

Action Plan for Parks and Recreation - 2018

FOREWORD

Parks Action Plan Update Committee

City of Wildwood, Missouri

February 22, 2019 "Final Draft"

The City has had in place for over ten (10) years its first Action Plan for Parks and Recreation, which was adopted in 2007 by the Planning and Zoning Commission and endorsed and ratified by the City Council. Since that time, its four (4) goals and twenty-six (26) recommendations became the roadmap for all City officials to use when making decisions in this regard. The plan was intended to be used on a daily basis and its review was undertaken on a monthly basis by the Planning and Parks Committee of City Council and City Council itself. These reports are part of the record of application of this plan and available on the City's website for review (www.cityofwildwood.com).

The Planning and Parks Committee of City Council did recognize that, as successful as the plan had been in its use and application, all documents of this nature need to be regularly updated to ensure they remain germane to residents and users, reflective of current trends, and timely on changes to ensure safety, function, and accessibility standards are always applied and in place at all of the City's facilities. The update process for this plan became an important goal of this Planning and Parks Committee during the early part of 2017, when it began its discussion and planning of the process for it and how it would be implemented to create the best outcome for this important planning tool.

The Planning and Parks Committee agreed to use a tried-and-true method by using a citizen's committee of resident volunteers to lead the update process and provide the direction to City officials to address the aforementioned germaneness, trends, and safety and function. The committee represented residents from all eight (8) of the City's wards and included representatives from the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Many of the members were new to this process and had not served on a previous board, commission, or committee of the City and provided fresh perspectives in this regard. The members began meeting in October 2017.

The Committee Members noted they had 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, while having world-class access to a system of public spaces and network of trails unrivalled in the region. Many of the members chose Wildwood due to its application of many of its plans, including the Action Plan for Parks and Recreation – 2007. The Committee Members' own inclinations are shared by many other Wildwood residents as well, which was reflected in the survey that was conducted in the early stages of the update process.

The results of the 2018 website survey 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!"

Executive Summary

The Parks Action Plan Update Committee worked for approximately one (1) year defining the future of park and recreation efforts in the City of Wildwood. This group undertook two (2) Open Houses and offered a website survey to all Wildwood residents and users of its park and trail facilities, along with attendees at its many recreational events that are offered by 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 Parks Action Plan Update Committee developed an Action Plan that contains five (5) goals this group believed were essential for the City Council to implement over a total of the upcoming ten (10) year period of time, with many of the recommendations sequenced to be completed within the first five (5) year period of this overall timeframe. The five (5) goal areas are as follows:

Action Point Number #1 – Recreational Programs and Target Populations

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

Action Point Number #2 – Type and Extent of Facilities

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 these publicly owned properties.

Action Point Number #3 – Acquisition Policies and Programs

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

Action Point Number #4 – Funding Sources and Application Policies

Goal: To develop new and maintain existing 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.

Action Point Number #5 – Town Center Green Space

Goal: Utilize the newly acquired six (6) acre tract of land abutting the current City Hall property for a Village Green, thereby fulfilling a need for public space within the Town Center Area of the City.

Each of the goals contain information relating to the creation of recommendations that were developed for each of them, identifies the supporting information used in creating these points, the supplemental factors that have changed during the last ten (10) years of the plan's application, and assumptions that were used to check the validity of the goals and recommendations. 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 the community.

The other desire of the Committee was to create a reasonable set of recommendations under the five (5) goals that recognized certain controlling parameters that exist relative to specific facilities and programs for this City. The members of the Committee 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.

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 energetic community, and that residents need and want such amenities. Therefore, one (1) volunteer from each ward was selected by the Mayor and approved by City Council to form the independent Parks Action Plan Update Committee. 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 Committee. With these goals identified and supported, this group began the update 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 Committee did not believe the City's park improvements 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 fourteen (14) 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 Action Plan Update Committee to update this Action Plan, which is premised on several resources that were collected over the course of an approximately one (1) year timeframe. These resources included a web-based survey that was available to all residents, park and trail users, and others that currently, or have in the past, used the City's offerings in this regard and was included in paper form in the City's Gazette Newsletter and mailed to every household within the City (the "survey"); two (2) specific community meetings to hear proposals and concerns about the use of the Belleview Farms Park site, two (2) Open Houses held within the community; and regularly scheduled meetings of the Committee, which were open to the public. These resources were intended to provide all who had any interest in parks and recreation activities an opportunity to participate in providing input into the update of the Action Plan. At the end of this process, the Committee Members had received input from all of these resources and used it extensively in its discussions about changes to the current plan, whether additions, deletions, or modifications.

Furthermore, the Committee 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, all-inclusive, and acceptable set of facilities, amenities, and programs for residents and non-residents of Wildwood. These aforementioned resources allowed the Committee 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 updated 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.

Opportunities for Residents

In updating this Action Plan, the Committee noted the City of Wildwood has many of the components already in place to achieve the intent of this document, which is to create a world-class system of park facilities and recreation programs. 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 Committee identified the following assets:

1. Over fourteen (14) 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); Greensfelder County Park (1,583 acres); Bluff View Park (100 acres); and Rock Hollow Valley (300 acres). Additionally, the State of Missouri and St. Louis County have other facilities in the City, including Belleview Farms (leased by the City of Wildwood, but not yet open to the public) and Howell Island (Missouri Department of Conservation Area).
2. Community Park, containing over sixty-six (66) acres of wooded and meadowlands, with an all-inclusive playground, a dog park, the City's largest rentable pavilion for events, and multiple-use trails are already developed, with additional phases planned for the future.
3. Three (3), neighborhood-sized City parks, which includes Glencoe City Park (Washington Avenue and 3rd Street), Anniversary Park (Clayton and Strecker Roads) and Old Pond School Park (Manchester Road).
4. Al Foster Memorial Trail and Trailhead, with the addition in Bluffview Park, connector trail, and the Rock Hollow Valley (over thirteen (13) miles of single-track, natural-surface trails).
5. Additional land area banked in the areas of Strecker Road and Clayton Road (Woodcliff Heights Park Property), Chesterfield Valley (Kohn Memorial Park), and the Town Center Area (north entry of eastern pedestrian bridge across State Route 100 and six (6) acres of property that abut Wildwood City Hall site).
6. Over twenty (20) miles of multiple use trails in Town Center Area and environs, including three (3) pedestrian bridges.
7. Wildwood Family YMCA facility located on State Route 109 in the City's Town Center Area.
8. Over eight (8) Rockwood School District sites, which include athletic fields, swimming pools, outdoor running tracks, and many other amenities.
9. St. Louis Community College's Wildwood Campus, with public space and meeting rooms.
10. Over two hundred (200) current recreational programs offered by the City of Wildwood to residents and non-residents alike, highlighted by the annual Wildwood Celebration.
11. Over seventeen (17) places of worship offering recreational programming and facilities for Wildwood residents.
12. Monarch-Chesterfield Levee, the trail system, and a new trailhead (John L. LeCave Memorial Trailhead) at its southern terminus, at its intersection of Centaur Road.
13. St. Louis Southwestern Railroad right-of-way, providing an opportunity for future trail system between Labadie, Missouri and Creve Coeur County Park.
14. Meramec and Missouri Rivers and related floodplain.
15. Hidden Valley Golf and Ski Resort on Alt Road within the City of Wildwood.

16. Rock Hollow Trail and Park Property (Great Rivers Greenway and St. Louis County) – also known as Zombie Road.
17. Over one hundred fifty (150) centerline miles of public rights-of-way for multi-modal use.
18. Wabash-Frisco and Pacific Mini-Gauge Railroad Facility in the Glencoe Area.
19. Pond Athletic Association (PAA) and its lighted playing fields.
20. 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 Committee 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 parks and recreation facilities and programs. Many of these facilities are located within close proximity of the City of Wildwood and a short drive from residents' homes and nearby businesses. Many of the City's residents already take advantage of these facilities, particularly the major swimming pool complexes, and related programs. Other cities graciously provide excellent opportunities to Wildwood residents.

Regionally, the City is also fortunate to be located in a metropolitan area that is rich in recreational opportunities, as well. The St. Louis Metropolitan Region has an extensive system of public park holdings, which range from areas like Forest Park to the Katy Trail. The region also provides a diverse and comprehensive offering of recreational programs and opportunities for all age groups, while also being nationally recognized for its high school and college sport programs, club programs, and age appropriate programs for seniors. Along with these facilities and programs, the St. Louis Metropolitan Region has three (3) of the larger river systems in the United States within it, i.e. Mississippi River, Missouri River, and the Meramec River. These river systems provide ample boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities unrivaled elsewhere in the country. The Committee believes the local and regional opportunities provide an exceptional foundation for the future of Wildwood's expanded system of parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Challenges for the Future

The Committee 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:

1. The reluctance of voters to endorse certain types of taxes to support parks and recreation efforts in the City of Wildwood. Without such a dedicated source of revenue, the City is dependent on operating and capital improvements only.
2. The diversity of the population failing to gain consensus on certain issues relating to facilities and programs and losing opportunities for development and growth.
3. The competition for available sites with private developers and institutional users.
4. The lack of cooperation between other governmental units and service providers on exploring and establishing partnering opportunities for Wildwood residents.
5. The conflict of providing facilities for convenience sake, when other providers offer them within a short commute of Wildwood.
6. The nature of competitive grants and the challenges presented by these processes, particularly in terms of timing.
7. The uncertainty of the pooled sales tax distribution to cities like Wildwood.

As reflected in the survey conducted in 2018, 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 costliest to construct, operate, and maintain. These challenges and the others listed above were discussed at length by the Committee and addressed in the goals outlined below. In addressing these challenges, the Committee 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 Committee worked to ensure its goals 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 goals. In considering this five (5) year review cycle, the Committee believed it was a long enough timeframe to allow progress to be made on the plan's relative goals. Conversely, this timeframe was believed to be 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 Committee believed the goals will be addressed appropriately for the future in terms of implementation and application.

Another major point in this planning effort was to establish reasonable expectations and timelines for implementation of its goals, based upon available resources. The Committee's determination was that each of these goals, and associated recommendations, should be analyzed and reviewed based upon the Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan the City Council updates each year, as part of its budget process, and if these items are being addressed, as planned. This plan, along with the Planning and Parks Committee's on-going review of its implementation each month at its meetings, would allow the City Council to adjust and respond to challenges, allocate new resources, where needed, and promote changes to improve its application over its planned timeframe.

Much of the Committee'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, primarily funded through grants, gifts, fees, and other charges, but with moderate interest for future sale tax increase. Regardless of the sources, the Committee 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.

Concurrence and Overall Direction

The Committee worked to create an updated Action Plan that accounted for all of the respective input it had received from several sources and a deliberative process of discussion at its meetings. All of the goals that are included in the Action Plan reflect a consensus on the item by the members of the Committee. If a goal is included in the plan, the Committee 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 this group of volunteers representing each of the City's eight (8) wards (one (1) from each ward appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council).

The Committee submitted this Action Plan to the City Council for consideration and action, with the expectation that each of the goals, 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 Committee 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 goals 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.

Action Plan Components

Action Point Number #1 – Recreational Programs and Target Populations

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

Recommendations:

1. Partner with the other providers to create the greatest range of programming opportunities **that are** possible for residents, **beginning by continuing on-going efforts, while expanding others**, with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Pond Athletic Association, the Rockwood School District, and the St. Louis Community College – **Wildwood Campus**;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. Create new recreation programs that foster opportunities for community gatherings and encourage a sense of place for residents, old and new;
6. 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;
7. **Form appropriate partnerships with the Wildwood business community to support targeted programming, where mutually beneficial to the parties; and**
8. **Connect any new programming initiatives with adequate Departmental staffing levels to meet demand and safety and quality considerations.**

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current

Priority: Immediate Term

Support Information: The Parks and Recreation Survey that was completed, as part of this update process, noted that a majority of respondents attend concerts as their primary contact with the City's programming efforts; thereafter, followed by hikes/walks, bicycle races/tours, and the Wildwood Barbecue Bash. Also questioned in the survey were the activities that residents enjoy the greatest, which included mountain biking, hiking, walking, bicycle riding, and playgrounds. Also identified was natural play, i.e. creek exploration and observing/experiencing nature. The survey also identified that respondents were split on whether the City should continue to prioritize partnerships with other providers and cities for its own facilities and programs, almost equally favoring the construction and provision of its own.

Supplemental Factors:

⇒ Residents (primary service group)

1. With **limited an on-going conservative fiscal management approach toward Wildwood's financial resources at this time**, the City should focus on a qualitative versus quantitative approach in current programming efforts.
2. Current programs continue to grow **and evolve**, while receiving positive feedback from participants.

3. 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

1. Demographic characteristics indicate a high percentage of households within the City have children.
2. These populations will need a diversity of programs to meet their anticipated needs.

⇒ Partnerships

1. Partnerships extend through all aspects of the City's programming efforts in its recreation activities.
2. **Current Establish** partnerships with service providers, **both already** located in the City **or elsewhere**, such as the Rockwood School District, the Pond Athletic Association, the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, **Great Rivers Greenway, St. Louis County, Wabash, Frisco, and Pacific Mini-Gauge Railroad, and nearby cities**, along with others, **continue to flourish and address identified needs**.
3. Other service providers that have expressed interest in partnering with the City of Wildwood in this area **of recreation programming**.

Assumptions:

1. The allowance for growth in programs will primarily be based upon availability of funding **and staffing** to support them.
2. The current programs should be continued and improved, based upon year-end evaluations in terms of attendance and related feedback from participants.
3. Engaging residents in enjoyable, safe programs builds support for parks and recreation facilities and activities within the community.
4. The provision of recreation programs provides a medium to grow community spirit and recognition of Wildwood.
5. **Positive inter-resident relationships form, and long-term wellness comes, from accessible and numerous park and trail corridors, along with diverse and comprehensive recreation programming opportunities.**

Action Point Number #2 – Type and Extent of Facilities

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

Recommendations:

1. **Continue and** expand current commitments to the development of all types of trail systems (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) within the City of Wildwood, which should eventually link all public park spaces, **e.g. State, County, and City, and surrounding municipalities as well, while being inclusive of all wards in the City of Wildwood** and population centers **together**, and follow the recommendations of the **recently** adopted “Access and Mobility Plan,” **while having it focus on the completions of the southern extension of the Al Foster Memorial Trail to the City of Eureka, Missouri and therein beyond to Route 66 State Park and a northern extension from Babler State Park to the John L. LeCave Memorial Trailhead and associated Monarch-Chesterfield Levee Trail.**
2. 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;
3. Increase programming emphasizing fitness, wellness, **and inclusiveness** for children, teens, and families (as funding is provided), which would include **fitness** walking, aquatics, hiking, biking, equestrian rides, **skating, multi-purpose court areas, skate boarding, which can be converted to an ice rink in the winter, and other teen appropriate facilities;**

4. 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;
5. Establish ~~a minimum of three (3), new~~ a neighborhood-sized or pocket type park **in any Ward of in** the City of Wildwood within the next **five (5) ~~ten (10)~~** years, **which currently lacks such, with their order being prioritized by City Council**, with these **priority** locations being determined by projected population densities **and demographics, availability of land areas, and appropriate access options;**
6. 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;
7. **Form appropriate partnerships with the Wildwood business community to support targeted programming, where mutually beneficial to the parties; and**
8. **Connect any new programming initiatives with adequate Departmental staffing levels to meet demand and safety and quality considerations.**
9. **Allocate adequate City resources to meet future costs associated with the opening and operation of Belleview Farms for public use, such being consistent with its environmental characteristics, desires of residents and input of Sherman neighbors, appropriate and desired programming, and heritage restrictions, thereby allowing this park site to become part of an inter-connected network of trails and properties that link Castlewood State Park and the Al Foster Memorial Trail ~~to Route 66 State Park~~. To achieve this recommendation, if necessary, seek an extension to the existing lease agreement between the City of Wildwood and St. Louis County, which currently stipulates a completion date for an identified level of improvements by January 2020 that may not be met.**
10. **The City Council shall seek and accept input and consultation from Sherman residents in decisions associated with Belleview Farms.**

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 survey, as noted, identified a range of activities the respondents identified as popular within the City of Wildwood, but also noted several omissions they would support for development or inclusion, which included swimming pool/splash pad/waterpark, trails, athletic fields, amphitheater, ice rink/skating rink/skate park, lake, and athletic fields/courts. This list of improvements that have been identified in this 2018 Survey are very similar to the identified items from 2007.

Supplemental Factors:

⇒ Park Types

1. ~~The respondents to the survey noted the need for a large, community-sized park for the City of Wildwood.~~
2. Input received from the community indicates a desire for additional neighborhood and pocket type parks for the future, in close proximity to their neighborhoods, **with at least one (1) such facility per ward.**

⇒ Passive and active types

1. 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.
2. **The retention of passive areas of park sites remains a priority to residents and is identified as necessary for aesthetics, habitat management, stormwater control, and diversity of use.**
3. ~~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”).~~

- ~~4. The respondents of the survey noted that “acquiring additional greenways, open space, and parks should be prioritized over developing recreation centers for indoor activities.”~~

⇒ Playgrounds

- ~~1. The provision of playgrounds garnered the highest level of support in the survey (69% viewed it as “essential to very important”).~~
2. The locations 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.
3. 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

- ~~1. 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

- ~~1. Over fifty (50%) percent of respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey identified outdoor ballfields as “essential or very important.”~~
- ~~2. Approximately forty (40%) percent of respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey identified outdoor soccer fields as “very important.”~~
3. The Pond Athletic Association, Babler State Park, the Rockwood School District, and ~~the Wildwood Family YMCA~~ LaSalle Institute provide a limited number of these types of fields in the City of Wildwood.
4. The City often has received comments from residents about the need for athletic fields for many years.

⇒ Trails

1. The level of support for additional trails **remains robust among all surveyed groups** ~~was high by respondents to the Parks and Recreation Survey at approximately fifty-six (56%) percent.~~
- ~~2. The most popular activity identified in the survey of households in the City is using trails (73%).~~
3. The City of Wildwood has over **twenty (20)** ~~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

- ~~1. The survey of households indicated that three (3) in ten (10) residents felt a multiple-use recreation or community center was “essential.”~~
2. ~~The information~~ **Comments** provided by ~~invited speakers and~~ members of the **Committee CCRP** indicated larger facilities seldom operate without subsidies from general revenue funds of the cities that have constructed them.
3. **The maintenance and renovations of these facilities are significant and on going.**
- ~~4. 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%) were given the lowest importance ratings of all facilities identified (over sixteen (16) were listed in the survey).~~
5. **The design of the Belleview Farms facility for its future use has been framed by distinctly different groups; nevertheless, its final concept should be based upon a multitude of factors, many yet undetermined, but with its focus on providing Wildwood residents the greatest benefits possible from its development, and operation, and conservation.**

Assumptions:

1. The development of facilities will require the greatest amount of expenditures, immediate and long-term, for **their** 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.

2. The availability of other facilities within Wildwood, and surrounding cities, offers opportunities for an immediate impact to residents, if City officials can develop **and maintain** specific arrangements with other providers on use accommodations, **such as the swimming pool pass programs with the Cities of Ballwin and Ellisville**. However, when partnering with other providers, the missions of the different entities can sometimes compete or cause problems and should be considered in the development of these relationships.
3. ~~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.~~
4. The City of Wildwood has an aging population that favors certain facilities over others.

Action Point Number #3 – Acquisition Policies and Programs

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

Recommendations:

1. Identify and prioritize locations for future park land acquisitions, **specifically focusing on an acquisitions within the City’s Town Center Area for a Village Green, such as the recently acquired properties forming a six (6) acre tract of land abutting the current City Hall site, as a location for events and the focal point of a radiating trail system, that completes the desired greenbelt and trail corridor between the Meramec and Missouri Rivers, e.g. between Rockwoods Reservation and Babler State Park, including the needed acquisition by the City of Wildwood of the Pruitt Site, which would provide a necessary link from Rockwoods Reservation to the Town Center Area.** ~~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;~~
2. ~~Develop a~~ **Use the City’s Comprehensive 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan as its** Facilities Plan **to coordinate that is coordinated with** the acquisition policies and actions of the City;
3. 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 lakes, barbeque pits, **a skate park, a park that is inclusive, with sensory features, and is universally accessible, multi-purpose court areas, which can be converted to an ice rink in the winter, and other teen appropriate facilities;**
4. ~~Actively explore a partnership with the Wildwood Family YMCA in their planned expansion of their current facility;~~
5. Establish ~~a minimum of three (3), new~~ a neighborhood-sized, **or pocket park, the latter, if space is limited, in any Ward of in** the City of Wildwood within the next **five (5) ten (10)** years, **which currently lacks such**, with their locations based upon projected population densities, **availability of land areas, and appropriate access options;**
6. 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;
7. ~~Create a plan and working committee of interested parties to~~ Develop a **“sprayground” major outdoor swimming pool/water park** facility within the next ten (10) years in the City of Wildwood’s **Town Center Area, and, if feasible and achievable, utilizing through** a partnership **of resources, expertise, and services** with the Wildwood Family YMCA, the Rockwood School District, **and/or** the St. Louis Community College; and
8. 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.
9. **Allocate adequate City resources to meet future costs associated with the opening and operation of Belleview Farms for public use, such being consistent with its environmental characteristics, appropriate and desired programming, and heritage restrictions.**

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current and Future

Priority: Immediate, Intermediate, and Long Term

Support Information: Survey results indicated residents want acquisitions 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.

Supplemental Factors:

- ⇒ Location(s) in Town Center, ~~a Central Site~~, **Individual Wards**, and/or Elsewhere in Wildwood
 1. ~~The development of a single central site along the State Route 100 corridor, near its intersection of State Route 109.~~
 2. The development of several, **additional** neighborhood park sites, particularly in the area of major subdivision developments, in the vicinities of Manchester Road, Clayton Road, and Valley Road, **and any ward currently lacking such.**
- ⇒ Affordability
 1. 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)
 1. ~~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:

1. 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.
2. The City of Wildwood does have land area of all sizes that is currently available for any of its future acquisition efforts.
3. The investment of the City into property can only be viewed as positive from all perspectives.
4. **The acquisitions of properties for park purposes can also serve other goals, including floodplain management.**

Action Point Number #4 – Funding Sources and Application Policies

Goal: To develop **new** and maintain **existing** 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:

1. Implement the necessary steps to promote the presentation of a park sales tax, **as authorized by State Statute**, to the voters of Wildwood, **at an appropriate no later than the November 2008 General election date to be determined by the City Council, and, if it is approved, said revenues, would be for** used in the development of park **and trail** facilities, **along with and** recreation programming, **while also including funds for along with** staffing, maintenance, and other expenses **to implement the goals and recommendations of this plan;**
2. Continue to fund current programs and efforts through a combination of the general revenue and capital improvement budgets of the City;
3. Establish a line item in the Department of Planning and Parks budget for advertisement and promotion of opportunities to participate in a gifts/donations program for public lands;

4. 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;
5. Provide programs for land-banking, conservation easements, life trusts, and others as a means to acquire property in a collaborative atmosphere with their respective owners;
6. Plan and establish **new and** reliable revenue sources, including user fees, for the funding of operational and maintenance costs associated with recreation programs and related facilities; and
7. 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 survey indicated a high level of support for a park sales tax in the City of Wildwood, over eighty (80) percent. The respondents also noted that a lower rate, i.e. 1/8th to 1/4th of a cent, is most palatable. The survey results also indicated that respondents continue their support of the City’s acquisitions efforts, but very limited support for the use of any future sales tax for indoor facilities or programming.

Supplemental Factors:

⇒ Grants, gifts, and donations

1. 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.
2. The locations of Anniversary Park and Old Pond School were gifts to the City by their respective owners.
3. 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

1. 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 **2018 2007**.
2. This amount of money for Fiscal Year **2007 2018** is the greatest, since the incorporation of the City.
- ~~3. 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

1. The anticipated revenue from this source for the City of Wildwood was estimated at approximately **\$350,000.00** [based upon **2007 2018** revenues **at 1%**] and does require the action of registered voters via an election (simple majority required for passage).
2. This tax is authorized by State Statute and utilized by several communities in the area, including the Cities of Ballwin, Chesterfield, Ellisville, **and Eureka**.
3. 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

1. The use of bonds for construction of major facilities has been used by many communities over the years, but requires voter approval.
2. The City of Wildwood has an excellent credit rating and low bond encumbrance, which would allow it to use this method of financing.
3. The market for municipal bonds is generally good.
4. The available resources to fund acquisition and the construction of facilities are diverse, but the costs associated with these activities continue to rise.
- 5. The City’s Charter does place restrictions on spending for certain facilities at a maximum of \$3.5 million and, thereafter, requires the vote of residents. This Charter requirement is cumulative,**

thereby addressing phases typically associated with larger projects, such as the Wildwood Community Park.

Assumptions:

1. 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.
2. The **CCPP Committee** recognized the difficulty of seeking support for a property tax increase for the purpose of expanding its park facilities and programming offerings **from Wildwood residents**.
3. The amount of user fees will not cover the operation and maintenance of larger park properties or facilities.
4. The design of any future comprehensive program for park facilities and lands must consider their immediate and long-term maintenance and operation.

Action Point Number #5 – Town Center Green Space

Goal: Utilize the newly acquired six (6) acre tract of land abutting the current City Hall property for a Village Green, thereby fulfilling a need for public space within the Town Center Area of the City.

Recommendations:

1. Develop an environmental assessment of the property for use ~~consideration~~ during future decisions on activity use areas within the planned Village Green. This assessment should minimally identify topographic, tree, soils, geology, and hydrologic information, as part of its development.
2. Engage the immediate community in the vicinity of the property, along with all Wildwood residents, to determine priorities in terms of activity areas, equipment, aesthetic enhancements, nearby land uses in its vicinity, and access considerations.
3. Develop a range of possible options for the use of this public space area, with a prioritization of them as well.
4. Process these responses and priorities from the community through a carefully vetted and selected design professional to create a concept plan for discussion purposes associated with this property.
5. Reengage the community to comment on the concept plan and refine accordingly (This review and comment process can be undertaken multiple times, being at the discretion of the City Council).
6. Present concept plan to appropriate City boards and commissions, including City Council, to accept comments, recommendations, and other input for inclusion. Refine accordingly.
7. Finalize concept plan and utilize its information in the development of engineered plans/specifications for bidding and construction of the Village Green in 2020/2021 timeframe.

Timeline Tier Level(s): Current

Priority: Immediate term

Support Information: The survey indicated many residents were disappointed with the recent loss of event space in Town Center Area, being caused by the development of new facilities, and believe a focal point for such should be a priority action for the City in the future.

Supplemental Factors:

⇒ **Timing**

1. The growing interest in Town Center Area for future development justifies a rigorous approach to the planning, design, engineering, and construction processes for this Village Green, given locations for community events are becoming limited within this area.
2. The process for planning, design, and engineering can take more than a year, given all parties needed to participate in such a discussion.

3. The City has generally worked on a schedule of planning, design, and engineering, including bidding in one (1) year, with construction of the project occurring the following year.

⇒ **Funding**

1. The City has allocated funding in Fiscal Year 2019 to complete the environmental assessment, along with planning and design efforts for this property.
2. The development of engineered plans for bidding purposes, and its eventual construction, are identified for Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022. Total amount budgeted through the City's Capital Improvements Program is one point one million dollars (\$1,100,000.00).
3. The funding for the City's Capital Improvements Program is via a sales tax that is distributed to the City on a per-capita basis.

⇒ **Other**

1. The development of a Village Green will require the removal of two (2) existing dwellings and several outbuildings in association with these properties, which is another cost in connection with this plan for the future.
2. The six (6) acre parcel of ground will benefit from the extension of Main Street, from its current terminus at City Hall, in terms of access, visibility, and function.
3. The easternmost tract of land that is a portion of this six (6) acre property abuts the current City Hall site, which has an additional 1.5 acres of useable area that has not been developed at this time.

Assumptions:

1. The property cannot meet every need that may exist and be desired by residents for public space in the Town Center Area.
2. The character of the land, access, and the existing and future land use patterns of the area will dictate, to a large degree, where facilities will best be sited on the property.
3. The proximity to existing City Hall is a positive and beneficial relationship between the respective properties.
4. The greater the amount of public input into the planning process for the property, the more likelihood of providing a successful outcome.

Implementation and Plan Updates

The Committee 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 Committee focused community meetings on Belleview Farms site, conducted two (2) Open House Events 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 Committee held numerous meetings to understand how best to serve Wildwood, while maintaining the key tenets of its Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, and Access and Mobility Plan. All told, the group of volunteers serving on this Committee 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 updated Action Plan, which is reflective of the collective thinking of this group, is complete. Those goals, which have been identified with a specific timeframe, were done with the intent to assist the City Council in its efforts, but certainly not to challenge its authority in this regard. The Committee believed this type of prioritization was part of the charge given to its members when the City Council formed it in October 2017. **However, in no case, did the Committee specifically bind the City Council to appropriate funds beyond its advisory authority.** The implementation of this Action Plan should begin immediately, once adopted by the City Council. The Committee designed this document to provide direction for an immediate five (5) year time window, while also creating a ten (10) year sunset

Additionally, the Committee 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 Committee believed it is critical to the success of this document to have these regular reports to the City Council on the status of the goals 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 Committee fully expects, like at each of the monthly reports to City Council's Planning and Parks Committee 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 goals 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 the Committee.

Summary and Conclusions

The members of this Committee 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 way it provides services, the Committee 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 Committee relied heavily on resident input in making its recommendations and chose those considerations best suited to the aforementioned characteristics of this City. Similarly, the Committee 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 five (5) goals of this plan, and the numerous recommendations contained in each, the Committee 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 Committee again referenced the survey, the input from the public forums, and Open House Events, along with comments provided throughout the process, to draw these final conclusions. Accordingly, the Committee supports the following goals:

Action Point Number #1 – Recreational Programs and Target Populations

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

Action Point Number #2 – Type and Extent of Facilities

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

Action Point Number #3 – Acquisition Policies and Programs

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

Action Point Number #4 – Funding Sources and Application Policies

Goal: To develop new and maintain existing 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.

Action Point Number #5 – Town Center Green Space

Goal: Utilize the newly acquired six (6) acre tract of land abutting the current City Hall property for a Village Green, thereby fulfilling a need for public space within the Town Center Area of the City.

The Committee believes these components of the goals are where the City of Wildwood needs to begin its new efforts in providing parks and recreation opportunities commensurate with all of its other current services in this community.

The Committee would like to thank the City Council, and its members, for the opportunity to provide this updated 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 goals, and recommendations associated therein by the City Council, along with the input and support of the two (2) City Council liaisons that served on it as well. No preconceived notions or requirements were placed upon the Committee 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 Committee, 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 Committee believed the City, and its leaders, are now in a position to continue its already successful efforts in creating 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.

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