implementation, Wildwood has been applying the Master Plan land use categories and environmental regulations to protect existing parkland from degradation and harm. These types of policies and applications were key components of the incorporation effort and, from the standpoint of the City, have been achieved when the condition of the major public park holdings are reviewed. Similarly, the City has been receiving dedications of land area to further the connection of Babler State Park to Rockwoods Reservation through development proposals in the Non-Urban Residential Areas. New developments, beyond these dedications of land area, are also required to buffer and protect park properties from stormwater runoff, grading, and tree removal/damage. These buffers normally exceed one hundred fifty (150) feet in size.

Just before the adoption of the Master Plan 2006 Update, the City Council approved a new Public Space Ordinance, which formalizes the dedication processes of obtaining land area, fees, and improve-

ments as part of the development or the division of land. This ordinance will create a fair and concise mechanism to gauge the impact of the new development on the need for public space and offer options to the developer to comply. When great communities are recognized or discussed, often heard is the abundance of public space, with improvements for residents to enjoy and use. The adoption of this ordinance begins the process of fulfilling many of the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and will ultimately lead to the need to create perpetual funding mechanisms within the community for the maintenance and upkeep of park properties and related facilities.

In 2006, the City Council, along with City staff, agreed to undertake a new approach to implementing the goals of the 2001 plan, which led to the formation of a citizen committee to achieve this end. The approach was to identify a limited number of goals from the 2001 plan and implement them in an abbreviated time to achieve the intended outcome. This process led to the development of an Action Plan that had four (4) goals and fifty-seven (57) recommendations. These goals and recommendations were then implemented thereafter and led to the following actions:

1. **Programming** - Partner with the other providers to create the greatest range of programming opportunities possible for residents, beginning with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Pond Athletic Association, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College - Wildwood Campus.
2. **Facilities** - Expand current commitments to development of all types of trail systems (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) in the City of Wildwood, which are intended to link all public park spaces and population centers together, along with implementing the recently adopted “Access and Mobility Plan.”
3. **Acquisition** - Identify and prioritize locations for future park-

land acquisitions, with the first action to be the acquisition of a parcel of ground, of a size to accommodate a community park, within the central area of the City (proximity to State Route 100 and State Route 109 and environs).

4. **Funding** - Implement the necessary steps to promote the presentation of a park sales tax to the voters of Wildwood, no later than the November 2008 General Election, for use in the development of parks facilities and recreation programs, to include staffing, maintenance, and other expenses.

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS**

1. Wildwood's parks and recreation facilities should improve the quality of life within the City, enhance property values, promote a sense of community, and welcome and engage residents and the visiting public. (2006)
2. Wildwood facilities and park and recreation programs should meet residents' needs and preferences within prudent fiscal constraints. (2006; Modified in 2016)
3. Wildwood should have permanent funding sources for its park and recreation facilities/programs and their maintenance. (2006)

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION OBJECTIVES**

1. The regional parks located within the City of Wildwood should be protected from adverse environmental consequences created by roadways, highways, and new developments located adjacent to or upstream from these publicly-held properties.
2. The connection of Babler, Rockwood Reservation and Range, and Greensfelder Parks should be encouraged, as part of a larger regional park system.
3. **Protection of the diversity and health of vegetative and wildlife**

species within the City of Wildwood should be supported and adopted for application. (1996; Modified in 2016)

4. Funding mechanisms, along with conservation easements, development incentives, and donation opportunities, for the active acquisition of properties and facilities to address the park and recreation needs of the City of Wildwood should be defined, established, created, and maintained. (2006)
5. Partnerships with federal, state, and local park and recreation agencies, other municipalities and public and private not-for-profit groups to implement the goals and objectives of this effort and regional actions of the greater community should be promoted and established. (2006)

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION POLICIES**

1. Encourage the purchase or donation of additional land for the regional parks through a variety of traditional and innovative programs. (1996; Modified in 2016)
2. Create community/neighborhood parks throughout the more developed areas of Wildwood, with appropriate facilities to serve the surrounding areas, designed to accommodate residents, visitors, and guests to the City. (2006; Modified in 2016)
3. Pursue funding and financing options and mechanisms for the acquisition of park and recreational facilities for Wildwood residents, visitors, and guests. (2006; Modified in 2016)
4. Encourage diversity in the type of facilities to be funded and built, so that they complement other facilities in the City and within surrounding communities. The design of these facilities should allow for expansion, as growth occurs or user demands change. (2006)

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5. Define, prioritize, and select potential locations for the acquisition, or protection by other means, of scenic vistas, pristine woodlands, diverse water features, prime agricultural lands, and properties whose acquisition will further such preservation within the City of Wildwood. (2006)
6. Ensure all efforts relating to parks and recreation planning in the City of Wildwood complement and adhere to the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, standards and guidelines of the Town Center Plan, requirements of the City Charter, and related municipal codes. (2006)
7. Initiate and implement partnerships with other entities to provide educational, and community outreach programs to residents, visitors, and guests of the City of Wildwood. (2006; Modified in 2016)
8. Develop opportunities for arts and cultural events for residents, visitors, and guests, as part of the City's public facilities and programs, and complement those provided by the public and private schools and regional institutions serving the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. (2006; Modified in 2016)

## Open Space and Recreation Element Cross-Reference

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Obj. 1	X		
Obj. 2	X		
Obj. 3	X		
Obj. 4		X	X
Obj. 5	X	X	
Pol. 1	X		
Pol. 2	X	X	
Pol. 3			X
Pol. 4	X		
Pol. 5	X		
Pol. 6	X	X	
Pol. 7	X		
Pol. 8	X		

## Economic Development Element

### A New Element for the Plan (2016)

In the past twenty (20) years, the City has created a number of opportunities for development in Wildwood, whether in residential settings or commercial locations. The commercial locations have focused in Town Center Area, given the allowable types, densities, and intensities of land use activities allowed in this special part of the City. The intent of the Town Center was to create a unique environment that provided engaging building architecture, walkable, pedestrian-friendly areas, park once and shop designs for convenience and building placements, and public spaces for gathering and outdoor enjoyment. Residential development has continued to occur throughout the community, of all types, from three (3) acre types and rural in nature, to the higher density projects in the Town Center Area. Collectively, this growth, whether residential or commercial in nature, was viewed for many years as the City's economic development efforts and sufficient in this regard.

However, more recently, in the last few years, concerns have been raised, particularly after the Great Recession, that more was needed from the City to spur commercial growth, which would be facilitated the development of more rooftops. Accordingly, the City Council appointed a task force of its members to develop an approach to this matter. This task force, a group of five (5) City Council members and the Mayor, spent its first year defining the City's long and short-term goals, which are defined below:

Thereafter, the task force engaged an outside consultant to create an Economic Development Plan for the City and identify a group of tasks for implementation and action. These action items are noted below:

With the consultant's work on-going during the development of this updated plan, the committee was able to review its products and

also discuss whether this sixth element to the Master Plan should be included or not. The committee agreed that, at this stage in the City's history, this new element would be beneficial and appropriate for inclusion into the plan, given the need to foster new interest in Town Center, maintain the current successes within this area, and grow the overall community by expanding its population, developing necessary and desired services, and forming new utility networks and infrastructure connections. Collectively, the committee sought to ensure that Wildwood, regardless of existing or future revenue sources, would be self-sustaining in terms of its budgetary needs for the immediate ten (10) year period covered by this updated plan.

## **Balancing Development Needs and Wildwood's Character**

Many pressures face communities in the new economy and competition for new development and retaining existing businesses increases each year. Communities have offered and provided public finance incentives in the billions of dollars, constructed infrastructure and utilities at no cost to the identified development interests, and competed against each other across the region to bring businesses to their receptive locations, at the loss to the other governments in the region. This approach to economic development has been studied and criticized and, conversely, praised by different parties, depending on their perspectives and/or perceived benefits. Regardless of the perspective, economic development in this fashion has limited merits, risky and short-term benefits, and high impacts associated with the incumbent negative consequences on other service providers and neighboring communities.

The City of Wildwood has never placed its principles at stake for the short-term benefits of a possible outcome. Of late, certain parties within the City have stated that Wildwood does not have a favorable business environment and changes to its long time regulations and policies in this regard need to be considered and acted upon, so as to change this circumstance and grow the local economy. This growth in the economy is partially based upon the uncertainty that

is now associated with the future of the pool sales tax and the funds it generates for the City. The Committee recognizes that it is important to have stable funding sources for the City and a business environment that is positive and vibrant, but is clear in its belief that such needs to be respectful of the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's other elements of its Master Plan.

With each legislative session at the State, this pool tax issue continues to be debated and it is important for the City to be attentive in this regard, but also work to implement the items adopted by the City Council from the consultant's report on economic development. Implementation of these action items identified in the consultant's report has been characterized as being a mix of short and long-term implementation timeframes. Therefore, progress in terms of their implementation should be measured in this regard, but always from the perspective of facilitating business retention and growth, consistent with the established direction of this community, since its incorporation, which has always been by measured and managed growth and quality, resident-based processes to verify successes.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

1. Continue to designate the Town Center as the City's core commercial and business area for development (see Planning Element – Objective #4). (2016)
2. Retention of current businesses and the development of new enterprises should be a priority to all staff, boards, commissions, and elected officials of the City. (2016)
3. Provide the necessary resources to promote the Town Center Area, as the City's core commercial and business location. (2016)
4. Allocate funding for capital improvement projects in Town Center Area, focusing on expansions or upgrades to the current

street and utility networks, along with open space, park, and trail development there as well. (2016)

5. Develop marketing strategies for the City, so tourists, recreational enthusiasts, and residents of the St. Louis Area will recognize it as a regional destination point. (2016)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

1. Undertake promotional efforts for the Town Center Area and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Area. (2016)
2. Organize and participate in outreach efforts among applicable business groups to foster interest in the Town Center and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Areas. (2016)
3. Inventory and report on Town Center Area's and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Area's growth, investment, and business patterns on an annual basis to the City Council, business community, and public. (2016)
4. Use the City's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan to identify and support projects in Town Center and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Areas to encourage new development within it. (2016)
5. Review on three (3) year cycles and modify, when needed, City land use regulations, permitting processes, and compliance efforts to determine and ensure effectiveness in their respective applications. (2016)
6. Establish a business development-retention coordinator for the City. (2016)
7. Make a recommendation to the City Council that the Economic Development Task Force be made a standing committee of City Council. (2016)

8. Create and maintain a business development plan focused on the Town Center and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Areas. (2016)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

1. Conduct research to determine what attracts people to Wildwood and develop a promotional campaign highlighting these features. (2016)
2. Identify key strategies for promoting and marketing Wildwood and then implement them. (2016)
3. Establish relationships with organizations/businesses that hold unique community assets, which helps in creating Wildwood's unique character. (2016)
4. Optimize the utilization of the City website, e-newsletter, and social media, including the possible development of new mobile applications. (2016)
5. Develop promotional materials, in conjunction with community representatives, which can be disseminated to desired businesses, restaurants, employers, development interests, and others to market Wildwood as a great place to live, work, and play. (2016)
6. Implement the adopted Action Items the City Council has identified as necessary from the City of Wildwood Economic Development Plan on these matters (Houseal Lavigne). (2016)
7. Complete the third phase of the Manchester Road Streetscape Project and facilitate the development of Main Street from its current terminus, at Market Avenue, to State Route 109. (2016)

## Economic Development Element Cross-Reference

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Obj. 1			X	X	X
Obj. 2			X	X	X
Obj. 3		X			
Obj. 4				X	
Obj. 5	X		X		X
Obj. 6		X			X
Obj. 7		X	X		
Obj. 8	X		X		X
Pol. 1		X			X
Pol. 2			X		X
Pol. 3		X	X		X
Pol. 4			X		X
Pol. 5			X		X
Pol. 6	X	X	X	X	X
Pol. 7				X	

### Conclusions and Conceptual Land Use Classifications

The residents, business owners, and service providers who live and work in the City of Wildwood, Missouri, have participated in the development of this updated Master Plan through a series of meetings, public hearings, and written comments received by the Department of Planning and Parks. These meetings, hearings, and comments were intended to obtain all possible information and opinions from the community to begin defining its vision for the future. As one of St. Louis County's ninety-two (92) municipalities, and the largest in terms of geographic size, the City of Wildwood has **always had a** unique, but difficult task ahead of it, due to the amount of undeveloped land area located here. These circumstances create development pressures in an area, which has long been known for its rugged terrain and natural beauty and has drawn many of its residents here for these reasons. While responsible, sustainable development is acceptable, **and encouraged within the Town Center and Industrial Areas of Wildwood**, it must be noted the existing density of development **in many of its watersheds** Caulks Creek Watershed has produced environmental and fiscal situations that should not be repeated in the remaining quadrants watershed areas located in the northwest, southwest and southern section of the southeast quadrant of the City.

This shared vision of the community began on February 7, 1995 at the polls and will be furthered through the adoption and implementation of this **updated** plan. The Master Plan addresses a number of areas relating to the City's policies on environmental protection, service provision, resource allocation, transportation analysis, **public space, economic development**, and land use development and control. The plan contains sixteen (16) goal statements, thirty (30) statements of objectives, and an additional sixty-two (62) statements designed to achieve these objectives. The major highlights of these one hundred eight (108) statements include the following:

**ENVIRONMENT** – Of the ~~five (5)~~ goals and objectives in this element, the primary policy for the area is to minimize environmental disturbance and damage within the existing developed areas, restore watersheds where erosion has negatively impacted the natural equilibrium, and prevent future disturbance or damage to both non-impacted and impacted areas. This protection and restoration is to be encouraged through the implementation of appropriate zoning densities and the clustering of lots to limit disturbance.

Of the ~~twenty (20)~~ policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on improving standards and development practices to address the sensitive nature of the City’s environment. The overall direction of these policies is to better manage the development process through the continued implementation of the City’s environmental regulations, including the tree preservation and restoration and grading and excavation codes, while exerting greater control over activities, which could potentially degrade the environment, such as, unmaintained stormwater control and sewage facilities.

**PLANNING** – Of the ~~six (6)~~ goals and objectives in this element the primary consensus in this area is to continue to consolidate more traditional urban densities in certain areas of the City where environmental characteristics, access, existing development patterns, and availability of services are more favorable to this type of density. Additionally, the City should maintain its current five (5) land

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use categories called Non-Urban Residential, Suburban Residential, Town Center, Industrial, and Historic.

Of the ~~ten (10)~~ policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on limiting suburban development densities to the two (2) areas of the community, where this pattern already exists, while concentrating commercial and innovative higher density residential development to the Town Center. Furthermore, the Non-Urban District zoned areas of the City should continue to be considered a legitimate and permanent land use category. This designation will also further the effort to protect expectations of existing homeowners in those areas, promote the protection and linkage of the parks, ~~create a species/vegetation corridor between them,~~ and thus establish the concept of the greenbelt that the residents of this area have long supported.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES** – Of the ~~seven (7)~~ goals and objectives in this element, the primary consensus is to promote a level of development commensurate with the availability of support services. Where services are not available or severely hampered, development densities and intensities must be limited.

Of the ~~eleven (11)~~ policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on promoting the concept of concurrency and managing the City's growth and expenditures based upon its longstanding rural char-

acter.

**TRANSPORTATION** – Of the ~~five (5)~~ goals and objectives in this element, the primary consensus is to promote a network of safe and efficient roads in the community, which are designed to serve the needs of the City. The construction or improvement of the area’s roadway system should be based upon the unique characteristics of its environment and level of development, **while also cognizant of increasing traffic volumes in certain areas necessitating certain changes for safety of users and travelers.**

Of the ~~eleven (11)~~ policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on limiting the improvement of the area’s roadway network to primarily two (2) lane arterial roads, including State Route 109. Additionally, the level of topical safety improvements should be based on specific plans developed for each of the roadways located in the City’s eight (8) wards and Town Center. Roads serving the Non-Urban Residential area should be built to City standards, but remain private, while those streets in the Sub-Urban Residential areas and the Town Center should be publicly maintained, except where specific circumstances dictate to the contrary.

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION** – Of the ~~seven (7)~~ objectives in this element, the primary consensus is to protect the regional park system and encourage the eventual development of the greenbelt

linkage between these publicly-held properties as noted in St. Louis County's first Parks Plan in 1965.

Of the ~~ten (10)~~ policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on creating policies and programs to encourage the dedication of land between these parks for inclusion in the greenbelt, thereby protecting these facilities from inappropriate development, and fostering the establishment of active park and trail facilities in Wildwood for the overall health of the community and region. ~~of the wildlife species/vegetation corridor.~~

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – Of the goals and objectives in this element, the primary consensus was to provide an environment that is conducive to retaining businesses already located in the City, through regular communication with them, strategic updates of regulations associated applicable to them, and better promotion of City programs for assistance in this regard. Along with business retention, this element's goals and objectives promote a targeted approach to economic development, which includes engaging an individual, who is responsible for this initiative, on a full to part-time basis, depending on need.

Of the policy statements in the plan, the emphasis is on creating new tactics of to promote Wildwood and its Town Center to area residents, and the overall region. Additionally, several of these policy statements seek for the City to provide certain benchmark activities to improve the business environment of Wildwood, including completing Phase Three of the Manchester Road Streetscape Project.

This Master Plan is unique and one which is used on a daily basis in making the City of Wildwood a better place to live, work and play indicative of the level of concern its residents hold regarding preservation of the City's natural attributes and rural character for future generations to enjoy. In attempting to accomplish this goal, the implementation of land use policies is paramount. As discussed in the proceeding summary, the community has reached a consensus on this policy and it is as follows: there should be five (5) major land use designations in the City --- Non-Urban Residential, Sub-Urban Residential, Industrial, Town Center, and Historic [Fifth Land Use Category - Historic was added to Master Plan with Ordinance #883 on October 14, 2002]. Each of these designations are described in greater detail below:

**NON-URBAN RESIDENTIAL** - This category currently contains the areas of the City currently zoned NU Non-Urban Residence District, **including one (1) commercially zoned property (Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District)**. Principally, this area is located west of the State Route 109 corridor, but additional properties of similar zoning and nature are found in all quadrants of the City. The Non-Urban Residential Area is generally not served by public sewer or water and is dependent upon individual systems for these services. Characteristically, the land area is steeply sloping, heavily vegetated, and relatively undeveloped in terms of traditional urban densities. The adjoining land use pattern is principally low density residential or parkland and access is limited to a network of rural roadways characterized by narrow widths, one-lane bridges, no shoulders, steep hills, and poor alignments. These characteristics are aesthetically desirable, but also at the same time dictate a low-density residential pattern (generally three (3) lots or

greater in size) for the future. Additionally, existing developments on lots of three (3) acres or more in these areas strongly weigh against any new development of higher densities in this land use designation. **Regarding the one (1) commercially zoned property located at the southeast corner of State Route 109/ Wild Horse Creek Road, its designation should be retained, as part of an Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District classification within this land use area, but for the sale of beer and wine only. However, no further commercial designations of properties located beyond this site should be considered, thereby acknowledging this previous zoning was part of St. Louis County's rejected land use policy and not the City of Wildwood.**

~~This category contains the areas of the City currently zoned NU Non Urban District. Principally, this area is located west of the State Route 109 corridor, but additional properties of similar zoning and nature are found in all quadrants of the City. The Non Urban Residential area is generally not served by public sewer or water and is dependent upon individual systems and/or package systems for these services. Characteristically, the land area is steeply sloping, heavily vegetated, and relatively undeveloped in terms of traditional urban densities. The adjoining land use pattern is principally low density residential or parkland and access is limited to a network of rural roadways characterized by narrow widths, one lane bridges, no shoulders, steep hills, and poor alignments. These characteristics are aesthetically desirable, but also at the same time dictate a low density res-~~

idential pattern (generally three (3) acre lots or greater in size) for the future. Additionally, existing developments on lots of three (3) acres or more in these areas strongly weigh against any new development of higher densities in this land use designation.

**SUB-URBAN RESIDENTIAL** - This category currently contains the areas of the City currently zoned for more intensive urban designations, such as the R-1 One Acre Residence District to the R-6A 4,000 square foot Residence District, including eight (8) commercially zoned properties (Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District). These two (2) areas are located east of the State Route 109 corridor and within the northeast and southeast quadrants of the City. Public sewer and water systems, along with a number of other services from additional utilities, generally serve these areas. The land's characteristics in these designations are more varied than the Non-Urban Residential areas of the City. Primarily, the land varies between steeply-sloping to rolling topography, forested to pasture, and to some extent has been disturbed by previous development, particularly in the Caulks Creek Watershed. Surrounding land use patterns are low to medium density residential, with limited commercial and institutional development as well. Access into these areas is principally from the State Route 100 or 109 corridors onto a system of formerly rural roads somewhat improved as development progressed into these areas. Given their proximity to existing development,

a low-medium density residential development pattern would be compatible in this area, subject to the environmental limitations of any given site that may require lower densities or alternative designs. With the variability of site characteristics in these areas, the appropriate zoning designations in the range of the NU Non-Urban District to the R-1 One Acre Residence District, with a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet as part of a Planned Residential Development (PRD), are appropriate, **excepting three (3) properties located at the terminuses of Center and West Avenues. These three (3) properties can be considered suitable for a greater residential land use density of one point seven five (1.75) units per acre, where appropriate, given their relative placements between high density land uses associated with St. Louis County's past actions and proximity to the Town Center Area's Boundary.** Regarding the eight (8) commercially-zoned properties located in and around the Clayton Road/Strecker Road intersection, their designation should be retained as part of an Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District classification within this land use area limiting the intensity of the commercial uses to C-1 authorized uses and requiring the neighborhood compatibility of the development. However, no future commercial designations of properties located in either of these areas should be considered, thereby acknowledging all such previous zonings were part of St. Louis County's rejected land use policy and not the City of Wildwood's. The relative level of appropriateness for individual lot sizes within these zoning designations is premised on a number of variables, not withstanding surrounding de-

velopment patterns and the extent of natural resource attribute restrictions exhibited by the individual sites. Therefore, the smallest minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet may not be appropriate on all sites and shall be viewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure its sensitivity to the objectives and policies of this Master Plan.

**INDUSTRIAL** - This category contains the areas of the City currently zoned M-3 Planned Industrial District and are primarily located in the Chesterfield Valley in the northwest quadrant of the City, which borders the Missouri River. This designation also includes one (1) isolated site along Ruck Road in the southeast quadrant of the City. This property is utilized for the St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic District garage/storage yard. Access to this property is by a County-maintained local road, not designated for heavy truck traffic. Given the isolated nature of this site and the predominant land use pattern around it, the expansion of the industrial activities would be inappropriate. Whereas, in the Chesterfield Valley, the development of these properties for the uses permitted under the site specific ordinance created at the time of the M-3 Planned Industrial District's adoption would be reasonable and supportable by the City.

**TOWN CENTER** - This category contains the areas of the City currently zoned either NU Non-Urban District or C-8 Planned Commercial District and include the historic communities of Grover and

Pond. This area is primarily centered in the wedge of properties bordered by State Route 100, State Route 109, and Manchester Road, with a small extension to the west along Manchester Road to Pond. A majority of this area is located inside public sewer and water service areas, but also relies upon individual systems for the provision of these services. The characteristics of the land are less restrictive than the remainder of the City and can be described as rolling to gently-sloping, forested to pasture, or developed. Many of these properties have been disturbed by previous development, given the long history of settlement associated with the two (2) communities. There are a mix of uses ranging from single family residences on very small lots and three acre developments, commercial businesses, and institutional uses to agricultural lands. Access to this area is good due to its proximity to the two (2) State roadways and Manchester Road. With their traditional heritage as the commercial centers of the area, Pond, Grover, and the surrounding properties offer an excellent location for the Town Center, which would include a mix of high density residential developments and commercial uses of a neighborhood orientation. The density of residential development should not exceed the R-6A 4,000 square foot Residence District (unless authorized by City Council as part of a site-specific ordinance) and would only be considered in this Town Center Area as part of a Planned Residential Development (PRD).

The intent of the Town Center is to create a center where a sense of community is established through the use of creative and innovative development features. These features will include: active and passive green space; interconnecting pedestrian pathways; family-owned and operated businesses; architecturally harmonious designs; integration and preservation of historical sites and local history; blending of local commercial development with appropriately buffered and situated residential development; an integrated system for sanitary and storm sewers; and protection of environmentally sensitive tracts. The Town Center should have a centralized area of park space that can be used as a gathering place for area residents to interact and truly develop a sense of place in their community, with plazas and mini-parks intermingled amongst future residential and commercial developments.

**HISTORIC** - This category contains properties or areas, which are listed on the City of Wildwood's Historic Register and can be located throughout the community, but only upon land zoned NU Non-Urban Residence District or the FPNU Floodplain Non-Urban Residence District, and not within the boundaries of the Town Center. The Historic Category is intended to provide property owners the opportunity to utilize their buildings, structures, or areas to a greater extent possible than normally allowed under their current Master Plan land use category or zoning district designation as an incentive for their preservation, protection, or adaptive

## Master Plan

reuse. Designation of properties or areas must meet the criteria listed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance for their nomination and consideration. The designation of properties or areas to this land use category must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council and only becomes effective when the owner agrees to have the property or area placed on the City's Historic Register and this designation is finalized. Future use of a historic property or an area will be premised on the surrounding land use pattern, access, utility service, and the sites' natural features and must provide a true community benefit for its consideration.

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### Conceptual Land Use Categories Map

The City's Charter is unique in that, when the voters of Wildwood approved it, it included a provision, which linked it to the Master Plan. This link was accomplished by adopting the Master Plan's Conceptual Land Use Category Plan as the Charter's Comprehensive Zoning Plan. Both of these plans, show as maps within each such document, create a legal requirement for land use decisions to correspond between these two (2) components. Therefore, the City Council cannot approve any zoning change that is inconsistent with the Conceptual Land Use Category Plan of the Master Plan, which is set forth in the Charter. Zoning amendments contrary to these maps are prohibited and may only be made by first amending the Comprehensive Zoning Plan itself, so that these types of decisions are always supported by an established document. The City has, therefore, created a system of checks and balances that elevates land use decisions to a status of significance that few other cities have chosen to incorporate into these development processes.

As the Master Plan Advisory Committee considered changes to the Conceptual Land Use Category Map of this document, it recognized the significance of potential changes to property designations and chose to consider them carefully and based upon clear and rationale criteria. This plan represents the single most important representation of future land use over the next ten (10) year period. The protection offered by this plan is expressed by the very limited number of changes that occurred to it in its first **twenty (20)** years of application (1996 – 2016). Providing property owners expectation on how parcels of ground may be utilized is one of the principal benefits of the City's planning processes. As a result of this process, and the importance of this plan, the Master Plan Advisory Committee ultimately made very few changes to the existing Conceptual Land Use Category Map. These changes are described in detail in Appendix VI of the Master Plan.

Although some changes were made, based upon the data and comments compiled through the update process, future modifications to

properties were also discussed in the context of a specific set of criteria premised on unique circumstances or specific conditions not anticipated at this time. In no instance did the Master Plan Advisory Committee agree the previous policies of St. Louis County should be used to justify a future change to the Master Plan's Conceptual Land Use Category Map. The Master Plan Advisory Committee noted that certain higher density residential developments and isolated commercial projects do exist in locations designated Non-Urban Residential Area in the original Master Plan, as legal non-conforming uses, and **creating these non-conformities** was an appropriate policy that should be continued at this time. This policy protects the character of Wildwood from previous land use decisions that were made with little regard to the overall impact upon the larger landscape and do not foster its continued application. Equally, the advisory committee did agree that surrounding land use, on **two (2) ~~one (1)~~** properties (**Property #X and #Y** in Appendix VI), could ultimately be considered as part of a land use change proposal, but only where its benefit to the community is clearly definable **and impacts to past resident expectations drawn over the last twenty (20) years are minimal to non-existent.** ~~public safety considerations are substantial.~~

In all, this group of volunteers responded to the input it received from the public input sessions and respected the system of checks and balances in place, as part of the Master Plan and Charter of the City to protect the character of Wildwood and limit the number of overall changes relating to land use. This action is reflected in the revised Conceptual Land Use Category Map that is part of this Master Plan.

*Conceptual Land Use Categories Map on next page.*

# Master Plan

## Policy Advisors

Assisting the volunteers in updating the Master Plan were a number of professionals from a broad range of backgrounds. These professionals provided valuable input, guidance, comments, and critiques of the recommended changes now contained in the Master Plan Update. These professionals are as follows:

Dr. Terry Jones, PhD.  
Moderator of Update Process

Ryan S. Thomas, P.E., City Administrator  
Community Services and Administration

Rob Golterman, Esq., City Attorney  
Legal Consultant

Tim Tanner, Captain, St. Louis County Police - Wildwood Precinct  
Police Services

Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works/City Engineer  
Transportation Policies and Infrastructure Programming

Kathy Arnett, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks  
Plan Coordinator and Web and Format Manager

Liz Weiss, City Clerk  
Initial Plan Coordinator (now City Clerk)

Terri L. Gaston, Senior Planner  
Mapping Services

Joe Vujnich, Director of Planning and Parks

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# 5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

This chapter presents the final recommendations that construct the economic development vision, goals, objectives, and five priority action items for the City of Wildwood. While other plan chapters support and substantiate the final recommendations, this chapter represents the strategic action plan for strengthening the City of Wildwood's economic development planning efforts. The City's Vision for Economic Development establishes the general framework for the five detailed **Priority Actions**, which drilldown into a series of key **Initiation Steps**.

This chapter helps serve as the “ways, ends, and means” of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The *vision and goals* establish the “ends,” or the broad, long-range desired outcomes. The *Priority Actions* provide the “ways,” which are more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action aimed at achieving one or many goals. Finally, the *Initiation Steps* within the Plan provide the “means,” identifying specific techniques and resources to carry out the objectives in clearly tangible, actionable detail.

## Vision & Opportunity

Twenty years after its founding as one of the most distinctive communities in the Midwest, the City of Wildwood presents itself as one of the most desirable communities in the St. Louis region. Founded on a blend of environmental conservation and New Urbanism, the City of Wildwood has stayed true to its founding principles and successfully achieved much of its original aspirations. Looking forward, the community is satisfied with its accomplishments and quality-of-life across its housing stock and neighborhoods, parks and open space, transportation amenities including a robust trail network, its local schools and colleges, its local government services and programs, and its community facilities. The one priority need is ensuring that the mixed-use Town Center achieves its full potential.

The City of Wildwood was just over a decade old when the Great Recession hit, which appears to have stalled out some of the commercial and mixed-use growth in the area. In 2015 the community appears to still be recovering and absorbing some of the vacancy and economic impact from the recession. This plan will act to stimulate a new wave of growth and development for Wildwood, leveraging its competitive position at a time when office, retail, restaurant, and other commercial development projects are building momentum across the St. Louis region. There is clear potential and growing opportunity for Wildwood to capture.

The City has indicated a willingness to shift its stance to more pro-active economic development efforts, including dedicating resources, staff time, and investments to targeted objectives. The primary emphasis over the next 2-3 years will be (1) working with the business and development community to identify strategies to stabilize the existing building stock and fill vacancy, while (2) beginning to align resources and plant the seeds for new construction approximately 5 to 10 years into the future. Evaluating new housing construction in the Town Center is also another critical decision point, which will add new rooftops and more disposable income to the area, while the City takes other strategic actions to grow and expand Wildwood's competitive market position.

The Wildwood Town Center can serve two important functions for the community and that approach captures the high-level vision for the community. For local residents, the area can act as the center of life in Wildwood, providing for a variety of needs and services, including serving as the cultural “heart and soul” and a central gathering place for town. But the vision should also include acting as that classic “downtown” for the greater area generally defined by I-64, I-270, and I-44. The established communities in this area, such as Chesterfield, Ellisville, Ballwin, Manchester, and Eureka lack a traditional, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood that can serve a wide range of functions for residents of this part of greater St. Louis, ranging from a Friday & Saturday night dining and entertainment destination, to a center of employment, to a hub to launch into outdoor recreation activities, to a distinctive backdrop for parades, festivals, and special events.

Wildwood’s Town Center must serve as the local community’s downtown, but it could realize its full potential by being positioned as this part of the St. Louis region’s go-to district much in the way the University City’s Delmar Loop, Maplewood, Kirkwood, Webster Groves, St. Charles and other similar districts function for their sub-markets. Through this vision Wildwood can increase its total market potential and achieve a number of important community goals.

## Primary Economic Development Goals

Although the intention and construction of this document is to identify (1) strategic action items and (2) prioritize clear implementation steps, throughout the process it appears Wildwood has a series of overarching economic development policy and community goals:

- Create more local jobs
- Add more daytime population
- Diversify the tax base and lessen the burden on homeowners
- Add local retail, restaurant, service, and better meet residents’ consumer needs within Wildwood and add to overall quality-of-life
- Identify growth and development opportunities to build-out the Main Street portion of Town Center and fully achieve Wildwood’s original vision for its “downtown”
- Develop as a center for entrepreneurship and new startups in the St. Louis region
- Achieve these goals in a manner that is consistent and respectful of Wildwood’s unique history and distinctive vision

These general economic goals have helped informed the near-term strategy and implementation detail.

## General Economic Development Strategic Approaches

### Programming for Citywide Economic Growth

Wildwood should not be viewed in only terms of the Town Center. Development is an outcome or result of a complex set of economic, physical, and political conditions. The City’s infrastructure, housing, residential quality-of-life, and public facilities all contribute to Wildwood’s overall competitiveness. There are opportunities for cross-promotion as well as maximizing the collocation of certain businesses and draws in Wildwood and any Town Center strategies should be placed in a context of the larger community. And ultimately businesses view markets or trade areas, not municipalities. As Wildwood initiates proactive economic development planning it must do so in a context that acknowledges the interconnectedness of the Town Center to the City as a whole, as well as how the local market functions beyond the municipal boundary.

## Residential Density & Development

The classic development maxim is “rooftops drive retail.” Although site selection has become more complex over the last 10 to 15 years, the two main drivers of such business investment remain the concentration of population in a trade area and those households’ disposable income. Wildwood presents both high incomes and a critical mass of population, but when combined with its transportation network and the drop off in density west of Highway 109, it does not present itself as a conventional commercial or retail destination district. Much of the existing trade area and its residents are served by developments in Chesterfield and the Manchester Road corridor traveling east to I-270. Wildwood’s current retail, restaurant, and service business local economy appears to be still navigating a series of vacancies, declining or stagnant rents, and underperforming tenants. Generally, there is a “softness” in the local market that is still being absorbed slowly and incrementally since the recession. Therefore, strengthening the local market and existing commercial properties is outlined in the beginning of this chapter as a critical strategic priority for Wildwood.

One of the most impactful approaches to achieving that goal is adding new housing units to the City of Wildwood. During the course of this planning effort a variety of residential developments at varying stages of review and approval have been proposed, virtually all of them would be located in the Town Center, and they would increase the total net density of the neighborhood in a meaningful way.

Ultimately this new housing construction will benefit existing businesses and likely positively contribute to filling persistent vacancies while helping increase commercial rents. The City should not simply approve any new housing development only to benefit the local commercial market, and new construction should complement Wildwood’s existing residential character. However, the City should carefully and strategically evaluate any new residential development and factor the positive impact it can have on driving new demand in the market. Once new housing is constructed and occupied, the City should incorporate those updated population and income statistics into their economic development efforts and promote the growing market to potential business investors and developers.

## Leveraging Areas outside Town Center

Certain destination businesses, like Hidden Valley Ski Resort and Wildwood’s many equestrian facilities, bring visitors to the community. Further, the City is a regional destination in the St. Louis metropolitan area for outdoor recreation and it features a number of high-quality nature preserves, such as the Rockwoods Reservation.

These are great examples of how the City of Wildwood can leverage its citywide economic development potential as a “weekend recreation destination” within St. Louis, which can also supply new disposable income to local shops, restaurants, and retailers located in the Town Center. The potential exists to develop a series of community festivals and cross-promotional events that tie these destination areas throughout the City of Wildwood to the Town Center. Ultimately this strategy can be employed through a blend of economic development and tourism programming.

Further, the opportunity likely exists to target niche retailers and themed restaurant concepts that draw from Wildwood’s community character as a destination for outdoor recreation. Potential examples include running apparel stores, bicycle shops, canoe/kayak dealers, and sporting good retailers; any of these types of boutique, niche retailers would contribute to Wildwood’s identity and brand as a destination for such activities while capturing existing visitor foot traffic in new ways.

## Pursuing the Destination Restaurant Anchor

A clear community desire is to have more restaurants and a wider range of varieties in the Town Center, particularly near Main Street. Further, consumer demand studies appear to demonstrate untapped demand in Wildwood's local and regional market for new restaurants. Community members have reported driving as far as 30-45 minutes for the types of sit-down restaurants they seek. Although there has been recent restaurant closings and reports of challenges, such as the lack of daytime population, to operating a restaurant in Wildwood, it appears there is a clear opportunity.

The City should begin to work towards leveraging a new, distinctive restaurant in the core Town Center that could act as a destination anchor for Wildwood more broadly. The intent is not to detract from existing establishments, but rather complement and facilitate a destination environment.

Most vibrant, successful downtowns in similar suburban contexts are anchored by signature, landmark businesses and developing one or two such anchors in the near-term; sometimes those are museums, colleges, large parks, or other non-commercial uses, but they are often beloved local restaurants. Such a vision appears appropriate for Wildwood.

An important strategy is understanding what makes a successful restaurant business model in Wildwood's unique local market. Based on the success of other establishments, it appears restaurants can be viable and profitable, but the business models that may work in other St. Louis suburban communities may need to be modified. Ultimately the City will need to partner with subject matter experts that can help assess the market and development potential for a restaurant in Wildwood to help guide economic development strategies and decision-making.

The City of Wildwood should work with existing restaurants as well as groups like the Saint Louis Independent Restaurant Association ("The Saint Louis Originals"), the Greater St. Louis Restaurant Association, and the Missouri Restaurant Association to identify approaches that would place a restaurateur in the best position to succeed in Wildwood. Further, the City should evaluate a formal recruitment and marketing campaign working with educational partners, such as St. Louis Community College, the Culinary Institute of St. Louis at Hickey College, and L'École Culinaire to network with emerging chefs and potential restaurateurs.

In the near term, food trucks and outdoor food events may be a more effective strategy and the City could sponsor, coordinate, and promote such events. As part of more long-range efforts, the City should identify existing commercial property owners interested in restaurant tenants as well as outline its potential approach to using public investment and/or development incentives to recruit a preferred restaurant concept to Wildwood. Ultimately a local food truck may ultimately grow into a "brick and mortar" location in the Town Center while maintaining its truck, which may travel to other communities; this incremental strategy has been successful in a number of similar suburban communities in recent years.



## Partnering with the Business Community

The City could easily pursue a host of economic development actions and programs without any collaboration with the business community but ultimately that is an ineffective approach. Ultimately, for the City and the community to achieve its goals, Wildwood businesses, commercial property owners, and the development community must be engaged as partners in achieving new investment.

The Wildwood Business Association is a clear partner and City officials and staff should regularly attend their meetings and participate in their activities; further, the West St. Louis County Chamber of Commerce should be engaged to identify similar shared goals. These types of organizations will likely be some of the most effective means to communicate and plan with the business community and such approaches should be institutionalized as standard operating protocol for the City. This model can be replicated through a series of locally-focused business district associations, sometimes called “merchant associations,” and the City should promote and encourage their creation. Finally, the City should welcome potential collaboration and partnerships with individual businesses and commercial property owners as well, and contact information and economic development programming material should be easily located on the City’s website and regularly communicated through public information methods.

Further, business leaders will be an important part of establishing business recruitment, retention, and expansion programming, providing private sector perspectives as part of “city sales pitches” to potential new businesses as well as staffing regular site visitation meetings. Existing businesses and commercial associations and networks will also serve as the foundation of entrepreneurship development. Ultimately the business community will be integral to the City of Wildwood launching proactive economic development efforts and representing and promoting the community to businesses more broadly.



## Priority Actions

The City of Wildwood wanted to examine the entire community's economic development potential and evaluate citywide and high-level strategies on a long-range timeline – but ultimately the project's final intention was to develop 3-5 clear, actionable, measurable priorities to begin the City's pro-active efforts.

Based on the breadth of analysis conducted, particularly balancing (1) the community's goals and desires, (2) the economic realities demonstrated through market assessments, and (3) the physical limitations and opportunities of specific development sites in Wildwood, these five action items have been developed. While the larger strategy envisions Wildwood 5 to 10 years into the future, these action items are squarely focused on the next 12 to 24 months. They were selected and are designed to produce near-term, tangible results and build sustainable, manageable momentum.

These five action items reflect the most immediate economic development programming steps the City could take to stimulate initial momentum for business growth in Wildwood. These efforts represent near-term strategies and have been constructed in tangible, direct action items that can begin immediately. Their approach limits the need for intensive resource investments, particularly financially, at this time and will begin to determine whether potential opportunities may materialize over the next 2 years.

As a result, this economic development programming approach needs to be *iterative*. The City will test strategies in the field through active implementation and ultimately the strategies must be *managed and modified* by City leaders based on project specifics and changing conditions. Each **Action Item** is further detailed in precise **Initiation Steps** that provide clear, immediate “out of the gate” moves for City staff, elected and appointed officials, and business leaders. Ultimately more complex public policy decisions may become part of project discussions, such as capital infrastructure investments and/or public financing incentives, and those steps must be rigorously evaluated at that time. But regardless, this five-point action agenda serves as the strategic catalyst for the City's emerging economic development programming.

## Producing Results

These programs and initiatives will be implemented and administered through a performance management system that will provide City staff, elected, and appointed officials clear, measureable ways to track, monitor, and evaluate progress. Further, these “success metrics” will be easily leveraged to demonstrate progress to the public and the business community. Roles, responsibilities, management timelines, benchmarks and metrics, success definitions, and ongoing performance management systems are structured in *Chapter 6: Program Performance Management & Administration*.



## Action Item #1

### Establish & Institutionalize a formal Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion Program

The fundamental message of this economic development strategic plan to the business community must be that the City of Wildwood is committing resources to being proactive in terms of business recruitment, retention, and expansion going forward. This approach will require roles and responsibilities from City staff, elected and appointed officials, and business groups like the Wildwood Business Association. Further, the City's economic development programming should ultimately include St. Louis County and State of Missouri agency coordination as well as partnerships with local colleges and universities. This new model will function, in effect, as a "community sales force," and will be most effective through iterative collaborations that leverage the strengths each sector brings to the table.

The most effective foundational approach to establishing municipal economic development activities is creating and managing an ongoing business recruitment, retention, and expansion program. Recruitment activities can vary based on a variety of factors, but retention and expansion programs (B|R+E) tend to be more consistent.

#### B|R+E Programs

Business retention and expansion programs begin with the recognition that as high as 86% of new jobs and capital investment is generated from existing employers, and likewise much and in many cases, new retail and restaurant activity directly stems from local business expansion. The importance of ongoing, institutionalized retention and expansion programs cannot be understated, and in many cases they are staffed and led by municipalities in their respective community.

Business retention and expansion programs generally aim to manage seven core goals:

- Build strong relationships between public officials and business leaders

- To demonstrate the support and commitment of public agencies towards the local business community and establish active collaboration
- Identify communitywide or districtwide problems impacting the business community
- Identify specific problems impacting an individual business or commercial/Industrial property
- Identify business sectors and specific companies at risk of downsizing or closing entirely
- Identify businesses sectors and specific companies with the need or potential to grow and expand in the existing municipality
- To help facilitate ongoing land use, development, and growth management planning



These goals are achieved through what is known as a “data-to-action” approach anchored by three key functions; these functions must be institutionalized, resourced, and managed as part of regular, ongoing municipal operations. Those functions are (1) regular business site visitation meetings, (2) the collection and examination of standardized data and analysis that is fed into an institutionalized business monitoring and tracking system, and (3) the use of these efforts to make strategic decisions, overseen by an Economic Development Task Force and executed by municipal staff. These efforts can also directly inform business recruitment activities as well as City policy, land use planning, and capital infrastructure programming more broadly as part of general municipal strategic planning. These efforts represent the “heart and soul” of municipal-led economic development programming.

## Initiation Steps

- The City should actively participate in the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and at least one member of municipal staff should be a Certified Economic Developer (CEd). The City should encourage private partner organizations to pursue training, education, and certification as well, to the extent to contributions to achieving the community’s economic development goals.
- The City should identify quarterly business recruitment objectives based on IEDC best practices and local community planning and pursue such investment through strategic partnerships with the development community.
- The City should establish a formal business retention and expansion program that is provided adequate municipal resources and staffed by City personnel, in partnership with elected and appointed officials and business leaders through the Economic Development Task Force.
- The City’s business retention and expansion program should directly include the Economic Development Task Force, which should be responsible for coordinating with staff on tracking, monitoring, and evaluating the information collected as part of activities. Teams of community representatives, including staff, elected and appointed officials, and Chamber of Commerce individuals, should develop a routinely structured series of business visitation meetings that utilize a standardized survey tool.

The City should work with the business community to create a dedicated business and development website (i.e. Advantage Spokane, Washington: [www.advantagespokane.com](http://www.advantagespokane.com))



## Action Item #2

### Begin to Build an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

A key community goal is developing more local employment but directly intertwined with that aspiration is establishing Wildwood as one of the centers of entrepreneurship and new business starts in the St. Louis region. Ultimately, due to a variety of physical and economic conditions, Wildwood's most strategic and competitive approach to office and major employment development will be through nurturing and cultivating small firms that grow and expand in Wildwood.

Wildwood's greatest strengths as a community, including its beautiful landscape, high-quality residential of life, and the strength of its schools, parks, recreation opportunities, churches, and existing business districts, can be leveraged as economic development assets too. Further, some of Wildwood's existing local telecommuting professionals and home-based businesses may present an opportunity to mine talent that is already present in the community.

Entrepreneurial communities flourish because of a delicate mix of conditions, sometimes called an "entrepreneurial ecosystem," that grows and compounds in impact over time. Incremental progress – *trial-and-error* – is central to the entrepreneurial and startup part of the economy, and that dynamic also applies to local government efforts to be a partner in establishing such a community. Not all initial efforts will produce easily measurable returns, and the ultimate success of entrepreneurial economic planning efforts are measured over the long-term.

Wildwood should lead initial efforts to begin to establish a local culture and community that supports entrepreneurs and small, new business startups. Many of the critical actors, such as entrepreneurs, committed government agencies, colleges and universities, potential investors, and experienced business mentors, are already present in Wildwood. But they may not be networking and strategically planning for a local business climate that encourages and supports new ventures. Further, Wildwood benefits from its location in the St. Louis region and its entrepreneurial programming efforts should leverage the large employers, major research universities, regional economic development entities, and capital networks in the larger economy.



## Initiation Steps

- The City should establish a sub-committee of the Economic Development Task Force that focuses its programming energies on developing a local entrepreneurship community, while coordinating those efforts with Wildwood's larger economic development activities.
- The City should partner with the Wildwood Business Association and the West St. Louis County Chamber of Commerce to develop a local Young Entrepreneurs Organization. Such a group should organize regularly "open coffee clubs" for entrepreneurs to meet and troubleshoot shared challenges as well as exchange leads and best practices.
- The City and its university and business partners in the community should work to organize "entrepreneur office hours" where experienced business and startup mentors host open-forum events and one-on-one advising opportunities.
- The City should work with the local colleges, universities, and even high schools, as well as the business community, to develop a Wildwood New Venture Challenge program.

The City should facilitate the creation of a local chapter of the StartUp America model, tailored to local interests, strengths, and resources, such as Startup Peoria ([www.startuppeoria.com](http://www.startuppeoria.com)).

The City should organize a strategic planning meeting with the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership to identify shared goals and areas where Wildwood's local entrepreneurship and economic development goals coincide with existing regional efforts.

The City should evaluate opportunities to develop an IGNITE! Wildwood or partner with other communities to create an IGNITE! West County initiative, similar to other successful efforts nationally, including IGNITE! Fond du Lac ([www.ignitefonddulacounty.com](http://www.ignitefonddulacounty.com)).

The City should work with local entrepreneurs and businesses to participate in regional events, such as Startup Weekend St. Louis, Startup Connection, Global Entrepreneurship Week, and through more ongoing monthly trainings and events through groups such as Accelerate St. Louis. When reasonable and appropriate based on a critical mass of interest, the Wildwood community should launch local versions of such regional events in partnership with St. Louis entities.

As a long-term strategy, as part of Town Center economic development projects more broadly, the City should partner with local colleges, universities, land owners, and developers to evaluate the potential for the construction of incubator and/or accelerator space in Wildwood. Although a long-term outcome, early discussions and relationships can be considered in the near-term.



## Action Item #3

### Actively Pursue an Office Park Development on Manchester Road

Based on recent market studies, there appears to be demand for office space growth in West County and that demand will likely grow over the next 3-5 years. A critical policy decision for Wildwood leaders is identify Town Center real estate that would be most conducive to certain uses and planning for that development in a strategic manner. Identifying locations that can accommodate incremental office development is a key priority.

Ultimately there appears to be potential in prioritizing the remaining tracts of land in the Dierbergs Town Center for the development of a single-story, low-density office or business park that could be incrementally constructed and strategically absorb new demand for Class A and B office space. Currently Class B office space in Westridge Centre is leasing for approximately \$15 per square foot, whereas other similar properties in Chesterfield and Ballwin are leasing for \$20 to as much as \$26 per square foot. Wildwood's market provides a number of benefits to smaller companies requiring small office spaces and their lease rates are competitive.

The two potential parcels currently include Wildwood Christian Church and a single-family house across from the Cherry Hills subdivision. The potential combined development site is a triangular "wedge" shape that stretches from the Wildwood Crossing Shopping Center to the loading docks and rear-access of the Dierberg's grocery store. Despite visibility from Highway 100 and Manchester Road, this site likely would not fully maximize its potential as a retail or restaurant area, and its siting and general location does not cater to residential development. A low-density office park helps add daytime population as well as new jobs to the community; further, it would add additional non-residential tax payers to the community and lessen the burden on homeowners. Further, the site could be designed in a manner to complement the existing retail nodes both east and west, as well as minimize its impact on the residential neighborhoods south of Manchester Road.

### Initiation Steps

- The City should initiate a dialogue with the two existing property owners to ascertain their long-term intentions for their lots.
- The City should develop a one-page site profile "tear-sheet" and initiate discussions with developers that specialize in suburban office and business park developments in the St. Louis region and identify potential partnerships.
- The City should collaborate with a potential developer to examine the site's maximum development capacity in terms of square footage and parking and develop a series of site designs and incremental build-out scenarios to evaluate potential project concepts.
- The City should evaluate its zoning and development regulations to identify any potential to offer non-financial incentives to promote and encourage the redevelopment of these parcels as an office park.
- The City should engage the public, particularly surrounding neighborhood residents, to evaluate the best approaches to mitigating any undesired impacts from future development while maximizing the positive contributions a future project can bring to Wildwood.



## Action Item #4

### Begin to Evaluate Partnerships for Long-Term Retail Development

Although the West County retail market is currently very competitive, and many consumers who live in Wildwood have established behavioral habits and a willingness to drive 20 to 30 minutes to shop at certain established retailers, there are targeted opportunities for Wildwood to pursue at this time. The most immediate opportunity appears to be pursuing a destination restaurant in the core Town Center, which was addressed earlier in this chapter. However, the City should also be preparing for a larger scale retail shopping center.

Projects totaling more than 100,000 square feet and multiple tenants, for example, can often take years to materialize and open to the public because of the intricate steps of purchasing the real estate, identifying and pre-leasing tenants, addressing site design, receiving zoning and building permit approvals, developing the site, and preparing individual stores to build-out and finally open. Project financing, leasing cycles, and internal corporate long-range plans all play a factor in how projects at this scale materialize. Wildwood would benefit from being proactive at this time and beginning to work with the development community to evaluate project opportunities.

Wildwood's most competitive location for a retail development is at the intersection of Highway 100 and 109 in the Interchange district. This area allows for retailers to capitalize on high traffic volumes and effective visibility as well as easy accessibility from throughout the trade area. Ultimately Wildwood does not, and arguably should not, pursue conventional suburban "big box" retail development because it does not match the community's vision and would not contribute to the City more broadly.

However, certain national chain retailers, such as Walmart, Target, Lowe's, Home Depot, and others have begun to shift to smaller footprint stores and have located in site designs known as "lifestyle centers." These types of developments do not feature one "wall" of building facades facing a massive surface parking lot, but rather are oriented in a "village" or "retail campus" layout, which often face towards the site's interior, anchored by a public plaza. Further, such developments are increasingly built with very high-quality materials and are heavily landscaped and buffered from surrounding residential uses. An example would be the Willow Festival Shopping Center in Northbrook, Illinois. Ultimately, this type of approach could complement Wildwood as a community while providing local retail and neighborhood services to residents.

## Initiation Steps

- The City should approach the owners of the approximately ten parcels in the area and evaluate their long-term plans and interests in their property. The City should evaluate any opportunity to help coordinate between property owners and issue a public Request for Proposal (RFP) for non-binding concepts from the development community.
- The City should develop a one-page “tear-sheet” to market the site directly to potential developers, which could proactively include the community’s position on infrastructure investment and the use of public financing tools.
- The City should both approach St. Louis area retailer developers individually as well as host a “sales pitch” presentation at City Hall and invite a diverse range of potential developers, including but not limited to, The Desco Group, Kimco, Pace Properties, Sansone Group, and THF Realty, for example. The City should be able to garner industry perspective analysis about the site, the regional retail economy, and potential project concepts to better inform an iterative process about any potential opportunities for the site.
- The City should conduct public meetings, surveys, and other community engagement activities to garner residents’ interest in recruiting such retailers to the community (including potential business tenants), as well as conduct visual preference, urban design, and architectural character charrettes (which can be online) to determine site design approaches that the community would support and see as a benefit to Wildwood.

## Action Item #5

### Invest in and Leverage the “Historic Manchester Road” District as a Catalyst

Wildwood is home to a unique district that is drawing consumers from throughout the St. Louis metropolitan region, establishing itself as a type of “regional day tourism” destination, and this market-driven retail growth should be fully leveraged as a catalyst for the Town Center. Many of the historic structures and older residential buildings in the Historic Manchester Road District now feature distinctive, boutique retailers, many of which that focus on home goods, interior decoration, furniture, and other similar products. The district is anchored by destination retailers like Three French Hens, Porch, and Imogene’s Tea Room, Botanicals & Home Décor and its steadily growing foot traffic should be leveraged to benefit Main Street as well as other business districts in Wildwood.

The Historic Manchester Road District is distinctive from Main Street and other business nodes in the Town Center and its identifiable, semi-rural, small-town character should be preserved and emphasized as part of both public and private investment in the corridor. The corridor would benefit from further branding itself as a signature Wildwood destination and an easily identifiable business district in the Town Center, which complements Main Street and other areas instead of directly competing. Ultimately these types of businesses are well-suited for such a district and they may not be as competitive in a shopping center or even a multi-story, mixed-use building on Main Street. The City should work to develop strategies that reinforce the Historic Manchester Road district's unique market competitiveness and sense of place, leveraging it as an early catalyst

## Initiation Steps

- The City should partner with business and property owners in the district to organize a business association to help organize regular communication and collaboration between the various public and private stakeholders in the area.
- Such a business association should conduct a needs assessment and develop a 5 year strategic plan to elevate, enhance, and improve the district as one of the premiere destinations in West County, with the assistance and support of the City.
- The City should participate in such business-led planning and evaluate potential strategic public investments to achieve community and business goals in the district. Such investments could include a dedicated City park or public plaza, special events space, gateways and additional streetscaping, public art, infill redevelopment projects, and be financed through a variety of development district tools.
- The City should collaborate and partner with local businesses to develop and program new special events, promotional days, and community festivals that occur within the district and reinforce its identity and brand.
- The City should conduct public meetings, surveys, and other community engagement activities with the other businesses located through Wildwood to draft a 24-month action agenda to identify strategies to better leverage the foot traffic generated by this district as a benefit to the City more broadly. One such approach would be a “hackathon” session where recurring, monthly meetings would generate actionable ideas that could be tested and revisited through an ongoing, iterative collaboration with and within the business community.
- The City should conduct a detailed evaluation of its zoning code and other regulatory tools to determine if overlay districts or other approaches should be applied to recognize the different built-form, character, and economic conditions of this district in comparison to other parts of the Town Center.