



WILDWOOD CONNECTION



DOWNTOWN RAILYARD PROJECT SITE PLAN APPROVED - CONSTRUCTION NEARS

Wildwood’s city commission approved the site plan for the Railyard project during its Oct. 28, 2024, meeting.

The highly anticipated project is the second visibly significant improvement to the downtown district and follows construction of the Main Street Parking Garage earlier this year. Both are part of the city’s Downtown Master Plan, a long-term strategy for rejuvenating Wildwood’s core and a vision crafted with input and feedback from residents.

“So much has been happening behind the scenes over the past few years, but that work hasn’t been something the public could easily see or touch,” said City Manager Jason McHugh. “We are now starting to watch our residents’ vision take form and come to life, which is immensely exciting from a planning perspective.”

The Railyard is part of a public-private partnership with G3 Development from Mount Dora, which managed construction of the garage before transferring ownership to the city. Featuring 8,000 square feet of retail space, the Railyard will be owned and operated by G3 and is expected to house tenants providing both indoor and outdoor dining and entertainment.

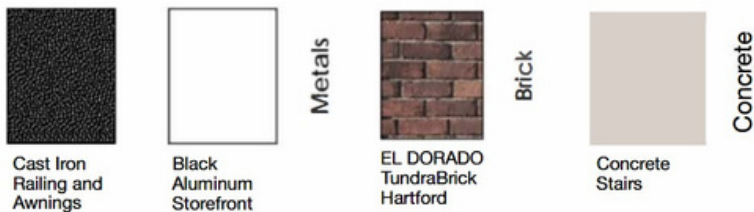
The master plan includes creating a more pedestrian-friendly Main Street area, with traffic calming features such as roundabouts, medians, and lane narrowing that will make it easier for those on foot to cross and mingle along the major corridor. Longer term, a truck bypass and pedestrian/bicycle overpass are envisioned.

Because US 301 falls under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), implementation of those initiatives is more complex.

Design of the state’s Complete Streets Study for Main Street/US 301 is included in FDOT’s Five-Year Work Program and the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization’s List of Priority Projects.

Meanwhile, construction of the Railyard project is expected to get underway soon, with anticipated groundbreaking as early as the beginning of 2025.

“This is going to be a game-changer for Wildwood,” McHugh said. “And once others see what’s happening here, I fully expect a cascade of private investment and redevelopment to follow. It’s been a long time coming, but the future is beginning now.”



The above renderings were presented at the commission’s Oct. 28, 2024, meeting, during which the project’s site plan was approved.

Construction is expect to begin soon.

HURRICANE SEASON WINDS DOWN

Atlantic Hurricane Season officially ends Nov. 30, 2024, and many agree they can't wait for it to be over.

"It's been a challenging weather year, to be sure," said City Manager Jason McHugh. "We saw flooding, downed trees, and power outages that strained our resources, and I'm proud of the way city employees stepped up and solved problems during trying times."

While not considered catastrophic, damage was significant, especially for those residents who experienced flooding and structural damage. The ground was already saturated from hurricanes Debby and Helene when Milton dropped another nine-plus inches on Wildwood.

"To say we were exceptionally fortunate would be the understatement of the century," said McHugh amidst damage assessment the day following Milton's rampage. "This one was a bigger threat than any we have seen in a very long time. Had the path shifted north instead of south, we may well have been on the wrong end of the tornadoes and other devastating damage."

Excess rain resulted in flooding of several residential areas and roadways in the city and Wildwood's public works team mitigated with generator-powered pumps. City officials reached out to affected residents and coordinated with local organizations to address specific needs.

City personnel worked around the clock to keep critical infrastructure running and to respond to other emergencies. Staff were on hand before, during, and following the hurricane at Sumter County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to facilitate the flow of information to and from emergency management officials and electricity suppliers.

Sumter County serves as the lead for local emergency management programs and services, per executed interlocal agreements. It operates the EOC, sandbag facilities, and emergency shelters for all incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county, including Wildwood.

Heavy rainfall stressed critical infrastructure. Spikes in stormwater and sediment often overwhelm wastewater systems during extreme weather events. Numerous spills have been reported by Central Florida jurisdictions during storms this hurricane season.

Milton's surge was magnified by ground saturation from Debby, Helene, and an overall wet season, and Wildwood's aggressive pumping could not keep up. Flows tripled during the storm and tanks overflowed by an estimated 1 million gallons at 11:00 p.m. while staff were in safety lockdown, unable to work outside in life-threatening winds.

Fortunately, the spill was contained to the facility site and was addressed immediately by staff upon lockdown release.

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Above, Wildwood crews worked extended shifts to clean up vegetative debris strewn by Hurricane Milton.

"Handling this work ourselves, rather than contracting it out, is a big undertaking but allows us to do clean-up faster and more efficiently," McHugh said.

NEW GENERATOR INSTALLED AT WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

A massive new generator was installed last month at Wildwood’s wastewater treatment facility, replacing the older model that had fully depreciated during its service.

The new unit’s 900 kilowatts of power, fueled by a 5100-gallon diesel tank, allows the entire wastewater plant to remain operational during a power outage and is a key component of the new treatment facility’s adherence to FDEP and EPA Class 1 Reliability criteria.

The photo below shows the new generator on site.



ANNUAL HYDRANT FLUSHING SCHEDULED

Sumter County’s fire department will be conducting annual fire hydrant maintenance this fall. Work is expected to begin during November in Center Hill. Crews will work northward to and through Wildwood.

While this maintenance is taking place, lower-than-normal water pressure and/or rusty or discolored water may occur. These issues should clear up within a few hours.

If you experience water issues that do not resolve quickly, during hydrant flushing or otherwise, please call 352-330-1336 and a water technician will be dispatched to your area.

WILDWOOD TO HONOR VETERANS WITH DISPLAY AND GOLF CART PARADE

To honor veterans and show appreciation for their service, the City of Wildwood will display veteran names on the walls of City Hall during November.

Veteran names can be submitted through the city’s website, wildwood-fl.gov, by clicking on the Recreation icon. The deadline to submit names is Nov. 6, 2024.

Please call 352-461-1334 with questions or for more information about the display.

On Nov. 11, 2024, starting at 10 a.m., the city’s police department will lead a golf cart parade from the Wildwood Community Center to American Legion Tri-City Post 18, concluding with a lunch and ceremony at 11 a.m.

Please email communityoutreach@wildwood-fl.gov to request a golf cart exemption pass or to learn more.

HURRICANE SEASON WINDS DOWN

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The gravity system on Huey Street also was overwhelmed by the infiltration and inflow, with approximately 10,000 gallons overflowing at the intersection of Huey Street and Hazel Street. The spill was contained to the right of way.

Neither overflow affected private property or utility service, and both were treated in accordance with all FDEP protocols and requirements. Flows remained elevated for weeks after the storm, however, placing continued demand on staff to manage and mitigate both incoming untreated wastewater and outgoing reclaimed water.

Wildwood crews began vegetative debris collection early Monday morning the week following Hurricane Milton. Teams worked extended shifts to clear the right of way of tree limbs, branches, leaves, moss, and other plant material strewn by the storm on city-maintained streets outside The Villages® section of Wildwood. The Villages® District management coordinates all vegetative and other solid waste collection in all areas within its jurisdiction.

“Handling this work ourselves, rather than contracting it out, is a big undertaking but allows us to do clean-up faster and more efficiently,” McHugh said. “We are able to finish our collection while many other jurisdictions are just getting started.”

McHugh gathered his management team following the immediate response efforts to gather their input and discuss what went well and what can be improved during future weather-related and other emergency events.

“What we have learned is we already do many—but not all—things very well,” McHugh said. “We can take steps now to better prepare and organize some of our information and resources to streamline internal communications and coordination next time we face similar events.”

“As our city continues to grow, we must find every possible opportunity to improve operational efficiencies,” he added. “Milton put us through a tough test and provided us new insights and knowledge. I am committed to putting all of it to use to enhance the lives of our residents.”



HOLIDAY SEASON OFFICIALLY UNDERWAY

The official start to the 2024 holiday season kicked off Sept. 25 with the City of Wildwood’s annual Spooktacular festival (photos below and at right).

Attendees enjoyed a trunk-or-treat with games and goodies provided by local organizations, a selection of food truck offerings, inflatables and activities, a dance performance by Thrill the Villages (part of the international dance group Thrill the World), and a costume contest for different age groups.

This month, the city will host its second annual community Thanksgiving celebration on Saturday, Nov. 23, at the Wildwood Community Center. In addition to a traditional holiday meal, the celebration features bounce houses, hayrides, face painting, games, and other activities. The free event, scheduled for noon, requires registration. Please sign up at wildwood-fl.gov > Recreation.

Christmas season gets underway at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6, when the Light Up Wildwood parade sets out from City Hall. It features illuminated floats created by area businesses and community organizations, and is followed by Winterfest and a tree-lighting ceremony at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Cookies with Santa provides an opportunity for families to visit with Santa and enjoy sweet treats at the Wildwood Community Center on Friday, Dec. 20, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The city closes out 2024 with a New Year’s celebration at the Wildwood Community Center at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 27, capping off with a spectacular fireworks show over Millennium Park at 9 p.m.

All events are free, family friendly, and open to all.

For more information, check the community calendar (under the Community menu) at wildwood-fl.gov or call the city’s parks and recreation team at 352-461-0134.



PRESENTED BY: WILDWOOD PARKS AND RECREATION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2024

WILDWOOD COMEDY CLUB
DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 P.M.; SHOW STARTS AT 6:30 P.M.

STAND-UP COMEDY NIGHT

FEATURING

THE FUNNY MAN
Warfield Auditorium
98 S. Warfield Avenue
Wildwood, FL 34785

THE COMEDIAN COMPANY

\$15 Entry Ticket (Ages 21+)
Purchase tickets in advance:
www.wildwood-fl.gov 352-461-0134
Dinner and drinks for sale.

WILDWOOD FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATION

VETERANS DAY

THE CITY OF WILDWOOD'S DISPLAY OF HONOR



11.11.24

To honor our veterans and show appreciation for their service, the City of Wildwood will display veteran names on the walls of City Hall. If you or a loved one has served in our military, please submit the name, branch, war(s) (optional) and rank (optional) to be recognized.

Deadline to Register: Wednesday, November 6, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.

TO REGISTER GO TO WILDWOOD-FL.GOV
QUESTIONS? 352-461-0134

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Find more activities and events on the city's community calendar at www.wildwood-fl.gov/calendar.




2nd Annual VETERANS DAY Golf Cart Parade

MONDAY 11 November, 2024

Most Patriotic Golf Cart WINS!

Our 2023 Winner!

9:30 a.m. Golf Cart Line-Up at: Wildwood Community Ctr 6500 Powell Rd, Wildwood, FL 34785	10:00 a.m. Parade starts!	11:00 a.m. Patriotic Ceremony & FREE Lunch thanks to American Legion Post 18 401 East Gulf Atlantic Hwy Wildwood, FL 34785 <small>* No golf cart, no problem. Meet at American Legion by 11:00.</small>
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To sign up & receive your Golf Cart Exemption Pass, please email: communityoutreach@wildwood-fl.gov

★ HONORING ALL WHO SERVED ★



WILDWOOD'S THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

COME JOIN US FOR A THANKSGIVING DINNER ALONG WITH FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES FOR ALL TO ENJOY

FREE THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR WILDWOOD RESIDENTS

MUSIC	FAMILY PHOTOS
BOUNCE HOUSES	CORN HOLE
HAYRIDE	FACE PAINTING
SHAVED ICE	AND MORE

Registration opens Sept. 12, 2024 until filled

www.Wildwood-fl.gov

November 23, 2024

Location: 6500 Powell Rd, Wildwood, FL

Time: 12:00 PM- 4:00 PM
Doors open at 11:30 am
Food will be served from 12 am-2pm
Festivities will start/open at 1pm

QUESTIONS CALL OFFICER ACE AT 352-931-1866 OR PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT AT 352-461-0134











UPCOMING MEETINGS

Code Compliance

November 5, 2024
1:00 p.m.

Local Planning Agency

November 5, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Planning and Zoning

November 5, 2024
2:15 p.m.

City Commission

November 11, 2024
9:00 a.m.

November 18, 2024 (Workshop)
9:00 a.m.

November 25, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Project Review Committee

November 12, 2024
10:00 a.m.

General Information

Unless otherwise specified, all meetings are held at City Hall, 100 N. Main St.

Agendas and minutes are posted on the city's website, www.wildwood-fl.gov. Click on the [Agenda](#) icon to view or download.

Meetings are open to the public. Attend in person or remotely by going to the city website and clicking on [Government > Attend a Meeting Virtually](#).

Anyone wishing to speak during Public Forum should submit a comment card before the meeting begins.



A LOOK AT WILDWOOD HISTORY

This photo shows a 1968-1969 youth baseball team with Coach R.V. Stephenson.

The photographer is unknown.

MONDAYS WITH THE MANAGER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Warfield Auditorium
98 S. Warfield Ave., Wildwood, FL 34785



Questions? Have a suggestion? Need help with a local issue? Stop by and chat with Wildwood City Manager Jason McHugh.

No appointment needed.



CITY INFORMATION

Commission

Ed Wolf
Mayor
ewolf@wildwood-fl.gov

Pamala Harrison-Bivins
Mayor Pro Tem
pbivins@wildwood-fl.gov

Joe Elliott
Commissioner
jelliott@wildwood-fl.gov

Marcos Flores
Commissioner
mflores@wildwood-fl.gov

Julian Green
Commissioner
jgreen@wildwood-fl.gov

City Hall

100 N. Main St.
Wildwood, FL 34785
352-330-1330
www.wildwood-fl.gov
facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida

Directory

City Manager
Jason McHugh
352-330-1332
jmchugh@wildwood-fl.gov

Development Services
352-330-1334

Human Resources
352-330-1340

Parks and Recreation
352-461-0134

Police (Non-Emergency)
352-330-1355

Police (Emergency)
911

Public Works
352-330-1343

Utilities
352-330-1336