

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR PARK PROGRESS

ACTION PLAN
2007

City of Wildwood, Missouri



WILDWOOD

FOREWORD

On February 7, 1995, after several years of the St. Louis County Council's approval of every developer's request for zoning changes to eliminate the Non-Urban District (minimum three (3) acre lot size), the citizens of West County got the chance to vote on the formation of a new city. The measure passed with a 61% majority and the City of Wildwood was born. This successful vote would not have been possible without the dedicated effort of the citizens, who gathered signatures on petitions, and researched the legal requirements of incorporation to make the dream a reality.

These were heady, euphoric days, when various citizens' committees drafted the Master Plan, and studied various ways to manage development, while keeping the beauty of Wildwood intact. These concepts are expressed in two (2) of the five (5) objectives in both the Original and Revised Master Plans as follows:

- ▶ "Preservation and conservation of the natural environment."
- ▶ "Residential and commercial development

consistent with long-range planning and prudent land utilization.”

Most Wildwood residents have chosen to live in this area because of its unique natural beauty, offering a rural country lifestyle well within commuting distance of jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment, and their friends in urban areas. Now that the ground work has been established, it is time to consider the needs of an expanding population, especially those families with children. Over half of the households in Wildwood have at least one (1) child under the age of eighteen (18).

The results of the 2007 survey of randomly-sampled households and the public input forums indicate there is strong support for additional local parks and recreational facilities in Wildwood. With the rising cost of land and increasing demands from residents, now is the time to address additional parks and recreational amenities within Wildwood, in keeping with the desires of the community and its motto. . .

“Planning Tomorrow Today.”

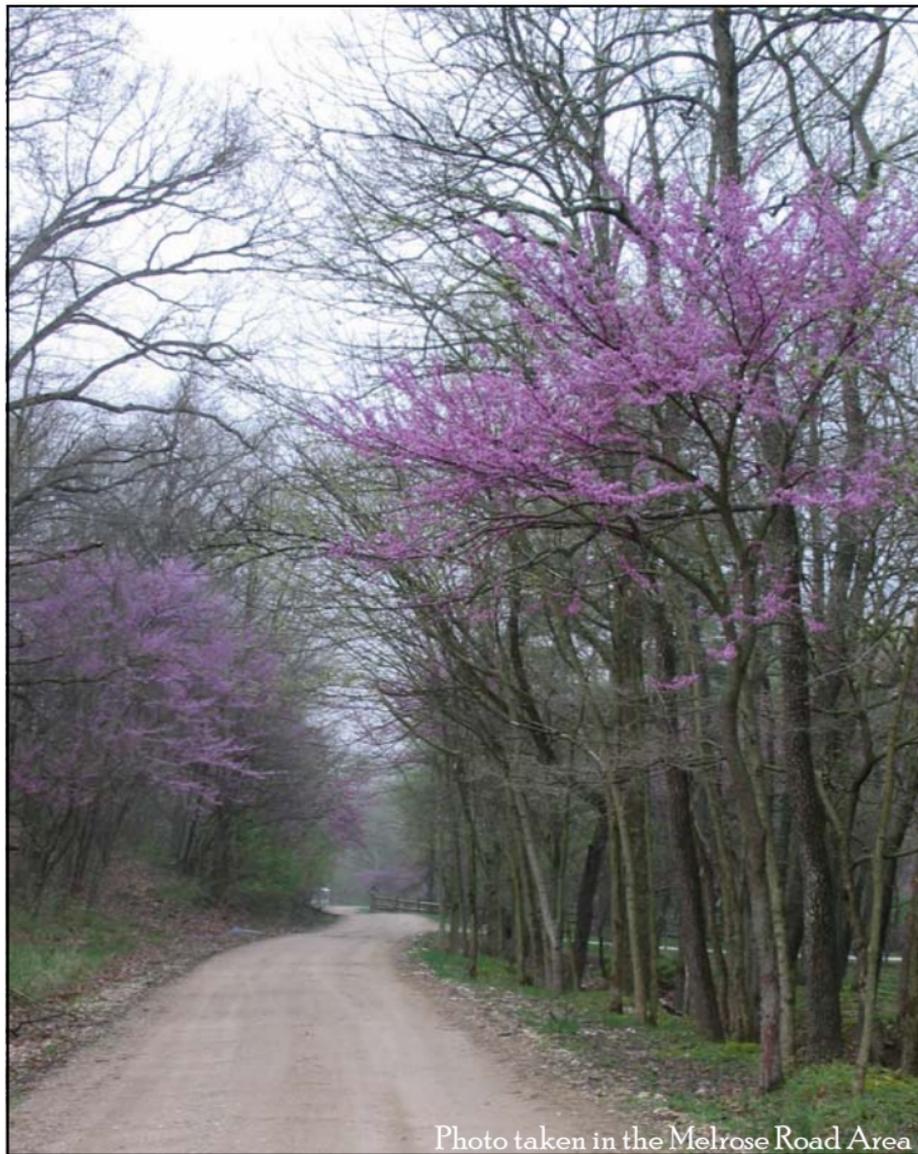


Photo taken in the Melrose Road Area

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Opportunities for Residents | 9 |
| Challenges for the Future | 13 |
| Timelines for Implementation and Use | 15 |
| Concurrence and Overall Direction | 19 |
| Action Plan Components | |
| Action Point #1 - Recreational Programs and Target Populations | 21 |
| Action Point #2 - Type and Extent of Facilities | 27 |
| Action Point #3 - Acquisition Policies and Programs | 37 |
| Action Point #4 - Funding Sources and Application Policies | 41 |
| Implementation & Plan Updates | 47 |
| Summary and Conclusions | 51 |
| Appendices | 55 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Citizens Committee for Park Progress has worked for approximately one (1) year defining the future of park and recreation efforts in the City of Wildwood. This group undertook a lengthy public comment process, culminated by a professionally designed and administered random survey to approximately three thousand (3,000) households in the City. The outgrowth of this public comment effort was significant input from residents of the City of Wildwood regarding their opinions about park facilities, recreation programs, acquisition efforts, and financing. Collectively, the Committee recognized the need for a citizen-based plan that would create support within all sectors of the community and ultimately be viewed by its users as a fair and representative document that reflected the unique circumstances that define the City of Wildwood, i.e. its land, interests, and current conditions.

The Citizens Committee for Park Progress developed an Action Plan that contains four (4) points this group believed were essential for the City Council to implement over a total of two (2), five (5) year renewals. The four (4) Action Point areas are as follows:

- ▶ **Programming** - Partner with the other providers to create the greatest range of programming opportunities possible for residents, beginning with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Pond Athletic Association, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College.
- ▶ **Facilities** - Expand current commitments to development of all types of trail systems (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) in the City of Wildwood, which are intended to link all public park spaces and population centers together, along with implementing the recently adopted “Access and Mobility Plan.”
- ▶ **Acquisition** - Identify and prioritize locations for future park land acquisitions, with the first action to be the acquisition of a parcel of ground, of a size to accommodate a community park, within the central area of the City (proximity to State Route 100 and State Route 109 and environs).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ~ CONTINUED

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

Each of the Action Points contains information relating to how the recommendations were developed, identifies the supporting information used in creating them, and establishes timeframes for their implementation. In completing this plan, the Committee entertained any and all opinions, comments, and input from all participants to create a community-based planning process that was intended to generate interest by users and support from residents.

The other desire of the Committee was to create a reasonable set of recommendations under the four (4) Action Points that recognized certain controlling parameters that exist relative to specific facilities and programs for this City. The members of the Commit-

tee recognized the need to have adequate funding sources in place for current and future facilities and programming, thereby guaranteeing a quality environment for users and neighbors and superior maintenance and upkeep of them over time. The Committee believes that, with the current assets that are identified in the plan and the proposed recommendations, Wildwood's goal of a world-class system of park facilities and recreational opportunities will become reality.



Photograph of Old Pond School

INTRODUCTION

Wildwood is a unique community, which benefits from the rolling and hilly woodlands of the Ozark Foothills. The City was founded to provide for development that will preserve the natural environment. The City recognized that parks and recreational facilities are necessary to maintain a healthy and viable community, and that residents need and want such amenities. Therefore, two (2) volunteers from each ward were selected by the Mayor and approved by City Council to form the independent Citizens Committee for Park Progress (“CCPP”). Building a parks and recreation program commensurate with these unique attributes of Wildwood's government and area were the goals of the volunteers that formed the CCPP. With these goals identified and supported, this group began the formation of the Action Plan with the acknowledgment that Wildwood is a unique community of environments, people, and opportunities and its parks and recreation offerings would be an extension of them.

The CCPP does not believe the City's park improve-

ments and recreation programming should attempt to replicate existing facilities available elsewhere, but provide opportunities that would address gaps or shortfalls, while maximizing current assets, such as the eleven (11) square miles of public space, and also address the defined priorities of the respective wards and their residents, which can reasonably be met. This acknowledgement is based upon a reasonable analysis of future needs and capabilities of Wildwood, since it currently has no property tax to support governmental programs, including recreational types, and facilities.

Key decisions have been discussed by the CCPP to create this Action Plan, which is premised on a number of resources that were collected over the course of an approximately one (1) year timeframe. These resources included a professionally administered, statistically valid survey that was sent to approximately three thousand (3,000), randomly-sampled households in the City (the “survey”); two (2) public input forums held in the community; a Service Providers Open House and letter; comment forms on the City’s website; and regularly scheduled meetings of the CCPP, which were open to the public. These resources were intended to provide all who had any interest in

INTRODUCTION ~ CONTINUED

parks and recreation activities an opportunity to participate in providing input into the development of the Action Plan. At the end of this process, the CCPP had received input from all of these resources, along with responses that followed accepted guidelines in terms of design, administration, and analysis to create a ninety-five (95) percent confidence level in its results for the entire population of the City of Wildwood (survey instrument, Executive Summary, Survey Analysis, and Market Segmentation Sections are contained in this plan's appendices).

Furthermore, the CCPP also challenged all participants not to limit themselves to previously accepted patterns of park development and recreational programming and disregard conventional wisdom on funding, financing, and partnerships, so as to explore all avenues that may be available to the City to create a diverse, safe, and acceptable set of facilities, amenities, and programs for residents and non-residents of Wildwood. To address these challenges, the CCPP met with experts in the fields of open space, partnering, facility development and management, and finance to

better understand current trends in the development and implementation of park facilities and recreation programming, along with future changes that might influence the Action Plan in the next five (5) to ten (10) years. These experts, along with the aforementioned resources, allowed the CCPP to have a thorough understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the City of Wildwood in providing for greater facilities and programs for residents and visitors to the community. Therefore, this Action Plan reflects the respective input, experience, and projections of the community of experts and participants, including residents of the City of Wildwood, for the purposes of creating a world-class system of facilities and programs for the defined and targeted populations.

Photograph of Anniversary Park



OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS

In creating this Action Plan, the CCPP would note the City of Wildwood is not without many of the components of creating this world-class system of park facilities and recreation programs already. This situation allows the City a level of flexibility and creativity in finding new opportunities to address the desires of residents for facilities and programs. In considering the components that currently exist in the City, the CCPP identified the following assets:

- ▶ Over eleven (11) square miles of publicly-held open space, which includes Babler State Park (2,441 acres); Rockwoods Reservation (1,881 acres); Rockwoods Range (1,388 acres); and Greensfelder County Park (1,583 acres). Additionally, the State of Missouri and St. Louis County have other facilities in the City, including Packwood Park (undeveloped) and Howell Island (Missouri Department of Conservation Area).
- ▶ Two (2), neighborhood-sized City parks, which includes Anniversary Park (Clayton

and Strecker Roads) and Old Pond School Park (Manchester Road).

- ▶ Al Foster Memorial Trail and Trailhead, including over twenty (20) acres of additional land in the Glencoe Area of the City.
- ▶ Additional land area banked in the areas of Strecker Road and Clayton Road (Woodcliff Heights Park Property), Chesterfield Valley (Kohn Memorial Park), and Bridge Park (north entry of pedestrian bridge across State Route 100).
- ▶ Future park properties in Wildwood Square Commercial Area, near planned Farmers Market Facility, and Homestead Estates Subdivision.
- ▶ Over ten (10) miles of multiple use trails in Town Center Area and environs, including the pedestrian bridge.
- ▶ Wildwood Family YMCA facility located on State Route 109 in the City's Town Center Area.
- ▶ Over eight (8) Rockwood School District sites, which include athletic fields, swimming pools, outdoor running tracks, and many other amenities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS ~

CONTINUED

- ▶ St. Louis Community College's Wildwood Campus, with public space and meeting rooms.
- ▶ Over sixty (60) current recreational programs offered by the City of Wildwood to residents and non-residents alike, highlighted by the annual Wildwood Celebration.
- ▶ Over seventeen (17) places of worship offering recreational programming and facilities for Wildwood residents.
- ▶ Monarch-Chesterfield Levee and planned trail system.
- ▶ St. Louis Southwestern Railroad right-of-way, providing an opportunity for future trail system between Labadie, Missouri and Creve Coeur County Park.
- ▶ Meramec and Missouri Rivers and related floodplain.
- ▶ Hidden Valley Golf and Ski Resort on Alt Road within the City of Wildwood.
- ▶ Rock Hollow Trail and Park Property (Great

Rivers Greenway and St. Louis County) – also known as Zombie Road.

- ▶ Over one hundred fifty (150) centerline miles of public rights-of-way for multi-modal use.
- ▶ Wabash-Frisco and Pacific Mini-Gauge Railroad Facility in the Glencoe Area.
- ▶ Pond Athletic Association and its lighted playing fields.
- ▶ Camp Wyman

All of these facilities have amenities located within them as well. These amenities range from swimming pools to equestrian trails and related facilities. With these existing amenities already located in the City of Wildwood, residents and non-residents already have a comprehensive array of facilities and programs available to them for use and enjoyment. Building on these facilities, programs, and amenities is a major goal of the CCPP and allows for unique opportunities for partnering and providing other facilities and programs not readily or currently available in the City or local region.

Not identified in this list of opportunities are surrounding cities, which also have excellent systems of

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The CCPP also chose to define the challenges that exist for Wildwood and the impacts they may create in implementing this Action Plan. These challenges do not necessarily present impediments to the implementation of this Action Plan, but are addressed or recognized, since their influence was considered significant enough to justify their identification. These challenges were discussed and collectively identified for the purposes of this plan and include the following:

- ▶ The reluctance of voters to endorse certain types of taxes to support parks and recreation efforts in the City of Wildwood.
- ▶ The diversity of the population failing to gain consensus on certain issues relating to facilities and programs and losing opportunities for development and growth.
- ▶ The competition for available sites with private developers and institutional users.
- ▶ The lack of cooperation between other governmental units and service providers on exploring

and establishing partnering opportunities for Wildwood residents.

- ▶ The conflict of providing facilities for convenience sake, when other providers offer them within a short commute of Wildwood.
- ▶ The nature of competitive grants and the challenges presented by these processes, particularly in terms of timing.

As reflected in the survey conducted in March 2007 through April 2007, the residents of Wildwood have a strong support for park and recreation opportunities in the City, but show a reluctance to support them by any other means than grants and fees to users. Along with this major consideration, the residents have also indicated in this survey, and by other available forums, that certain facilities are preferred, but often are the most costly to construct, operate, and maintain. These challenges and the others listed above were discussed at length by the CCPP and addressed in the Action Points outlined below. In addressing these challenges, the CCPP also believed, if duly recognized, they could be changed into positive attributes and further the City's desire to host a world-class park system.

TIMELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

In the course of creating this Action Plan, the CCPP worked to ensure its Action Points could be achievable in a reasonable timeframe. The first step in this effort was to recognize the need to review and update the Action Plan on a five (5) year basis to gauge successes and failures in implementing and completing the Action Points. In considering this five (5) year review cycle, the CCPP believed it was a long enough timeframe to allow progress to be made on the plan's relative Action Points. This timeframe is still short enough to integrate new ideas and trends into them; alter direction on items or considerations associated with them, particularly if these items are not realizing success or lack support among residents or elected officials; gauge successes and build upon the key ingredients associated with them; and create interest in the Action Plan by keeping it a part of the City's active planning programs. With a five (5) year review window, the CCPP remains assured that Action Points will be addressed appropriately for the future in terms of implementation and application.

Another major point in this effort was to establish rea-

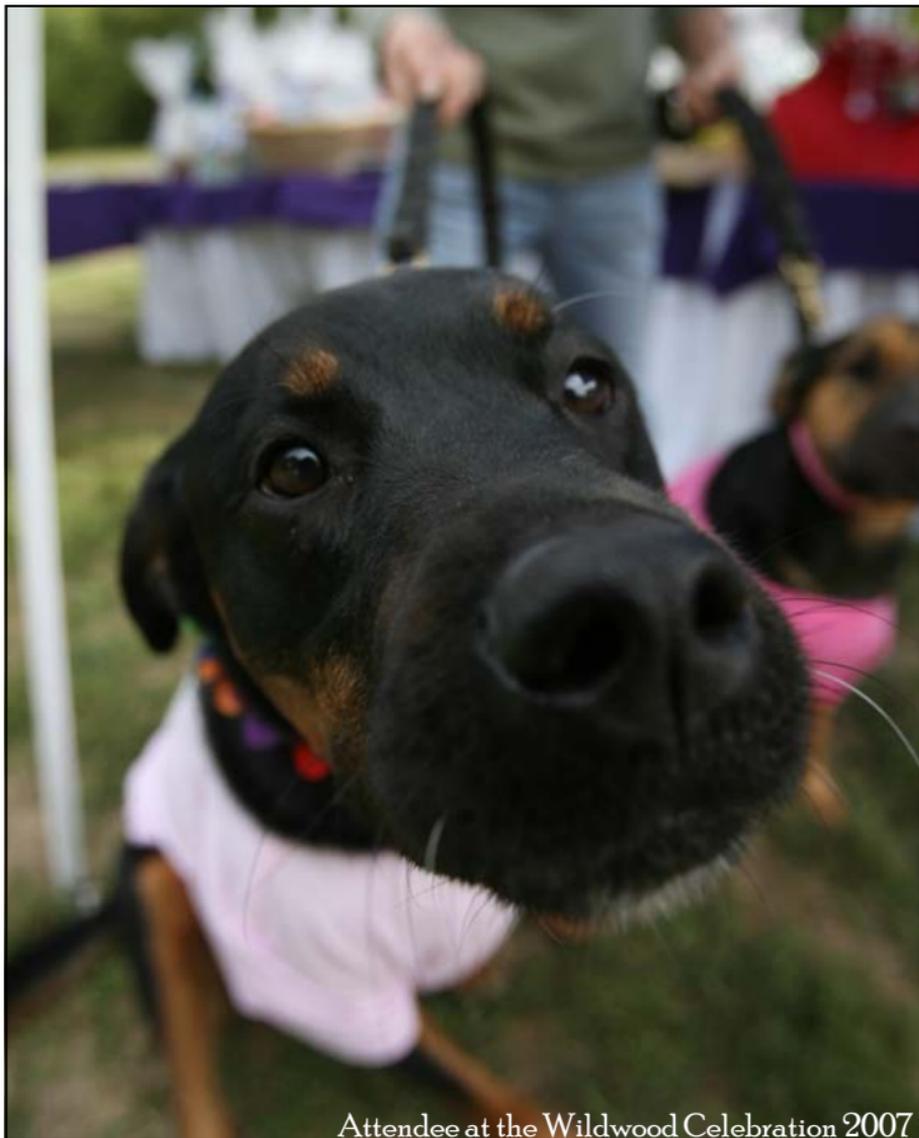
sonable expectations and timelines for implementation of the plan's Action Points, based upon available resources. The CCPP's determination was that each of these recommendations should be analyzed and categorized based upon immediate, intermediate, and long-term priorities. The members of CCPP believed this hierarchy would allow for the development of a two (2) tiered approach to acquiring property for future facilities, building new venues for all ages, and creating recreational programs over the next five (5) and ten (10) year periods of time. This two (2) tiered approach also offered the CCPP a manner to address one (1) of the major challenges it faced, which was creating a financing plan that anticipates current levels of revenues and resources, with no change. The plan also addresses the situation if new types are established, and a program for implementation, if these sources are created for use within the community. The CCPP took this approach, given the results of the survey of households in Wildwood, which indicated some supported new taxes for the purposes of parks and recreation efforts. Therefore, under each Action Point, the implementation strategy is based upon current funding sources, if no new funding options are created for parks and recreation efforts and, another, if new avenues of revenues are established. Each implementa-

TIMELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND USE ~ CONTINUED

tion strategy in the respective tier of an Action Point is then identified from a standpoint of immediate, intermediate, or long-term timeframe. ¹

Much of the CCPP's work was premised on understanding the relationship of availability of funding to the extent of facilities, programs, operations, and maintenance that could be expected. The survey indicated a significant level of support for park facilities and recreational programs, but funded through grants, gifts, fees, and other charges, with limited interest for future tax increases, particularly on real property. Regardless of the sources, the CCPP remained committed to providing a park and recreation system that would meet the desires of residents, while acknowledging that partnering with other providers and not replicating existing facilities and programs could not meet all of Wildwood's needs in terms of park facilities and recreation programs.

¹Immediate timeframe = Years 1 to 2; Intermediate timeframe = Years 3 to 5; and Long-Term timeframe = Years 6 to 10.



Attendee at the Wildwood Celebration 2007

CONCURRENCE AND OVERALL DIRECTION

The CCPP worked to create an Action Plan that accounted for all of the respective input it had received from a number of sources and a deliberative process of discussion at its meetings. All of the Action Points that are included in the Action Plan reflect a consensus on the item by the members of the CCPP. If an Action Point is included in the plan, the CCPP believed it met a high level of support in the community and would address a missing component of facility, program, or service sought by the residents of Wildwood. Collectively, the Action Plan was created through a process of study, discussion, and acceptance among the sixteen (16) volunteers representing each of the City's eight (8) wards (two (2) from each ward appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council).

The CCPP submitted this Action Plan to the City Council for consideration and action, with the expectation that each of the Action Points, whether accomplished under current requirements of funding or through a future source, as well as in an established

timeframe, would be equally supported by elected officials. The CCPP developed this expectation from the knowledge that parks and recreation opportunities are expected by Wildwood residents and they are an integral part of building a community that is diverse in its interests and fun for all. Overall, the outcome of this planning process was the development of a document that offers a mix of facilities, activities, and opportunities, based upon the input of the community. A key issue in the development of Action Points is the assumption that the principles of the incorporation of Wildwood would be exercised by the City officials and staff in implementing them, so as to provide the greatest number of resources at the least cost.



Photograph taken in Wood at Hawks Rest Subdivision

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS

Goal: To offer a broad range of programs to all residents of Wildwood that may be added or eliminated, as new interests are defined among targeted populations over time.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Partner with the other providers to create the greatest range of programming opportunities possible for residents, beginning with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Pond Athletic Association, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College;
- ▶ Establish, as part of these partnerships, opportunities for residents to obtain these services and programs from these other providers at reduced or subsidized levels by creating financial agreements with said entities;
- ▶ Increase programming emphasizing fitness and wellness for children, teens, and families (as funding is provided), which would include fitness walking, aquatics, hiking, biking, and equestrian rides;

- ▶ Construct facilities that are commensurate and appropriate for the programming efforts that are in place and planned for the future by the City of Wildwood;
- ▶ Create new recreation programs that foster opportunities for community gatherings and encourage a sense of place for residents, old and new; and
- ▶ Promote new recreation programs that provide opportunities that are not currently available within the City and surrounding area, so as to complement, not compete, with other providers.

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current

Priority: Immediate Term

Support Information: The Parks and Recreation Survey indicated that over seventy (70) percent of respondents supported providing programs for six (6) to twelve (12) year olds, teenagers, and families (in order of priority). Additionally, the overwhelming majority of these same respondents supported creating programs for residents first and others after. Along with these two (2) considerations, the households that were

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

surveyed felt that a broad diversity of programs providing experience levels from beginners to advanced, versus just introductory, should be the focus of the City in this regard. Public input forum participants expressed strong support for the programs that are currently provided by the City of Wildwood, but noted lack of equestrian activities at this time.

Supplemental Factors:

- ▶ Residents (primary service group)
 - ▶ With limited resources at this time, the City should focus on a qualitative versus quantitative approach in current programming efforts.
 - ▶ Current programs continue to grow and receive positive feedback from participants.
 - ▶ Other opportunities to provide more and broader recreation program offerings should always be explored through a systematic review, on a yearly basis, similar

to the Capital Improvement Program of the City of Wildwood.

- ▶ Younger age groups and families
 - ▶ Demographic characteristics indicate a high percentage of households within the City have children.
 - ▶ These populations will need a diversity of programs to meet their anticipated needs.
- ▶ Partnerships
 - ▶ Partnerships extend through all aspects of the City's programming efforts in its recreation activities.
 - ▶ Establish partnerships with service providers already located in the City, such as the Rockwood School District, the Pond Athletic Association, the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and others.
 - ▶ Other service providers have expressed interest in partnering with the City of Wildwood in this area.

Assumptions:

- ▶ The allowance for growth in programs will primarily be based upon availability of fund-

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

ing to support them.

- ▶ The current programs should be continued and improved, based upon year-end evaluations in terms of attendance and related feedback from participants.
- ▶ Engaging residents in enjoyable, safe programs builds support for parks and recreation facilities and activities within the community.
- ▶ The provision of recreation programs provides a medium to grow community spirit and recognition of Wildwood.



Photograph of Route 66 5K Run/Walk



ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Goal: To provide a range of facilities at locations throughout the City that offer ample space for recreational buildings, and programs, while creating passive areas as well, particularly in environmentally sensitive portions of the publicly-owned properties.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Expand current commitments to the development of all types of trail systems (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) in the City of Wildwood, which should eventually link all public park spaces and population centers together, and follow the recommendations of the recently adopted “Access and Mobility Plan;”
- ▶ Develop a Facilities Plan that is coordinated with the acquisition policies and actions of the City;
- ▶ Provide facilities that are accessible, adaptable, and flexible, so as to maximize their use regardless of the season of the year, such as, but not limited to, playgrounds, trails (all types), picnic areas, outdoor ball fields/soccer fields,

outdoor/indoor swimming pools, tennis courts, equestrian facilities, fishing lake, and barbeque pits;

- ▶ Actively explore a partnership with the Wildwood Family YMCA in their planned expansion of their current facility;
- ▶ Establish a minimum of three (3), new neighborhood-sized parks in the City of Wildwood within the next five (5) years, with their locations based upon projected population densities;
- ▶ Require the provision of playgrounds, pavilions, and barbeque pits in all public space areas located within new residential subdivisions, as well as in all planned City facilities;
- ▶ Create a plan and working committee of interested parties to develop a major outdoor swimming pool/water park facility within the next ten (10) years in the City of Wildwood through a partnership with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College; and
- ▶ Set aside a proportion of future park properties for passive activities and limited use, particularly on land areas where topography or other physical characteristics are environmentally sensitive.

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Timeline Tier Level(s): Future

Priority: Intermediate to Long Term

Support Information: The Parks and Recreation Survey indicated a broad range of interests in the City of Wildwood, with a very active population in terms of their use of current facilities, both here in this community and the surrounding area. The Service Providers' Open House, as well as comments from these other entities, indicates a willingness on the part of them to partner with the City of Wildwood in a number of different venues, facilities, and improvements. At the two (2) public forums held by the CCPP, the majority of participants spoke in favor of equestrian trails and facilities, along with multiple-use trails and an outdoor swimming pool. Comments received from other sources, such as the City's website, indicate certain respondents prefer facilities that are not currently readily available, such as dog and skate parks, golf courses, river access points, ice rinks, and commu-

nity event rooms.

Supplemental Factors:

- ▶ **Park Types**
 - ▶ The respondents to the survey noted the need for a large, community-sized park for the City of Wildwood.
 - ▶ Input received from the community indicated a desire for additional neighborhood and pocket type parks for the future, in close proximity to their neighborhoods.
- ▶ **Passive and active types**
 - ▶ The diversity of environments on properties in Wildwood will almost always dictate a portion of any property will have a mix of favorable and unfavorable topography and other physical features.
 - ▶ The development of a single, larger park property should accommodate the type of facilities identified by the CCPP for inclusion, while preserving an ample area for passive purposes (described by respondents of the survey as “essential to very important”).
 - ▶ The respondents of the survey noted that

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

“acquiring additional greenways, open space, and parks should be prioritized over developing recreation centers for indoor activities.”

- ▶ **Playgrounds**
 - ▶ The provision of playgrounds garnered the highest level of support in the survey (69% viewed it as “essential to very important”).
 - ▶ The location of neighborhood parks appear to be best suited in higher density areas of the City, where the population is the greatest and the largest number of residents can be served.
 - ▶ The application of the City’s new Public Space Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance will continue to provide an appropriate vehicle to obtain these types of facilities in new residential and mixed use projects.
- ▶ **Pavilions/Barbeque Pits**
 - ▶ The success of Anniversary Park and the

Old Pond School are indicative of the need that has been identified in the community, as a function of the survey.

▶ **Athletic fields**

- ▶ Over fifty (50%) percent of respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey identified outdoor ballfields as “essential or very important.”
- ▶ Approximately forty (40%) percent of respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey identified outdoor soccer fields as “very important.”
- ▶ The Pond Athletic Association, Babler State Park, the Rockwood School District, and the Wildwood Family YMCA (at La-Salle Institute) provide a limited number of these types of fields in the City of Wildwood.
- ▶ The City often has received comments from residents about the need for athletic fields for many years.

▶ **Trails**

- ▶ The level of support for additional trails was high by respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey at approximately fifty-

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Action Point #2 - Type and Extent of Facilities

- ▶ six (56%) percent.
- ▶ The most popular activity identified in the survey of households in the City is using trails (73%).
- ▶ The City of Wildwood has over ten (10) miles of multiple-use trails, with many more miles located in the four (4), major public holdings in this community (Babler State Park, Rockwoods Reservation, Rockwoods Range, and Greensfelder County Park).
- ▶ Other facilities
 - ▶ The survey of households indicated that three (3) in ten (10) residents felt a multiple use recreation or community center was “essential.”
 - ▶ The information provided by invited speakers and members of the CCPP indicated larger facilities seldom operate without subsidies from general revenue funds of the cities that have constructed them.
 - ▶ Those households that responded to the

Parks and Recreation Survey identified skate parks (16%), dog parks (just over 25%), boat launches (20%), equestrian trails (10%), and an equestrian facility (9%) as having the lowest importance ratings of all facilities identified (over sixteen (16) were listed in the survey).

Assumptions:

- ▶ The development of facilities will require the greatest amount of expenditures, immediate and long-term, for construction, operation, and maintenance than all other costs associated with its parks and recreation efforts. Therefore, a revenue source must be in place not only to address capital improvements, but the on-going operation and maintenance of these facilities, buildings, and structures.
- ▶ The availability of other facilities within Wildwood, and surrounding cities, offers opportunities for an immediate impact to residents, if specific arrangements can be developed with other providers on use accommodations by City officials. However, when partnering with other providers, the missions of the different

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

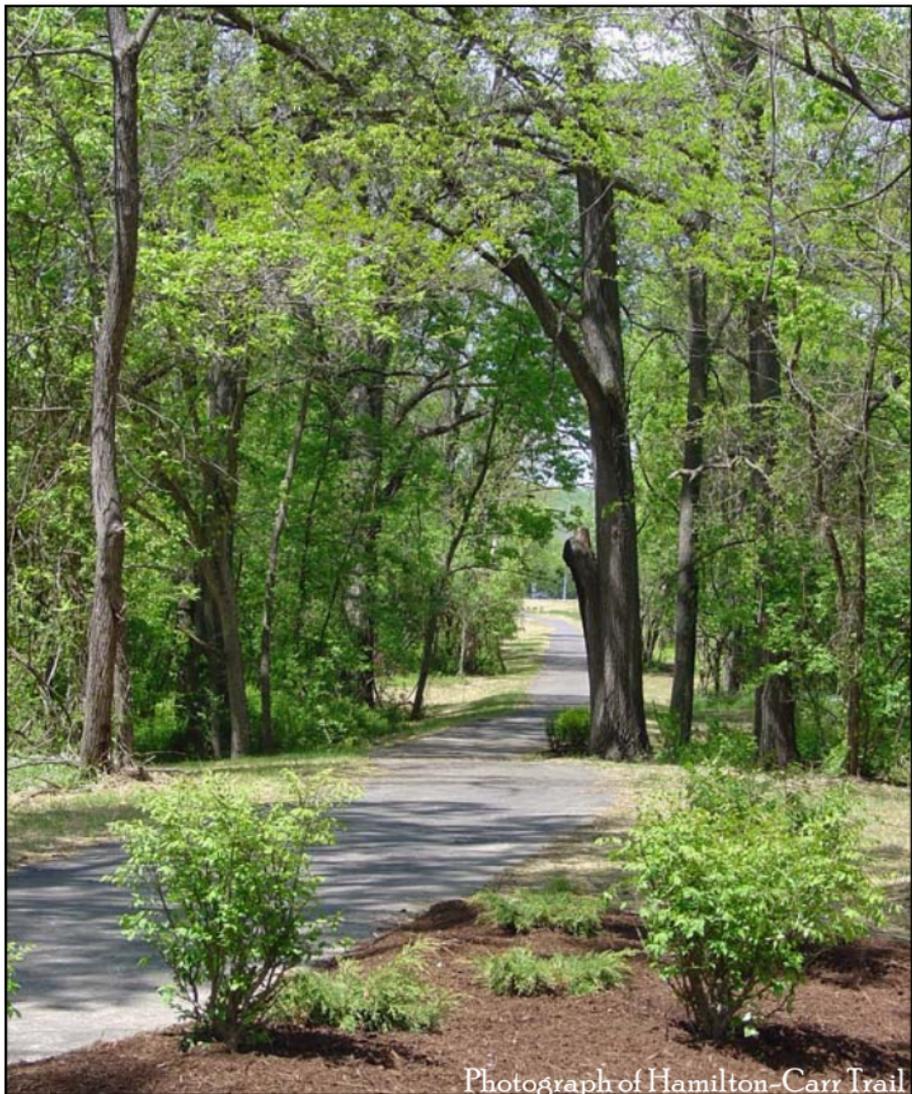
CONTINUED

entities can sometimes compete or cause problems and should be considered in the development of these relationships.

- ▶ The inclination of the CCPP members was to provide parks and park amenities first, with facilities to follow thereafter. The overarching desire of the CCPP members was to provide a facility large enough to allow for flexibility and adaptability in its use.
- ▶ The City of Wildwood has an aging population that favors certain facilities over others.



Photograph of Northern Park at Dierbergs Town Center



Photograph of Hamilton-Carr Trail

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Goal: To provide land area for future park properties to support facilities and programs.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Identify and prioritize locations for future park land acquisitions, with the first action to be the acquisition of a parcel of ground, of a size to accommodate a community park, within the central area of the City (proximity to State Route 100 and State Route 109 and environs) or the acceptance of land-banked property from another governmental entity, i.e. St. Louis County's Packwood Park;
- ▶ Set aside revenues in each fiscal year, as part of the capital improvements budget, to expand current efforts in terms of its property acquisition programs, particularly in the Glencoe Area of Wildwood;
- ▶ Partner with the Open Space Council of Greater St. Louis to pursue landbanking of environmentally sensitive sites for passive recreational areas;

- ▶ Continue the application of the Public Space Requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance; and
- ▶ Pursue gifts and donations from landowners in the City by offering tax benefits, naming opportunities, life estates, conservation easements, or other incentives for their consideration.

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current and Future

Priority: Immediate, Intermediate, and Long Term

Support Information: Survey results indicated residents want acquisition of properties that are substantial in size, as well as others for the creation of more neighborhood sized park areas (one (1) to five (5) acres); larger park properties should be diverse in character to provide active and passive spaces; and participants at the two (2) public forums wanted immediate action.

Supplemental Factors:

- ▶ Location(s) in Town Center, a Central Site, and/or Elsewhere in Wildwood
 - ▶ The development of a single central site along the State Route 100 corridor, near its

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

- ▶ intersection of State Route 109.
- ▶ The development of several, neighborhood park sites, particularly in the area of major subdivision developments in the vicinities of Manchester Road, Clayton Road, and Valley Road.
- ▶ Affordability
 - ▶ The cost per acre/square foot for land area must balance against accessibility, physical features, availability, and adaptability for future use category, i.e. mini-park, neighborhood, and/or community.
- ▶ Types of Facilities and Programs (dictate size requirements)
 - ▶ The respondents to the survey indicated general support for the following facilities: trails, all types; playgrounds, including pavilions, picnic tables, and barbecue pits; outdoor swimming pool and water park; athletic fields; and a recreational complex.

Assumptions:

- ▶ The cost of land in the City of Wildwood continues to increase and dictates the need for the City to act promptly on property acquisitions.
- ▶ The City of Wildwood does have land area of all sizes that is currently available for any of its future acquisition efforts.
- ▶ The investment of the City into property can only be viewed as positive from all perspectives.



Photograph of Glencoe Park Property

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Goal: To develop and maintain funding sources, along with programs for grants, gifts, and donations, to meet the recreational and fitness needs of residents through a system of park facilities and recreation programs.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Implement the necessary steps to promote the presentation of a park sales tax² to the voters of Wildwood, no later than the November 2008 General Election, for use in the development of parks facilities and recreation programs, along with staffing, maintenance, and other expenses;
- ▶ Continue to fund current programs and efforts through a combination of the general revenue and capital improvement budgets of the City;
- ▶ Establish a line item in the Department of

² This sales tax, if approved, should be structured to be solely dedicated to parks funding and contain no sunset clause, thereby ensuring monies for on-going maintenance of properties and related improvements.

Planning and Parks budget for advertisement and promotion of opportunities to participate in a gifts/donations program for public lands;

- ▶ Accept gifts and donations from all sources for non-acquisition types of efforts, along with creating programs to administer such activities, including defining incentives to encourage them;
- ▶ Provide programs for landbanking, conservation easements, life trusts, and others as a means to acquire property in a collaborative atmosphere with their respective owners;
- ▶ Plan and establish reliable revenue sources, including user fees, for the funding of operational and maintenance costs associated with recreation programs and related facilities; and
- ▶ Pursue all grants that are available from the myriad of resources at all levels, including local, State, and federal.

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current

Priority: Immediate term

Support Information: The Parks and Recreation

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

Survey indicated limited to just over a majority of support for new taxes of any kind. The Service Providers' Open House, as well as comments from these other entities, suggests that partnering and sharing of facilities may be the most advantageous manner to address major facilities in the future. At the two (2) public forums held by the CCPP, the majority of participants spoke in favor of parks and stormwater tax, and against any type of property tax. Comments received from other sources, such as the City's website, indicate residents support parks and recreation efforts, more so than other governmental buildings or similar capital outlays.

Supplemental Factors:

- ▶ Grants, gifts, and donations
 - ▶ The City of Wildwood has received millions of dollars in grants for its current system of multiple-use trails and parks from a variety of sources.
 - ▶ The locations of Anniversary Park and

Old Pond School were gifts to the City by their respective owners.

- ▶ The existence of Great Rivers Greenway and the Municipal Park Grant Commission offer ample opportunities to continue to construct a world-class trail system in the City of Wildwood.
- ▶ General revenue funds
 - ▶ The City currently budgets approximately \$260,000 for its parks and recreation efforts. This amount is approximately 3.4% of the overall General Fund for Fiscal Year 2007.
 - ▶ This amount of money for Fiscal Year 2007 is the greatest, since the incorporation of the City.
 - ▶ The respondents to the survey indicated that nearly two-thirds of them were in favor of using the City's general revenue funds, despite potential reductions in funding for other services.
- ▶ Parks and stormwater sales tax
 - ▶ The anticipated revenue from this source for the City of Wildwood was estimated at approximately \$750,000 [based upon 2007

ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS ~

CONTINUED

- revenues] and does require the action of registered voters via an election (simple majority required for passage).
- ▶ This tax is authorized by State Statute and utilized by a number of communities in the area, including the Cities of Ballwin, Chesterfield, and Ellisville.
 - ▶ The parks and stormwater sales tax is dedicated to these activities only and can be used to leverage greater borrowing in the future.
 - ▶ Other sources, i.e. bond issue for land purchase and major facilities
 - ▶ The use of bonds for construction of major facilities has been used by many communities over the years, but requires voter approval.
 - ▶ The City of Wildwood has an excellent credit rating and low bond encumbrance, which would allow it to use this method of financing.
 - ▶ The market for municipal bonds is gen-

erally good.

- ▶ The available resources to fund acquisition and the construction of facilities are diverse, but the costs associated with these activities continue to rise.

Assumptions:

- ▶ The use of grants and gifts to further the parks and recreation efforts of the City must always be an integral part of any planning effort.
- ▶ The CCPP recognized the difficulty of seeking support for a property tax increase for the purpose of expanding its park facilities and programming offerings.
- ▶ The amount of user fees will not cover the operation and maintenance of larger park properties or facilities.
- ▶ The design of any future comprehensive program for park facilities and lands must take into account their immediate and long-term maintenance and operation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATES

The CCPP has spent approximately one (1) year reviewing the data relating to the City of Wildwood, the surrounding area, St. Louis County, and the St. Louis Metropolitan Region to understand park and recreation trends, facilities, programs, and efforts currently underway or planned for the future. In addition to this data collection effort, the CCPP held public forums with the residents and other park and recreation providers, which also involved conducting a City-wide survey of households, to better understand what opportunities exist and what residents want now and in the future. Furthermore, the CCPP held numerous meetings to understand how best to serve Wildwood, while maintaining the key tenants of its Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, and Access and Mobility Plan. All told, the group of volunteers serving on this CCPP undertook a painstaking effort to define all the options, issues, and opportunities for the City of Wildwood, as it embarks on upgrades and expansions of its parks and recreation offerings over the next five (5) to ten (10) years.

As a result of this effort, the CCPP created this Action Plan, which is reflective of the collective thinking of this group. The members of the CCPP believed the best approach to achieving success in implementing the recommendations of the Action Points were to categorize them first as “current and future” endeavors and then establish within these broad timelines priorities therein, specifically, immediate, intermediate, and long-term types. Therefore, if an Action Point is identified as “Immediate/Short,” the CCPP believed this item should be acted upon by the City Council and Department of Planning and Parks staff as quickly as possible and be the focus of its efforts now, and until completed or implemented. Those Action Points, with ranges of times and priorities, would then follow. This prioritization was done with the intent to assist the City Council in its efforts, but certainly not to challenge its authority in this regard. The CCPP believes this type of prioritization was part of the charge given to its members when the City Council formed it in June 2006. ***However, in no case, did the CCPP specifically bind the City Council to appropriate funds beyond its advisory authority.***

The implementation of this Action Plan should begin

IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATES ~

CONTINUED

immediately, once adopted by the City Council. The CCPP designed this document to provide direction for an immediate five (5) year time window, while also creating a ten (10) year sunset. At the end of five (5) years, it is the opinion of the CCPP members that all of the “Intermediate/Short-term” priorities should be completed, with Future/Medium and Long-Term priorities begun, with an anticipated completion sometime thereafter. Although with regards to some recommendations within the four (4) Action Points, these timelines are aggressive, the CCPP believed it was best to encourage action rather than delay.

Additionally, the CCPP has made recommendations regarding updates and reviews of this plan, both annually and at the end of the first five (5) year period of time. The CCPP believes it is critical to the success of this document to have these regular reports to the City Council on the status of the Action Points and their recommendations, thereby allowing unexpected circumstances to be addressed, current programs improved, and new trends incorporated into them as

well. At the first five (5) year anniversary, the CCPP fully expects, like at each of the annual reports to City Council by Department of Planning and Parks staff, certain recommendations will be enacted or implemented, and others underway, while all planned for the future. The five (5) year update will also allow for a thorough review of the Action Points and any major alterations to be made. Keeping the Action Plan germane, fresh, and a part of the community's collective memory, is the stated desire of the members of this CCPP.



Photograph taken in the Clayton Road area

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The members of this CCPP were asked by the City Council at the start of this process to provide to it a plan for the expansion, improvement, and sustainability of a parks and recreation effort that meets the residents' needs in almost all ways. Recognizing the unique nature of the City of Wildwood, from its founding to the manner in which it provides services, the CCPP recognized this Action Plan would not create a typical parks and recreation profile in terms of the types of facilities, parks, and programs that would be offered. Respective of Wildwood's natural beauty, environmentally sensitive lands, small staff, and privatization goals, the CCPP relied heavily on resident input in making its recommendations and chose those considerations best suited to the aforementioned characteristics of this City. Similarly, the CCPP believed that partnering opportunities with a host of other governments, private, not-for-profit organizations, and other service providers was the best, and quickest, way to meet current and future residents' needs.

In considering the components of the four (4) Action Points of this plan, and the numerous recommendations contained in each, the CCPP did reach a consensus on this document, as well as what it believed should be the City of Wildwood's first steps in its implementation. In creating these first steps, the CCPP again referenced the survey results from the randomly-sampled households in the City, the input from the public forums, and Service Provider's Open House, along with comments provided throughout the process, to draw these final conclusions. Accordingly, the CCPP supports the following priority steps:

- ▶ **Programming** - Partner with the other providers to create the greatest range of programming opportunities possible for residents, beginning with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Pond Athletic Association, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College.
- ▶ **Facilities** - Expand current commitments to development of all types of trail systems (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) in the City of Wildwood, which are intended to link all public park spaces and population centers together,

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ~

CONTINUED

along with implementing the recently adopted “Access and Mobility Plan.”

- ▶ **Acquisition** - Identify and prioritize locations for future park land acquisitions, with the first action to be the acquisition of a parcel of ground, of a size to accommodate a community park, within the central area of the City (proximity to State Route 100 and State Route 109 and environs).
- ▶ **Funding** - Implement the necessary steps to promote the presentation of a park sales tax to the voters of Wildwood, no later than the November 2008 General Election, for use in the development of parks facilities and recreation programs, along with staffing, maintenance, and other expenses.

The CCPP believes these components of the Action Points are where the City of Wildwood needs to begin its new efforts in providing parks and recreation op-

portunities commensurate with all of its other current services in this community.

The CCPP would like to thank the City Council, and its members, for the opportunity to provide this Action Plan to it for consideration, and the latitude given to it in completing this task. The members appreciated the flexibility they were allowed in creating this plan, the Action Points, and recommendations associated therein by the City Council. No preconceived notions or requirements were placed upon the CCPP by the City Council, nor was influence exerted in this process to add, subtract, or otherwise alter the plan's outcome. To the members of this CCPP, the City Council's desire for their opinions, shown by allowing this freedom in developing this plan, was greatly appreciated and recognized. With the conclusion of this planning effort, the CCPP believes the City, and its leaders, are now in a position to create a world-class park and recreation system in Wildwood by utilizing existing park lands and facilities, partnering with other providers, and building/adding new lands, facilities, and programs attune to the unique character of the City and this area of west St. Louis County.

APPENDICES

The Appendices for this document include the following:

- ▶ **Parks and Recreation Survey**
 - ▶ **Executive Summary**
 - ▶ **Report of Results**
 - ▶ **Report of Market Segmentation Analysis**
- ▶ **Feedback from Service Providers**
- ▶ **Summary of Comments - Public Input Sessions**
- ▶ **Mobility and Access Plan**
 - ▶ **Executive Summary**
 - ▶ **Map**
- ▶ **City of Wildwood Parks and Recreation Plan - 2002**
- ▶ **Master Plan Update 2006**

All Appendices are available for review at Wildwood City Hall.