



WILDWOOD CONNECTION

WILDWOOD PREPARES FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET

Budget season is here, and city leaders have been hard at work crunching numbers and analyzing projected costs and revenues associated with providing essential and expected services for Wildwood’s rapidly growing population.

Wildwood takes this work very seriously. For five years in a row, the city has been named a Distinguished Budget Award winner by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA), and looks to keep the streak going.

What goes into preparing the city’s budget?

It’s a monthlong process that involves every department and a review of what is and is not working, based on strategic goals set the year prior. Department heads submit a list of requests, including both equipment and new positions, along with justifications for each item.

Some of the requested equipment this year includes additional and replacement police cars and work trucks for road and utilities crews, for example.

The city manager and his team scrutinize the requests and ask, “Is this really needed? How does it benefit the citizens? Is it a prudent use of taxpayer funds? Can we serve our residents without it?”

Management also looks at revenues and analyzes whether what is coming in, via ad valorem taxes, utility fees, intergovernmental revenues, and other sources, is adequate to cover the costs of all the services provided by the city. If not, adjustments need to be calculated based on projections for the coming year.

Capital projects and associated costs are considered to ensure the city’s infrastructure can meet the needs of its people. Two projects currently under design are a new wastewater treatment facility and a new outreach and recreation center. What will it cost to build these projects, and how will the city pay for them?

Concurrently, city leaders review Wildwood’s five-year strategic plan to assess progress toward each strategic goal. Have key metrics been met? If not, why not, and what is needed to get back on track and ensure the city is moving forward in a purposeful, thoughtful, and strategic manner?

Human resources are evaluated along with capital resources. Does the city have enough employees? Are they compensated fairly for their work? What adjustments are needed to recruit and retain a high-performing, customer-service-oriented team that takes pride in the city and its people?

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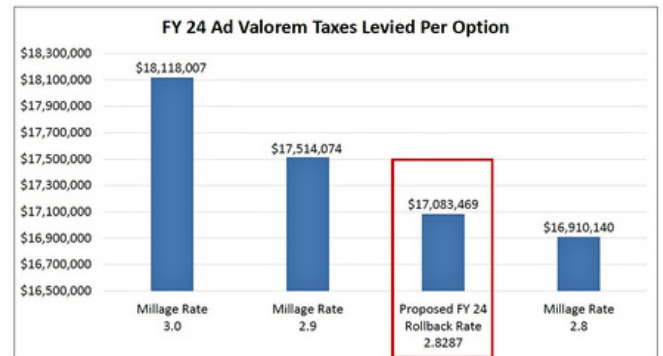
At right are slides from the first budget presentation given at the city commission’s July 17, 2023, special meeting.

FY24 First Budget Presentation Budget Schedule

- Budget Preparation Schedule
 - First Budget Presentation – Today
 - Set Tentative Millage Rate – July 24th
 - Second Budget Workshop – July 31st
 - [Presentation from CPH and Stantec](#)
 - Third Budget Workshop – August 21st
 - Presentation on the Final Budget
 - First Public Hearing – September 11th
 - Second Public Hearing – September 25th

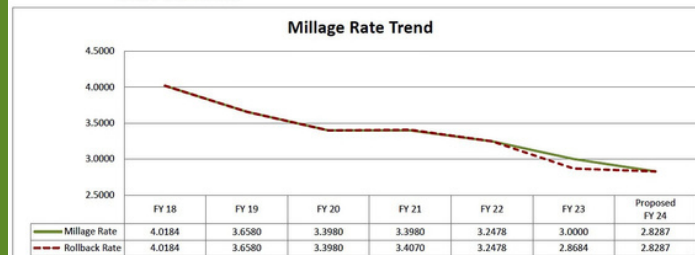


FY24 First Budget Presentation Millage Rate Options



FY24 First Budget Presentation Millage Rate

- Proposed Millage Rate of 2.8287 (Rollback Rate)
 - Millage Rate Reduction
 - Decrease from the Current Millage Rate of 3.0 by 5.7% or 0.1713 mills



Wildwood Strategic Plan Goals

Community Engagement

Enhance public trust, encourage civic pride, and build cross-community partnerships that enhance the quality of life for Wildwood residents

Transportation

Invest in road and sidewalk infrastructure to provide for connections and future growth

Affordable Housing

Positively impact availability of affordable housing through partnerships and policy development/implementation

Downtown Redevelopment

Revitalize the City's core downtown area to spur investment and redevelopment

Infrastructure

Assess, construct, and maintain the City's municipal infrastructure systems, focusing on water, wastewater, and stormwater systems

Employee Recruitment and Retainment

Provide residents with superior service through the recruitment and retainment of talented and dedicated employees

Above is a page from Wildwood's current five-year strategic plan, adopted October 1, 2022, showing the city's six strategic goals. Key metrics associated with each are examined and tracked to assess progress.

WILDWOOD PREPARES FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET

(continued from Page 1)

Wildwood recently contracted with a consulting firm to conduct a salary and classification study to assess job titles, pay, and benefits. Those study results and recommendations are being considered as part of the current budgeting process.

Once management has analyzed all the data and answered these questions, it prepares a draft budget to present to city commissioners for review and discussion. Workshops are scheduled over the summer to allow enough time for questions, answers, and additional research and analysis.

In late July, the commission sets a tentative millage rate for ad valorem taxes as part of the budget development. This year, the commission agreed on the rollback rate of 2.8287, a tax decrease of approximately 5.7 percent. This rate provides the same ad valorem revenue, adjusted to current-year dollars, as the year before. Because the value of taxable property is increasing, the millage rate can be decreased.

During August, the commission will have another budget workshop in addition to its regularly scheduled meetings, followed by two public hearings in September to gather input from citizens on the budget.

Finally, the commission will vote on a final budget to take effect October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year.

All commission meetings, workshops, and hearings are open to the public, and citizens are encouraged to attend and participate in the process. Agendas and supporting documents are posted on the city's website, wildwood-fl.gov, (click on the Agenda icon) at least 72 hours before each meeting.

Wildwood's current, award-winning budget can be found at wildwood-fl.gov/finance, where the new budget will be added once it is adopted.

WILDWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HOST FIRST FISHING TOURNAMENT

Wildwood PD will hold its first inshore fishing tournament for veterans and first responders on Saturday, August 12, 2023, at Crump's Landing in Homosassa.

Each boat must include a veteran and/or first responder, including personnel from active-duty military, law enforcement, fire, EMS, corrections, power and water, or another applicable crisis-responding agency.

The tournament starts at daylight with weigh-in at 5:00 p.m., followed by the presentation of cash awards and prizes.

A captain's check-in meeting will be held the night before, Friday, August 11, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., or the morning of the event at 6:30 a.m.

Registration closes August 1, 2023, so do not delay.

The fee is \$50 per angler, with proceeds going to Combat Veterans to Careers, a civilian 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization in Wildwood.

Please email communityoutreach@wildwood-fl.gov for more information.

NEW DOWNTOWN AND DASHBOARD WEBSITES

Wildwood has launched two new websites to provide additional information about the city as it grows.

The first, data.wildwood-fl.gov, is an interactive dashboard that displays statistical information grouped into eight major categories: population, households and families, housing, education, transportation, poverty, employment and income, and healthcare.

"Measurement is the first step to improvement," said City Manager Jason McHugh. "By tracking key metrics over time, we can identify trends and make adjustments that help guide those progressions in the right direction."

Clicking the View All Data button on each main category tile expands the group to reveal details, including comparative data for prior years and/or other cities and regions.

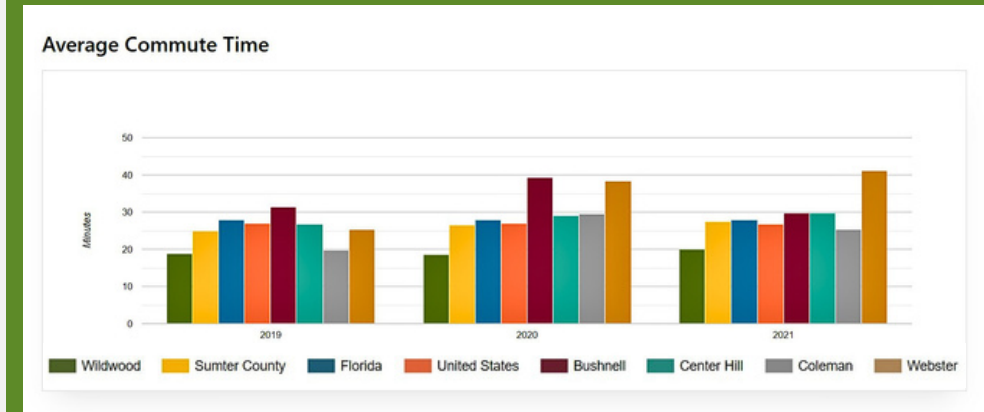
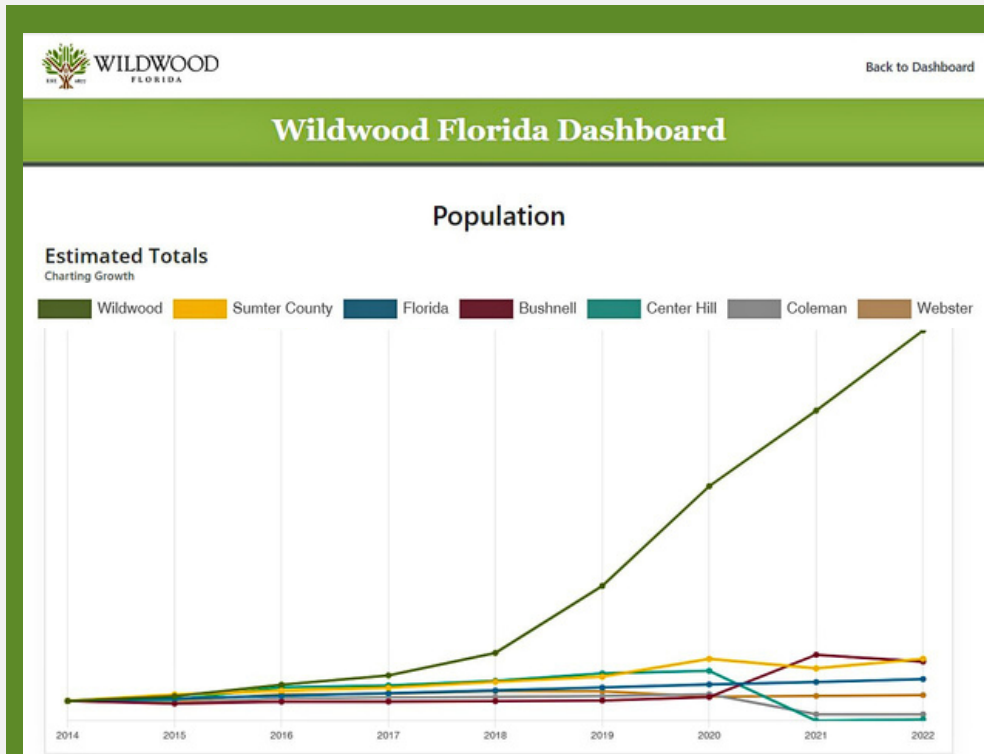
"How does Wildwood stack up? This is what our citizens and prospective new residents are asking," said Commissioner Joe Elliott. "This dashboard will only get better as it is used and improved by individuals and organizations who have a role in Wildwood. The first step in correcting a problem is recognizing it. This effort is indeed the beginning of a new approach."

The second new site, wildwooddowntown.com, is a multimedia hub for downtown redevelopment information. Photos, videos, renderings, and words all help tell the story of Wildwood's origin, history, present, and future, focusing on the city's core.

"With downtown redevelopment underway, we wanted to provide citizens with a dedicated, centralized location for both updates as well as relevant plans, reports, and images," explained McHugh.

"We also wanted to honor and showcase the city's evolution and history," he continued. "Many of our residents have deep roots here. It is important we remember and respect their families' heritage and contributions as we all shape Wildwood's future."

Both new sites can be accessed from wildwood-fl.gov through the Community menu at the top of the page, and are considered works in progress, with new information added as it is available.



HOW DOES CODE COMPLIANCE WORK IN WILDWOOD?

Florida Statutes Chapter 162 provides the framework for municipal code enforcement to “promote, protect, and improve the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens.”

Wildwood’s code compliance department oversees proactive patrols, inspections, and documentation of violations and responds to complaints made on the record by other individuals (state law does not permit enforcement action on anonymous complaints).

City staff educates residents on land development regulations, ordinances, and property maintenance codes when violations may exist and offer resources and other information that may be helpful to the owner in helping to bring properties into compliance.

When properties remain uncompliant despite education and outreach, cases are brought before Wildwood’s special magistrate, who hears and rules on the alleged violations. State law gives the special magistrate “authority to impose administrative fines and other noncriminal penalties to provide an equitable, expeditious, effective, and inexpensive method of enforcing any codes and ordinances in force in counties and municipalities, where a pending or repeated violation continues to exist.”

Examples of common violations:

- Junk Cars
- Overgrown Lots
- Trash
- Dilapidated Homes
- Illegal Signs
- Junk/Debris
- Semi-Trucks
- Blight



Wildwood’s proactive approach to code compliance helps property owners avoid potential violations that may occur from the progression of existing conditions and helps owners avoid potential hearings and any subsequential penalties when violations already exist.

Staff recognizes that owners sometimes face extraordinary personal or financial stressors that contribute additional challenges to maintaining their properties and are knowledgeable about some of the local resources available.

The photos at right show before-and-after examples of violations that were corrected with the knowledge and resources provided by the city.

Code compliance staff helps residents keep their properties safe, preserve property values, and maintain positive relationships in their neighborhoods. For more information, including a library of fact sheets on specific code topics, visit www.wildwood-fl.gov/code-enforcement.

Residents of The Villages® and other planned developments within the City of Wildwood should be aware of any additional rules and regulations pursuant to their respective deed restrictions, homeowners’ associations, and/or district government.

Please check with your property or district manager if you have questions about what your specific community requires beyond the City of Wildwood’s land development regulations, ordinances, and property maintenance codes.



FAMILY FUN DAY
AUG 12 FREE TO PLAY!
9:00AM
 Work together to finish a city-wide scavenger hunt. Enjoy food trucks, games, prizes, and fun! You will need a vehicle for the hunt. Fun for the whole family!
WARFIELD AUDITORIUM
98 S. WARFIELD AVE.
 2023
 For questions, please call 352-461-0134 or email parksandrec@wildwood-fl.gov



CITY OF WILDWOOD
WILD TOTS
 SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2023
 9:00AM - 11:00AM
 AGES 2-5
 GAMES, SOCIALIZING, STORYTIME, AND A SNACK!
 98 S. WARFIELD AVE.
 FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 352-461-0134 OR EMAIL PARKSANDREC@WILDWOOD-FL.GOV



PARKS AND RECREATION SPECIAL EVENTS

Wildwood's Happy Birthday America event on July 3, 2023, shown in photos above, brought approximately 4,000 people to Millennium Park for a community-wide celebration.

At left are some of the events coming up this month.

For more recreational programs, activities, and events, visit wildwood-fl.gov/parksrec and click on Recreation Programs.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Code Compliance

August 1, 2023
1:00 p.m.

Local Planning Agency

August 1, 2023
2:00 p.m.

Planning and Zoning

August 1, 2023
2:15 p.m.

City Commission

August 14, 2023
9:00 a.m.
August 21, 2023 (workshop)
9:00 a.m.
August 28, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Project Review Committee

August 8, 2023
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. Go to www.wildwood-fl.gov and click on [Agenda](#).

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 by Zip Starnes shows Mrs. A.M. Barlow with the Wildwood Junior Garden Club officers. The year is unknown.

GROW WITH US: CITY CAREERS

Working for Wildwood is more than just a job. The city offers long-term career opportunities along with a great benefits package.

Leadership regularly reviews compensation plans to ensure they remain competitive and recognize strong performance.

Employees work hard and have fun doing it, in an environment that focuses on superior, friendly service with a strong sense of community.

See current openings and submit a streamlined application at www.wildwood-fl.gov/hr.

STAY UP TO DATE ON CITY HAPPENINGS

You can keep up with Wildwood news and happenings in a variety of ways:

1. Check wildwood-fl.gov for general information.
2. Sign up for **notifications** at wildwood-fl.gov to have news delivered directly to your inbox.
3. Follow us on **Facebook** and get news in your feed:
 - City of Wildwood page: facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida
 - Parks and Recreation Special Events page: facebook.com/WildwoodParksRecEvents
 - Police Department page: facebook.com/WildwoodPoliceFL

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

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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