MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE
4:45 P.M.
03/14/16

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1. Call To Order By Chair Bertolino And Roll Call Of Members
2. Opening Remarks By Chair Bertolino
3. Approval Of The Minutes From January 11, 2016 Meeting

   Documents: EDTF MINUTES JANUARY 11, 2016.PDF

4. Public Comment(S)
5. Discussion Item(S)

   5.I. Ready For Action – Two (2) Items

   5.I.i. City Of Wildwood Economic Development Plan - Review Of Final Draft With Houseal Lavigne

   Documents: DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN.PDF

   5.I.ii. Master Plan Update – Draft Economic Development Element

   Documents: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT - MP.PDF

   5.II. Not Ready For Action – Six (6) Items

   5.II.i. Sewer Extension Planning For Historic Pond Area

   5.II.ii. Additional "Great Streets" Wayfinding Signage

   5.II.iii. Village Green Development In Town Center

   5.II.iv. Strategic Planning Goals – Main Street And Other Infrastructure And Utilities

   5.II.v. Public Financing Options As Economic Incentives

   5.II.vi. Networking Opportunities With Outdoor Industry Association

6. Other Business News And Updates
7. Additional Public Comment(S)
8. Next Meeting Date – Monday, March 28, 2016 – 4:45 P.m.

9. Adjournment

If you would like to submit a comment regarding an item on this meeting agenda, please visit the Form Center.

The City of Wildwood is working to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Mandates. Individuals who require an accommodation to attend a meeting should contact City Hall, 636-458-0440 at least 48 hours in advance.

The Economic Development Task Force 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.

WILDWOOD

MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Monday, January 11, 2016, at 4:45 p.m.
WILDWOOD CITY HALL
First Floor Community Room
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

MINUTES

I. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members – meeting began at 4:45 p.m.

The meeting was convened by Chair Bertolino at 4:45 p.m. and a roll call of members was taken. Members in attendance included the following: Council Members Bertolino, Levitt, McGowen, and Goodson. Other City officials in attendance included Mayor Woerther, City Administrator Ryan Thomas, Director of Public Works Rick Brown, Director of Planning and Parks Joe Vujnich, and Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Kathy Arnett.

Absent: Council Member Sewell

II. Opening Remarks by Chair Bertolino

Chair Bertolino welcomed everyone to the meeting.

III. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from December 14, 2015

A motion was made by Council Member McGowen, seconded by Council Member Goodson, to approve the minutes. A voice vote was taken, with no objections, and Chair Bertolino declared the motion approved.

IV. Public Comment(s)

John Gragnani noted that he continues to have conversations with a representative from Oberweis Dairy and this individual noted that someone from the company was planning to visit this month and look at areas for a potential new store. The company would be looking for a parcel of ground approximately one and one-half (1 ½) acres in size and in a location, where a drive through would be permissible. City Administrator Thomas noted he has been communicating with the company representative, has sent him information, and will continue discussions with him regarding locating in Wildwood.

V. Discussion Item(s)

V.I. Ready for Action – Three (3) Items

i. Status Update on Final Draft of Economic Development Plan

City Administrator Thomas noted Houseal Lavigne is in the process on amending the Economic Development Plan, per the comments provided by the City. An expected delivery date for the final draft of the plan has not yet been provided by the consultant, but Mr. Thomas hopes to receive it within the next few weeks. Once the final draft is received, a review timeline will be established and then a final presentation by the consultant will be scheduled.

ii. Upcoming Visit by St. Louis Science Center Representatives

City Administrator Thomas noted a meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13th, with the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer of the St. Louis Science Center. This meeting is to introduce them to the Wildwood Area and investigate interest in small exhibits within the City. He was looking for feedback from the Task Force Members on suggested points they wished to have discussed at this meeting.

Discussion was then held regarding showing the representatives the following: outdoor spaces in and out of the Town Center Area, Community Park, trails, Hidden Valley Ski Resort, and St. Louis Community College – Wildwood Campus. City Administrator Thomas noted that he was also preparing a PowerPoint slide presentation and handouts, including the Town Center Developments Map and the Community Park Map.

iii. Networking Opportunities with Outdoor Industry Association

City Administrator Thomas introduced an opportunity for the City to establish itself as an outdoor recreation area through participating in some fashion with/in the Outdoor Industry Association. Mr. Thomas is looking for feedback on interest of the City participating in the Summer Market, which is held in August, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Discussion was then held among the Task Force Members regarding the following: the need to create marketing materials; if other cities are members of this organization; the potential to collaborate with Hidden Valley Ski Resort, which is a member; other types of outdoor businesses, such as tack shops, pro shops, etc., that could be partners; and the existence of other, smaller organizations specific to hiking, bicycling, etc.

Consensus was reached by the members to have City Administrator Thomas continue to pursue this idea and gather more information on these types of opportunities and their costs.

V.II. Not Ready for Action

i. Sewer Extension Planning for Historic Pond Area
ii. Additional "Great Streets" Wayfinding Signage
iii. Village Green Development in Town Center
iv. Strategic Planning Goals – Main Street and Other Infrastructure and Utilities
v. Public Financing Options as Economic Incentives

VI. Other Business News and Updates

Council Member McGowen provided the Task Force Members with information on the Vermont Bicycle Touring Company. This company organizes weeklong events for hiking, bicycling, etc. He has attended several of these tours and commented on what a great job the company does. They also partner with local bed and breakfasts and other companies during the tours.

City Administrator Thomas noted discussions have begun regarding hosting a cross -country camp within the City. Only preliminary ideas have been discussed, but this type of activity could be another opportunity to promote Wildwood's parks and trails.

Director of Planning Vujnich noted there has been interest by a number of developers in multiple-family projects in the Town Center - four (4) separate development entities. If all were submitted, and approved, there would be over 560 new units. He promised to keep the members informed as these projects progress.

Discussion was held regarding whether the CVS Pharmacy was still pursuing a development on the southwest corner of State Route 109 and Manchester Road. Director of Planning Vujnich noted the Department has not heard from the developer in a while, but thought the company's engineer was working on the required traffic study and other engineering items, i.e. grading.

Council Member Goodson noted that a meeting was held with Ezekiel and Stearns and they are still interested in the building on East Avenue. The main discussion point was the size of the existing sign, which is closer to twenty-five (25) square feet, not the thirty (30) square feet that was approved in the site-specific ordinance and whether the City would be willing to allow the sign to stay at its current size. Preliminary discussions were this accommodation on sign size was a possible compromise. City Council will be discussing this matter at their meeting this evening and may approve to allow the draft legislation to be prepared.

VII. Additional Public Comment(s)

None

VIII. <u>Executive (Closed) Session</u>

Executive Session with regard to legal actions, causes of action, litigation or privileged communications between the City's representatives and its attorneys [RSMO 610.021(1) 1994]; lease, purchase or sale of real estate [RSMO 610.021 (2) 1994]; bidding specification [RSMO 610.021 (11) 1994]; and/or sealed bids and related documents, until the bids are opened and sealed proposals and related documents or any documents related to a negotiated contract until a contract is executed, or all proposals are rejected [RSMO 610.021 (12) 1994].

A motion was made by Council Member Levitt, seconded by Council Member Goodson, to go into Executive Session.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion, with the following results:
Ayes – Council Members McGowen, Levitt, Goodson, and Bertolino
Nays – None
Absent – Council Member Sewell

Whereupon, Chair Bertolino declared the motion approved by a vote of 4-0.

A motion was made by Council Member Levitt, seconded by Council Member McGowen, to close the Executive Session.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion, with the following results:
Ayes – Council Members McGowen, Levitt, Goodson, and Bertolino
Nays – None
Absent – Council Member Sewell

Whereupon, Chair Bertolino declared the motion approved by a vote of 4-0.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Levitt, seconded by Council Member McGowen, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted in favor and the motion was approved. The meeting closed at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Arnett
Assistant Director of Planning and Parks

City of Wildwood, MO

Economic Development Plan

February 2016

HOUSEAL LAVIGNE ASSOCIATES

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prepared by

HOUSEAL LAVIGNE ASSOCIATES

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Wildwood community was founded with a very clear and shared vision that achieved broad support across the city in the 1990s. The community was established through a commitment to preserving and conserving the area's natural beauty while developing aligned with New Urbanist design principles. Wildwood is unique, not only among other St. Louis County suburbs, but is distinctive in a manner that separates it from most American suburbs.

It is clear that Wildwood still values its vision and prides itself on what has been accomplished thus far. To that end, there is not a call for wholesale shifts in strategy or vision. Wildwood's place within the St. Louis region is competitive and strong, and there are many local assets and strengths. The community's economic development vision is about achieving Wildwood's full potential, not changing who it is today.

Throughout the outreach process participants cited that at its core, Wildwood has great residential areas, schools, institutions, open spaces, outdoor recreation, and community events. To a degree, the sentiment appears that over the past twenty years Wildwood has achieved its original vision and stands as one of the most desirable communities in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. However, the City's commercial areas still present some persistent challenges and have not fully developed to their potential. The general sentiment is that additional focus on economic development is needed to complete the total fulfillment of the City's original vision.

Understanding that context, Wildwood's economic development mission should be a targeted, or "surgical," approach to identifying opportunities to complete the vision for the Town Center and promote economic growth throughout the city. A key aspect of this is maintaining the intended character of the community while also recognizing the new housing development under consideration within the Town Center and identifying the types of business and uses that will best serve Wildwood residents and visitors.

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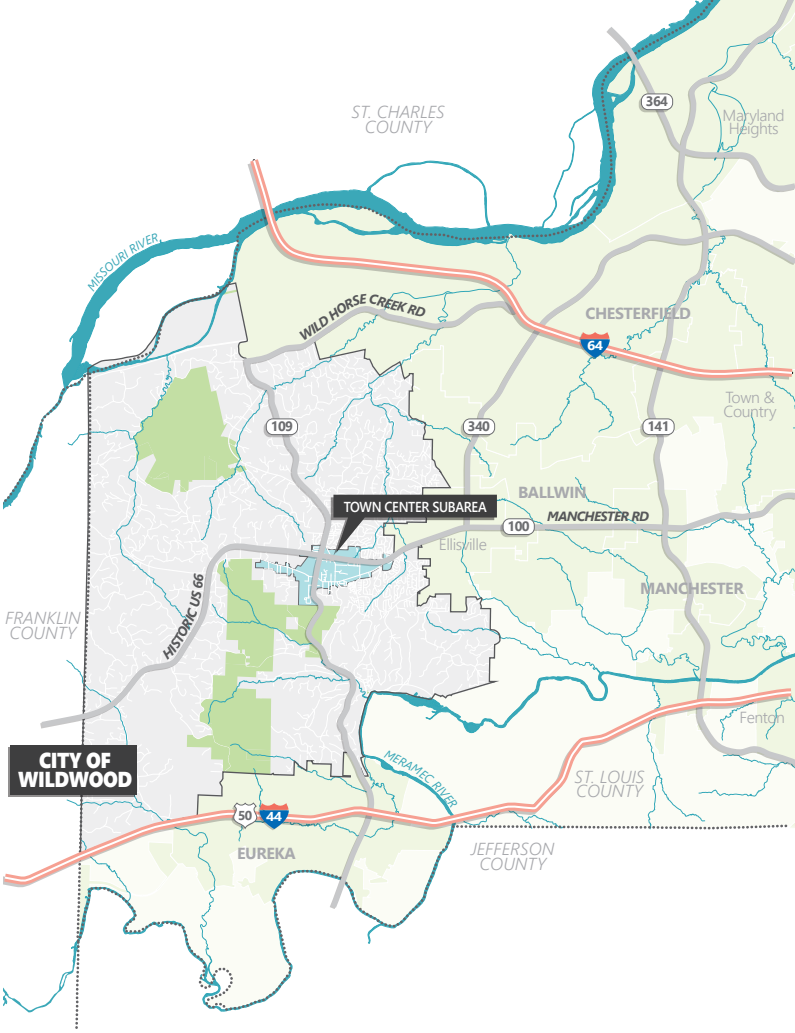

Community Context

Wildwood is a primarily residential community of approximately 35,000 residents located in far "West County" in the suburban St. Louis County region. The City is generally located in-between I-64, I-270, and I-44, and while none of these major interstate corridors travel through Wildwood, they still play a critical role in shaping its character and potential. Unlike much of the St. Louis region, Wildwood is distinctively defined by its considerable terrain and changes in elevation, presenting a very attractive rolling, wooded community character that reflects its place as a gateway to the Ozark foothills.

The City itself is largely defined by an east-and-west boundary along Missouri Highway 109, with areas to the west being more natural, low-density, and heavily wooded, and areas to the east more reflective of suburban densities and development patterns. Further, Manchester Road and Highway 100 (a historic U.S. Route 66 corridor) also primarily shapes Wildwood's urban design, transportation functionality, and land development patterns. This corridor largely links Wildwood to the rest of the St. Louis region, providing access to Chesterfield, while also traveling through nearby Ellisville, Ballwin, and Manchester, stretching all the way to the Chouteau Avenue district in Downtown St. Louis on the Mississippi River.

The City contains a considerable amount of parks, open space, and high-quality outdoor recreation, highlighted by a series of heavily wooded county and state parks, a number of equestrian facilities, and a ski resort. The community features its own schools, many of which are clustered on Highway 109 near Passiglia's Nursery & Garden.

Further, Wildwood features significant community facilities, such as the YMCA and a St. Louis Community College campus, as well as a satellite campus of Lindenwood University. Manchester Road represents much of the community's heritage and historic buildings, including the Pond Historic District. Wildwood is unique in having one of the few New Urbanist town centers in the St. Louis region, which is anchored by a contemporarily designed, walkable, and pedestrian-oriented "downtown" that features a range of mixed land uses.

Wildwood presents an appealing blend of residential, commercial, religious, educational, and employment land uses set against a backdrop of beautiful open spaces that has positioned the City as one of the most desirable communities in the St. Louis region.

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Recent Planning Efforts

The City of Wildwood regularly conducts strategic planning and through the Economic Development Task Force has established some short-term goals. Further, the City is currently in the process of updating the community master plan, guiding land use policy and public investment for years into the future. Future economic development efforts should align with these goals and reinforce those ongoing efforts. Important recent accomplishments, goals, and initiatives from these efforts include:

- Updating the Town Center Plan
- Identifying the City's Assets
- Developing a branding campaign
- Stimulating non-retail job growth
- Adding an economic development component to the City's website
- Develop a pool of advisors on economic development policies and practices
- Assign staff time and resources to the Economic Development Task Force
- Develop a marketing brochure
- Better leverage social networking
- Continue the City's CIP program and strategic long-term planning

Prevailing Trends

A study of Wildwood's current and forecasted demographic trends, as well as its housing, retail, office, and industrial markets was conducted to form an economic baseline for planning. A presentation of its full detail, including a series of maps, charts, tables, and graphics is contained within Chapter 3: Market Study. A selection of the most relevant and impactful data and analysis is summarized here:

- **Population is Increasing.** Wildwood has 35,618 residents according to 2015 population estimates, and is forecasted to remain relatively unchanged into 2020.
- **Population is Aging.** Wildwood's current median age is 42.9, which is nearly four years higher than the St. Louis region average, or more than 10% higher; further, the population is forecasted to continue to age to nearly 45 years by 2020, representing an increase of approximately 8% since 2010. Generally, Wildwood's population reflects older "Baby Boomer" populations with an increasing number of retirees. This trend is also reflected in a decrease in household size over the last decade.
- **Wildwood is a High-Income Community.** The City's current median household income is approximately $120,000 and projected to increase to more than $140,000 by the 2020s. Generally, Wildwood is one of the highest household income communities in the St. Louis region and will continue to be in the future.
- **Wildwood is a Bedroom Community.** Typical of most suburban communities, very few residents both live and work in Wildwood. Further, while more than 15,000 residents commute outside of the City for employment, only approximately 5,000 non-residents travel to Wildwood for work. Wildwood only contains 17 jobs per 100 residents, which is generally considered a low ratio, although on par with low-density suburban communities.

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- **Employment Growth is Slowly Building.** Despite a small, local employment base, Wildwood has been adding jobs and rebounding from the recession more quickly than other parts of the St. Louis region. A forecast based on State of Missouri Department of Economic Development data indicates that Wildwood could capture approximately 580 new jobs by the early 2020s; further, far Southwest County along the I-64 and I-44 corridors is anticipated to experience an increasing amount of job growth, in comparison to older parts of St. Louis County.
- **Housing Unit Construction is Growing.** The City of Wildwood currently contains 11,086 housing units, of which 97% are occupied; in general, the community contains very little residential vacancy and resale rates are strong. New housing construction forecasts are modest, predicting an increase of just over 100 units, or about a 1% increase in the City's total stock of units.
- **Wildwood Housing is Desirable.** The typical "Wildwood home" is an owner-occupied, four-bedroom, single-family detached unit. Only 8.7% of occupied housing units are rental and less than 10% of total units are of any other housing type than single-family detached. Wildwood's housing stock is very new, with nearly 60% constructed since 1990, and its home values are forecasted to rise at a faster rate than the St. Louis metropolitan area. Wildwood's housing is competitive with neighboring communities and reflects the West County market, particularly in comparison to Chesterfield and the Manchester Road communities of Ellisville, Ballwin, and Manchester.
- **There is Retail Development Potential, Albeit Competitive.** Using a drivetime analysis of the three major commercial intersections in Wildwood, it appears the 10, 15, and 20 minute drivetime markets are undersupplied in general, and specifically in trade area segments such as furniture and home goods stores, food and beverage stores, food service and drinking places, general merchandise stores, and gasoline and convenience market stations. There are important differences in the City's business districts and within the drivetime trade areas; these market differences are detailed in the full market study.
- **The Regional St. Louis Office Market is Slowly Recovering.** The St. Louis Metropolitan Area saw positive trends in the regional office market in 2014, highlighted by almost a million square feet of positive absorption as the regional market continues to return to pre-recession figures. Vacancy in the market is down to 15.1%, and most of the submarkets are now below pre-recession vacancy rates. The West County submarket is highlighted by decreasing vacancies and some small-scale new construction, although most of that activity is found in the I-270 and I-64 corridors and focused on new Class A space.
- **Industrial Opportunities Appear Selective.** Regionally, St. Louis is a strong industrial development market, taken from a broader Midwestern market perspective. The 2014 cycle built on positive trends experiencing increases in net absorption and a vacancy rate of 6.2%. The market saw over 3.8 million square feet of net absorption in 2014, more than doubling the absorption rate for the prior year. However, most of the new construction is occurring in interstate corridors and the far West County submarket has experienced few large-scale industrial projects. Wildwood's position in the existing industrial market appears to be secondary to the interstate corridors, and local demand has not been demonstrated as a submarket strength to-date.

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2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is an integral part of the planning process. Outreach activities included meeting with City staff, appointed and elected officials through the Economic Development Task Force, as well as conducting stakeholder interviews with approximately twenty-five individuals. These confidential interviews discussed a wide range of topics with individuals representing local, small businesses and restaurants, large developers, the realty and commercial listing community, homebuilders, community organizations and institutions, Wildwood residents, and business association members. Their insights and analysis is presented in the following list of issue-based categories.

It should be noted, the following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions received in response to interview questions. Items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant, but rather feedback and comments received from workshop, interview, and focus group participants. This feedback is presented at face-value and captures the viewpoints as we received them. Their validity and application will be further evaluated as part of the planning process and in establishing goals and objectives.

Defining Wildwood's Future

Many participants stressed that Wildwood had a clear vision 20 years ago when the community was founded, but expressed concern that after two decades that original vision was not materializing. Specifically, comments included that the Town Center, as envisioned, is "way too big, way too ambitious," that local codes and development regulations no longer match post-recession economic realities, that the City is not acknowledging meaningful shifts in national retail trends since the 1990s (including online commerce), and that Wildwood is missing opportunities that neighboring communities are seizing because it is holding onto unrealistic expectations. One participant described the vision for the Town Center as "old fashioned neighborhoods where you walked to Main Street to get ice from the general store," and expressed concern that ideal was not supported by today's market in Wildwood, primarily because it lacks the residential density of older 19th Century cities and traditional neighborhoods.

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Generally, participants stated that they felt Wildwood's elected and appointed officials need to be more clear on their intent or desires for the City's economic development and that this process needs to clearly articulate that vision as well as community goals. One participant summarized this sentiment as, "Wildwood has always known who it was as a residential community, and it's fantastic – but the City never has seemed to have a clear vision for its commercial areas and they've been slow to develop an identity." Another participant captured it as, "many people want to live in Wildwood, it is seen as a great place to live, but I'm not sure people think about it as anything else – as a place to visit or shop like other suburbs."

Recognizing the Whole City's Potential

Many participants stressed that the City's emphasis on the Town Center has perhaps resulted in a lack of attention to developing citywide strategies. Although the City serves as a destination for a variety of reasons, tn general, participants feel Wildwood could particularly serve as a destination "ecotourism" hub for the St. Louis region, building on the area's numerous equestrian facilities, open space, trails, large parks and forest preserves, and the Hidden Valley Ski area. Some participants were disappointed Hidden Valley's golf course closed and felt Wildwood lent itself to golf facilities alongside its other outdoor recreation opportunities. One participant dubbed this market as "yuppie rural," where another felt Wildwood was not tapping into youth and family recreation opportunities, including athletic facilities, as much as it could.

However, participants noted that most outdoor recreation tourists are accessing the area via I-44 and the lack of restaurant, lodging, and conference, banquet, or meeting space in Wildwood meant that this foot traffic is leaving the City. In general, participants expressed they felt part of the vision for Wildwood's development needs to include strategies to leverage Wildwood's natural assets to attract visitors to the community, and then keep them in the area to better create a "day tourism" or weekend trip destination.

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Closing Businesses & Residential Quality-of-Life

Generally, many participants were concerned about recent business closings and felt that Wildwood may be trending in the wrong direction. Various participants cited the loss of Applebee's, Indigo Joe's, the Mexican restaurant, and the conversion of retail into lower-quality service businesses as both major frustrations to their quality-of-life as well as a concern about Wildwood's long-term competitiveness. One participant stated that while he loved Wildwood as a residential community he had always been disappointed in the Town Center's slow growth, and that his wife and kids' favorite local businesses, the wine shop and ice cream shop, had both recently closed. Generally, this lessened the appeal of living in the community.

There was concern that other local Wildwood draws, such as the St. Louis Bread Co., the Wildwood Hotel, and the movie theatre were all at risk to close. Participants stated that not having a local business community lowered their quality-of-life and driving 20-30 minutes to Chesterfield was not always desirable. Some participants stated they moved to Wildwood anticipating that the development would occur one day, but they are growing impatient. One participant stated "normally if you live far off the interstate you save money on your house, but we don't – we pay the same prices and taxes as Chesterfield or West County suburbs on 270, but we don't have any of the other things they do."

A Lack of Interest from Past Developers & Employers

Participants expressed a concern that major developers and employers who have done business with Wildwood in the past, such as Koman Properties, National Medical Billing Service, and Desco's proposed Target development site, are increasingly leaving the City. Related, there is concern that no other major, regional commercial or industrial developers appear to be engaging the City. Further, Wildwood has never garnered interest from national developers who build large master planned commercial developments in other parts of the St. Louis region.

Although there is interest in local, small business development and attracting entrepreneurs, there was concern that larger, major developers and employers at least appear to be pulling away from Wildwood. Further, some developers indicated that Wildwood-based rental rates have declined in recent years and that the local market is so competitive that smaller tenants are essentially recycling through the local real estate marketplace every few years. It was reported that Wildwood's retail shopping centers have higher vacancy rates than a typical center found in other suburbs. One developer reported that this frequently high turnover and chronic vacancy is starting to scare away other potential leases because business owners are unsure of the long-term stability of the Wildwood market.

A Lack of Development Tools

There was both some concern and some frustration expressed by various participants that the City of Wildwood has not historically been active in using a wide variety of development tools, including Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts, Community Improvement Districts (CIDs), Transportation Improvement Districts (TDDs), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), or Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs), or even the local option economic development sales tax. Some participants stated that if the City relaxed some of its regulations, shortened some of its review periods, and provided the public infrastructure needed to make a development site "pad ready," then these incentives and financing tools were not as important, because Wildwood features a strong local market.

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A Lack of a Destination Anchor & Daytime Use

Many participants expressed Wildwood, particularly the Main Street core, lacks a signature draw or destination anchor to activate the district. Some participants noted that the vision of a "nights and weekends restaurant and bar" district is unrealistic because Wildwood does not feature the residential density needed to make that model successful. Participants noted that one of the biggest deterrents to restaurant recruitment in Wildwood is the lack of virtually any lunch crowd, which requires establishments generate a significant amount of their revenue in just a few days per week. This lack of daytime use is additionally challenging for local businesses that rely on steady foot traffic because there is no regional destination to anchor the area.

In fact, many participants noted that many Wildwood residents leave for Chesterfield and St. Charles County for youth sports and other activities, and as a result eat, shop, and spend disposable income in those communities on the weekends. This dynamic just further erodes Wildwood's potential and participants stated that the Town Center needs key destinations to retain Wildwood residents while attracting visitors from elsewhere; employers were offered as the easiest solution to the daytime problem, but a range of ideas from a Town Center "family park" to a kid's museum to an indoor youth sports complex were offered as nights and weekends solutions.

The Role of Residential Development

One of the fundamental rules of retail, restaurant, and service development is that rooftops drive business growth. One of the main points expressed during outreach was because Wildwood is very low-density and located on the edge of the St. Louis metropolitan region, it struggles to compete with adjacent communities for most retail and restaurant uses. This challenge is furthered by the lack of interstate access. Many of the outreach participants stressed that the most effective long-term strategy for business growth in Wildwood is encouraging more housing development, including greater density and a diversity of new housing types and products, and adding to the local population base.

Specifically, there was a sentiment that the Town Center could support denser single-family homes, townhomes, and even certain types of multi-family developments, including those targeted toward young professionals and recent retirees. Some participants felt strongly that Wildwood's near-term priority needs to be an emphasis on residential development to stabilize the existing commercial market and strengthen its trade area.

Diversifying Wildwood's Population Base

Some participants also expressed that Wildwood is increasingly an older, high-income community and young professionals and their families cannot afford to live in the City. Some participants stated that older, smaller, and more affordable housing closer to I-270 is increasingly appealing to this demographic and experiencing an uptick in sales, while others stated that a lot of the "starter home" and young family market is fueling recent housing construction in Eureka. Although Eureka has used development incentives to promote this housing development, the ultimate factor is it is impacting where young families decide to purchase a home and reside.

There was concern that Wildwood was not recognizing the meaningful shifts in the housing market since 2008 and that as new residential construction comes in cycles, the City could be missing out on its opportunity while young families put down roots in communities encircling the area. Regardless, many participants felt a housing strategy was a key part of economic development in Wildwood and that approach needs to include diversifying the local housing market and City's demographics.

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Wildwood's Business-Friendliness

Many participants stated that Wildwood has a negative reputation in the region, among business owners, developers, and contractors, as being difficult to work with, expensive to develop and operate, and generally a challenging environment for economic development. One specific comment shared multiple times was that the City's review is inconsistent and slow; participants reported receiving faster permit review from St. Louis County or other municipalities and also expressed frustration that initial review and comments often change later in the process – this dynamic adds time as well as uncertainty to the development process. However, participants also cited improvement in recent years and generally positive reviews for current City personnel.

One participant stated that Wildwood "is somewhat of a weak market and for a lot of developers because it includes too many decision-makers for too few dollars… it's unpredictable, long, and ultimately too risky;" another participant stated, "people think there's all this money in Wildwood, but they don't understand it's not dense at all – the trade area out here isn't actually all that great." Another participant expressed this dynamic using an example of a professional service business that had two locations before closing the Wildwood store because they had four times the foot traffic with half the rent in a suburban community further down Manchester Road. In general, participants stressed that the City needs to evaluate its regulatory and operating environment against market and economic realities and try to create an environment that is more conducive to business investment.

City Hall's Role in Economic Development

Some participants stated that the City has historically been passive and reactionary in regards to business development. Participants stated that they feel the City needs to become pro-active and directly engaged in the recruitment of new businesses and developers to Wildwood. Further, some participants want the City to regularly meet with the business community and engage them in addressing community challenges and barriers to reinvesting and expanding in Wildwood. Participants stated that the City is not active in the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and do not actively attend economic development events, including with St. Louis County entities or metropolitan efforts, such as the St. Louis Regional Chamber. Participants stressed that the City leading more public-private partnerships would carry weight in the development community and could be a key catalyst for locating new commercial investment in Wildwood.

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Challenging Competition from Neighbors

Most participants stated they understand there are a lot of retail and office developments throughout St. Louis County, including some robust competition from Wildwood's neighbors, such as Chesterfield at I-64, Eureka at I-44, the Clarkson Road corridor, the Manchester Road corridor, and relatively quick access to I-270 in general. Participants cited the lack of direct interstate access, limited arterial highways, and minimal visibility of the City's commercial frontage corridors as key barriers to Wildwood's growth and development. Further, some participants stated some of these other communities feature less taxes, cheaper permits and fees, and less regulation on development. Additionally, Wildwood's western edge contributes little to its trade area, whereas the intersection of Manchester and Clarkson Road essentially optimizes consumers in the local far Southwest County submarket.

Despite these factors, one participant stated that Chesterfield is a heavily-developed and high-traffic "rat race," and that Wildwood has the potential to offer more local alternatives that keep residents in Wildwood. Most participants still identified their vision for Wildwood's potential, but expressed that the City must be targeted and strategic alongside continued population growth.

Leveraging Unique Community Partners

Many participants stressed that two of the best community assets in Wildwood are the YMCA and St. Louis Community College campus. Participants feel that these two campuses and facilities are isolated from the Main Street Town Center area and wish they were more accessible from throughout Wildwood by bicycle and sidewalk. Further, participants noted both campuses' direct access to Rockwoods Reservation and the potential to use both areas as trailheads for outdoor recreation. Participants also felt both facilities are potential economic development partners and opportunities for improving the community's quality-of-life; participants expressed they would like the City to more actively engage these two large institutional stakeholders and identify partnership opportunities.

Employment Growth & Entrepreneurship

Some participants feel that part of Wildwood's economic development strategy must be an emphasis on establishing the City as a destination for entrepreneurs and small business growth. Most participants expressed that employment, particularly office jobs that appeal to Wildwood's residential population, need to be a part of the City's long-term growth and development. Some participants expressed that the area needs Class A office and incubator space that targets companies with less than 10 employees; some participants felt the City should be active in developing such space and providing free rent and other subsidy incentives. Finally, some participants felt this type of activity was a natural fit for the Main Street area, which could be complemented by new, denser housing products that would be walkable to an office or mixed-use development in the Town Center core.

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Other specific comments included:

- **Pool Sales Tax.** There is concern about the impact of St. Louis County's "pool tax" ever being eliminated or significantly modified, as it would hurt Wildwood's budget considerably and impact how it approaches economic development.
- **Internet Service.** There is concern about poor internet service, particularly west of State Route 109, and its long-term impact on Wildwood's residential housing market. Specifically, some participants reported this deters home-based employees, particularly those in the technology sector, from locating in Wildwood.
- **Establishing Community.** There were multiple comments that Wildwood is increasingly effective at establishing community through a series of well-attended special events and a growing arts segment. In general, participants expressed they would like to see more events, and more opportunities for community gatherings outside of just the core Main Street area.
- **Traffic Congestion.** State Route 109 was specifically mentioned by multiple participants as a problem, although some expressed doubt that any substantial road work was possible. Some expressed that north-south travel needs to be a regional issue, and that Wildwood should be partnering with Chesterfield and Eureka to address traffic congestion at the County level and with East-West Gateway.
- **Sign Code.** Some participants expressed that the sign code is overly restrictive and not aligned with other West County suburban municipalities. Specific areas, such as along State Routes 100 and 109, were shared as areas where more flexible sign regulations would benefit economic growth.
- **Engaging the Business Leaders**. Some participants stated that the City needs to include local business owners and commercial/industrial property owners in their economic development efforts, including requiring private sector representation on the Economic Development Task Force.
- **Public Officials attending Chamber Events.** Some participants stated that if the City is serious about engaging the business community and leading economic development efforts that City officials need to more actively attend Chamber of Commerce and other business-led events. Participants stated that there needs to be open dialogue and more regular interactions between public officials and business leaders in Wildwood.
- **The Balance of Commercial Development and Open Space.** Some participants feel that the City has overly emphasized and prioritized open space preservation and parks planning, and as a result, commercial development has probably occurred more slowly than if it was actively pursued and encouraged. Some participants want a strategic balance between open space areas to the west and a focus on greater densities and mixed-uses in the Town Center.
- **Blending Land Uses.** Some participants expressed concern that City leaders may see an either/or proposition in promoting a high-quality residential community with plenty of open space, and a major suburb with a lot of regional-destination commercial activity. Certain participants cited a range of other communities they felt Wildwood could use as a model, ranging from Kirkwood, Ladue, Frontenac, and Creve Coeur, to examples from Chicago, Colorado, and Maryland area communities.
- **Medical Services Need.** Some participants expressed that Wildwood lacks adequate medical services and want the City to pursue a small hospital or at least an urgent care facility, as well as more local medical offices.

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- **Political Leadership & Processes.** Some participants expressed they feel Wildwood has too many elected officials and too many committees. Participants expressed doubt that additional individuals and/or governing bodies improved local processes and cited examples of other successful communities in the St. Louis region that feature less of both.
- **West of 109.** There was some concern expressed by a few participants that the portion of Wildwood west of State Route 109 needed additional infrastructure investment, which may be achieved by permitting greater residential densities. In general the viewpoint was the very low-density and aging housing stock, which in some cases lacks modern public infrastructure, would ultimately be a land use problem for the City to address. However, many others expressed that Wildwood's vision was to develop and maintain 3 to 5 acre residential lots west of 109 and are not open to reexamining that land use approach.
- **Shop Local.** Some participants stressed they do not feel local Wildwood residents are aware of all of the independent, small businesses in their own community and there is a lack of "shopping local." Some participants would like to see the City lead more "shop local" marketing and branding campaigns as well as investment in establishing the various business districts within the Town Center.

Additionally, other recent planning efforts in the City of Wildwood have captured a list of the types of businesses and other uses desired by the community for the Town Center (in no particular order):

- In general, Wildwood should "shop local" and support small, local businesses
- Food trucks (and special events based around food truck nights)
- Ice cream and/or frozen yogurt shops
- Pizza restaurant (particularly family friendly, not fast food pizza)
- Craft beer/brewery/winery/wine shop
- A "nice" Italian restaurant
- Bookstore (or library that sells used books, etc.)
- A small, niche, or "boutique" grocery, like a Trader Joe's
- Community theatre
- Healthy fast(er) food choices, i.e. Crazy Bowls & Wraps
- Ted Drewe's custard stand
- More family-oriented sit-down restaurants with amenities for children
- Smoothie shop
- Ethnic food restaurants, particularly Asian and Indian
- A "nice" deli and/or sandwich shop
- An old-fashioned styled, classic diner
- Unique local retail shops (few were specifically identified, just generally)
- Day spa
- Offices
- Loft apartments and condos
- More festivals and community events, particularly involving music
- A variety of community facilities, including:
- Outdoor plazas
- Library branch
- Swimming pool and aquatics center
- Splash pads and a water park
- Skatepark
- Sand volleyball
- Bowling alleys
- Playgrounds
- Ice rink
- Community center
- A park, "Village green," or just generally open space

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3 MARKET & DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Wildwood's demographic and market conditions were analyzed to guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information for developing market-viable policy recommendations. The chapter focuses on six topics: (1) population demographics, (2) employment, (3) housing, (4) retail, (5) commercial real estate, and (6) industrial real estate. Each section presents and assesses current trends, notes important market implications, and to the extent possible, makes projections for future growth and development opportunities. Collectively, this information provides a snapshot of Wildwood's current and projected competitive position within the St. Louis region.

Data for this study were acquired from a variety of sources, including the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2010 U.S. Census, and ESRI Business Analyst, a nationally recognized provider of business and market data.

Demographics

Population

The population is increasing. The 2015 population in Wildwood is estimated at 35,618 people. Between 2010 and 2020, the city is projected to grow at a modest rate, adding 351 residents. These forecasts are extrapolated from historical data, but it is important to note that Wildwood has the potential to grow more considerably due to a number of current housing proposals. The number of households is increasing at double the rate, with average household size expected to decrease over the next five years.

The St. Louis MSA (referred to as MSA) is also experiencing population growth, but at a slightly faster pace. Between 2010 and 2020, the MSA is projected to experience a population increase of 1.3%, roughly 0.3% greater than Wildwood. The increase in household roughly mirrors the trend in Wildwood, with a larger number of households but smaller household sizes.

Demographic Summary (2010, 2015, 2020)
Wildwood, MO

	2010	2015	2020	Projected Change (2010-2020)	
Wildwood					
Population	35,517	35,618	35,868	+351	+1.0%
Households	12,112	12,260	12,380	+268	+2.2%
Average Household Size	2.93	2.9	2.89	-0.04	-1.4%
Median Age	41.4	42.4	44.8	+3.4	+8.2%
Median Household Income	--	$119,894	$134,421	+$14,527*	+12.1%*
St. Louis MSA					
Population	2,787,701	2,798,304	2,823,128	+35,427	+1.3%
Households	1,109,665	1,123,077	1,136,241	+26,576	+2.4%
Average Household Size	2.46	2.44	2.44	-0.02	-0.8%
Median Age	38	39	39.7	+1.7	+4.5%
Median Household Income	--	$54,317	$62,728	+$8,411*	+15.4%*

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates
** Denotes change from 2015-2020 as 2010 data was unavailable*

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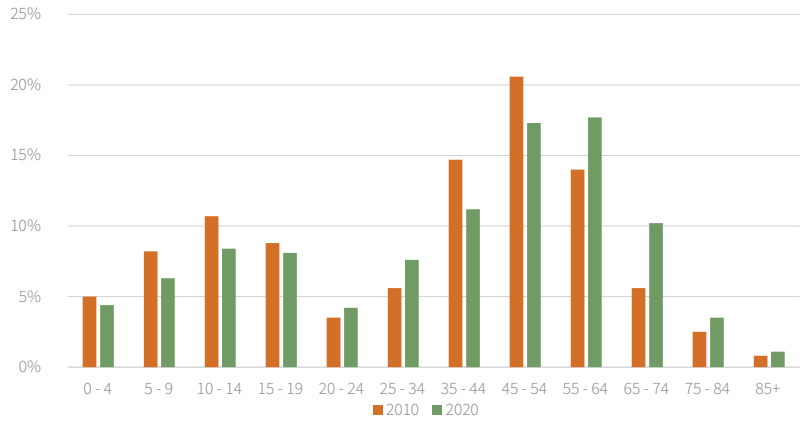
Age

The population is aging. Wildwood's current (2015) median age is estimated at 42.9 years. The City's median age is projected to rise further to 44.8 years by 2020, an increase of roughly 8% from 2010. Age cohorts gaining in share of the population are mostly on the older end of the spectrum (55-64 years and 65-74 years), although there is a slight uptick in the share of population that is between 25 and 34 years of age. Age cohorts losing in share of the population are mostly younger and middle-aged cohorts.

The MSA is aging at a slightly slower pace, and is projected to see a median age of 39.7 years by 2020.

Age Distribution (2010, 2020)

Wildwood, MO



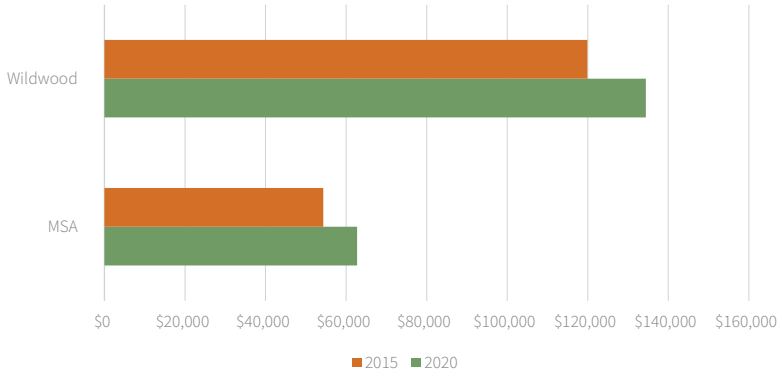
Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Income

Incomes are rising. Wildwood's current (2015) median household income is estimated at $119,894. By 2020, it is projected to increase by more than $14,000 to $134,421. While incomes in Wildwood are projected to increase by a smaller amount over the next 5 years than the MSA (12.1% vs. 15.5%), Wildwood is currently and is expected to remain wealthier than the overall MSA. In fact, between 2015 and 2020, the percentage of households in Wildwood earning greater than $150,000 is projected to rise from 38.9% to 44.6%.

Median Household Income (2015, 2020)

Wildwood & St. Louis MSA



Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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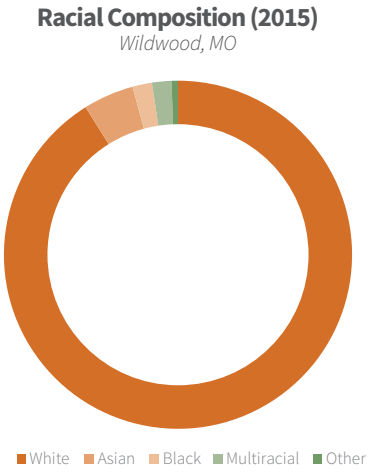

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Race & Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic composition remains relatively unchanged. As defined by the U.S. Census, white residents currently (2015) comprise the overwhelming majority of the city's population (91%). The remainder of the population includes those identifying as Asian (4.7%), Black (1.8%), and Multiracial (1.8%). Between 2010 and 2020, the composition is projected to remain relatively unchanged, with a slight decrease in the white population (-2.7 percentage points) and an equal increase in minority populations. Wildwood is less diverse than the entire MSA, which in 2015 is 75.8% white.

The City's Hispanic population is currently estimated at 2.6%. Between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic population's share of the population is projected make a modest increase from 2.3% to 3.1%. For purposes of clarification, the U.S. Census considers Hispanic an ethnicity and not mutually exclusive with racial categories. For example, a resident may identify as both Black AND Hispanic.

Market Implications for Demographics

- A decrease in average household size will increase the demand for housing, despite only modest increases in population between 2010 and 2020.
- The aging of the population and growth in older age cohorts may require a more senior-friendly housing stock of multi-family, townhome, and senior living options, as well as accessible health and medical services and new senior services and programming.
- Rising incomes may lead to higher demand for retail goods and services, facilitating small business growth. Additionally, higher income levels increase the ability to market Wildwood to national retailers and developers, who often base the siting of new stores, restaurants, and housing units on income levels.

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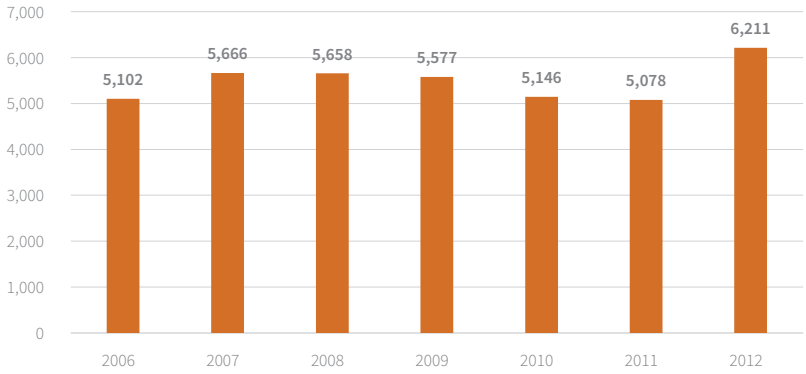
Employment

Total Employment

The number of jobs has risen. In 2012 (the most recent year with data available), the City contained 6,211 jobs, which is the highest level of employment in the past six years. This is an increase of roughly 1,100 jobs from the previous year. The majority of the City's jobs are clustered along the Highway 100 and Highway 109 corridors. Additionally, the State of Missouri Department of Economic Development estimates that the St. Louis Region, which includes Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis Counties (including St. Louis City), will collectively gain 102,303 jobs between 2012 and 2022. Applying Wildwood's local share of the region's jobs (0.57% in 2012, according to the U.S. Census) to the anticipated expansion, it can be estimated that the City could gain roughly 580 jobs by 2022.

Total Primary Jobs (2006-2012)
Wildwood, MO



Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Total Employment (2006-2012)
Wildwood, MO

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	**5,102**	**100.0%**	**5,666**	**100.0%**	**5,658**	**100.0%**	**5,577**	**100.0%**	**5,146**	**100.0%**	**5,078**	**100.0%**	**6,211**	**100.0%**
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	43	0.8%	46	0.8%	60	1.1%	39	0.7%	41	0.8%	36	0.7%	39	0.6%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Construction	960	18.8%	1,150	20.3%	993	17.6%	735	13.2%	510	9.9%	529	10.4%	565	9.1%
Manufacturing	171	3.4%	230	4.1%	242	4.3%	199	3.6%	80	1.6%	94	1.9%	84	1.4%
Wholesale Trade	264	5.2%	327	5.8%	331	5.9%	378	6.8%	304	5.9%	320	6.3%	511	8.2%
Retail Trade	308	6.0%	383	6.8%	332	5.9%	332	6.0%	280	5.4%	286	5.6%	303	4.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	512	10.0%	422	7.4%	420	7.4%	334	6.0%	328	6.4%	359	7.1%	349	5.6%
Information	65	1.3%	74	1.3%	36	0.6%	25	0.4%	36	0.7%	34	0.7%	43	0.7%
Finance and Insurance	96	1.9%	95	1.7%	98	1.7%	102	1.8%	89	1.7%	85	1.7%	107	1.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	47	0.9%	48	0.8%	42	0.7%	42	0.8%	30	0.6%	45	0.9%	94	1.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	239	4.7%	260	4.6%	364	6.4%	404	7.2%	364	7.1%	293	5.8%	370	6.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	42	0.8%	46	0.8%	34	0.6%	37	0.7%	19	0.4%	17	0.3%	12	0.2%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	227	4.4%	217	3.8%	174	3.1%	179	3.2%	201	3.9%	214	4.2%	278	4.5%
Educational Services	1,141	22.4%	1,239	21.9%	1,294	22.9%	1,352	24.2%	1,408	27.4%	1,353	26.6%	1,158	18.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	417	8.2%	445	7.9%	466	8.2%	482	8.6%	569	11.1%	524	10.3%	515	8.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	53	1.0%	59	1.0%	50	0.9%	30	0.5%	32	0.6%	24	0.5%	947	15.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	304	6.0%	352	6.2%	437	7.7%	621	11.1%	573	11.1%	598	11.8%	585	9.4%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	81	1.6%	112	2.0%	105	1.9%	97	1.7%	90	1.7%	83	1.6%	98	1.6%
Public Administration	132	2.6%	161	2.8%	180	3.2%	189	3.4%	192	3.7%	184	3.6%	153	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census "On the Map"; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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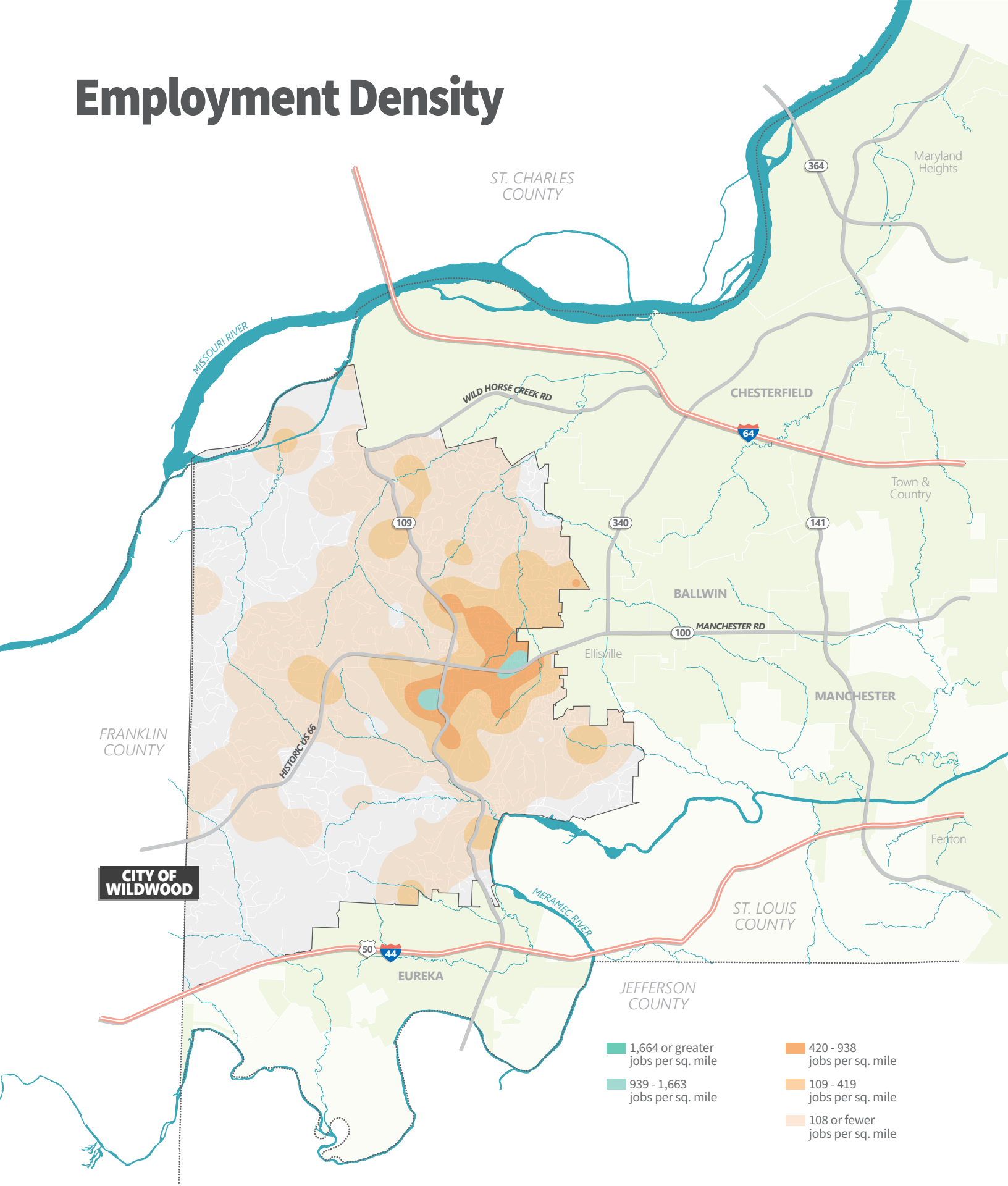
Employment Density



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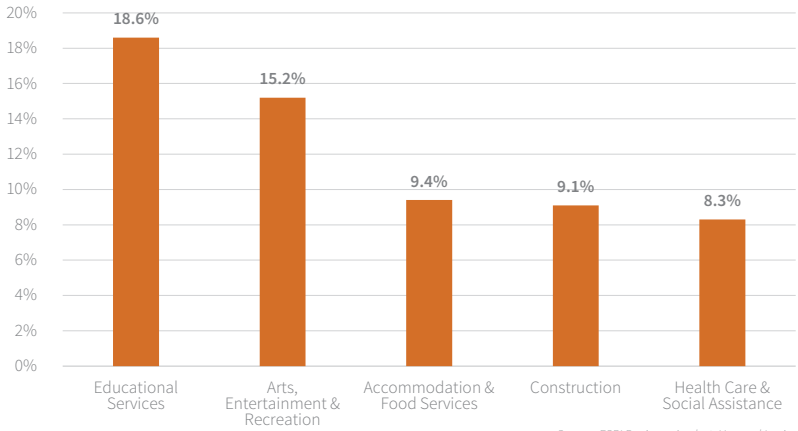
Employment by Industry

Education and the arts are the City's most dominant industries. Roughly a third of the Wildwood's jobs are either in the Education Services or Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries, with the remainder including Accommodation and Food Services (9.4%), Construction (9.1%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (8.3%).

Major Employers

The region's largest employers are located outside of Wildwood. Major employers in the greater St. Louis region include many prominent national companies, including Mastercard, Nestle Purina, and Edward Jones. Please refer to the accompanying table for more information.

Top Five Industries (2012)
Wildwood, MO



Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Major Employers (2014)
Greater St. Louis Region

Name	Location	Headquarters
Anheuser-Busch	St. Louis	N
Ameren Corporation	St. Louis	Y
Boeing Defense, Space & Security Unit	Hazelwood	N
Centene	St. Louis	Y
Edward Jones	St. Louis	Y
Emerson Electric Co.	St. Louis	Y
Energizer Holdings	St. Louis	Y
Enterprise Rent-a-Car	St. Louis	Y
Express Scripts, Inc.	St. Louis	Y
General Motors	Wentzville	N
GKN Aerospace North America	Hazelwood	Y
Graybar Electric	St. Louis	Y
Mallinckrodt	Hazelwood	N
Mastercard International	O'Fallon	Y
Monsanto	St. Louis	Y
Nestle Purina PetCare	St. Louis	Y
Olin Corp.	Clayton	Y
Peabody Energy	St. Louis	Y
Reinsurance Group of America	Chesterfield	Y
Scottrade	St. Louis	Y
Sigma-Aldrich	St. Louis	Y
SunEdison	St. Petere	Y
Wells Fargo Advisors	St. Louis	N
UniGroup Inc.	Fenton	Y

Source: Missouri Partnership; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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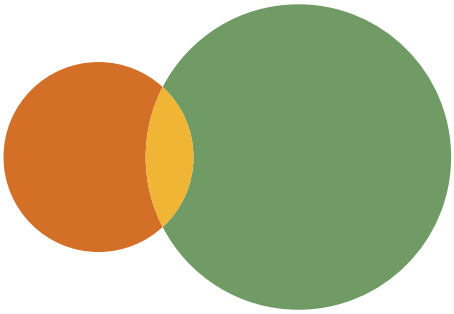
Inflow/Outflow

Wildwood is a bedroom community.
Based on 2012 data, on any given day, more than 15,345 city residents commute to jobs elsewhere in the region. At the same time, more than 5,000 non-residents commute into Wildwood for work. Only 872 people live and work in Wildwood.

Inflow / Outflow Job Counts (2012)
Wildwood, MO



Market Implications for Employment

Wildwood only contains 17 jobs per 100 residents, a relatively low ratio, but on par with many suburban communities and reflective of a bedroom community. Available land, favorable business climate and proximity to both St. Louis and major thoroughfares are significant assets. With the St. Louis region poised for further economic growth, Wildwood is well positioned for attracting a variety of employers that can diversify the tax base and provide goods and services to its residents.

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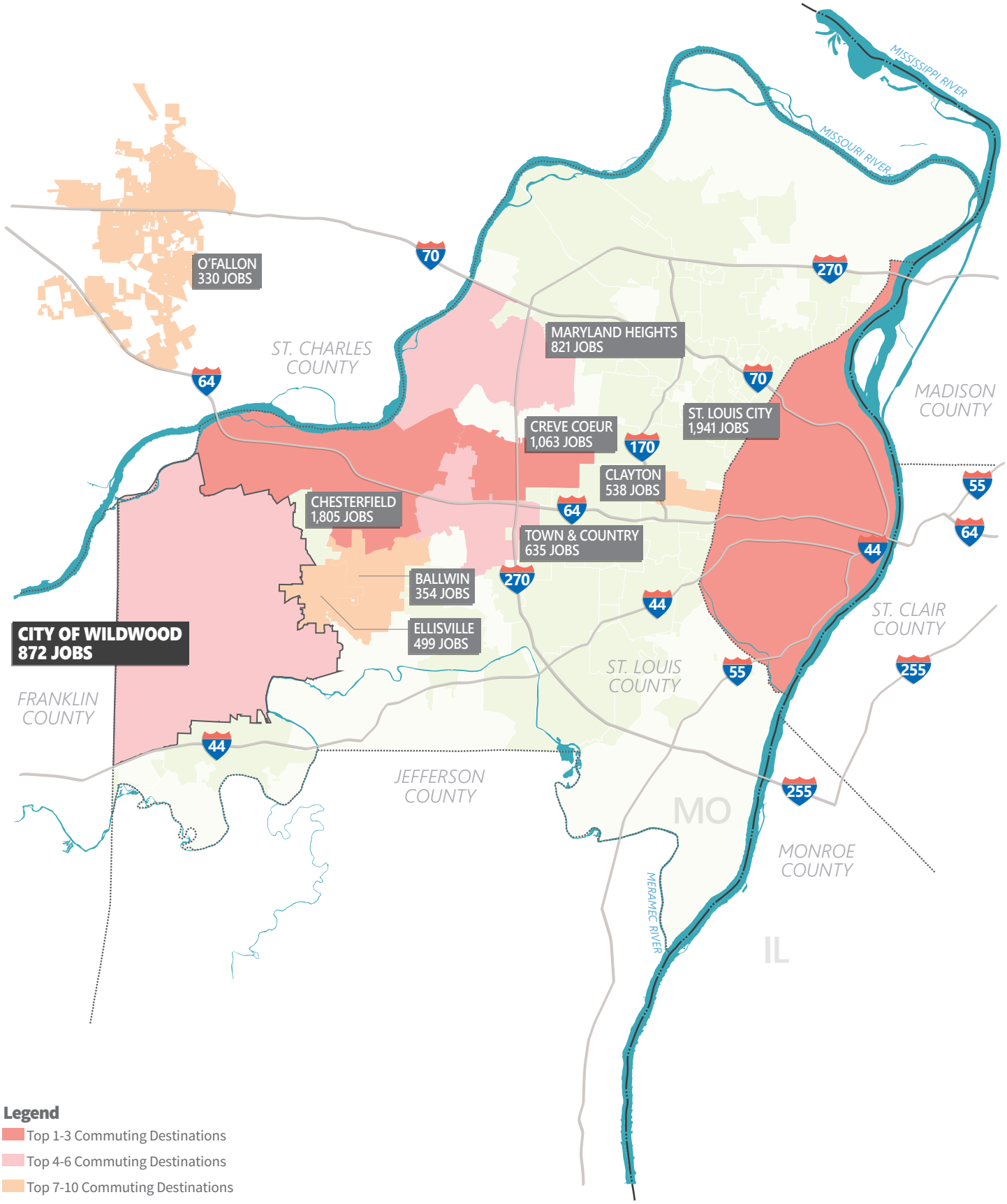
Commute Shed



Legend

- Top 1-3 Commuting Destinations
- Top 4-6 Commuting Destinations
- Top 7-10 Commuting Destinations

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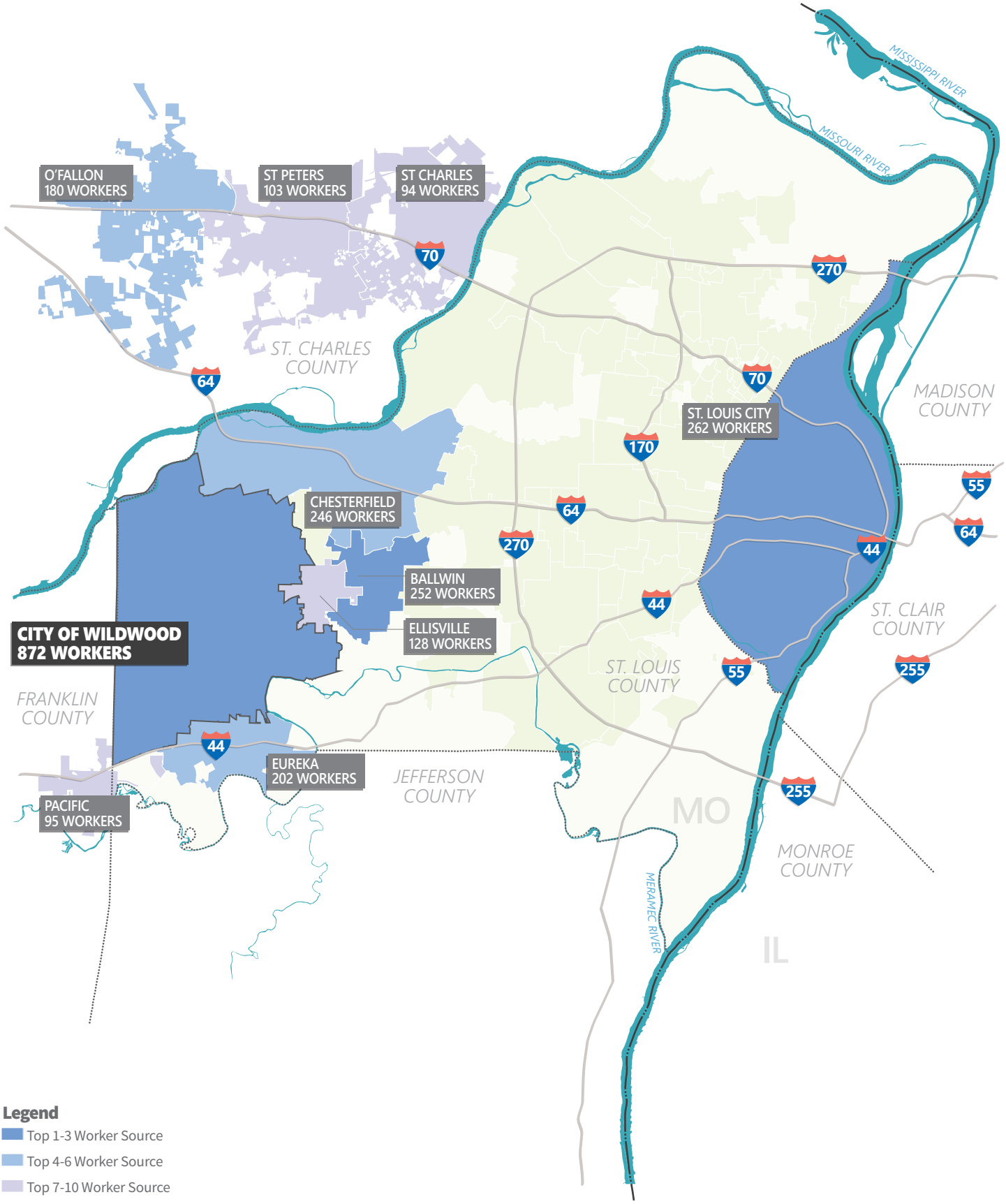
Labor Shed



Legend

- Top 1-3 Worker Source
- Top 4-6 Worker Source
- Top 7-10 Worker Source

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Housing

Housing Units

The total number of housing units is growing at a modest rate. The City currently contains 11,086 housing units (2105) of which 97% are occupied. Between 2015 and 2020 the City is projected to add just over 100 new housing units, or an increase of 1% over the next five years.

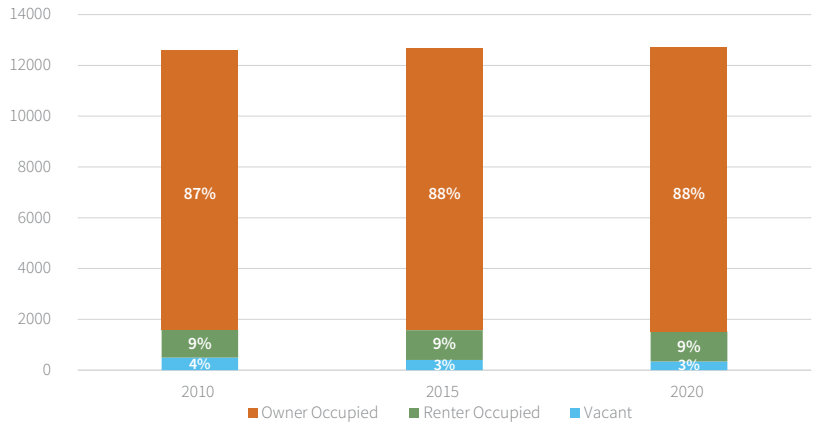
The vacancy rate is low. The 2015 vacancy rate for housing units in Wildwood is reported at approximately 3.1% of total units while the MSA is 10%.

The local housing market has rebounded. While Wildwood housing values were impacted by the downturn in the market, similar to other areas of the region and country, the market has rebounded. Home values have steadily increased since 2012 and have returned to pre-recession levels.

Type & Tenure

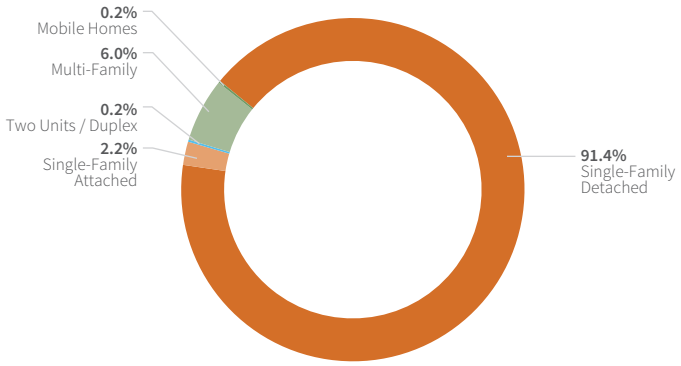
The average Wildwood home is an owner-occupied, four-bedroom, single-family detached home. The majority of units in the City are single family detached homes (91%). A smaller number of owner occupied units consist of townhomes and condominiums for a total owner occupied percentage of 91.3%, with 8.7% of occupied housing units being rented. This includes all housing types.

Total Housing Units (2010, 2015, 2020)
Wildwood, MO



Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Housing by Type (2009-2013 Average)
Wildwood, MO



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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Values

Home values are rising. The City's reported average home sales price in 2015 is approximately $362,000, up $80,000 from the 2012 estimate of $282,000. Similar to neighborhood communities, average home sales prices have fluctuated in recent years; however, Wildwood consistently outperforms neighboring municipalities.

Age

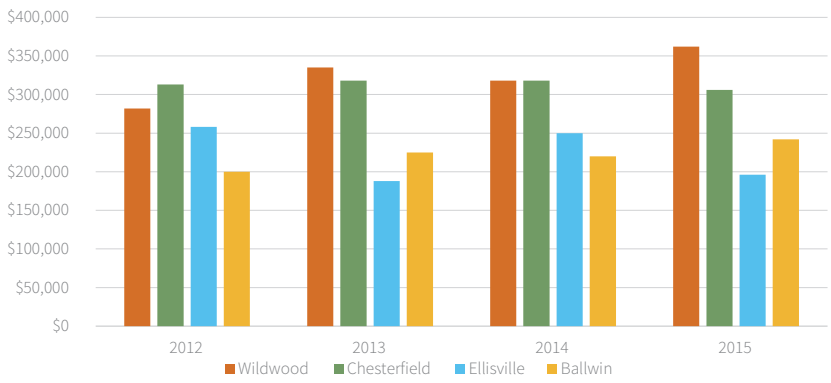
The city's housing stock is relatively new. Nearly 60% of the city's housing stock was constructed after 1990 with the highest percentage (43%) constructed between 1990 and 1999.

Market Implications for Housing

Overall, the City has a high quality and stable housing market. Key housing market implications include:

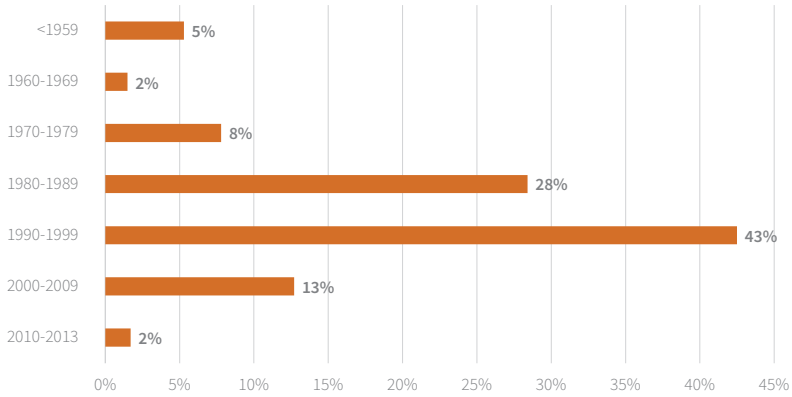
- The majority of housing in the City is owner occupied single-family homes, with fewer options for rental and/or multi-family product.
- Wildwood continues to be a destination for high-end, large, single-family homes.
- The City continues to be more of a "bedroom" community.
- The Rockwood School District has a significant impact on the marketability of Wildwood homes.

Average Home Sales Price (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015)
Wildwood, Chesterfield, Ellisville & Ballwin



Source: Zillow (Average sales price is taken from May of each year)

Housing Age (<1950-2013)
Wildwood, MO



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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Retail Market

This section provides an overview of Wildwood's retail market, highlights other commercial areas competing with Wildwood for consumer spending; and evaluates Wildwood's retail market potential through a "gap analysis." All data is from 2013-2014 and was obtained from ESRI Business Analyst, a national provider of market data.

Retail Gap

Wildwood's retail market potential is assessed through two different lens: a local market and a regional market. As consumers shop based on convenience and proximity, a drivetime best models consumer shopping behavior as opposed to using jurisdictional boundaries or mileage. Consumers will generally travel short distances for groceries and day-to-day needs, but travel longer to purchase more durable items such as refrigerators, cars, or high-end clothing.

For this analysis, three different points within the Wildwood retail market were analyzed: (1) the intersection of Main Street and Taylor Road, (2) the intersection of Manchester Road and Highway 100, and (3) the intersection of Manchester Road and Highway 109. All three drivetime maps are presented here, but the narrative analysis is derived from analyzing the core Town Center's location (Main & Taylor). The regional market is defined as a 15 minute drive from an intersection analyzed, however a 20 minute drivetime was also included to more accurately capture the market as it appears to function. While a 5 minute drivetime is often typical for a local market, the low-density nature of Wildwood and the few retail areas west of Highway 109 require that a 10 minute drivetime be utilized to better reflect local market realities.

Understanding Retail Gap Analysis

A retail gap analysis is a comparison of retail supply and demand within a defined market area. Its findings help establish what types of new retail could or could not be supported. The gap analysis compares the availability of goods and services ("supply") with consumer expenditures ("demand") within respective drivetimes. When consumers spend more than existing businesses can accommodate (demand > supply), this means that consumers are spending dollars outside of the market area. This is referred to as "leakage," and is displayed in green on the accompanying table. Typically, market areas with leakage represent potential opportunities for growth, as local demand for these goods and services already exists but is unmet by existing supply.

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Conversely, when there is a larger amount of supply within a particular retail category or more than consumers spend (supply > demand) in a market area, there is market saturation. This is referred to as a "surplus," and is depicted in red on the accompanying table. A retail category with surplus is challenging for new retail development because it is already oversupplied.

It is important to note, however, the difference between market potential ("leakage") and the tangible development of a particular site or location. While leakage may exist, the success of recapturing that lost revenue depends on a variety of factors beyond spending habits, including the availability of developable land, construction costs, rents, road conditions, competition from nearby municipalities, and/or the business climate. Equally, indications of market saturation should not immediately preclude opportunities for development. While supply may exist in a particular category it may not be adequately serving the market in terms of product offerings, quality, accessibility and other issues.

Retail Potential in Square Footage

In addition to surplus and leakage figures, the accompanying charts also include supported retail potential in square footage. Converting leakage figures into square footage allows a visualization of what size and scale of retail **could** be supported. While sales-per-square-foot revenues vary by individual retailer and industry sources, general assumptions of supportable square footage can be made by using a benchmark average. A generally accepted range for national retailers is $200 to $400 per-square-foot. The use of a per-square-foot amount on the higher end of this range allows for a more conservative approach so as not to overstate retail potential. As shown in the Gap Analysis tables, when a per-square-foot amount of $400 is applied, demand is effectively translated to a potential number of square feet that could be supported within a five, ten, or fifteen minute drivetime. It is important to note, however, that calculations cannot be effectively applied to uses such as car dealerships or gas stations. This same methodology is applied to each of the three market areas analyzed.

To help envision development potential in square footage, the following provides the average size of an assortment of retail stores, based off of data obtained by industry sources. Supported square footage from the Retail Gap Analysis can be compared to this list for context. It is important to note that these stores are listed merely for contextual purposes and not to support development of any particular brand over another.

- Dunkin Donuts – 2,250 ft2
- Chipotle – 2,650 ft2
- CVS – 19,856 ft2
- Buffalo Wild Wings – 5,600 ft2
- Olive Garden – 7,336 ft2
- The Gap – 12,503 ft2
- Barnes & Noble – 25,525 ft2
- Whole Foods – 33,739 ft2
- Best Buy – 38,631 ft2
- Kohl's – 75,230 ft2
- Walmart – 102,683 ft2
- Home Depot – 105,192 ft2
- Cabela's – 148,148 ft2
- Macy's – 181,946 ft2

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Local Market Area: Undersupplied by $153.9M (10 Minute Drivetime)

The local market (10 minute drivetime) is undersupplied by $153.9M. It contains 46,096 people in 17,209 households ("rooftops"), with a median disposable income of nearly $80,000. The drivetime spans from roughly from the heart of the City of Wildwood north to the border with Chesterfield, south to nearly the I-44 interchange in Eureka, and east as far as the Olde Towne Plaza shopping center in Ballwin (the location of Lowe's and Marshall's). This trade area covers most of Wildwood, although primarily east of Highway 109, as well as parts of Chesterfield, Ellisville, Ballwin, and the general Clarkson Valley area. This trade area, anchored by Wildwood's Town Center, really serves the core, local Wildwood market. The portions of adjacent communities included within the 10 minute drivetime area are also served by retail and restaurant locations closer to their residential neighborhoods and the market is markedly competitive. However, there is a meaningful density of rooftops combined with a very high median disposable income in the area. While it represents one of the more competitive retail areas in the St. Louis region, it also represents one of the most affluent areas too.

Overall, this analysis represents a clear opportunity for Wildwood. The area is growing and this unmet demand will also increase. The City should look to address this undersupplied market.

Many retail categories are undersupplied, but several categories appear to be the priority targets for retail business growth. This includes General Merchandise Stores; Gasoline Stations; Food & Beverage Stores; and Food Services & Drinking Places. Although this potential requires targeted strategies tailored to the local market, there are clear opportunities to better meet existing demand – for example this data reflects demand for potentially as much as 130,000 square feet of new food-related businesses in the Town Center market area. This data resonates with the information collected throughout outreach that many Wildwood residents are traveling as much as 30 to even 45 minutes to dine in restaurants, well outside of the community. Further, there are a limited number of gas stations in Wildwood as well as local, general retail stores; outreach participants also reported frequently leaving Wildwood to meet these consumer needs.

Key business categories that appear oversupplied, or saturated, in the 10 minute drivetime trade area include Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers; Health & Personal Care Stores; Building Materials, Garden Equipment & Supply Stores; and Electronics & Appliance Stores. Many of the specific national and/or regional chain retailers that fit in these categories do currently serve this market, including a number of direct competitors located in close proximity, and they are primarily located in Chesterfield near I-64, on Clarkson Road, or on Manchester Road, and mostly located outside of the City of Wildwood. Although local context, travel patterns, and location-specific details factor into retail investment and site selection decisions, there may be limited opportunities to pursue business growth in these categories, for at least the near-term future.

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Regional Market Area: Undersupplied by $324.9M (20 Minute Drivetime)

The regional market (20 minute drivetime) is undersupplied by $324.9M. It contains 205,144 people in 78,702 households, with a median disposable income of $72,441. This trade area covers the entirety of the City of Wildwood, as well as most of Chesterfield, Eureka, Ellisville, Ballwin, Manchester, Town & Country, Creve Coeur, and stretches into both Franklin and Jefferson Counties, and at its absolute maximum extent spans from Gray Summit to Kirkwood, and from Maryland Heights to south of the Meramec River near Byrnes Mill. This trade area is most easily envisioned as serving the Southwestern St. Louis sub-regional market, which is generally located in-between I-64, I-270, and I-44, with the of the St. Louis County-Franklin County border forming its approximate western edge.

The total retail gap in this market area is $324.9M, which is divided by approximately 2/3 retail trade businesses and 1/3 food and drink establishments. Within this retail gap data there are a couple clear business categories that capture the majority of this figure. Food & Beverage Stores and Food Services & Drinking Places account for 56% of this entire regional market retail gap. Therefore there is a clear opportunity for new businesses in these categories, which resonates with information collected during outreach activities. Wildwood residents frequently travel outside of the community to meet these consumer needs, but further, many residents of this 20 minute drivetime area (bound by the three interstates), also often travel to the I-270 corridor and beyond to communities such as Kirkwood, Frontneac, Creve Coeur, and Clayton to dine and generally socialize at these food-related businesses. In general, there appears to be a meaningful amount of food-related leakage from the greater Southwestern St. Louis County area to other parts of the St. Louis region and it represents a clear opportunity for Wildwood's Town Center.

The data yields a few select opportunities for other retail categories, but those are often envisioned in square footages that only represent a single store, or despite the potential untapped demand, do not appear to meet the typical minimum square footage for a conventional retail store in those categories. One such category would be Electronics & Appliance Stores, where the demand is forecasted at only an approximately 15,000 square foot presence in the market, which for example, is smaller than half the size of a typical Best Buy. Ultimately this untapped demand, and any new market demand in the 20 minute drivetime trade area, may be most efficiently captured by existing retailers.

It is worth noting that two retail categories have a sizable oversupply or market-saturation within the 20 minute drivetime area. Both Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores, as well as Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores, appear to be oversupplying this market anchored within 20 minutes of Wildwood's Town Center, which is likely captured primarily by the two malls in Chesterfield and Des Peres, as well as the "big box" regional retail located in these business districts. Although opportunities may always exist within the right local context, it generally appears these are highly competitive retail segments and will be served by the existing market for the near-term future.

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Market Implications for Retail Market

Generally speaking, both the local and regional retail markets are presently serving the Wildwood community. Each community is unique and consumers' willingness to drive to certain stores and/or certain locations can impact how a retail trade area functions – that local context is critical and complements the market data and statistics. Some stores, some restaurants, and even some neighborhoods become destinations for a wide variety of reasons that can include cost competitiveness, service quality, brand loyalty, or even just the distinctive experience provided by a unique place. Throughout outreach participants expressed that Wildwood residents moved to the community understanding one of the tradeoffs associated with the City's appealing residential quality-of-life and premiere open space is that they would have to drive farther to certain retail stores than they would if they lived in the heart of suburban St. Louis County. That recognition is central to the original vision for Wildwood and its Town Center. That is important context.

And to a degree, that local culture, regional development pattern, and established "travel loops" have likely contributed to the development of the major retail corridors found in Chesterfield, Clarkson Valley, and along Manchester Road. It is not that the City of Wildwood's residents are not shopping at, for instance, Walmart, Target, Macy's, Best Buy, Home Depot, or Barnes & Noble, but rather that they are likely shopping somewhere within this 20 minute drivetime, if not even beyond it, for example The St. Louis Galleria in Richmond Heights or Eager Road and Brentwood Boulevard in Brentwood. Based on this market assessment, there appears to be a competitive market within many existing retail categories within both the local and regional markets, as defined by these drivetimes.

However, restaurants and other food and beverage stores, which could include microbreweries, wineries or wine bars, gastropubs, and other similar business models, represent two of the clear opportunities found within this retail gap analysis. Further, outreach participants across a number of public engagement opportunities throughout 2015 have expressed a desire for a wide range of local food service establishments, including ice cream shops, ethnic food restaurants, lunch options like a premium deli or café, sit-down breakfast options like a diner, and a wide range of sit-down restaurants that generally aim to provide more local choices within Wildwood itself.

Wildwood's daytime population and lack of a predictable, growing "lunch crowd" has been reported as a contributing factor to the recent closing of past restaurants, as well as a deterrent to potential new establishments opening. Therefore, what a successful restaurant business model looks like in Wildwood may be distinct from profitable restaurant concepts in other communities – but it appears that there are clear opportunities to better leverage Wildwood's local market. More detailed business development strategies within these retail segments will be structured in the final plan.

An important factor in forecasting the next 5-10 years of the Wildwood retail and restaurant market is anticipating the impact of new housing units, or "rooftops." There are currently 300-500 new housing units in concept development or formally proposed in Wildwood's Town Center right now – that is significant. Based on the current median disposable income, those new households will yield tens of millions of dollars of new disposable income to the local market. This is ultimately based on a wide variety of factors which will ultimately influence that final disposable income figure, but it illustrates the impact and relationship between increasing the total number of households in Wildwood and growing local market demand. As the axiom states, "rooftops drive retail." Further, any additional new housing beyond this near-term window will similarly have a continued positive impact on market demand.

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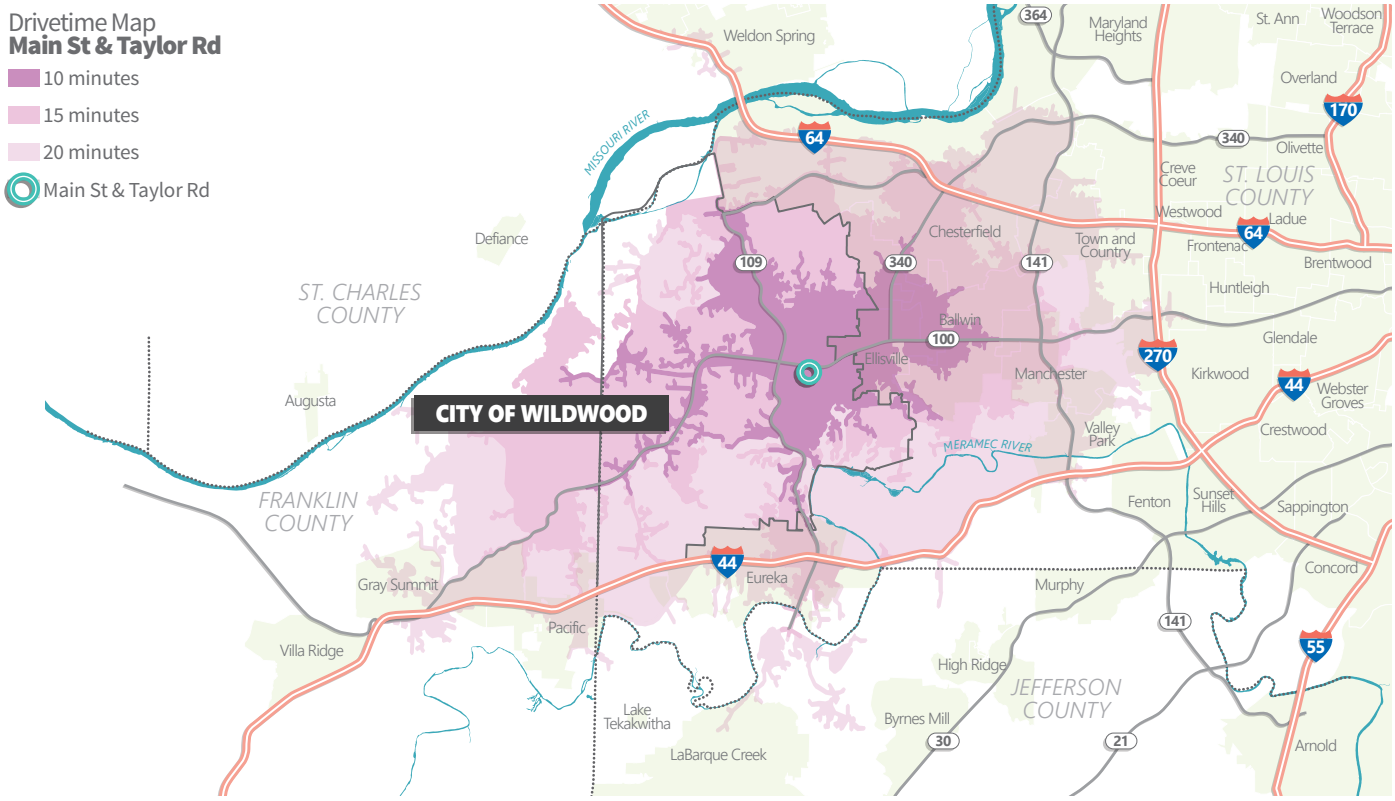

Retail Gap Analysis Summary (2014)

Wildwood: Intersection of Main Street and Taylor Road

Summary Demographics	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Population	46,096	120,433	205,144
Households	17,209	45,681	78,702
Median Disposable Income	$79,091	$76,814	$72,441
Per Capita Income	$48,464	$48,890	$48,221

Overview	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Total Retail Gap	$153.9	$398.6	$324.9
Total Retail Trade	$125.7	$325.1	$220.7
Total Food & Drink	$28.2	$73.5	$104.2

Retail Gap by Industry Group	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	-$143.5	--	-$56.2	--	-$25.3	--
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$10.6	26,481	$16.0	39,877	-$4.7	-11,776
Electronics & Appliance Stores	-$9.2	-22,887	$4.8	11,896	$5.8	14,479
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-$9.6	-23,916	$15.1	37,687	$21.1	52,762
Food & Beverage Stores	$23.7	59,353	$19.0	47,469	$79.5	198,761
Health & Personal Care Stores	-$13.8	-34,591	-$34.7	-86,875	-$14.1	-35,298
Gasoline Stations	$52.2	--	$83.6	--	$101.3	--
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$35.3	88,127	-$17.0	-42,589	-$64.7	-161,861
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	-$2.8	-7,024	-$19.6	-48,976	-$33.2	-83,056
General Merchandise Stores	$127.8	319,615	$179.5	448,696	$19.8	49,620
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$8.0	20,089	$24.5	61,153	$32.5	81,326
Nonstore Retailers	$46.9	--	$110.4	--	$102.8	--
Food Services & Drinking Places	$28.2	70,378	$73.5	183,710	$104.2	260,379

*Potential is based on an average sales of $400/sq. ft. Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers, Gas Stations, and Nonstore Retailers are not included in this calculation.
Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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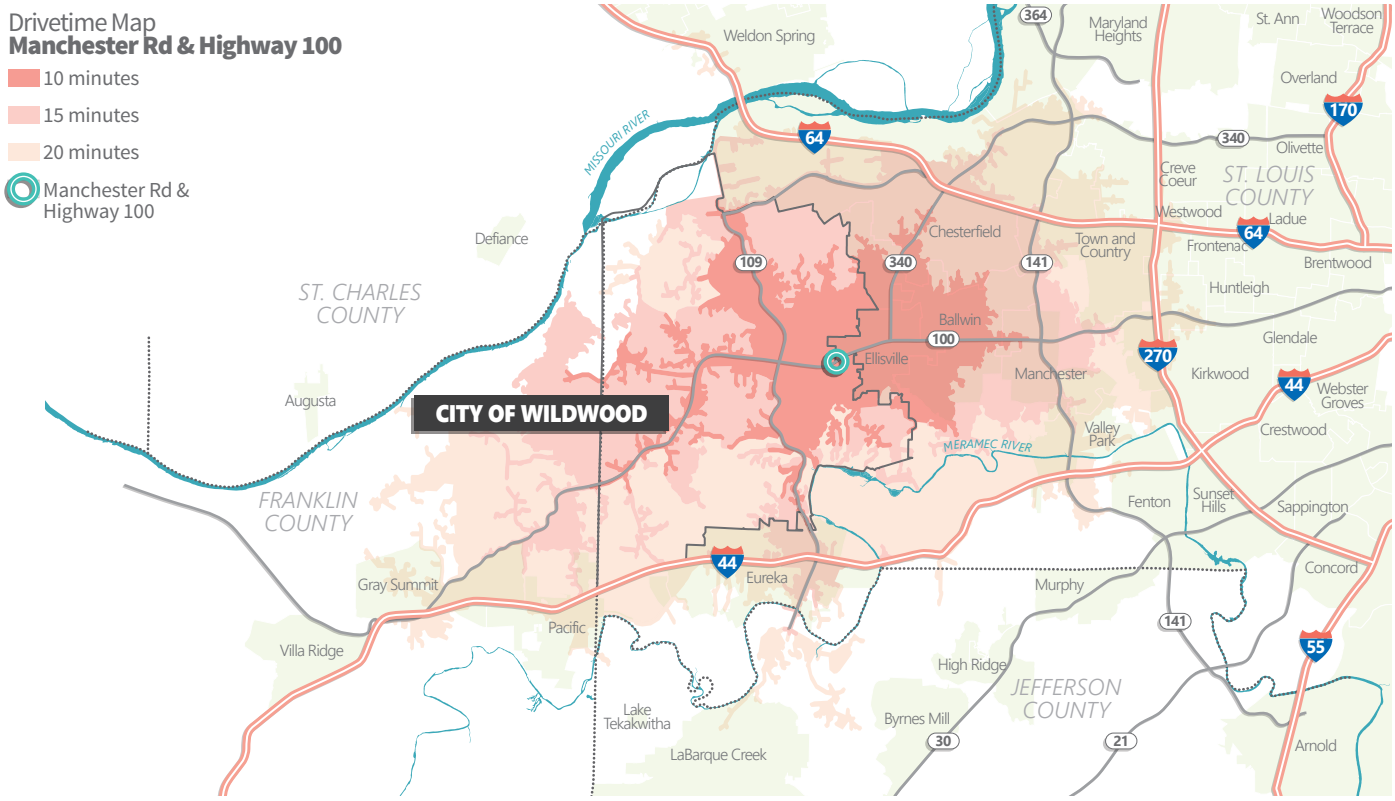

Retail Gap Analysis Summary (2014)

Wildwood: Intersection of Manchester Road & Highway 100

Summary Demographics	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Population	57,803	145,977	216,832
Households	21,408	55,600	83,421
Median Disposable Income	$78,923	$75,772	$72,639
Per Capita Income	$48,728	$49,019	$48,862

Overview	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Total Retail Gap	$218.4	$321.6	$354.4
Total Retail Trade	$183.8	$225.4	$248.6
Total Food & Drink	$34.6	$96.2	$105.8

Retail Gap by Industry Group	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	-$135.2	--	-$28.5	--	$13.5	--
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$14.0	34,919	$1.6	3,984	-$4.7	-11,788
Electronics & Appliance Stores	-$5.5	-13,835	-$7.5	-18,645	$11.0	27,483
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-$10.0	-25,117	$19.7	49,279	$27.9	69,627
Food & Beverage Stores	$16.5	41,178	$25.1	62,672	$79.0	197,464
Health & Personal Care Stores	-$10.9	-27,303	-$46.8	-116,968	-$3.5	-8,675
Gasoline Stations	$54.1	--	$69.3	--	$102.6	--
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$40.0	100,034	-$10.1	-25,323	-$99.9	-249,685
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	-$15.1	-37,831	-$19.7	-49,168	-$32.6	-81,511
General Merchandise Stores	$168.0	420,016	$73.4	183,556	$14.6	36,623
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$11.3	28,152	$27.7	69,185	$36.3	90,791
Nonstore Retailers	$56.7	--	$121.2	--	$104.4	--
Food Services & Drinking Places	$34.6	86,482	$96.2	240,574	$105.8	264,485

*Potential is based on an average sales of $400/sq. ft. Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers, Gas Stations, and Nonstore Retailers are not included in this calculation.
Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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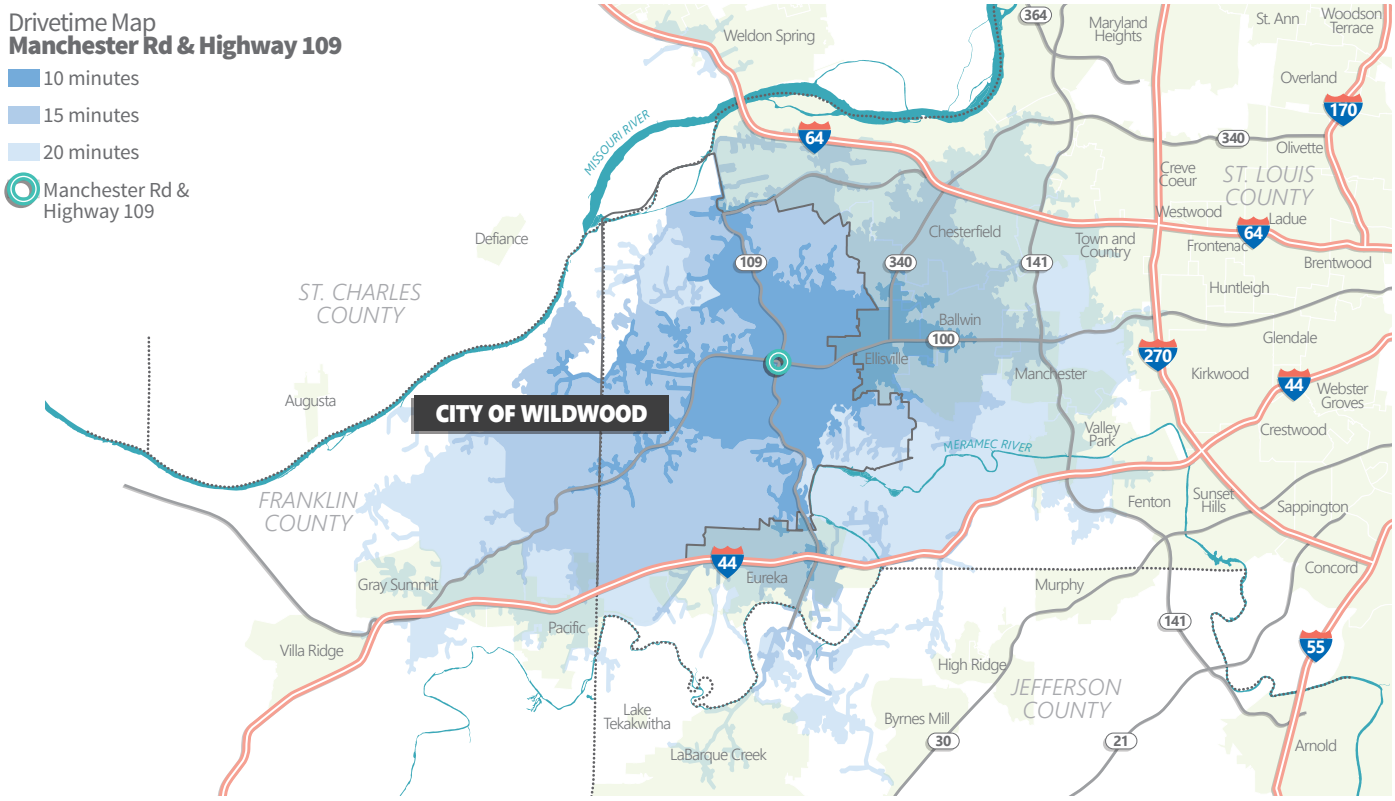

Retail Gap Analysis Summary (2014)

Wildwood: Intersection of Manchester Road & Highway 109

Summary Demographics	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Population	38,214	109,277	206,216
Households	14,153	40,725	79,265
Median Disposable Income	$81,853	$78,220	$71,436
Per Capita Income	$48,652	$49,084	$47,112

Overview	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime	20 Minute Drivetime
Total Retail Gap	$89.6	$332.8	$1,065.4
Total Retail Trade	$67.3	$282.1	$973.9
Total Food & Drink	$22.4	$50.7	$91.4

Retail Gap by Industry Group	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	-$140.1	--	-$95.7	--	-$31.2	--
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$8.1	20,170	$21.4	53,532	-$3.8	-9,583
Electronics & Appliance Stores	-$9.8	-24,459	$6.8	16,980	$6.1	15,371
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-$7.8	-19,594	$5.6	14,049	$19.3	48,147
Food & Beverage Stores	$7.5	18,795	$62.1	155,240	$92.1	230,309
Health & Personal Care Stores	-$18.5	-46,312	$4.3	10,696	-$36.0	-89,886
Gasoline Stations	$43.6	--	$89.1	--	$47.4	--
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$29.4	73,574	$2.8	6,885	-$31.8	-79,469
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	-$3.6	-9,122	-$24.9	-62,335	-$32.8	-82,084
General Merchandise Stores	$112.1	280,254	$216.9	542,321	$70.8	176,902
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$6.1	15,182	$19.7	49,235	$29.3	73,243
Nonstore Retailers	$40.4	--	$92.7	--	$111.5	--
Food Services & Drinking Places	$22.4	55,897	$64.6	161,564	$102.9	257,267

*Potential is based on an average sales of $400/sq. ft. Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers, Gas Stations, and Nonstore Retailers are not included in this calculation.
Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

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Office Market

An interest has been expressed in attracting more office development to the community and recruiting more employers and daytime population to the community. The office market sector is key in evaluating these goals. This section summarizes conditions and trends in both the regional and local office markets. Data was obtained from NAI Desco (Q2 2015) and Colliers International (Q2 2015).

St. Louis Regional Market

The St. Louis regional market has an unchanged unemployment rate at 5.7%, but despite that employment growth stagnation in recent quarters, the office market continues to absorb existing development square footage. Since 2013 the St. Louis regional market has absorbed over 1 million square feet of space, which includes nearly 200,000 square feet in the second quarter of 2015 alone. From the regional perspective, Clayton and Downtown St. Louis continue to be the main drivers of Class A space and capture much of that demand throughout the greater region, while the St. Charles and West County B Class submarkets perform at the second tier of main regional activity. Average quoted rental rates in the St. Louis region, within the Class A sector were $21.68, and $16.56 in the Class B sector.

Vacancy rates are at 11.1% for the entire region, which is down more than a full percentage point since 2014. Unfortunately the average per square foot rental rate is at approximately $17.40, which is below the historical regional average of $18/sq. ft., and the St. Louis office market has not performed above that $18/sq. ft. market since prior to 2010. As a result, the office market in the greater St. Louis region remains stable, but sluggish. Developers are not building any speculative office space and are being very conservative even when they are working directly with known tenants.

The office market has been challenging everywhere nationally since the Great Recession. Although a very complex analysis, one of the central drivers has been that many employers have survived the recession and remained in business. Many of them laid off workers but kept their existing square footage and did not or were not in a position to downsize their office spaces. As hiring came back nationally and new employees were added, in effect, these new people just took the vacant desks sitting in already-leased, existing office space capacity. As a result, office absorption rates performed pretty weakly in recent years, even as the economy and hiring rebounded.

This had been particularly true in the St. Louis region until 2013. However, with recent activity, NAI Chief Global Economist, Dr. Peter Linneman, has recently stated, “As full job recovery has occurred and the empty desks have been filled, incremental unleased space has been absorbed, much to the surprise of those who declared office absorption dead.” As existing space fills up, it drives higher rents and demand for new office construction. All of this is positive trends for the St. Louis region and for Wildwood’s position within the office marketplace. It presents a regional market with opportunities, however, very targeted and moving at a very deliberative pace.

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West County Submarket & Market Implications

Wildwood competes in the West County office submarket, against communities like Chesterfield, Ellisville, Ballwin, Manchester, and Town & Country. It is important to note, that versus local cultural references to "West County," the office submarket is divided more specifically, which segments out Clayton, the I-270 Creve Coeur/Westport area, and the West County area bound by I-64, I-270, and I-44, which is where Wildwood is located.

The West County submarket has the second-least amount of existing Class A and Class B office space, only above St. Charles in terms of the greater St. Louis region. There are 77 Class A buildings and 61 Class B buildings. Vacancy rates are higher than the regional average, at 8.1% for Class A space and 9.6% for Class B space. Another factor for the West County submarket's competition in the region is it features some of the higher rental rates, with $22.78 per square foot for Class A space and $20.15 per square foot for Class B space – this is in contract, for example, with only approximately $18/ sq. ft. in Downtown St. Louis for Class A space and only $19/ sq. ft. for Class B space in Clayton. Although these rental rates may price out certain smaller office users and smaller employers, it also helps produce potential revenue for any new construction projects. Finally, although the West County market has experienced a lot of market absorption in the Class B office product, there has been some increased vacancy recently in Class A space.

Market Implications for Office Market

Ultimately there is a market for new office development in Wildwood; however, one of the main questions is how far into the future. Without direct access to the interstate, there will be certain limitations on which types of companies want to locate in Wildwood, versus cities like Chesterfield and Manchester, both direct competitors in the West County submarket. Further, certain office users and businesses will prefer to locate in the City of St. Louis, Clayton, and North County near Lambert St. Louis International Airport. Future office construction in Wildwood will likely produce some Class A space, but there will also be demand for Class B and office park or employment park styled developments. The demand for space will likely be in smaller square footage increments than most other parts of the St. Louis region and even in comparison to adjacent cities, such as Chesterfield.

Therefore, Wildwood's economic development strategy must be targeted to a range of office uses and then further targeted to specific locations within the City. Further, in light of a flurry of recent residential proposals, the City of Wildwood may need to evaluate locations for future office development and preserve that available real estate for commercial and office use, since that demand may not materialize until later in the mid-term future. Strategies and potential tenant businesses can be further explored in the final economic development plan.

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Office Submarket Snapshot
Greater St. Louis Region

Market	Existing Inventory (sq. ft.)	Number of Buildings	New Deliveries (YTD)	Vacant Space (sq. ft.)	Vacancy Rate	Average Rent (sq. ft.)	Absorption (Quarterly)	Absorption (YTD)
Class A								
CBD	9,639,250	27	0	160,110	12.0%	$17.97	154,198	-108,652
Midtown	848,817	7	0	66,721	7.9%	$23.46	-8,709	-13,361
Clayton	5,272,761	31	0	461,306	8.7%	$26.03	65,034	35,961
South County	1,466,398	21	0	87,262	6.0%	$21.27	-7,755	-7,269
North County	3,788,709	23	0	244,529	6.5%	$18.35	56,723	84,850
Creve Coeur / Westport	5,801,857	43	0	705,771	12.2%	$21.71	-46,482	-171,425
West County	7,422,841	77	0	598,908	8.1%	$22.78	-1,477	-206,166
St. Charles	2,533,486	22	0	250,467	9.9%	$20.18	1,404	-164,940
Class A Totals	**36,774,119**	**251**	**0**	**3,575,074**	**9.7%**	**$21.47**	**212,936**	**-551,002**
Class B								
CBD	9,132,579	68	0	1,700,062	18.6%	$13.33	-2,375	5,572
Midtown	1,030,598	21	0	75,534	7.3%	$12.13	9,600	11,634
Clayton	2,487,145	45	0	110,901	4.5%	$19.33	-4,250	14,087
South County	4,190,461	52	0	420,292	10.0%	$20.44	16,560	23,624
North County	5,166,271	41	0	429,908	8.3%	$15.25	6,367	6,327
Creve Coeur / Westport	5,617,679	117	0	662,645	11.8%	$17.19	2,774	66,182
West County	2,772,199	61	0	266,328	9.6%	$20.15	19,104	783
St. Charles	1,655,529	46	0	162,096	9.8%	$16.12	24,274	36,211
Class B Total	**32,052,461**	**451**	**0**	**3,827,766**	**11.9%**	**$16.74**	**72,054**	**164,420**
Class C								
CBD	3,508,818	40	0	845,471	24.1%	$13.05	-$96,227	-110,914
Midtown	896,212	27	0	26,091	2.9%	$12.12	$3,376	9,477
Clayton	1,249,788	31	0	114,653	9.2%	$17.48	-$2,252	1,188
South County	970,812	36	0	66,974	6.9%	$12.66	-$12,685	-6,345
North County	1,483,426	34	0	95,373	6.4%	$12.90	-$2,855	18,088
Creve Coeur / Westport	938,070	33	0	154,377	16.5%	$15.97	$1,431	3,978
West County	422,905	11	0	16,957	4.0%	$16.56	$2,582	-3,912
St. Charles	250,313	8	0	28,086	11.2%	$12.66	$2,685	2,341
Class C Total	**9,720,344**	**220**	**0**	**1,347,982**	**13.9%**	**$14.18**	**-$103,945**	**-86,099**
TOTAL	**78,546,924**	**922**	**0**	**8,750,822**	**11.14%**	**$17.46**	**$181,045**	**-472,681**

Source: Colliers International

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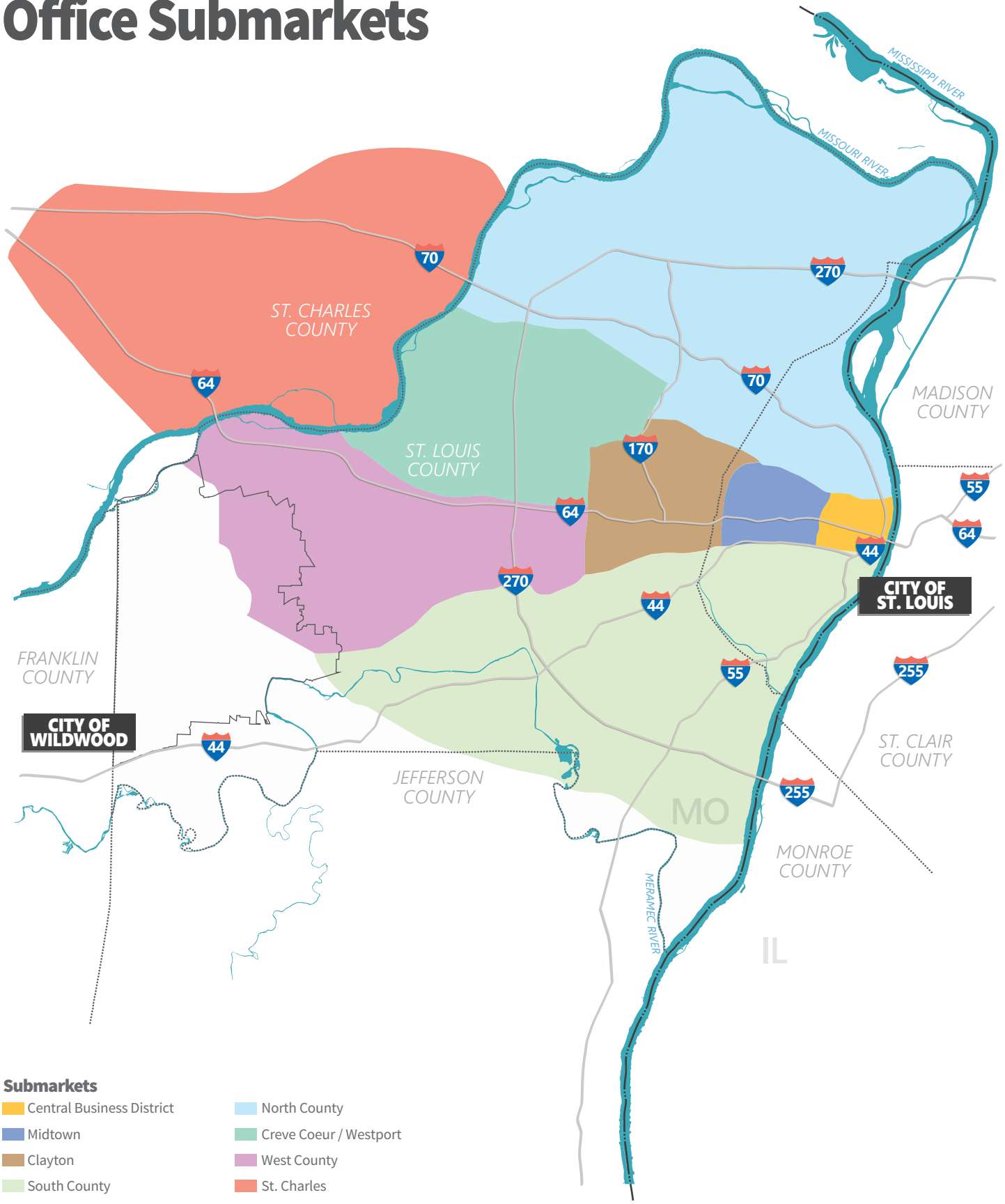
St. Louis Regional Office Submarkets



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Industrial Market

Although a small segment of the Wildwood community in 2015, part of the community's interest in local employment growth could be filled by certain industrial land uses. This section details industrial market trends within both the regional and local industrial markets. Data was obtained from NAI Desco (Q2 2015) and Colliers International (Q2 2015).

St. Louis Regional Market

The St. Louis regional industrial market contains roughly 265 million square feet of industrial space and has experienced strong growth trends recently. Colliers International states "average rental rates in the region are now at their highest level since 2010," and "that by the end of second quarter 2015, average rental rates in the region increased to $4.11 per square foot. They predict that rental rates will continue to rise as existing square footage is further reduced by increased occupancy and the pursuit of limited available space becomes more competitive.

The lack of Class A space is driving the regional market's demand and growth which has yielded more than 2 million square feet of new construction in the greater St. Louis area. The industrial vacancy rate is 7.3%, which is down from 8% exactly a year ago. In general the market forecast is strong for the St. Louis region and it is anticipated that vacancy rates will continue to decline, rental rates will continue to increase, and additional new construction projects will be proposed in 2016 and 2017.

One important note is many of the "big moves" in the regional industrial market have been in the Illinois submarket. Illinois is leading all St. Louis area submarkets with the best absorption rate, with 1.4 million square feet of space filled in 2015. Further, the region's largest new construction projects are found in Illinois, including the Gateway RT Distribution Center, as 673,000 square foot facility built for the Saddle Creek Corporation, and a 410,000 square foot facility built for World Wide Technologies.

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Industrial Submarket Snapshot
Greater St. Louis Region

Submarket	Number of Buildings	Existing Inventory (sq. ft.)	Direct Vacant Space (sq. ft.)	Sublease Vacant Space (sq. ft.)	Total Vacancy Rate	YTD Net Absorption (sq. ft.)	Under Construction (sq. ft.)	Quoted Rates
Illinois	702	40,129,263	1,402,225	25,626	3.6%	1,110,602	0	$3.62
St. Louis City	1,802	77,372,098	8,980,208	120,000	11.8%	266,532	0	$2.95
Central St. Louis County	888	27,511,701	1,396,309	6,488	5.1%	-104,907	79,000	$4.31
North St. Louis County	700	47,094,780	3,795,483	64,177	8.2%	-439,713	749,775	$4.33
South St. Louis County	498	17,789,531	925,691	31,530	5.4%	-110,957	0	$6.23
West St. Louis County	720	26,515,332	1,669,690	47,613	6.5%	179,677	12,802	$5.90
St. Charles County	806	27,866,571	714,560	2,500	2.6%	14,558	0	$5.23
MARKET TOTALS	**6,116**	**264,279,276**	**18,884,166**	**297,934**	**7.3%**	**915,792**	**841,577**	**$4.11**

Source: Colliers International

West St. Louis County Submarket & Market Implications

The St. Louis region industrial market is divided into 7 submarkets. Wildwood is located in the West St. Louis County submarket, which is not one of the region's weaker markets, but has also not experienced some of the major new construction and growth that Illinois, St. Charles County, and areas near Lambert St. Louis International Airport have seen. West County's submarket features 720 existing buildings with more than 26 million square feet of available space. The vacancy rate stands at 6.5% and the most recent absorption rate only took 179,677 square feet of space off of the market. Because of the approximately 1.7 million square feet of vacant industrial space in West County there is only one facility currently under construction, a smaller building at about 12,000 square feet.

Most of the major, recent leases in the St. Louis region have been more medium-sized Class A and Class B facilities between 30,000 square feet and 65,000 square feet, primarily for distribution and warehousing tenants – again, primarily in Illinois, North County, and further west into St. Charles County. Currently Wildwood and its immediate neighbors lack such facilities or an industrial or business park property in this type of submarket segment and there are no known proposed construction projects.

Market Implications for Industrial Market

Historically, industrial land uses have not been a part of the vision for the City of Wildwood. Recent interest in attracting more local employers may be a cause for an evaluation on how certain "back office" and other low-impact, light industrial businesses, which typically locate in business parks and employment centers, fit into the future of Wildwood. However, there will be certain challenges to pursuing this type of development in Wildwood. There appears to be an adequate supply of vacant space for the near-term future and new construction projects will be limited.

As the St. Louis region's industrial growth continues it will drive demand for existing space, which may increase interest in West County, while also pushing demand for new construction. Wildwood could likely target certain industrial and business park uses but it will probably appeal to be a very specific submarket that requires approximately 10,000 to 50,000 square feet of space in flexible facilities, and businesses that do not need immediate interstate access. Strategies and potential tenant businesses can be further explored in the final economic development plan.

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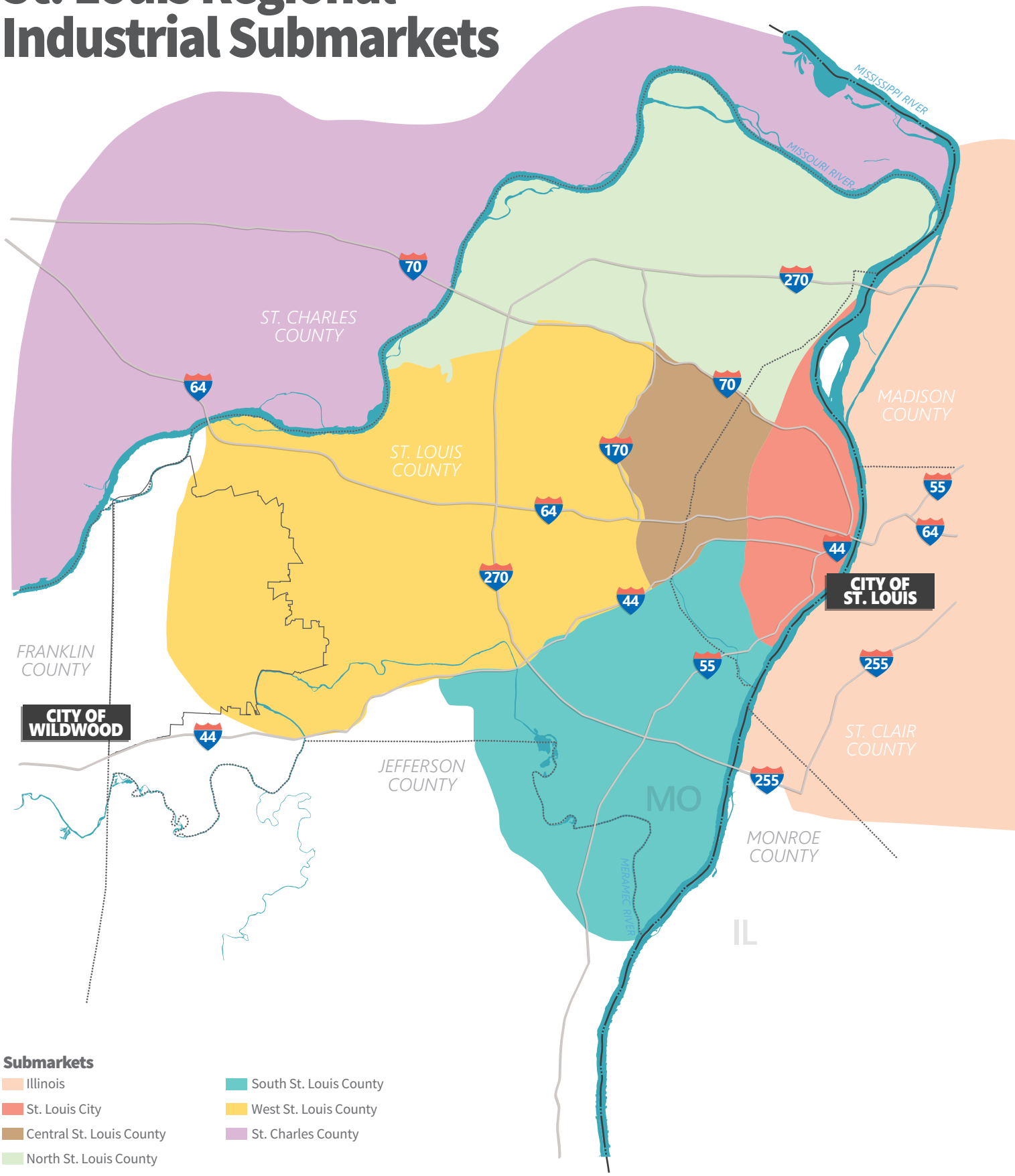
St. Louis Regional Industrial Submarkets



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4 TOWN CENTER DISTRICTS

The Town Center is a large expansive area that presents a variety of different physical or urban design conditions that will help determine what types of businesses are most likely to locate in a specific development or district, as well as where certain types of businesses may be most successful. These conditions include the variety of land uses, architectural styles, densities, roadway configurations, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, visibility, and other site-specific factors that impact how the larger Town Center area functions.

These "districts" may or may not influence other official City policies, however, they can be thought of as "development character areas" that help define what type of specific business uses are most appropriate for certain parts of the Town Center, and what types of development would likely be most compatible with existing structures and roadway infrastructure. Used in this manner, these districts can better inform and direct business recruitment, retention, and expansion programs. Economic development actions should be tailored to the unique conditions found in each district within the Town Center. Each district is described and its physical and economic conditions catalogued, as well as currently undeveloped sites, in the following sections.

Eastern Gateway

The City of Wildwood's boundaries begin slightly east of the intersection of Manchester Road, Westglen Farms Drive, and State Route 100, but that signalized intersection acts as the community's eastern gateway. This commercial node acts as a neighborhood retail and service district, anchored by the Village Plaza and Wildwood Crossing shopping centers. There are a number of bank and restaurant out lots along with strip center retail and service. There are also a number of medical, dentistry, and related uses as well. The Manchester Road corridor was recently selected by East-West Gateway as a Great Street project, in coordination with a number of community along the roadway.

Dierbergs Town Center

The Dierbergs grocery store location in Wildwood is considered part of the Town Center but most of its urban design is typical of a suburban shopping center. However, it includes more pedestrian and cyclist amenities as well as connectivity to adjacent sites than is commonly found in other suburban shopping centers of a similar size and scale. The site is fed by a sidewalk network and bicycle trail and is accessed via a pedestrian-scale street network that features attractive streetscaping. Further, the center's out lots are designed more as a part of the Taylor Road streetwall and contribute to an urban character for the "Downtown" portion of the Town Center. The well-marked, landscaped, and designed crosswalk at Main and Taylor also reinforces connectivity between the Dierbergs site and the Main Street portion of Town Center to the west.

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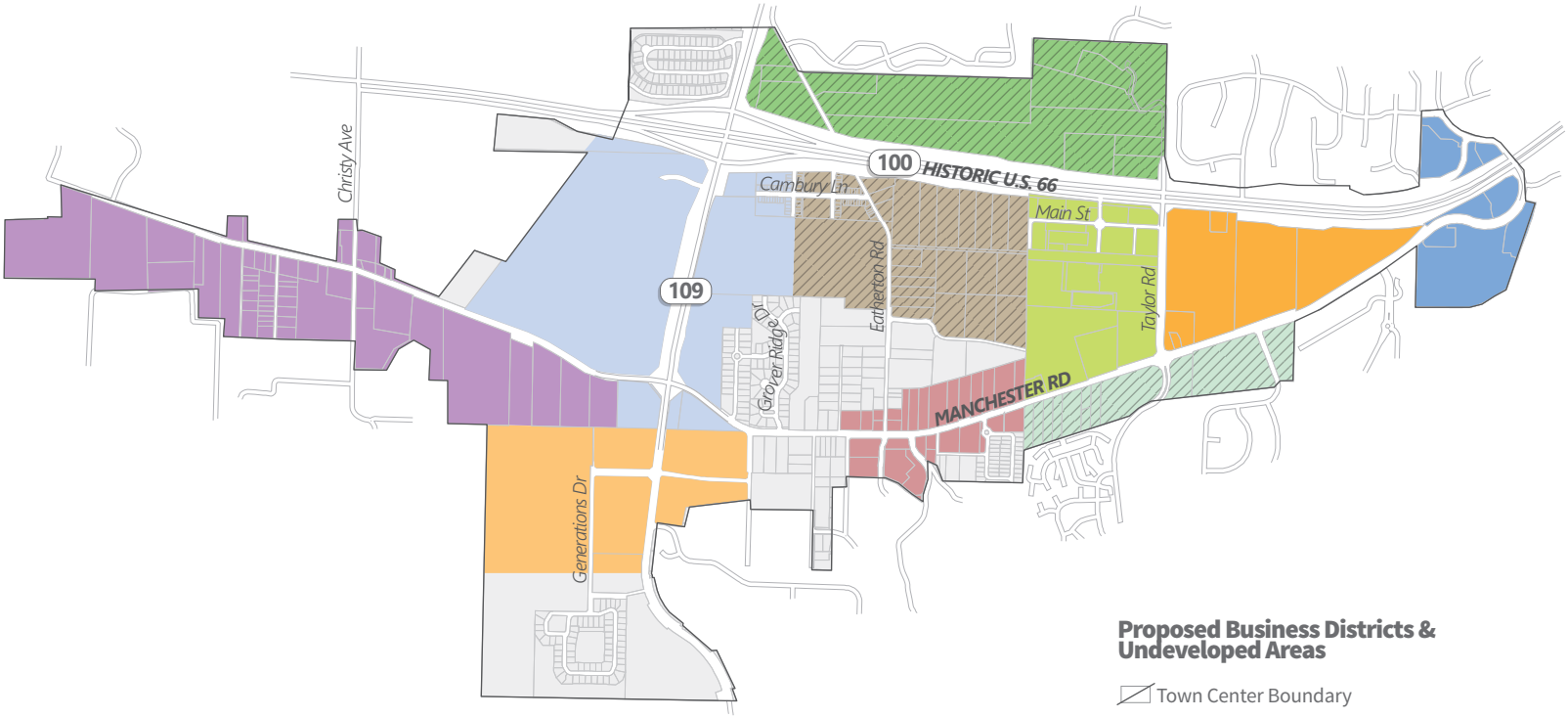

Proposed Business Districts & Undeveloped Areas

- Town Center Boundary
- Eastern Gateway
- Dierbergs Town Center
- Main Street Town Center
- Historic Manchester Road District
- College District
- Pond Historic District
- Interchange District
- North of 100 Area
- Main Street Extension Area
- Town Center South Area
- Business Districts on Undeveloped Land

Main Street Town Center

The core walkable, traditional "Downtown" area within Wildwood is defined by the six blocks along Main Street and Plaza Drive. The district includes buildings that are built-to the sidewalk and "hold the corners," such as the structure that includes Starbucks or the buildings located on the Fountain Plaza traffic circle; there is a traditional multi-story streetwall present that includes the Wildwood Hotel and the building between Fountain and Eastgate Lane. These features reinforce the vision of a traditional "central business district" designed around a walkable, human-scale block pattern and multi-story, mixed-use buildings.

However, the district also includes urban design more typical of an auto-oriented suburban environment, such as the Walgreen's, as well as a major parking garage and a lot of surface parking. The district is home to a number of special events and festivals and serves as the "community meeting place" or cultural heart of the Wildwood community. There is undeveloped land between Main Street and Manchester Road that is envisioned in the Town Center Regulating Plan as both "Neighborhood Edge" and "Workplace" land uses.

Historic Manchester Road District

On Manchester Road, west of Larry's Tavern, the corridor transitions into a more 19th and early 20th Century historic character that features houses converted to commercial uses and infill, small-scale commercial strip centers. The district features a number of destination retailers, such as Three French Hens, Porch, Imogene's, as well as Grover Post Office branch. Although the district features overhead utility lines, on-site parking lots, and sidewalks that directly abut the curb, the area is still conducive to pedestrians and cyclists and presents an "old town" charm. Unlike other parts of Wildwood which feature leased shopping center space, many of the commercial structures in this district are owner-occupied and represent substantial investments by local, small business owners.

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College District

Located along State Route 109, south of Manchester Road, there is a cluster of commercial uses adjacent to the YMCA and St. Louis Community College campus. This district includes a mix of office uses located in the Westridge Centre and retail, service, and restaurant businesses located in Wildwood Square. Located at the intersection of a five-lane highway (State Route 109) and a four-land, landscaped median divided boulevard (New College Avenue), the district is primarily auto-oriented and pedestrian mobility is generally limited. The business district is adjacent to Rockwoods Reservation, which is located directly to the west, south, and southeast, and is operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation. The district acts as a gateway into the Town Center for motorists traveling State Route 109 through the rolling, wooded terrain.

Pond Historic District

Located along Manchester Road, west of State Route 109, is another mixed-use district with 19th Century roots. The Old Pond School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located at 17123 Manchester Road, and presents an important site to plan in harmony with future economic development, growth, and new construction. The site is heavily wooded, slightly elevated from the roadway, and features a stone retaining wall with a wrought iron fence; all of these elements present a historic character and clear transition from the interchange and College district areas as motorists travel west on Manchester Road.

The remainder of the district features a number of churches, Pond Elementary, Wildwood Middle School, auto repair businesses, light industrial uses, and Big Chief Roadhouse. Along with this eclectic mix of land uses, most of these sites are significantly less dense than other commercial properties in Wildwood, typically being set further back from the roadway and featuring more greenspace and trees. In general, the district presents an urban design character that reflects Wildwood's more rural heritage and early development patterns.

Interchange District

The intersection of State Route 100 and State Route 109 is designed as a major four-ramp interchange that manages heavy traffic volumes and motorists traveling at high speeds. The quadrants surrounding the interchange have been developed by the Crest Windsor subdivision to the northwest, the Phillips 66 to the southwest, and the BP gas station to the southeast. The northeast quadrant remains undeveloped, but is directly adjacent to Sandalwood Creek Drive. Cambury Lane, a multi-family development, is accessed from the interchange area near BP, and is the only existing residential development in the district.

The remainder of the district is largely undeveloped, traveling south to the intersection with Manchester Road, near the Metro West Fire Protection District facility. Bonhomme Creek flows throughout this undeveloped area and there are significant changes in grade on potential development sites. The Town Center Regulating Plan envisions this area as "Workplace" uses along the State Route 109 frontage, buffered from residential areas outside the Town Center with "Neighborhood General" and "Neighborhood Edge" transitional uses.

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Undeveloped Areas

We have also analyzed the three remaining, major tracts of land available for development that carry significant impact for the final build-out of the Town Center. They include:

- **North of 100 Area:** There is undeveloped land adjacent to residential neighborhoods north of State Route 100 with access from Taylor Road and State Route 109. The property abuts Sandalwood Creek residences only and is envisioned as a blend of "Neighborhood General" and "Neighborhood Edge" uses as part of the Town Center Regulating Plan. The area traverses from the State Route 100 and State Route 109 interchange to the entrance to the core walkable Town Center area off Taylor Road. As a result, the area has the potentially to directly contribute to Wildwood's "Downtown" while it may also be attractive to more auto-oriented developers leveraging State Route 100 frontage. Finally, residential development and a transition in land uses to buffer the single-family uses the north must be addressed. There is currently a proposal for 194 housing units on a portion of the site.
- **Main Street Extension Area:** Main Street currently terminates at City Hall, but is aligned with Crestview Drive. The Town Center Regulating Plan envisions the undeveloped area to the west of "Downtown" as an extension of this walkable, mixed-use district. Beyond Eatherton Road the Plan calls for a transition to "Neighborhood General" as a buffer, with "Workplace" uses along the State Route 109 frontage. There are currently multiple proposals for residential development within this area. The extension of Main Street, which is envisioned to cross State Route 109 and curve south to Manchester Road, would provide enhanced connectivity between "Downtown" and other business districts and neighborhoods to the west. The area will also ultimately abut residential areas tucked within the business districts, such as on Grover Ridge Drive. The area could be developed in a variety of ways and carries considerable potential to support "Downtown" and Town Center activities.
- **Town Center South Area:** There is a series of undeveloped parcels on the south side of Manchester Road, immediately adjacent to where the Town Center transitions into the "Downtown" district. The Town Center Regulating Plan envisions this area as "Neighborhood General" to the east of Taylor Road, and there is currently a proposal for 38 housing units on that site. The Plan calls for "Workplace" uses west of Taylor Road, ultimately blending into the historic Manchester corridor at the Eatherton Road intersection. This area has the potential to support "Downtown" business activities, as well as perform a transition between the Manchester Road corridor. Regardless, this area must also effectively transition from the residential uses to the south, such as the Villages of Cherry Hills.

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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.

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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:

a. Create more local jobs

b. Add more daytime population

c. Diversify and expand the tax base and lessen the potential future burden on homeowners

d. Add local retail, restaurant, service, and better meet residents' consumer needs within Wildwood and add to overall quality-of-life

e. 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"

f. Develop as a center for entrepreneurship and new startups in the St. Louis region

g. Achieve these goals in a manner that is consistent and respectful of Wildwood's unique history and distinctive vision, as set forth in its Master Plan.

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 colocation 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

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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 public holdings, 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.

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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. However, successful economic development programs, at their core, are public-private partnerships.

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.

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PRIORITY ACTIONS

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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: Implementation*.

A Note on Lettering of Bullets

The following bullets throughout the document are lettered for organizational purposes only and do not indicate a hierarchy or prioritization at all. They are simply provided for reference purposes.

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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:

a. Build strong relationships between public officials and business leaders

b. To demonstrate the support and commitment of public agencies towards the local business community and establish active collaboration

c. Identify communitywide or districtwide problems impacting the business community

d. Identify specific problems impacting an individual business or commercial/industrial property

e. Identify business sectors and specific companies at risk of downsizing or closing entirely

f. Identify businesses sectors and specific companies with the need or potential to grow and expand in the existing municipality

g. To help facilitate ongoing land use, development, and growth management planning

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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

a. 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 (CEcD). 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

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

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Action Item #2

Begin to Build a Community of Entrepreneurs and New Business Startups

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 overtime. 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 measureable 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.

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Initiation Steps

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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).

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.ignitefonddulaccounty.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.

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Action Item #3

Continue to develop the Main Street & Taylor Road node in Town Center as a restaurant

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 restaurants 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. In fact, since this economic planning process has begun, new restaurants have located and opened in Town Center. A wide variety of restaurant concepts in Wildwood can work, the key is connecting entrepreneurs, investors, and building/property owners to make it happen.

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. 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.

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Initiation Steps

a. The City of Wildwood should form a local restaurant association to facilitate coordinated research, discussion, and policy decisions as a part of the community's restaurant development strategy. The association should be public-private in nature, but could function as a standing subcommittee of either the Chamber of Commerce or the City's Economic Development Task Force.

b. The City 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. Wildwood should be actively promoted as a St. Louis area dining destination through these networks.

c. 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 restauranteurs.

d. Working this with potential network of educational institutions, the City should consider developing a "kitchen incubator" space in one of the buildings in the Town Center.

e. The City should consider partnering with the St. Louis Food Truck Association (STLFTA) to organize food truck related events, regular foot truck locations, and outdoor food events as a near-term strategy to develop Wildwood as a restaurant market. The City could sponsor, coordinate, and promote such events.

f. 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.

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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.

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Initiation Steps

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

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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

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Initiation Steps

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.

f. Despite recently conducting such a review, the City could further evaluate 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. The goal would be to position the regulatory environment to best achieve the City’s economic development goals. This review should ensure that no further changes are recommended at this time.

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6 IMPLEMENTATION

Putting the Plan to work.

The City of Wildwood's economic development strategic plan is organized around five core *Action Items*:

- Establish & Institutionalize a formal Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion Program
- Begin to Build a Community of Entrepreneurs and New Business Startups
- Continue to develop the Main Street & Taylor Road node in Town Center as a restaurant
- Begin to Evaluate Partnerships for Long-Term Retail Development
- Invest in and Leverage the "Historic Manchester Road" District as a Catalyst

Each of these strategies contain near-term considerations as well as long-term goals. Collectively, they work towards a future vision for Wildwood's Town Center and commercial areas that is consistent with its heritage and the legacy of its original founding. The critical step is translating these plans, goals, and idea into measurable results. This chapter provides a manual on how to operationalize the plan into an implementation structure.

The strategy is structured through a series of action items that incrementally work towards achieving these goals, with a general long view ten years into the future. But implementation begins immediately. A big vision is achieved through small steps.

Implementation

The Wildwood Economic Development Strategic Plan serves as the foundation for decision making and a reference for City officials, residents, and stakeholders as they consider development proposals, capital improvements, infrastructure investments, policy changes, and other actions in the decades to come. For the vision of Wildwood to be realized, the City must be proactive, serving in a leadership capacity to spearhead, implement, and coordinate recommendations within the Plan. This will require the support, participation, cooperation, and collaboration of local leaders, other public agencies, various neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents.

This chapter presents an implementation framework that the City can use to initiate and undertake key recommendations included in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The actions and strategies identified in this section establish the "next steps" to be taken in continuing the process of community planning and investment.

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1. Use the Plan Daily

As the official policy guide for the City's economic development efforts, the City of Wildwood Economic Development Strategic Plan should be used and referenced on daily basis to inform everyday decision making. Once adopted, both hard copies and digital formats should be made available and accessible to City officials, staff, and the public. It should be referenced by City staff, boards, and commissions as part of deliberations.

2. Update the Plan on a Regular Basis

This is a plan designed to pick priorities and then execute them. The action items and priorities selected by the Economic Development Task Force should be continuously evaluated and updated based on results on the ground. As such, the Economic Development Strategic Plan should be formally reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the changing needs of the community. Yearly updates should coincide with the preparation of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to ensure recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition to annual updates, this plan is produced with a 5 year structure and it should be thoroughly evaluated after 3 years with an anticipation of a total update in 2021.

3. Capital Improvement Plan

While the City of Wildwood has a current five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the City should review and update it as needed to reflect Plan recommendations where infrastructure investment could have an impact on the City's economic development goals. The City could add a formal criteria measure in the evaluation and scoring of CIP projects based on their potential economic development impact.

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4. Maintain Open Communication

The Wildwood planning process utilized robust public engagement, which was supplemented by recent surveys and online brainstorming charrettes facilitated by social media. Consistent dialogue with residents, business owners, and local stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of the Plan. These outreach efforts could continue, particularly in terms of monthly coordination with the business community and the chambers of commerce. The community should continue to be kept informed of economic development activities through the City's website, a newsletter, and communication through civic and community leaders.

5. Promote Cooperation

For the Economic Development Strategic Plan to be successful, there must be strong leadership from the City of Wildwood and firm partnerships between other public agencies, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. The City should assume a leadership role to cooperate and coordinate with the various partners outlined in this plan, specific to an individual action item.

6. Review & Update Development Controls

The Economic Development Strategic Plan sets forth policies regarding real estate development and the quality, character, and intensity of new development in the years ahead. As such, the City's zoning, subdivision regulations, property maintenance, and other related development codes and ordinances, should be reviewed and updated to ensure that all regulations are consistent with and complementary to the Economic Development Strategic Plan. There may not be any needed modifications, but the Economic Development Task Force should coordinate with the City's Planning & Zoning Commission to ensure current regulations align with the City's development goals.

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Potential Funding Sources

A description of potential funding sources currently available to the City and its partners for implementation is summarized below. As the following funding sources and streams are subject to change over time, it is important to continue to research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify new opportunities as they become available.

General Economic Development

Tax Increment Finance (TIF)

It is noted that the City of Wildwood has an active policy against using TIF districts as a tool. This information is presented only as a public service to describe the tool and there is no recommendation to further evaluate the use of this tool in the City.

The purpose of TIF funding is to assist funding the redevelopment of areas within a community which qualify as blighted, in need of conservation, or an area of economic development. TIF dollars can typically be used for infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development.

TIF utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF district increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in that area. Local officials may then issue bonds to undertake other financial obligations based on the growth in new revenue.

Over the life of a TIF district, existing taxing bodies receive the same level of tax revenue as in the base year. Provisions exist for schools to receive additional revenue. The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Missouri is 23 years.

Special Assessments

Special assessments are taxes levied on properties to provide funding for improvement projects that will directly benefit that property. Unlike districts, special assessments are applied only to those properties which will benefit from a project, rather than an established area. Assessments can be initiated by property owners, legislative bodies, or local administrations, at which point the cost of the project and the potential benefit to adjacent properties is assessed. Total costs of the project are apportioned to all properties within the assessment and paid through special tax bills.

Community Improvement District (CID)

Community Improvement Districts allow a City to collect sales taxes, real property taxes, special assessments, and issues bonds to fund a range of improvements and projects within an area. CIDs must be created at the petition of property owners within the district. CID funding can be used for a variety of projects such as utility and transportation infrastructure improvements, maintenance and expansion of landscaping and public spaces, creation and support of community facilities and amenities, and providing public services such as promotion, maintenance, and economic development for the district.

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Special Business Districts (SBD)

Special Business Districts allow a City to collect real property taxes, business license taxes, and special assessments, and issue bonds to fund projects within an area, with a focus on improvements that will benefit businesses within the established district. SBDs must be created by the petition of property owners within the district. SBD funding can be used for a variety of projects similar to those permitted for CIDs; however, a greater focus is placed on infrastructure improvements and public services which will benefit business activity and economic development.

Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)

Neighborhood Improvement Districts allow a City to make improvements within a district by issuing bonds to pay for improvement projects. Unlike other funding methods which create districts or corporations which are separate entities, NIDs are not separate from the City. NIDs are not limited to blighted areas of a City. Using NIDs, the City will issue bonds to pay for public improvements and pay these bonds by levying assessments on property within the district. As these districts are not separate from the City, bonds are backed by general revenue of the City and thus more secure than other market investments. NID funding is limited to projects for public facilities and services, such as public infrastructure, utilities, transportation systems, parks and open spaces, and public amenities.

Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax

Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax is a tool by which a City may levy a tax of up to 0.5% to support planning, projects, and improvements related to economic development. To administer the tax, the City must receive voter approval, allowing the creation of an Economic Development Tax Board. The board operates in an advisory role, creating plans and identifying projects for economic development which are then recommended to the City for funding. The program requires that 20% of the revenue be used for long-term economic development preparation and no more than 25% be used annually for administrative purposes.

Incentives

Utilizing other funding mechanisms, such as TIF districts, CIDs, or SBDs, the City can provide a variety of incentive programs to help with implementation of the Plan. These incentives can be used to attract new development, improve existing development, and encourage business owners to remain in the community. This list identifies potential incentive programs that establish a starting point for the City in creation of a comprehensive range of incentive programs that help the City complete its objectives.

Façade & Site Improvements Programs

Façade and site improvement programs can be used to beautify and improve the appearance of existing businesses. These programs provide low interest loans or grants to business owners to improve the exterior appearance of designated structures or properties. These programs are most commonly supported by funding made available through TIFs.

Sales Tax Rebate

A sales tax rebate is a tool typically used by municipalities to incentivize business to locate to a site or area while making cost effective physical improvements. For developments that require public infrastructure extensions, the City can enter into a sales tax rebate agreement, by which the developer agrees to pay for the cost of improvements. The City will then reimburse the developer over a specified period of time utilizing the incremental sales taxes which are generated by the improvement. Sales tax rebates have proven effective in attracting new businesses and encouraging redevelopment and renovation.

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Property Tax Abatement under Chapter 353

Property Tax Abatement under Chapter 353 of the Revised Statues of Missouri allows a community to address blighted areas by offering property tax abatements. A municipality may provide abatements upon establishment of an Urban Redevelopment Corporation and approval of a development plan. Tax abatements can be offered for up to 25 years with the goal of encouraging redevelopment within the area. During the first 10 years, real property taxes on land and all improvements are abated and the owner pays the cost of real property taxes from of the year before establishment of the abatement. For the following 15 years, the City can offer a 50% to 100% abatement on the incremental change in real property taxes that would naturally occur.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is a tool similar to tax abatement and may be used in coordination with abatements. The City can use PILOT to reduce the property tax burden of a desired business for a predetermined period. In this instance, the City and property owners will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of property taxes. Payments are generally made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property.

In addition, PILOT can be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the City of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services because they do not pay taxes. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the City to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Revolving Loan Fund

A revolving loan fund is administered to provide financial support and assistance to new or expanding businesses, funded through the Missouri State Revolving Loan Fund, called the SRF Leveraged Loan Program. The program is managed by the Department of Natural Resources Water Protection Program. The borrower may use the low-interest loan for construction, property rehabilitation/improvements, and land acquisition, among other things.

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Transportation & Infrastructure

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

In December 2015 FAST Act, a five-year transportation reauthorization bill, was established. The FAST Act replaces the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act, which expired in October 2015 and was extended three times. The FAST Act aims to improve infrastructure, provide long-term certainty and increased flexibility for states and local governments, streamline project approval processes, and encourage innovation to make the surface transportation system safer and more efficient. The City should monitor the FAST Act as application occurs to determine the full extent of funding changes and implementation. The City should remain an active participant in regional transportation funding discussions through East-West Gateway as the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is developed.

Transportation Development District (TDD)

Transportation Development Districts allow a municipality to collect sales taxes, special assessments, property taxes, tolls, and issues bonds within a specific area to be used for transportation improvements. The establishment of a TDD must be approved by a majority of voters within the new district boundaries. TDD funds can be used for improvements and expansions of transportation infrastructure, including roadways, highways, signage, intersections, parking lots, and transit stops and stations.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

The Surface Transportation Program provides federal funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for transportation projects and improvements. Wildwood is eligible for STP funds through the Large Urban program, which provides funding for the metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Springfield, and St. Louis. STP funds can be used for multimodal and roadway projects related to highways, alternative transportation, transportation safety and control, natural habitat and wetlands mitigation, infrastructure improvements, and environmental restoration and pollution prevention.

Transportation Enhancements (TE)

Transportation Enhancements are funded as part of the STP program with the aim of expanding travel choices and improving the transportation experience. This can include projects related to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, landscaping and scenic beautification, and control of outdoor advertising, amongst others.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program was established through federal funding to provide assisting in meeting federal air quality guidelines. As part of the St. Louis metropolitan area, Wildwood is eligible for funding through the CMAQ program. Funds are available for a variety of transportation projects with the requirement that the project have a demonstrated effect on reducing emissions.

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Missouri Byways Program

The Missouri Byways Program was established to encourage the creation of routes that demonstrate examples of the state's culture, history, archeology, natural beauty, scenic views, and recreational amenities. The program provides funding for the designation, protection, promotion, and necessary infrastructure development to benefit important routes. Within Wildwood, routes along the Meramec River or through the community, such as the historic Manchester Road corridor, could potentially be eligible for improvement through the program. There would likely be benefit to partnering with other Manchester Road corridor communities in pursuit of establishing a byway, which could highlight Route 66 heritage.

Great Streets Initiative

The East-West Gateway's Great Streets Initiative was launched in 2006 to identify and make improvements to key roadways within the St. Louis Region. The concept was to alter the way in which communities understand roadways, creating streets which not only serve a variety of transportation methods but also act as diverse spaces for activity and interaction. The initiative started with four demonstration projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) act in 2009, and was expanded to include additional projects in 2012. This expansion includes the City of Wildwood as part of examining the Manchester Road corridor.

Parks, Trails & Open Spaces

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources offers two grant programs for outdoor recreation through the Division of State Parks. This includes the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which are federally-funded through the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Land and Water Conservation Fund grants are available to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Grants require a 55% match and funding varies by year, most recently having a $75,000 maximum amount per project. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National park Service and must be used only for outdoor recreational purposes. Examples of common projects funded by LWCF grants include:

- Playgrounds
- Ball fields
- Pools and water parks
- Archery and shooting ranges
- Camping facilities
- Picnic areas
- Golf courses
- Boating and fishing facilities

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program is federally-funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), with the aim of promoting motorized and non-motorized recreational trails. Grants are available to local and state governments, schools districts, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and businesses. Projects require a minimum match of 20% of the total cost and have a grant maximum of $150,000 per project. Eligible projects much be open to the public and can include:

- Constructing new recreational trails
- Maintaining or renovating existing trails
- Developing or renovating trailheads or trail amenities
- Acquiring land of recreational trails
- Purchasing or leasing trail maintenance equipment

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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 been focused in the 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. All types of residential development have continued to occur throughout the community, from three (3) acre lots 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.

More recently, however, in the last few years, (2013-2015) concerns have been raised, particularly after the Great Recession, that more was needed from the City to spur commercial growth, which would be facilitated by 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:

Long Term Economic Development Goals:

1. Commitment to sustainable and on-going implementation of all goals.
2. Assign staff coordinator/contact for outreach and information.
3. Develop marketing brochure.
4. Update City's website.
5. Coordinate effort with public relations or economic develop-

ment consultant(s).
6. Use social networking to advance message of City.
7. Continue long-term strategic goals of the City (capital improvements projects).

Short Term Economic Development Goals:
1. Resolve the Town Center Plan Update.
2. Identify City's assets.
3. Develop and implement a branding message campaign.
4. Upgrade existing website to include economic development component.
5. Invite outside advisors (speakers, representatives of various entities or other communities), both local and nationally recognized experts.

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. With the consultant's work ongoing 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 increas-

es 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 respective 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 pooled 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 must be respective of the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's other elements of its Master Plan.

With each State legislative session, this pooled sales tax issue continues to be debated and it is important for the City to be attentive in this regard, concurrently it must 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 re-

tention 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 and promote 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. 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)

4. Develop 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 and Chesterfield Valley Industrial Areas. (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 communi-

ty, 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 them. (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 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 City of Wildwood's Economic Development Plan. (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

Each of the cross-reference tables have been included to assist users in understanding the interrelationships of the adopted goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan's six (6) elements and the role each plays in achieving the desired outcomes set forth in them.

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