



2023

Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element



ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Wildwood City, Cape May County, New Jersey

Clarke Caton Hintz | 100 BARRACK STREET | TRENTON, NJ | 08608

2023 Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

Wildwood City, Cape May County, New Jersey

Adopted by the Wildwood City Planning Board on November 6, 2023

Prepared for the Wildwood City Planning Board by

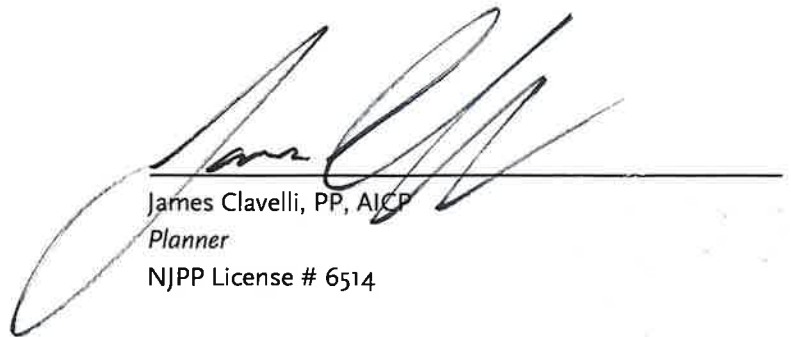
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Open Space And Recreation Plan	4
	Goals and Objectives	4
	Wildwood’s Open Space and Recreation Resources	5
	Resource Assessment and Recommendations	8
	General Recommendations	14
3	Conservation Plan	17
	Goals and Objectives	17
	Natural Features	19
	Energy	27
	Alternative Transportation.....	31
	Urban Tree Canopy	32
	Climate-Change Vulnerability	33
	Pet Waste	34
4	Appendices	35
	Appendix A - Adopting Resolution	35

1 INTRODUCTION

This document comprises a combined Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element as recommended by the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination and Land Use Plan Element for the City of Wildwood. The Municipal Land Use Law establishes that a municipal Master Plan may include a recreation plan element that shows:

...a comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation;

(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.b(7));

and a conservation plan element that provides for:

...the preservation, conservation, and utilization of natural resources, including, to the extent appropriate, energy, open space, water supply, forests, soil, marshes, wetlands, harbors, rivers and other waters, fisheries, endangered or threatened species wildlife and other resources; and which systematically analyzes the impact of each other component and element of the master plan on the present and future preservation, conservation and utilization of those resources.

(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.b(8))

This combined plan includes the statutory components of each respective element above and replaces all prior versions adopted by the City. This document is organized into two sections: (1) an Open Space and Recreation Plan, which shall include the open space components of a conservation plan element and (2) a Conservation Plan. Overall, this document provides an inventory of open space and recreation resources, natural features, environmental issues, and strategies intended to achieve the goals of the City's Master Plan as reaffirmed in the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination.



History of Conservation, Recreation and Open Space in Wildwood

The City of Wildwood has long recognized the immense value of its natural and recreational resources, which form the foundation of its cultural identity, resort economy, and way of life of its residents. Although the City comprises mostly built-out land and well-established beaches, the continued investment in its parks, beaches, and recreation facilities – and conservation of the natural amenities that support these assets – remains a high priority of the City. This is reflected in the adoption of several master plan elements, ordinance amendments, and programs over the past two decades.

Past Planning Efforts

2007 Comprehensive Master Plan Update

The prior update to the City's Master Plan was adopted by the City Commissioners in 2007. The Plan included an Open Space & Recreation Plan Element providing an inventory of the City's parks and open space facilities and recommended improvements for each park which have since been completed. This combined Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Plan Element builds upon subsequent reexaminations of the 2007 Plan.

Parks Revitalization Program (2016-present)

In 2016, the City launched a comprehensive program to revitalize all of its greenspaces through various repairs and upgrades as recommended in the 2007 Master Plan. After years of deferred maintenance, these investments culminated in the clearing of overgrown vegetation, replacement of dead or dying trees, installation of sprinkler systems, statuary, fountains, and refurbishment of decorative features. While the program was initially designed to terminate in 2017 after addressing each planned upgrade, it was later recommended that the City continue to enhance its parks and open spaces through this program until all sites were improved and to focus on maintenance once those improvements were made.

2017 General Reexamination of the 2007 Comprehensive Master Plan Update

The 2017 General Reexamination Report of the 2007 Master Plan, adopted January 15, 2018, reaffirmed many of the principles and objectives adopted in the 2007 Plan and eliminated others that have been achieved or determined to no longer apply. The Reexamination focused heavily on economic growth and revitalization, as well as preservation of critical lands.

In addition to identifying changes in state policy since 2007, the Reexamination described several recently constructed community facilities, including Byrne Plaza, Byrne Community Center, and Wildwood Dog Park and Dog Beach. These recreational resources are described further in this plan.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

2022 Master Plan Reexamination and Land Use Plan Element

The City adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report and Land Use Element in October 2022, which further reassessed and reaffirmed many of the City's goals for open space, community facilities, and conservation. As recommended in the report, the City was to adopt a new combined Conservation and Recreation Plan Element following the Master Plan Reexamination. This plan shall fulfill that goal to establish specific strategies for conservation, recreation, and open space as they relate to other elements and goals of the Master Plan.

Sustainability and Resiliency

As a built-out coastal community, sustainable redevelopment and increased resiliency to the effects of climate change remain ever-important priorities for the City of Wildwood. If left unaddressed, vulnerability to increasing climate-related risks such as storms, flooding, and sea-level rise threatens all aspects of life from public health and safety to the strength of the regional economy. Planning for a resilient future will ensure that the City protects its people and its assets and ultimately remains a vibrant and sustainable destination for future generations. This plan element builds upon the findings of the Climate-Change Vulnerability Assessment included in the Land Use Element to achieve these ends.

Covid-19, Remote Work and Beyond

Best management practices for parks and open space planning have shifted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Public health concerns in particular raised awareness to the everlasting demand for safe and convenient access to outdoor public spaces and free recreational opportunities. Although the City has ample beach area and diverse recreational facilities, it must continue to manage its facilities and programs in creative and responsive ways to preserve the safety, access, and overall enjoyment of its natural and built assets.

In addition to the shift in behavior relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and public health, the other pronounced change is related to work patterns, and subsequently residential and commuting patterns and behavior that result from those work patterns. While remote work is not new, it is now more common, and in many instances an expected amenity for employees that have the capacity to work remotely. Cities like Wildwood may reasonably expect an uptick in year-round residents in the future as this has untethered some employees from a physical work location, and has changed their commuting and residential needs. Residents working from home, especially those residents in apartments or living on small lots, may utilize public recreation and open space more so than in the past, and at different times than previously expected, as work and commuting routines shift as result of this phenomenon.

2 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

This Plan provides an inventory of the City's parks and open space facilities, a needs assessment based on national statistics, and general recommendations for parks and open spaces planning going forward. The findings and recommendations of this Plan are intended to advance the goals and objectives below, which have been carried forward or revised per the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

Goals and Objectives

- OSR 1 *Wildwood recognizes that publicly-accessible active and passive recreational sites and facilities are a critical component of residential life and a beneficial attraction for visitors and therefore shall make these facilities available to both residents and visitors.*
- OSR 2 *Provide a variety of recreation facilities and programming to meet the needs of all segments of the City's year-round and seasonal residents and visitors.*
- OSR 3 *Utilize the wide beach for additional active and passive recreation activities, including, but not limited to, a bicycle path which could connect to existing similar pathways in North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest:*
- a. Maximize the use of the City's wide Beach for active and passive recreation and as a tool for economic development;*
 - b. Promote activities which will enhance public access to the Beach and water;*
 - c. Respect and avoid disruption of existing environmentally-sensitive lands;*
 - d. Utilize the beach to attract visitors of varied ages and interests by way of more ~ and more-varied ~ offerings in order to enhance the Wildwood visitor's experience and satisfy the desires of an increasingly sophisticated vacationing public;*
 - e. Explore concepts that have not been tried before ~ at least in Wildwood ~ to create unique experiences as attractions for the City;*
 - f. Continue to modify existing policy or establish new regulations governing land use and physical improvements on the beach;*
 - g. Develop utility and easement controls which will promote the efficient and effective provision of necessary infrastructure and related services to the uses envisioned;*
 - h. Coordinate these goals and objectives with relevant permitting agencies to ensure that State and local policies and programs support the use of the beach as envisioned while respecting the traditional beach environment.*

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

WILDWOOD CITY, CAPE MAY COUNTY, NJ

ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 6, 2023 | PAGE 4

- i. *Balance use of the beach with resiliency goals and protection from natural hazards and climate-change related risks.*
- OSR 4 *Work with the Wildwood Board of Education to address physical plant issues facing the school system, including, but not limited to, issues identified within the Board of Education's Long-Range Facilities Plan.*
- OSR 5 *Update the City's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) to accurately reflect current conditions.*
- OSR 6 *Continue to coordinate these goals, objectives, and recommendations with other Elements of the City's Master Plan.*

Wildwood's Open Space and Recreation Resources

The City of Wildwood has 25 open space and recreation resources comprising approximately 173.73 acres. These resources consist of improved parkland, unimproved open space, and a combination of both preserved and unpreserved lands and facilities. It is recommended that the City continue to ensure consistency between the following list and the State's ROSI. With the exception of Byrne Plaza and portions of First Ward Beach, the City of Wildwood owns and manages all of the following open space and recreation resources:

- A. Holly Beach Park** (Block 72, Lot 7) is a 0.55-acre neighborhood park located between East Andrews Avenue and East Burk Avenue. The park includes a fountain, benches, lighting, walkways, trees, passive recreation space, and decorative brick column entryways on the street.
- B. Columbus Park** (Block 86, Lot 1) is a 1.74-acre park bounded by Atlantic Avenue, East Burk Avenue, Ocean Avenue and located adjacent to Fox Park. Columbus Park is equipped with walking paths, war memorials, benches, and a fenced softball field that doubles as event parking.
- C. Fox Park** (Block 97, Lot 1) is a 1.74-acre park bounded by Atlantic Avenue, East Montgomery Avenue, and Ocean Avenue. The park provides five tennis courts, two pickleball courts, a full-size basketball court, outdoor exercise equipment, memorial walking path, and a fenced playground suited for ages 5-12. Fox Park is also the location of the Doo Wop Experience Museum, which includes a band shell oriented toward Columbus Park.
- D. B.W. "Reds" Maxwell Memorial Field** (Block 132, Lot 1) is a 11.7-acre sports complex bounded by Susquehanna Avenue, Youngs Avenue, Park Boulevard, and Spicer Avenue. Facilities include a football stadium, track and field, full-size baseball field

and facilities, soccer field, basketball court, field lights, and off-street parking. Maxwell Field hosts a variety of recreational sports activities and is historically known for drum and bugle corps competitions.

At time of adoption, \$5 million in facility redesign and upgrades are underway for the complex through the County Open Space Project including a new track, playground, basketball courts, outdoor fitness areas, and other amenities.

An additional 0.3-acre property across the street (Block 152, Lot 9) has been acquired by the City and cleared for future expansion of the park, but no improvements are planned as of June 2023.

- E. **Byrne Community Center** is a 16,000-square-foot state-of-the-art community recreation center finished in 2008. The facility is located near the Maxwell Field sports complex at 401 W Youngs Avenue and equipped with a fitness room, computer lab, meeting room, dance room, game room, gymnasium, locker room, kitchen, and outdoor basketball court. The Center is open every day of the year and provides facilities and programs designed for all ages, including after-school programs for local students, exercise and social programs for seniors, special events, and recreation league activities.
- F. **Cedar Park** (Block 192, Lot 19) is a 0.45-acre passive recreation space located between Wildwood Avenue and Oak Avenue and adjacent to the Lions Center apartments. The lot contains trees and lawn.
- G. **Maple Avenue Park** (Block 204.02, Lot 1) is a 0.11-acre dockside pocket park situated at the end of West Maple Avenue. The park contains trees, lawn, and benches that overlook the docks in West Wildwood.
- H. **Fountain Park** (Block 225, Lot 18) is a 0.62-acre park bounded by Glenwood Avenue, New Jersey Avenue, and Magnolia Avenue. Amenities include benches, trees, walkways, lawn, a gazebo, and a statuary fountain.
- I. **William H. Bright Memorial Park** (Block 227, Lot 19) is a 0.12-acre pocket park located at the corner of Glenwood Avenue and Pacific Avenue. The park is dedicated to past Wildwood Mayor William H. Bright and contains walkways, benches, grass, and a fountain repurposed as a flowerbed.
- J. **SOLCOW¹ Park** (Block 242, Lot 16), known as Poplar Park until 2020, is a 0.41-acre neighborhood park bounded by Poplar Avenue, New York Avenue, and Juniper Avenue. The park is designed to serve the general public and function as

¹ Socratic Outdoor Learning Center of Wildwood

an outdoor classroom for Glenwood Avenue Elementary School students ages 6-12. The park provides trees, benches, walkways, and educational features such as a Socratic learning circle, flagpole-sundial, solar system statuary, and artistic solar panels.

- K. Old Fashioned Garden Park** (Block 255, Lot 2) is 0.12-acre pocket park located on the northern edge of the City at East 26th Avenue and Pacific Avenue. The park contains walkways, benches, trees, and lawn.
- L. Second Ward Beach and Third Ward Beach** (Block 267, Lot 1 and Block 268, Lot 1) encompass 78.42 acres and 25.25 acres respectively, or the southern 2/3 of the City's beach area. In addition to First Ward Beach located to the north, these areas are the "pride and joy" of Wildwood's open space and recreation system, providing nearly 1.3 linear miles of the state's widest beaches for swimming, recreation, and various festivals and events.
- M. Byrne Plaza** (Block 185, Lot 1.02) is a 1.46-acre multi-use public space owned by the County of Cape May and managed by the Wildwood Business Improvement District (WBID). The lot is equipped with a multi-use greenspace, programmable sign, band shell, bike racks, and benches. The plaza hosts farmers markets, free family movie nights, pop-up markets, live performances, fitness classes, community festivals and other public events.
- N. First Ward Beach** (Block 280, Lot 1) encompasses 44.9 acres of beach area located to the northeast of the City. The property is approximately 187-feet-wide at the boardwalk, widening to approximately 2,000 feet at the shoreline. As a discrepancy exists between the Tax Map property lines and the deeds of properties along the boardwalk, it is recommended that the City resolve issues pertaining to title ownership and riparian rights to ensure that the beach area remains part of the public beach and recreation system. First Ward Beach hosts various festivals and events and is home to Wildwood Dog Park and Dog Beach.
- O. Wildwood Dog Park and Dog Beach** is located along the boardwalk between Glenwood Avenue and Maple Avenue. The fenced dog park is approximately 0.75 acres and features play equipment for dogs, while the dog-friendly beach extends to the shoreline. Although the success of the dog park has been tremendously celebrated, the City anticipates its relocation as part of the beach maintenance plan and dune project, possibly to further down the beach near Baker Avenue.
- P. The Leaming Ave Bocce Courts** are located on a 40-foot by 100-foot portion of Block 34, Lot 2 where Leaming Avenue meets the boardwalk. The two bocce courts are equipped with lights, fencing, and seating areas although the facilities are

reportedly in need of major repairs. The remainder of the lot is used for beach parking.

- Q.** An **Unnamed Open Space** is located at 3300 New Jersey Ave on Block 192, Lot 21. The property is 0.25 acres and owned by the City. The area is 55- by 200-foot and adjacent to a bus stop. The space is maintained and contains a walking path, monument, trees, and benches.

R. Other open space and recreational resources:

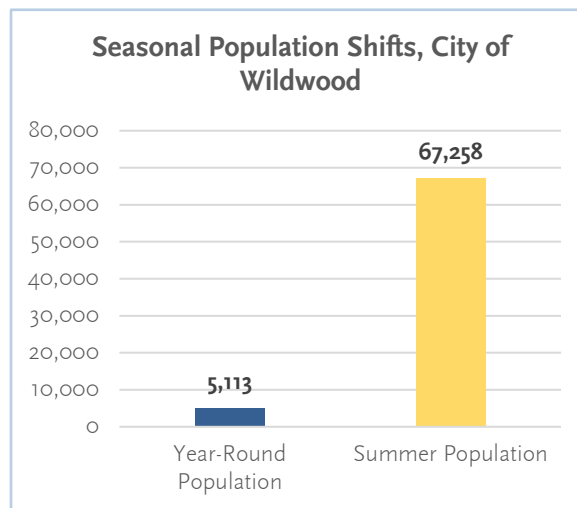
- Boardwalk Pavilion (Block 262, Lot 1): 0.15 acres
- Lifeguard Station (Block 263, Lot 1): 0.03 acres
- Boardwalk Comfort Station (Block 264, Lot 1): 0.04 acres
- Beach Access at Wildwood Avenue (Block 271, Lot 2.01): 0.61 acres
- Beach Access at Glenwood Avenue (Block 274, Lot 6.01): 0.56 acres
- Beach (Block 140, Lot 1.02): 1.01 acres (owned by Morey's Pier)
- Beach (Block 180, Lot 1.02): 2.09 acres (owned by Morey's Pier)
- Beach (Block 180, Lot 2.02): 1.01 acres (owned by Morey's Pier)

Resource Assessment and Recommendations

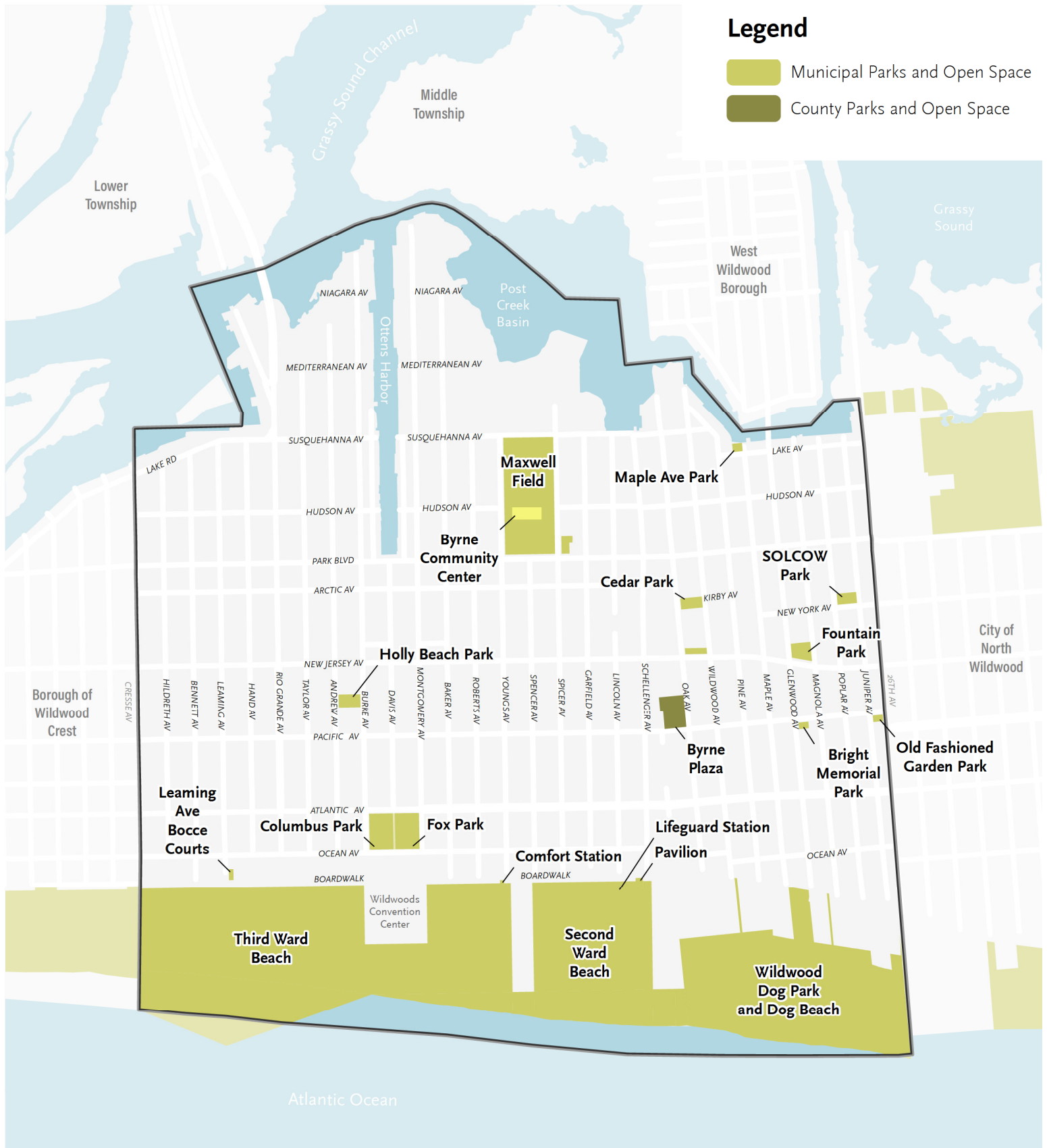
NRPA Needs Assessment

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) publishes an annual report providing survey statistics from parks and recreation departments in the United States. These findings can help local officials set department priorities by providing national statistics for comparison with local conditions. While no hard and fast rules for the provision of parks and recreational facilities exist, NRPA data provide a quantifiable baseline for identifying a City's potential needs for additional facilities and open space.

NRPA statistics are based on population data and should be considered in the context of local conditions. In Wildwood, this analysis must account for seasonal changes in population associated with summer tourism and the regional draw of the beaches. Whereas the year-round population



Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element



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Architecture
Planning
Landscape Architecture

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Open Space and Recreation Resources

LOCATION:
City of Wildwood, Cape May County, NJ

DATE:
May 2023

Sources:

Open Space and Recreation Resources
City of Wildwood and Clarke Caton Hintz (2023)

Parcel Data
NJGIS (2022)

New Jersey Roadway Network
NJDOT (2022)

is approximately 5,113 residents,² **the City's summer population is estimated to reach approximately 67,258 each year.**³ As a result, the City straddles two different NRPA population size groups: "Less than 20,000" during most of the year and "50,000 to 99,999" during the summer.

Although the estimated summer population is nearly 13x the number of year-round residents, it may be assumed that most of the City's summer population comprises visitors of the beaches, boardwalks, and related attractions rather than users of local active recreation facilities like baseball fields. While there may be some overlap among users, there is no indication that the City needs to design its municipal parks system to support 13x its permanent residential population. However, recreational facilities may see increased demand for facility needs where these populations are likely to overlap, such as along the beaches and boardwalk or playgrounds near clusters of hotels and hospitality uses.

The following is a summary of comparison between NRPA statistics and existing conditions in Wildwood, outlined in detail in Table 1.0.

Residents per Park: When it comes to year-round residents per park, Wildwood outperforms other places of similar population size throughout the country. In the summer, however, Wildwood is well below the national median. As noted above, these findings should be acknowledged but considered in the context of overlapping populations and feedback from both residents and visitors.

Acres per 1,000 Residents: Wildwood is primarily built-out and thus has a much lower acreage of park space per capita than places of similar population densities. This is true for year-round and summer populations.

Playgrounds: Wildwood has two playgrounds within the City, which puts it over the national median for residents per playground and represents a potential deficit. This is true for year-round and summer populations. However, compared to places of similar population density, Wildwood outperforms. Therefore, comparison with national statistics is somewhat inconclusive, and the City may need to conduct its own assessment through public input to ensure that playground supply and access is sufficient.

² 2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, United States Census Bureau.

³ "Post Covid Tourism Recovery." Cape May County Department of Tourism, 2022.

Table 1.o: Comparison of Wildwood Parks and Open Space ¹ and NRPA Statistics ²				
NRPA Statistic	NRPA Median, Year-Round (Goal)	Wildwood, Year-Round (Existing)	NRPA Median, Summer (Goal)	Wildwood, Summer (Existing)
Residents per Park (vs. Places of Similar Population)	1,225	300 (-975)	2,240	3,956 (+1,716)
Residents per Park (vs. Places of Similar Pop. Density)	2,187	300 (-1,887)	2,187	3,956 (+1,769)
Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents (vs. Places of Similar Population)	13.0	33.9 (+20.9)	11.2	2.5 (-8.7)
Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents (vs. Places of Similar Pop. Density)	7.8	33.9 (+25.1)	7.8	2.5 (-5.3)
Residents per Playground (vs. Places of Similar Population)	2,014	2,757 (+743)	3,779	33,629 (+29,850)
Residents per Playground (vs. Places of Similar Pop. Density)	3,731	2,757 (-974)	3,731	33,629 (+29,898)
¹ Calculations based on 17 parks, beaches and recreation facilities totaling 173.73 and 2 playgrounds; support facilities such as the Lifeguard Station are excluded; a year-round population of 5,113, and a summer population of 67,258. ² Findings from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, data gathered 2020-2022 by NRPA Park Metrics.				

Access to Parks and Playgrounds

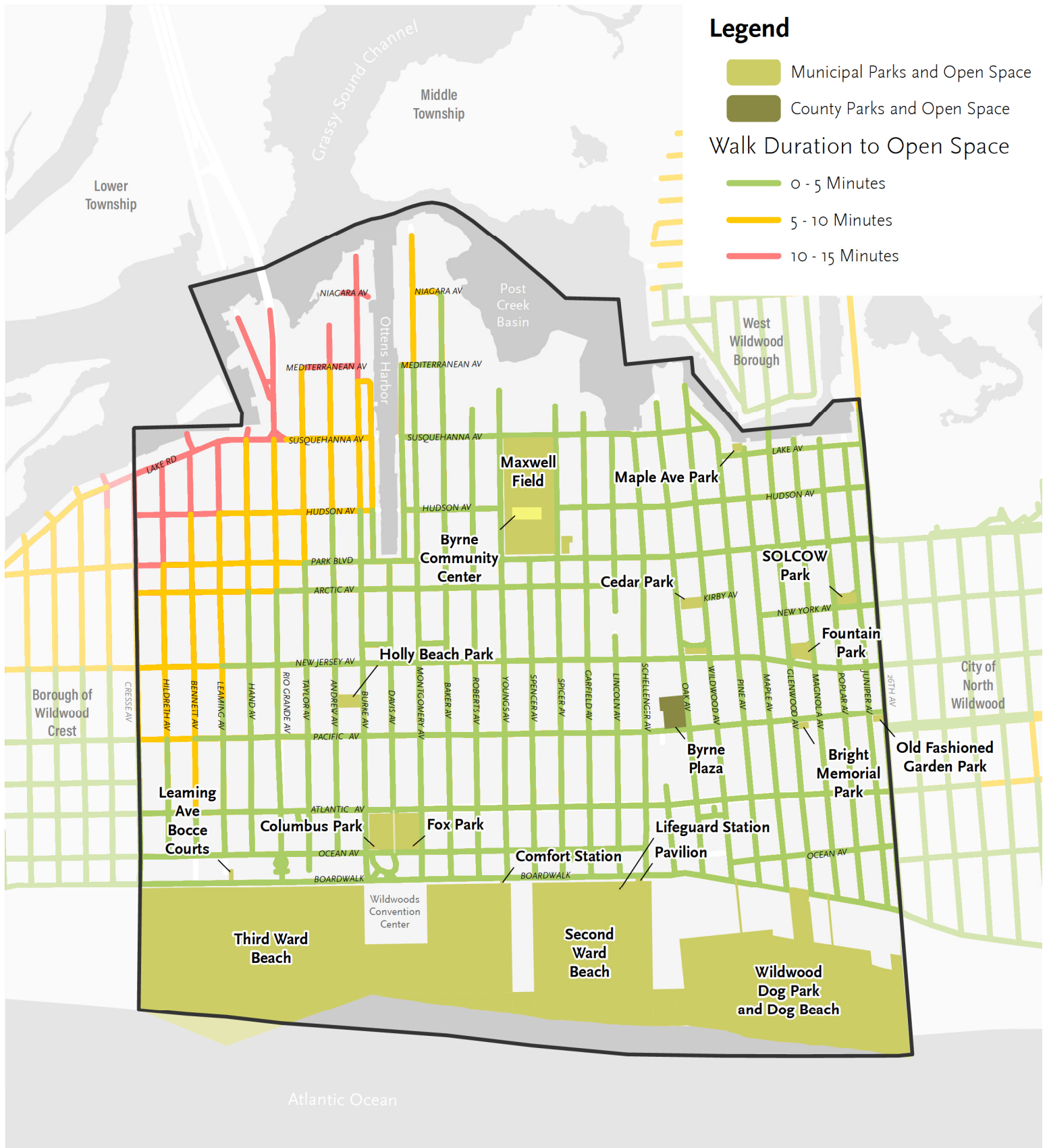
An analysis of walking distances to local parks and playgrounds is shown on the attached maps. Areas located within five-minute, ten-minute and fifteen-minute walks are indicated by a green, yellow, and red street network respectively, while areas located outside of a fifteen-minute walk are shown in purple.

The majority of the City is located within a five-minute walk of parks and open space according to the Access to Open Space and Recreation Facilities map. The area with the least access, which includes the blocks between Ottens Harbor and the Route 47 bridge, is located no more than a fifteen-minute walk from the nearest facilities, Holly Beach Park and Maxwell Field.

According to the Access to Playground Facilities map, playgrounds are also within reasonable walking distance for most of the City with few blocks more than 15 minutes away from the nearest playground. The City may consider additional playgrounds in the least served areas to the northeast and southwest, as shown on the map, to maximize playground proximity and minimize travel distances for children and families.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

WILDWOOD CITY, CAPE MAY COUNTY, NJ
ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 6, 2023 | PAGE 11



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CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Access to Open Space and Recreation Facilities

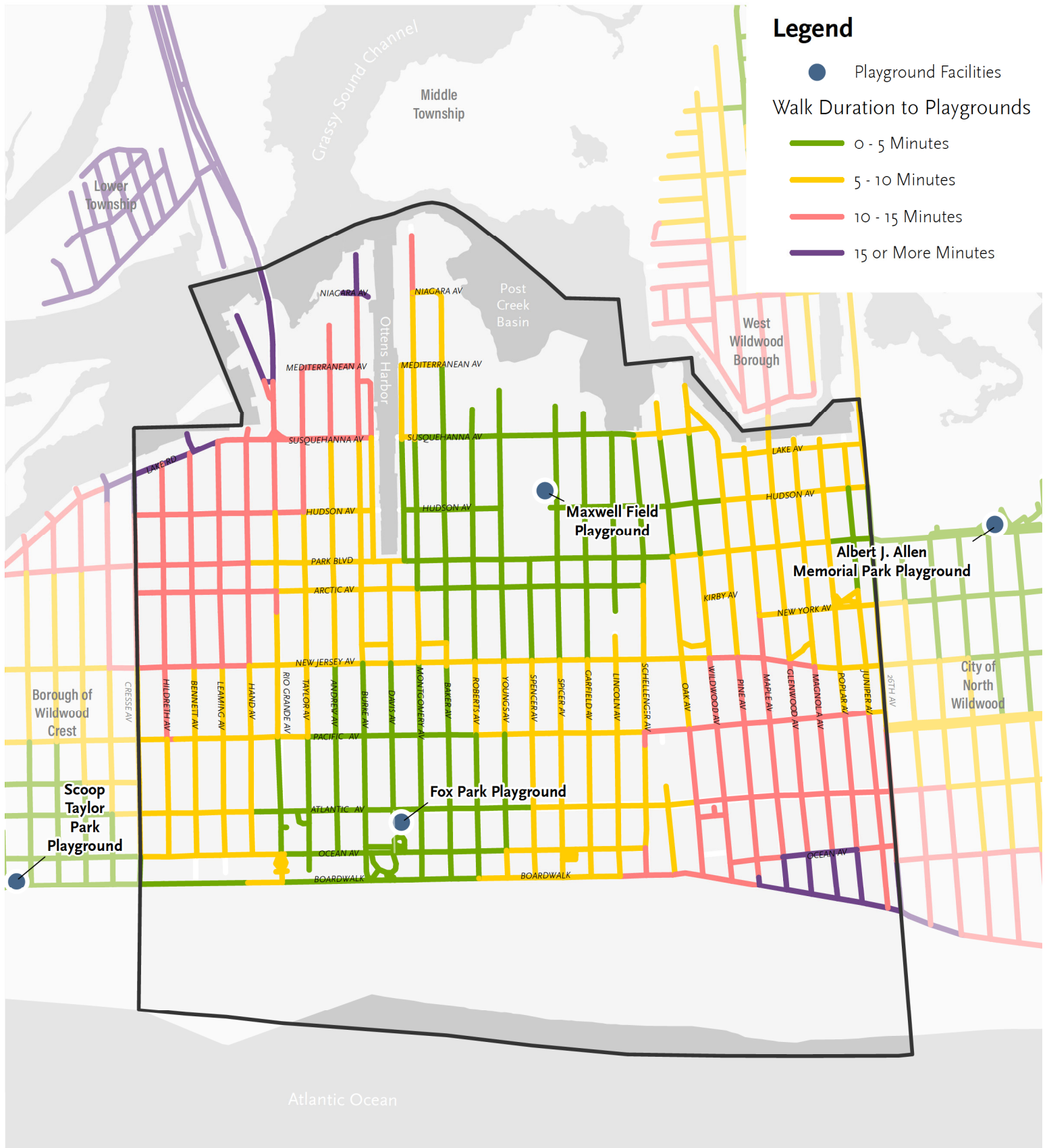
LOCATION:
City of Wildwood, Cape May County, NJ

DATE:
May 2023

Sources:

Parcel Data
NJGIS (2022)

New Jersey Roadway Network
NJDOT (2022)



Legend

- Playground Facilities

Walk Duration to Playgrounds

- 0 - 5 Minutes
- 5 - 10 Minutes
- 10 - 15 Minutes
- 15 or More Minutes



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Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Access to Playground Facilities

LOCATION:
City of Wildwood, Cape May County, NJ

DATE:
June 2023

Sources:

Parcel Data
NJOGIS (2022)

New Jersey Roadway Network
NJDOT (2022)

General Recommendations

Wildwoods Bike Path

The Wildwood boardwalk forms a link in the Wildwoods Bike Path, an intermunicipal bicycle route spanning 3.5 miles of Five Mile Beach. Where the boardwalk meets North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest, the bike route transitions to a two-way, separated bike path along the dunes. However, in order to maintain the safety of various users, cycling on the boardwalk is restricted to specific hours, which limits the functionality of the overall bike network.

To provide unrestricted bike access within Wildwood, the City has identified an interest in constructing a bicycle path similar to its neighbors. Although the previous concept envisioned a curvilinear route along the beach, this option was deemed less feasible due to ongoing dune reconstruction projects. It is recommended that the City continue to pursue a bike route as explored in the City's Circulation Plan Element.

Parks and Public Health

Parks and open spaces are intricately linked to various public health outcomes as they are part of the built environment and thus a social determinant of health as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). More specifically, access to nature and opportunities for recreation play a role in reducing asthma rates, obesity, heart health, while enriching social development and mental health. It is recommended that the City continue to provide facilities and programs that consider public health outcomes in tandem with other priorities identified by the City.

Planning for Inclusive Parks

Parks and open space planning has increasingly become cognizant of strategies that ensure that such facilities can be accessed and enjoyed by people of all backgrounds. The City can achieve this vision by ensuring safe and abundant access to its facilities, programming, and information pertaining to these resources.

While Wildwood's recreational facilities generally meet the needs of its residents and visitor populations, recreational programming has been traditionally oriented to the City's families and youth. In recent years, programming for seniors and other segments of the population has been provided primarily through Byrne Community Center. It is recommended that the City continue to assess its resources in order to balance and meet the needs of its senior population as well as other segments of the population, such as people with disabilities or neurodivergent populations.

Specific recommendations for a more inclusive parks and recreation system include:

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

1. Providing diverse opportunities for both active and passive recreation;
2. Establishing user-friendly, citywide signage and wayfinding; and
3. Incorporating universal design principles for all ages and abilities intended to exceed ADA requirements.

Maximizing Public Use of the Beach

Preserving and enhancing use and access to the City's beaches remains a high priority. The City has long held a policy to "ensure the continued unobstructed view from the Boardwalk to the Beach and to the Ocean and to ensure continued use of the Beach and Ocean by bathers" in a way that "promotes the Beach as a natural resource."

With regard to First Ward Beach, public acquisition of privately-owned lots on the east side of the boardwalk for the City's public beach system was a previous goal that is complicated by existing property ownership and riparian rights. The City has instead decided to pursue perpetual easements as part of the ongoing dune plan led by NJDEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. Where necessary, the City should continue to work with property owners on preserving and enhancing public access to the beach in accordance with statewide regulations governing public access to the waterfront as established by NJDEP.

Implementing the Beach Concept Plan

A concept site plan for the City's beaches and forthcoming dune system was prepared in 2022.⁴ The plan included a variety of permanent and temporary improvements aimed to diversify beachfront facilities and maximize use of the entire beach. It is recommended that the City pursue funding opportunities for the proposed improvements and coordinate implementation of the plan with the dune reconstruction project. Notable features of the plan include:

- Parking facilities
- Public restrooms
- Public walkways;
- Baseball fields;
- Misc. recreation facilities;
- Concessions areas;
- Beach bars;
- Relocated dog park;
- Festival zones;
- Beach boxes;

⁴ Site Plan (Post-Dune). Dated January 13, 2023. Prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers.

- Beach equipment storage areas; and
- Fireworks staging areas.

Coordination with Educational Facilities Planning

Coordination with the Wildwood Board of Education to address physical plant issues facing the school system and identified in the Board's Long-Range Facilities Plan remains a goal of the Master Plan. Although the Wildwood School District manages no standalone or publicly accessible outdoor recreation facilities, the City and the School District can support school activities and after-school activities by enhancing bicycle and pedestrian access between schools and public recreation facilities.

It is recommended that the City and Board of Education explore the principles of Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to Schools programs and pursue public funding opportunities for implementation of these programs as described further in the Circulation Plan Element. These initiatives may also be achieved through coordination with active transportation school programs such as "bike buses" and "walking buses" as recommended in the Circulation Plan Element.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

3 CONSERVATION PLAN

The Master Plan continues to support City policy that balances economic development goals with conservation of the resources that sustain it. As the City's buildable land area is already mostly developed, conservation efforts in Wildwood will consist of preservation of its waters and waterfront features and implementation of strategies that optimize the City's use of energy and natural resources. This Conservation Plan Element provides an inventory of the City's natural resources and recommendations aimed at achieving the following goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

- CV 1 *Wildwood recognizes the need to balance its desire to promote economic development with its need to preserve its environmental resources (principally the bathing beaches, Atlantic Ocean, marine tidal marshes and back bay areas). As a seaside resort, Wildwood recognizes that its economic health is inextricably tied to the health of these resources.*
- CV 2 *Explore the installation of an effective dune system to protect the City's Amusement Piers, Convention Center and Boardwalk. Link such system with the existing dune surrounding the Convention Center.*
- CV 3 *While the State Plan endorses the concept of growth in Wildwood, the regulatory framework currently in place, principally under NJDEP / CAFRA, constitutes a very real impediment to such development.*
- CV 4 *Recognizing the urban, fully-developed nature of the City, the special nature of the Wildwood beach and boardwalk and the opportunities presented by these elements, and further recognizing that the State Plan has designated the Wildwoods as a 'Regional Center' within a PA-5B (Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area / Barrier Island) Planning Area, explore creation of a specific CAFRA "Wildwood Rule" in order to tailor the Coastal Zone Management Rules to take advantage of Wildwood's assets and designations while appropriately protecting the natural environment.*
- CV 5 *Support economic activity and programmatic elements designed to make appropriate use of the City's environmental resources.*
- CV 6 *The City will work to implement the goals of New Jersey's Coastal Management Program, and work together to protect and enhance the beaches, maintain public access to the beaches, ensure that proper evacuation plans are developed, and ensure that zoning policies are in place to retain water dependent uses.*
- CV 7 *Wildwood recognizes that, as a principal of Smart Growth, well-planned communities reduce land consumption, habitat loss, vehicle miles traveled ("VMT"), toxic emissions and demand for energy and other resources. Accordingly, the City needs to promote every*

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

possible means to conserve energy by using energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy resources and passive forms of energy.

- CV 8 Maximize energy efficiency and use of renewable energy resources for all mechanical building systems of new developments in the City.*
- CV 9 Maximize the use of environmentally-friendly, LEED building systems and technologies for all new development projects and City operations.*
- CV 10 Consider appropriate technologies and practices related to building lighting for vertical development in order to maximize energy efficiency and reduce the incidence of migratory bird strikes at these buildings. Such a program may include a Lights Out program to extinguish or reduce decorative building lighting on upper stories between 11:00 p.m. and daylight.*
- CV 11 Institute a shuttle (mass transit) system to reduce VMTs as part of the Centralized Parking Plan detailed in the Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan.*
- CV 12 Climate change and sea level rise is a new phenomenon that has been recently recognized by leading researchers and the State of New Jersey. Climate change presents an unprecedented challenge to humanity. The Global Warming Response Act adopts goals for the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions in New Jersey. Ignoring this problem is catalyst for increased storm event magnification, storm-related flooding, significant property loss, impacts upon coastal ecosystems and may threaten coastal freshwater supplies due to saltwater intrusion. A sea-level rise in line with median projections would threaten the majority of New Jersey's coastline, not just the City of Wildwood.*
- CV 13 Investigate multiple resiliency strategies to address sea-level rise and storm surges including but not limited to: form-based land use codes, zoning for higher densities and mixed-use development, infill development and limits on dwelling size, green building standards, codes and programs to retro-fit existing municipal and privately-owned buildings.*
- CV 14 Inventory potential sources of greenhouse gas emissions to identify excess energy consumption associated with municipal and regional agencies.*

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

Natural Features

Topography

Wildwood is located on a barrier island, where elevation changes are relatively minor. The majority of the City's land area is less than ten feet above sea level, whereas the highest elevation is approximately 20 feet. The City's flat elevation has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the City's economy and reputation is built upon its uniquely wide beaches, which have provided the opportunity to develop the beach and boardwalk into the commercial and recreational destination that it is today. However, on the other hand, the City's low-lying coastal location and current lack of sufficient dune protection increases its vulnerability to storm surges and coastal flooding, which are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change. To address this risk, the US Army Corps of Engineers and NJDEP are currently advancing a multibillion-dollar dune construction plan for Five Mile Beach that will include the Wildwoods and offer enhanced protection from flooding.

Beaches

Wildwood has approximately 198 acres⁵ of beaches, of which 108 acres are publicly owned and preserved through Green Acres. Whereas other barrier island communities have experienced severe erosion of their beaches, Wildwood has gradually accreted additional land area over the past several decades to the point that its beaches range from 0.2- to 0.3- miles in width, which constitute the widest beaches in the state.

Conservation of the City's beaches will continue to be advanced through New Jersey's Coastal Management Program, the City's Land Development Ordinance and redevelopment plans, and expansion of public and recreational uses on the beach as permitted by NJDEP. Physical protection of the beach and boardwalk will be advanced by the dune plan underway by the US Army Corps of Engineers and NJDEP, which is to be coordinated with public access and other components of this plan.

Soils

According to the US Department of Agriculture's Web Soil Survey tool, the majority of the soil in Wildwood is classified as USPSBP: urban land, psamments, wet substratum complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded. This soil type is concentrated along the center of the island that Wildwoods is situated on, and most of the residential and commercial properties are in this area. The eastern portion of the city, lying along Ottens Harbor, Post Creek and Post Creek Basin is USPSAS type oil – urban land, psamments, sulfidic substratum complex, occasionally flooded. Along the western shore, adjacent to the

⁵ NJDEP Bureau of GIS, Land Use/Land Cover of New Jersey 2015. Published January 29th, 2019. Updated August 12, 2019. Retrieved May 4, 2023. gisdata-njdep.opendata.arcgis.com/documents/6f76b90deda34cc98aec255e2defdb45/about

Atlantic Ocean the soil is BEADV – beaches, 0 to 15 percent slopes, very frequently flooded. These three soil types make up over 95 percent of the soil in the City, with a small section of HorDr – Hooken sand, 2 to 15 percent slopes, rarely flooded – located surrounding the Wildwoods Convention Center.

Soil conservation efforts in Wildwood can be advanced in tandem with other strategies of the Master Plan such as those that manage stormwater runoff and promote natural infiltration, protect the beaches and minimize damage from large-scale flood and tidal events, and the conservation of wetlands areas and by extension hydric soils as administered by NJDEP regulations.

Surface Water

The “City by the Sea” is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Intracoastal Waterway to the west. The Intracoastal Waterway encompasses the bayside of the City, connecting several waterbodies and channels between the island of Five Mile Beach and New Jersey’s mainland. To the northwest is Post Creek Basin, also known as Sunset Lake, which connects Post Creek and the Wildwood Canal, the respective boundaries between Middle Township and West Wildwood. Waters on both the bayside and oceanside provide for a variety of water sports in the summer including swimming, surfing, fishing, boating and motorized activities.

Private harbors and marinas are located along much of the City’s bayside. Ottens Harbor extends a half-mile into the City from the back bay to Park Boulevard and consists of a 220-foot-wide dredged canal lined with private residential docks and bulkheads.

The City is located within NJDEP Cape May Watershed Management Area 16. In 2019, the City adopted a Watershed Management Plan, identifying local watershed characteristics and City policies and establishing a set of goals to manage flooding concerns. It is recommended that the City continue to work with NJDEP on implementation of the WMP.

There are no sources of surface freshwater located within Wildwood or Five Mile Beach. In fact, the City’s water source is located in Middle Township, where it is protected from saltwater intrusion. However, an aquifer recharge well pump station is located at the Wildwood Bureau of Water complex at 3100 New Jersey Avenue. The facility injects potable water into non-potable or saline aquifers underground, where it forms a lens, or bubble, of drinkable water for later recovery and use.

To protect its water resources, it is recommended that the City continue to implement policies and as administered by NJDEP, including both mandatory rules and voluntary best management practices (BMPs) related to stormwater management, groundwater recharge, and water quality protection.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is a result of precipitation that has been prevented from infiltrating the ground by impervious surfaces such as concrete and pavement that comprise streets, rooftops, and other built features. As it flows across impervious surfaces, runoff picks up animal waste, pollutants, and sediment, and carries them through the City's stormwater system to outfalls at the edge of the City, where it is discharged into waterways. As this discharge is not treated in Wildwood, it is thus a non-point source of water pollution that should be mitigated to protect the quality of its recreational waters and aquatic ecosystems.

Other than the City's beaches and parks, most of the City is impervious land cover. According to analytical mapping by NJDEP based on land cover data⁶, impervious land coverage in Wildwood ranges from an estimated 10-30% coverage in the areas of the back bay to 80-100% in the most densely built blocks near the boardwalk and along avenues running up and down the island. Efforts that minimize and reduce impervious coverage in developed areas of the City will be a key component of stormwater management.

In 2020, NJDEP adopted stormwater management rules that require the use of green infrastructure such as vegetative swales, bioretention, green roofs, cisterns, wet ponds, infiltration basins and constructed wetlands. These new rules are aimed at improving ground infiltration of stormwater and mimicking natural filtration and drainage systems. The City adopted Ordinance 1207-21 to amend the Land Development Ordinance to incorporate these mandatory requirements for major development. It is recommended that the City continue to pursue opportunities for enhanced stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in addition to administering mandatory NJDEP stormwater rules.

Flood Hazard Areas

As a coastal community, Wildwood is located within Special Flood Hazard Areas as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Based on the agency's National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) data, the majority of the City is located within the Zone AE, or the 100-year flood plain, which means there is a 1% annual chance that most of the City will flood in any given year. Further, any mortgaged structures in this area shall require flood insurance.

Within the AE Zones in Wildwood, there are three levels of anticipated base flood elevation: 10 feet, 9 feet, and 8 feet. These levels of elevation correspond to the minimum required elevation for inhabited portions of structures. However, Wildwood's design flood elevation for new construction and substantial improvements exceeds FEMA requirements by two feet as an extra protection from current and projected increases in flood damage.

⁶ Impervious Surface of New Jersey from Land Use/Land Cover 2012 Update. NJDEP. njogis-newjersey.opendata.arcgis.com/documents/7471a42f971e473bbe6e483a4d01e1c7/about

Nearly all areas that are not located in Zone AE are located in Zone X, or the 500-year flood plain. There is a 0.2% annual chance that these areas will flood in any given year.

An additional level of flood risk corresponds to Zone VE, which includes areas within the 100-year flood plain (Zone AE) that are also exposed to velocity hazard, or wave action, during flooding events. In Wildwood, Zone VE encompasses all areas that are east of the boardwalk.

The only areas in the City that are located outside of an SFHA are an area in front of Wildwoods Convention Center and the Bayside Redevelopment Area (BSRA). However, these areas comprise extremely limited portions of the City that would be effectively isolated in the case of a 100-year flood.

As of 2023, the Army Corps of Engineers and NJDEP continue to advance a multibillion-dollar dune plan to reduce the vulnerability of New Jersey's barrier islands to beach erosion coastal flood damage. A reconstructed beachfront dune is planned to stretch from Hereford Inlet in North Wildwood to Diamond Beach in Lower Township.

Wetlands and Marshes

Both freshwater wetlands and saline marshes are located within the City. According to NJDEP land use land cover GIS data⁷, the City has 12.26 acres of wetlands, consisting of several subtypes as defined by the Anderson Classification System and summarized below.

Saline Marsh: There are 8.9 acres of saline marshes along western shore of Post Creek Basin and north of the George Redding Bridge (NJ Route-47). Wetlands of this classification are typically located in the Delaware Bay and associated tributaries and are characterized by the presence of grasses associated with high salinity waters.

Phragmites Dominate Wetlands: Approximately 1.12 acres of phragmites dominate wetlands are present near Bunkers Marina at the end of West Baker Avenue. This wetlands classification includes areas overrun with *Phragmites australis*, an invasive species of flood-tolerant grass that grows rapidly to heights of six feet or more and overcrowds native species.

Managed Wetlands: Approximately 2.19 acres of managed wetlands are located on Maxwell Field sports facilities. Per NJDEP, managed wetlands are disturbed wetland areas that once had natural wetlands but were later altered as part of a

⁷ NJDEP Bureau of GIS, Land Use/Land Cover of New Jersey 2015. Published January 28, 2019. Updated August 12, 2019. Retrieved May 4, 2023. gisdata-njdep.opendata.arcgis.com/documents/6f76b90deda34cc98aec255e2defdb45/about

managed landscape. These areas exhibit signs of saturated soils but do not support typical wetlands vegetation due to human alteration such as lawn cover or swales.

All wetlands in New Jersey are regulated by NJDEP permit rules and are thus unlikely to be removed but for significant development requiring special permission from NJDEP. While wetlands conditions are subject to change over time, NJDEP shall continue to have the final authority over the official delineation and interpretation of wetlands boundaries. However, it is recommended that the City update the information of this plan concurrently with the release of updated data published by NJDEP.

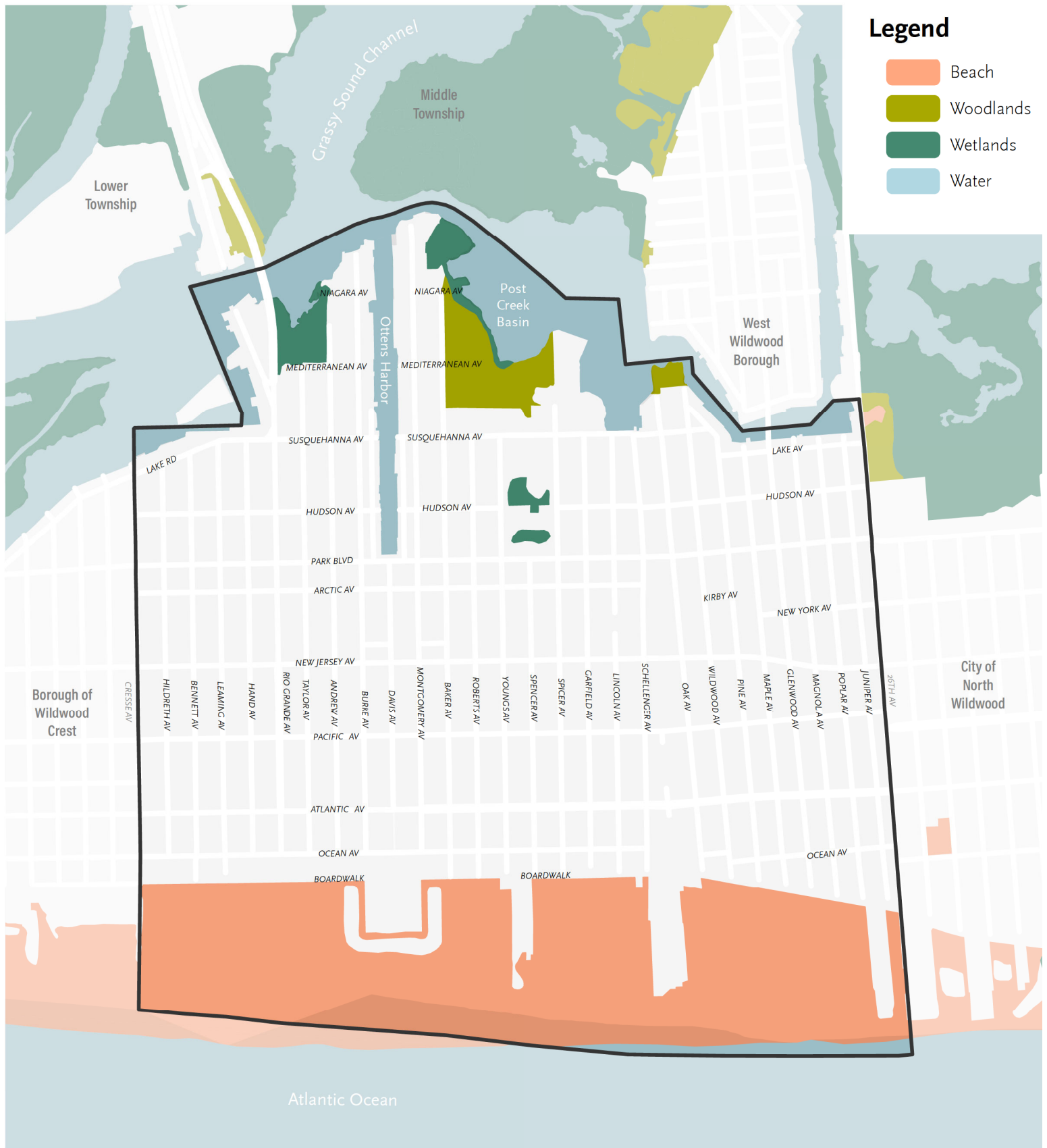
Woodlands

Wildwood has 16.56 acres of woodlands, consisting primarily of brush and scrub covered areas near the western shoreline. Approximately 1.49 acres of the City's woodlands consists of scrubland located west of the Atlantic City Electric substation at Susquehanna and Oak Avenue, while 15.07 acres of brush/scrubland are located within the Bayside Redevelopment Area (BSRA), which comprises the City's former landfill. The Bayside/Back Bay Redevelopment Plan anticipates redevelopment of the majority of the City's remaining woodlands into residential, commercial, and public uses.

Rather than amend the Redevelopment Plan, it is recommended that the City instead pursue expansion of its urban tree canopy to provide supplemental woodland habitat and other ecosystem services throughout the entire City.

Wildlife Habitat

The Division of Fish & Wildlife of NJDEP developed the Landscape Project as a tool to assist communities with strategic wildlife habitat conservation. The Landscape Project combines documented species sightings and location data, land-use and land-cover data, and species life history information to delineate habitat for endangered, threatened and special concern wildlife throughout the state. The Landscape Project categorizes critical wildlife habitat areas into 5 ranks, described in Table 2.0, below.



Legend

- Beach
- Woodlands
- Wetlands
- Water



Clarke Caton Hintz



Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Natural Land Cover

LOCATION:
City of Wildwood, Cape May County, NJ

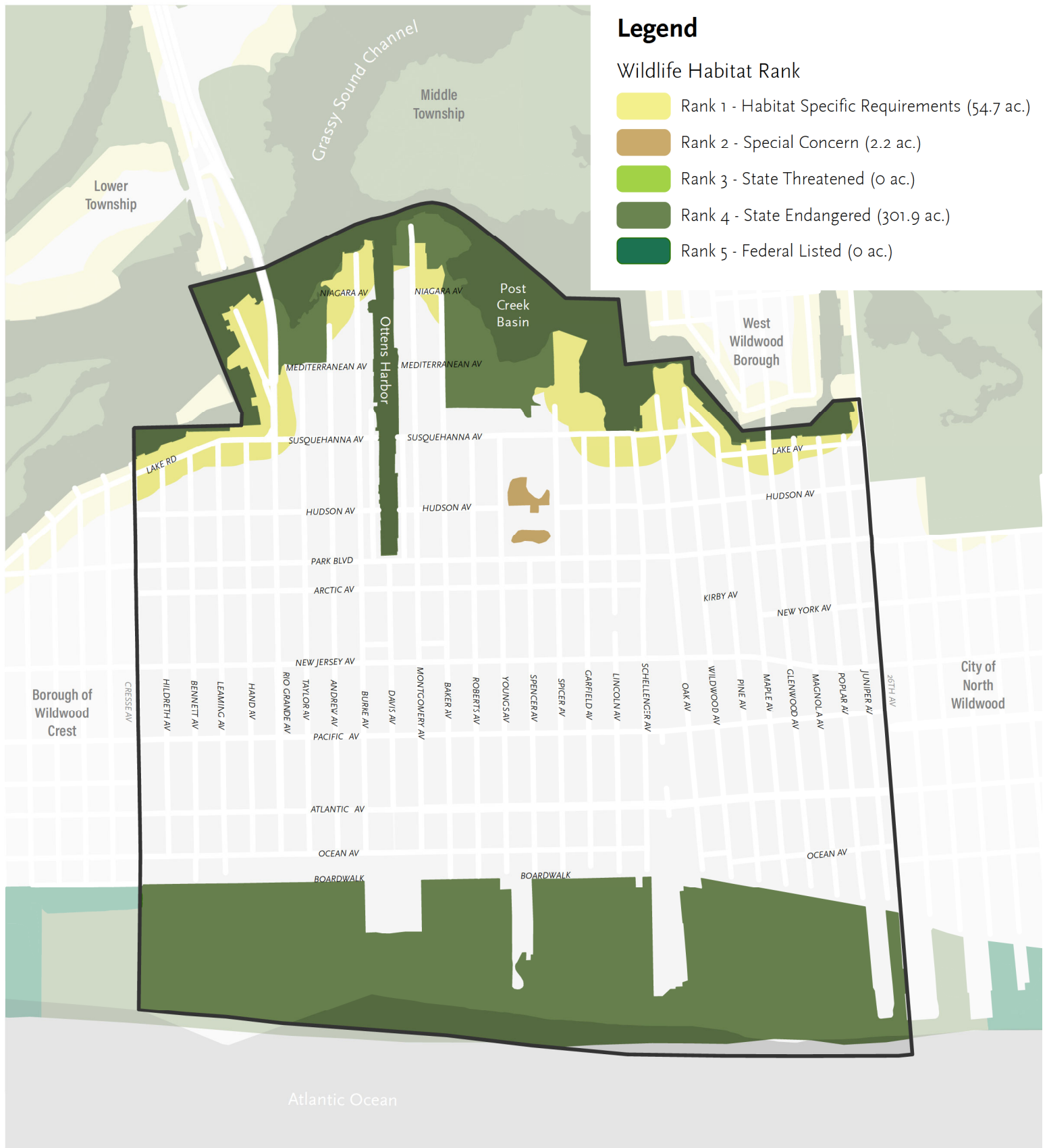
DATE:
May 2023

Sources:

Land Use / Land Cover
NJDEP (2015)

Parcel Data
NJOGIS (2022)

New Jersey Roadway Network
NJDOT (2022)



Legend

Wildlife Habitat Rank

- Rank 1 - Habitat Specific Requirements (54.7 ac.)
- Rank 2 - Special Concern (2.2 ac.)
- Rank 3 - State Threatened (0 ac.)
- Rank 4 - State Endangered (301.9 ac.)
- Rank 5 - Federal Listed (0 ac.)



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Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Wildlife Habitat

LOCATION:
City of Wildwood, Cape May County, NJ

DATE:
May 2023

Sources:

Atlantic Coastal - Species Based Habitat
NJDEP, DFW, Landscape Project v3.3 (2021)

Parcel Data
NJOGIS (2022)

New Jersey Roadway Network
NJDOT (2022)

Table 2.o: Landscape Project Species-Specific Habitat Classifications ¹				
Rank		Acres	Rank Description	Location(s)
1	Habitat Specific Requirements	54.7	- Meets habitat-specific suitability requirements such as minimum size or core area criteria for endangered, threatened or special concern wildlife species - Does not intersect with any confirmed occurrences of such species	Within ±300 feet of bayside waterways
2	Special Concern	2.2	- Contains at least one occurrence of species considered to be of special concern	Mitigated wetlands on Maxwell Field
3	State Threatened	0	- Contains at least one occurrence of State threatened species	N/A
4	State Endangered	301.9	- Contains at least one occurrence of State endangered species	Bayside waterways, Ottens Harbor, beaches, wetlands, and wooded areas
5	Federal Listed	0	- Contains at least one occurrence of species listed as endangered and threatened pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973	N/A
¹ Landscape Project Version 3.3, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife. 2017.				

According to the Landscape Project, species-based habitat of Rank 1, 2, and 4 is located within the City of Wildwood. The majority of identified habitat within the City consists of beaches or waters that are subject to permit procedures administered by NJDEP and other agencies. In these areas, direct loss of existing habitat due to land development is of lesser concern than natural and man-made effects of pollution, erosion, or coastal flooding.

Approximately 15 acres of Rank 4 wooded habitat is located within the Bayside Redevelopment Area (BSRA), which comprises the City's former landfill. In conjunction with expanding the urban canopy throughout the City, it is recommended that mitigation of existing woodland habitat loss be considered throughout the redevelopment process of the BSRA to the extent feasible.

The City can also support wildlife habitat and species of concern through various measures beyond land preservation. It is recommended that the City promote best management practices that minimize the loss or degradation of natural habitat and promote habitat restoration, such as:

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

1. Promote the planting of native, diverse, and context-appropriate species;
2. Discourage the planting of non-native species;
3. Support restoration of dunes, wetlands, and scrub/brushlands;
4. Curb the use of pesticides and fertilizers;
5. Encourage bird-friendly window installations;
6. Manage outdoor cat populations;
7. Remove invasive species;
8. Promote noise mitigation strategies; and
9. Continue to provide dog waste stations and sufficient waste collection services/facilities.

Shellfishing

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) classifies and regulates waters throughout the state to protect public health by preventing the harvest and consumption of contaminated shellfish. Classification is based on the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP), coordinated by the US Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and administered by participating agencies at the federal and state level. Delineation of classification area is based on regular monitoring of water quality, field surveys of shoreline conditions, and study of water currents and flows, or hydrography.

As of 2022, all waters located within City limits or immediately adjacent are Prohibited, which means that shellfish harvesting is not permitted under any conditions.⁸

Energy

While New Jersey's electricity is primarily sourced from natural gas and nuclear power,⁹ the City of Wildwood can encourage increased energy efficiency and local energy production sourced from renewable resources such as solar and wind. In addition to reducing emissions that contribute to climate change and poor air quality, local transition to on-site, "cleaner and greener" energy sources can improve local resiliency to large scale power outages. The following strategies are intended to advance these goals of the Master Plan.

§17-511B Energy Conservation Devices.

In January 2019, the City adopted Ordinance No. 1128-18, which established conditions permitting the installation of solar panels and other energy conservation devices in all zoning districts. Among the adopted standards, such facilities shall not be located in the front yard of any lot nor shall they be taller than 1.5x the permitted height of any principal use. To encourage energy conservation devices in Wildwood as technology and priorities

⁸ N.J.A.C 7:12

⁹ US Energy Information Administration, State profile and Energy Estimates 2021.
www.eia.gov/state/?sid=NJ#tabs-1

evolve, the City should continually reassess and amend this section of the ordinance as necessary.

NJ Community Solar Program

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) launched a Community Solar Pilot Program in 2019 with planned permanence in 2023. Community solar projects enable an energy ratepayer to subscribe at a reduced rate to virtually receive their energy from approved community solar projects anywhere in the state. It is recommended that the City encourage development of local community solar projects and microgrids through this program.

Several public and quasi-public solar facilities have already been installed throughout Wildwood, including an artistic solar array installation in SOLCOW Park and a solar canopy over the Morey's Pier parking lot on Ocean Avenue. Additionally, a new solar canopy has been completed on the City Hall parking lots with planned expansion of solar facilities to all municipal buildings, including those owned by the Wildwood Water Utility in Middle Township.

It is recommended that solar facilities continue to be prioritized among all public land uses facilities and specifically targeted for critical facilities such as public buildings, schools, and grocery stores and other sites that have been identified in the Climate-Change Vulnerability Assessment of the Land Use Element. The City should also encourage the proliferation of microgrids in efforts related to the goal of energy resiliency.

NJDEP Solar Siting Analysis

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) performed a statewide solar siting analysis in 2017 using geographic information systems (GIS) data to aid the State, local communities, and potential solar developers in planning for solar facilities. The siting analysis culminated in a map delineating lands where NJDEP encourages or discourages solar development. According to the assessment, nearly all developed lands in Wildwood west of the boardwalk are locations deemed suitable by NJDEP for solar facilities. Areas of undeveloped natural landcover such as woodlands, wetlands, and beach, are not preferred sites.

It is recommended that, due to spatial constraints, the City continue to encourage private development of solar arrays on rooftops, parking lots, and other existing impervious surfaces where feasible.

Green Building Practices

Research from the United States Environmental Protection Agency found that 13% of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the United States each year come from *fossil fuels burned for heat, lighting and the use of gases for refrigeration and cooling in businesses and homes,*

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

*and non-building specific emissions such as the handling of waste*¹⁰. Furthermore, the EPA indicated that if electricity used by businesses and homes were included in the greenhouse gas emission tally, that the number would be considerably higher¹¹. While this is a nationwide phenomenon, local control over zoning and building practices provides an opportunity for Wildwood to encourage or require more sustainable building practices for residential, commercial and municipal development at the local level.

There are several means by which Wildwood may require or encourage green development in the future. This ranges from providing architectural and design guidelines for new construction, requiring sustainable building techniques in redevelopment plans, incentivizing the use of sustainable HVAC equipment and making information about State and Federal programs geared towards lowering the cost of sustainable construction available to residents and property owners in the City. The following list contains suggestions for more sustainable construction in Wildwood:

- I. Architectural and Design Guidelines: The City should adopt as part of its general building regulations guidelines for sustainable development. Such guidelines can be tied to an independent rating system such as LEED, NGBS or Phius. The City may also look to the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) LIHTC Green Requirements for guidance on green building practices that can be adopted by the City. While these requirements are intended for developers of affordable housing, the guidelines can be applied to market rate housing and commercial development just the same. Examples of such guidelines are as follows:
 - Passive solar and cooling practices through the proper orientation of buildings and windows.
 - Proper insulation and sealing of buildings to limit energy loss.
 - Use of high efficiency HVAC equipment.
 - Use of appliances and equipment certified by Energy Star.
 - Use of LED lighting.
 - Use of green roofs or white/cool roofs.
2. Future redevelopment plans should require sustainable building practices.

¹⁰ www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions

¹¹ Ibid.

3. Encourage residents and developers to utilize State and Federal programs that provide funding or financing for sustainable retrofitting of existing buildings. Examples of such programs include:
 - Appliance and HVAC equipment rebates through Utilities such as JCP&L and Atlantic City Electric.
 - Interest free repayment programs
 - The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Comfort Partners Program.
 - Energy Efficiency Home Improvement Federal tax credits.
 - Federal tax credit for solar photovoltaics.
 - The U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program.
4. For Vertical Development, consider appropriate technologies and practice related to building lighting in order to maximize energy efficiency and reduce the incidence of migratory bird strikes at these buildings. Such a program may include a Lights Out program to extinguish or reduce decorative building lighting on upper stories between 11:00 p.m. and daylight.

Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment

One method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is through replacing automobiles that utilize gasoline with those that run either partially or completely on electricity. While it is out of the reach of the City to facilitate mass vehicle replacement, it is possible to make it more convenient to own and/or operate such a vehicle in Wildwood.

As stated in the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination, New Jersey passed a law on July 9, 2021 mandating the provision of electric vehicle charging equipment and “make-ready” spaces for most types of development. As the City of Wildwood continues to grow and change, EVSE spaces will be provided as required by the law.

The City can facilitate greater EV use by placing charging stations in municipal parking lots, centralized parking facilities and other municipally owned land. EV charging facilities are planned for City Hall. In addition to providing additional EVSE charging equipment, it is also recommended that such equipment be sited in areas less prone to flooding. Grant funding is available through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's *It Pay\$ to Plug In* program, which the City should apply for.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

Alternative Transportation

The City of Wildwood recognizes that a reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT) is a core principle of Smart Growth and the reduction of per capita fossil fuel emissions. To achieve this goal, it is recommended that the City continue to provide the infrastructure, services, and land use policies to support public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips. Further recommendations to optimize efficiency of these systems are described below while systematic planning of these systems is described in more detail in the Circulation Plan Element.

Transit

The City of Wildwood has created the foundation to reduce per capita energy consumption through its public transit options, which include the Wildwood Bus Terminal located at Washington Avenue and operated by NJ Transit, the Wildwood Trolley shuttle system, and the Boardwalk ‘Sightseer’ Car. It is recommended that the City continue to explore ways to improve connectivity, energy efficiency, electrification, and expanded use of these assets.

Biking

The City continues to encourage bicycle use as a viable means for both transportation and recreation. Modal shift from car trips to bicycle trips provides many environmental benefits such as improved local air quality and more efficient use of street space. Further, widespread endorsement of bicycle use can also yield social benefits such as increased independence for people of all ages, benefits to health and longevity, and promotion of a “bike culture” which can form a complimentary relationship with the City’s resort economy.

It is recommended that the City continue to establish a safe and efficient bike network focused on cyclist comfort and access in addition to provision of secure and convenient bike storage facilities.

Walking

The City of Wildwood is a dense and walkable community that shall continue to capitalize on walking as a practical and energy-efficient means of transportation and recreation. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Asset Map ¹² has assigned Walkability Index Scores to census block groups throughout the state based on employment data, job density, and the percentage of workers who walk to work. Wildwood has been assigned Walkability Index Scores ranging from 13 to 18 (moderate) in the

¹² NJ Community Asset Map. NJ Department of Community Affairs.
njdca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=96ec274c50a34890b23263f10e4ad9b

southwest and northwest to 79' (high) in the back bay and north of the boardwalk, which indicates a strong relationship between the City's walkability and its economy.

It is recommended that the City continue to reinforce pedestrian trips through safety and streetscape improvements, permitting walkable building densities in targeted areas such as the Pacific Avenue Redevelopment Area and as prescribed by the Land Development Ordinance, and implementation of the Centralized Parking Plan as discussed in the Circulation Plan Element.

Urban Tree Canopy

Urban tree canopy provides numerous ecosystem services that yield a wide range of benefits such as improved stormwater management, air quality, urban habitat, windbreaks, higher property values, mental and physical health benefits, and mitigation of noise and urban heat island effect. As Wildwood is located on a barrier island, salty, sandy, and windy coastal conditions present environmental challenges to establishing and maintaining a healthy, resilient tree canopy.

To expand its urban forest, it is recommended that the City continue to advance initiatives that promote native tree plantings on public and private property such as amending zoning requirements where appropriate or pursuing sources of public funding for planning and implementation.

City Street Tree Requirements

Pursuant to §17-610 of the City's Land Development Ordinance, the planting of street tree species native to the southern New Jersey barrier islands environment is required for all land development devoid of major trees and native vegetation. Per the ordinance, proposed tree planting and species selection is subject to review by the City Engineer and discretion of the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment. It is recommended that the City consider establishing a shade tree committee and a guidance document providing a list of preferred native street tree species recommended for specific locations and purposes.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Element

Tree Equity

The Tree Equity Score¹³ is a metric calculated by American Forests assessing how effectively trees – and their associated benefits – are distributed across race and class lines. The score is derived from a variety of socioeconomic and spatial data including income, age, race, health indicators, tree canopy cover and surface temperature.

Wildwood has an overall Tree Equity Score of 55/100 and census block group scores ranging from 32 to 76, indicating neighborhoods with potential for increased canopy coverage.



Climate-Change Vulnerability

Threats related to climate change were identified in the 2021 Cape May County Hazard Mitigation Plan and reiterated in the Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment of the City's 2022 Land Use Element. These include the City's location within a flood hazard area, vulnerability to sea level rise, susceptibility to high heat days and the location of buildings, infrastructure and critical facilities in areas prone to flooding. Natural resources such as the marshes, wetlands and treed areas of the lying near to and along the back bay, to the wide beaches along the Atlantic Ocean are vulnerable to human caused climate change.

Conservation in this regard has two facets: First, the residents, workers and visitors in the City of Wildwood require facilities that allow them to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This pertains to protection from flooding, extreme weather and high heat. It should be a perpetual goal of the City to provide such facilities while utilizing energy efficient means to do so. New construction meant to provide protection from flooding and sea level rise should be constructed utilizing green building techniques. Cooling and heating should be done using high efficiency equipment. To the extent feasible, energy should be provided through renewable means.

The second facet of this is long term protection of natural resources such as beaches, marshes, wetlands and woodlands. To that effect, the City should:

- I. Continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and NJDEP on the Dune Systems Plan that is currently being prepared. It should be prepared such that it

¹³ Tree Equity Score, American Forests. www.treeequityscore.org/

protects the beaches and City while also continuing to allow residents and visitors to safely enjoy the beaches.

2. The wetlands within the City, located around the Wildwoods Convention Center, within the Wildwood Recreation Center and in Maxwell Field. These should continue to be protected under existing NJDEP regulations.
3. Existing marshes are located along Post Creek near Wildwood Boulevard, West Andrews Street and Mediterranean Avenue. There are additional marshes along the Post Creek Basin near West Baker Avenue and a section of Coastal Wetlands located north of West Montgomery Avenue. Marshes have many benefits, including acting as a natural means of filtering water and sequestering carbon¹⁴. The City should prioritize protecting these resources.

Pet Waste

The proliferation of pet waste in urban areas is both a public nuisance and an environmental hazard as untreated waste combines with stormwater and fertilizer runoff to be carried into public waterways and ecosystems. The City should continue to maintain dog waste cleanup stations and regulatory signage where necessary in its parks and other strategic locations to address these issues.

¹⁴ www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/habitat-matters-marshes

APPENDIX A
ADOPTING RESOLUTION

**CITY OF WILDWOOD PLANNING/ZONING
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, specifically N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25 and 40:55D-28, Municipal Planning Boards are given exclusive authority to adopt or amend a Municipality's Master Plan, or a component thereof; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wildwood's original Master Plan was adopted in 1971 and same has been periodically reexamined over the years to address evolving development goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS, re-examinations of the City of Wildwood Master Plan were completed in 1987, 1997, 2003, 2004, 2007, and 2018; and

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2022, the City of Wildwood Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustment completed its most recent Master Plan Reexamination and also adopted a Land Use Plan Element, which were prepared by Michael F. Sullivan, ASLA, AICP, dated August 1, 2022, and which outlined and identified the City's current land development objectives and goals, updated the status of the goals and objectives outlined within the 2007 Master Plan and 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Reports, and which set forth recommended revisions to the development regulations, zoning ordinance, and zoning map that would further the City's land development goals and address any significant changes that occurred since the City's Master Plan was last reexamined; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to further refine, clarify, and advance its development goals and objectives, the City of Wildwood Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustment retained the services of Michael F. Sullivan, ASLA, AICP to evaluate and develop a Conservation, Recreation and Open

Space Plan Element, dated June 2023, and a Circulation Plan Element, dated June 2023, to expound upon the goals and objectives set forth within the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Report; and

WHEREAS, at its October 2, 2023 duly-noticed public meeting, the City of Wildwood Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustment reviewed the proposed Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element and Circulation Plan Element, received a presentation from Mr. Sullivan, and, after a discussion amongst the members of the Board, found same to be consistent with the City's Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the City of Wildwood, as follows:

1. The aforementioned recitals are incorporated herein by referenced as though same were set forth at length.
2. The Board has reviewed the Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element, dated June 2023, and a Circulation Plan Element, dated June 2023 and finds that same are consistent with the City's Master Plan.
3. The Board voted unanimously to amend the City's most recent Master Plan to incorporate the Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element, dated June 2023, and a Circulation Plan Element, dated June 2023, as components of same.
4. If any provision or part of this Resolution shall be deemed invalid, such parts shall be severed and the invalidity thereby shall not affect the remaining provisions of this Resolution.

5. A copy of this resolution shall be forward to the Board of Commissioners of the City of Wildwood and a copy of this resolution shall be available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the City of Wildwood.

MOTION TO APPROVE

MADE BY: G. Clark
SECONDED BY: R. Gilson

ROLL CALL VOTE

<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
G. Clark	X			
K. Fitzsimons			X	
N. Fluharty			X	
R. Gilson	X			
J. Hesley				X
T. Kieninger	X			
S. Mikulski				X
P. Swetsky	X			
P. Arcuri	X			
C. Sicilia				X
C. Hines				X
K. Fulginiti	X			

DATED: 11/6/23


Todd Kieninger, Board Chairman


Kate Dunn, Board Secretary