

Parks Action Plan Update Committee – PAPUC 2018

~~Citizens Committee for Park Progress~~

City of Wildwood, Missouri

September 20, 2007 “Final Draft”

June 26, 2018 – 1st Draft

July 24, 2018 – 2nd Draft

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 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, then others thereafter. Along with these two (2) considerations, the households that were 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)

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) in the City of Wildwood, which should eventually link all public park spaces, ***e.g. State, County, and City, and surrounding municipalities as well (Pages 2, 30, 31, and 32), 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;"
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, and barbeque pits;
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 park **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 (**Page #28, 29, 30, and 31**);
7. ~~Create a plan and working committee of interested parties to~~ Develop a **“sprayground (Page #28, 29, 30, and 31)”** ~~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): 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 community event rooms.

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 **fifteen (15)** ~~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** CCPP 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.**~~

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 acquisition in the City's Town Center Area, as a location for events and the center of a radiating trail system, along with completing the desired greenbelt between the Meramec and Missouri Rivers, e.g. between Rockwoods Reservation and Babler State Park, including the Pruitt Site (Pages 2 and 3)**. ~~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. Set aside revenues in each fiscal year, as part of the capital improvements budget, to expand current efforts in terms of its property acquisition program, ~~particularly in the Glencoe Area of Wildwood;~~
3. Partner with the Open Space Council of Greater St. Louis to pursue landbanking of environmentally sensitive sites for passive recreational areas;
4. Continue the application of the Public Space Requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance; and
5. 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.
6. **Develop and initiate improved programs for the preservation of the City of Wildwood's historical assets, i.e. buildings, structures, and other improvements, by undertaking appropriate acquisitions, accepting gifts, or offering available incentives, then dedicating a location on public lands for their siting, viewing, and programming for future generations of new residents (Page 37).**

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, **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 (Pages 3 and 4)** 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 taxⁱ to the voters of Wildwood, no later than **2019/2020/2021 Municipal** ~~the November 2008 General Election~~ (**Page 41**), for use in the development of parks facilities and recreation programs, along with staffing, maintenance, and other expenses;
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 Parks and Recreation 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
 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 **\$750,000** [based upon ~~2007~~ **2018** revenues] 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 a number of 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 take into account their immediate and long-term maintenance and operation.

Editor's Note: Additions and deletions reflecting the Committee's recent discussions on the Action Plan for Parks and Recreation 2007, which have been summarized and represented in the attached Department of Planning and Parks' Memorandum dated May 16, 2018, are indicated by blue, bolded type or a single, strike-through line. Page number(s) from the current 2007 version of the plan are provided for reference purposes as well.

Editor's 2nd Note: The orange, bolded type, along with an underline and italicized text, indicates further additions since the June 2018 version of these revisions. A strike-through line still represents a deletion.

The highlighted yellow areas will be updated with the new survey information, as part of the final draft of the updated plan.

ⁱ 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.