



**Borough of Wildwood Crest  
Plan Endorsement  
2020  
Municipal Self-Assessment**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Borough of Wildwood Crest is undertaking the process of plan endorsement in order to better understand, define and address issues that face the Borough of Wildwood Crest in years to come and to plan for its future in a proactive and thoughtful way. Given the challenges we face globally including sea-level rise, global warming and the ever-increasing costs of energy and its impacts on our environment, the Borough recognizes its role in making positive, carefully crafted planning initiatives.

Our goal is to continue our efforts in flood mitigation, address parking congestion, improve upon the borough's traffic circulation, continue to improve upon our existing recreational amenities, add new recreational amenities, and to encourage the use of bicycles and walking by adding bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements throughout town. In our endeavors, we seek to maintain our brand which embodies the family-friendly character of our beachfront community while revitalizing our struggling downtown business district. The Borough's objective is to enhance our already beautiful community with successful businesses such as restaurants, retail shops and various businesses while adding outdoor recreation and enjoyment. Relevant planning issues that could be addressed through plan endorsement are flood mitigation, circulation, green initiatives, beaches, and public access due to free and very popular beaches and motel/hotel condominium conversions and their impact upon parking and the residential community. We also want to address the revitalization of our downtown along New Jersey Avenue. Many times, our plans to enhance our parks, beaches, and infrastructure by providing amenities necessary to our visitors are stymied by regulatory agencies and expensive and time-consuming permitting processes. Of course, funding of these of these costly improvements also limits what this small municipality can do also.

The Borough seeks the State's assistance in obtaining funding and technical assistance to address persistent flooding issues that plague this island community. We have been proactive in our approach to flood mitigation and have sought grant opportunities and

expended a great deal of the Borough's capital funds to consistently make improvements to our storm sewer system but need financial assistance to keep the pace with the ever rising tides.

The Borough seeks assistance in obtaining a site-specific amendment to the sewer service area to include the previous location of the Wildwood Crest Fishing Pier Clubhouse. The clubhouse had a sanitary sewer hookup which currently remains; however, the building was removed in 1980. Photos of the building and the visible sewer connection are below. The Borough plans to rebuild the current fishing pier to not only extend it into the Atlantic Ocean to allow for fishing but will also be widening the pier to enhance public access, accessibility, and increase tourism. Public bathrooms are an integral part of this plan as is a building to house a retail establishment to service visitors.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS/OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

### **Background**

Founded in 1910, the Borough of Wildwood Crest is a coastal community located in Cape May County along the Atlantic Ocean on the 5-mile island along with the City of North Wildwood, the Borough of West Wildwood, City of Wildwood and a small portion of Lower Township known as Diamond Beach. It operates as a Commission Form of government under the Walsh Act. It is a densely populated municipality that attracts beachgoers from all over the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area and New York Metropolitan Area as well as frequently attracting visitors from Quebec, Canada. Most visitors easily commute to the Crest via the Garden State Parkway which was constructed in the 1950s. There are three bridges which provide access to the 5-mile island. These bridges are aged and in dire need of rehabilitation and two are operable bridges that frequently open in summer months to permit boat traffic to pass.

The Borough of Wildwood Crest is part of Wildwood Regional Center and was designated such on April 22, 1998 initially. The State Planning designations for Wildwood Crest are PA5B planning area. A sewer service area is located throughout the Borough, coinciding with the PA5B planning area. The Borough of Wildwood Crest updated the Master Plan in 2005. The re-examination plan was completed on February 23, 2012.

Wildwood Crest has a high concentration of seasonal residents and visitors and boasts one of New Jersey's best beaches stretching approximately 2-miles long and as wide as 1300 ft. in most cases. It is estimated that Wildwood Crest's seasonal population exceeds 54,000 in the summer months. This is nearly 10 times the winter population. Wildwood Crest has abundant parkland, much of which is located along the Atlantic Ocean and Sunset Lake bayfront. The Borough has actively pursued and obtained various grant funds to make numerous improvements and recreational enhancements to these parks for over 10 years. These improvements include the ongoing lengthening of the walkways to accommodate the very wide beaches and make it easier for visitors to get to the water. This endeavor comes at great expense to the Borough annually. With the constant accretion of sand, the costs for expansion and maintenance will continue for years to

come. The Borough is comprised of commercial and residential properties. This includes 140 commercial properties such as numerous ocean front motel/hotels and 2,500 residential single-family and multi-family residential properties and 5766 condominium units in approximately 200 complexes and is the second home for many seasonal residents. The Borough owns 82 properties, 12 of which are improved while 70 are vacant land. There are 5 churches and 1 school with 1 school playground in the Crest. Flood mitigation efforts are ongoing to ensure that these properties have adequate protection from coastal storm events and lunar flooding episodes.

As part of the designated Regional Center, the Borough of Wildwood Crest continues to incorporate many key concepts and policy objectives from the State Plan in our local plans. There are no inconsistencies between the State Plan and the Borough's plan. The Borough is proactive in financial planning and meets annually to discuss capital projects. The Borough maintains a 5-year capital plan in addition to the required 3-year plan approved in the budget.

The Borough of Wildwood Crest faces many challenges in managing the large influx of tourists, visitors and second homeowners. One of the biggest challenges that comes from the busy summer bathing season is parking vehicles. Current zoning laws mandate 1 parking spot for each unit. Many visitors rent for a one to two-week period and bring at least 2 vehicles for the duration of their vacation. This results in them having to park at least 1 vehicle on street. Most prefer not to park in a metered space but rather in the residential areas a few blocks back from the beach but as close to their condominium or motel as possible. Residential areas have adequate on-street parking, however, lot sizes average 40-50 ft wide and most have only 2 off-street parking spaces while still providing ample green space on their property.

Another challenge the Borough faces is persistent flooding. Sea-level rise coupled with global warming and older storm water infrastructure is increasing the number of nuisance flooding events. Constant sand accretion attributed to the construction of the Cape May Inlet jetty causes our outfall pipes to be covered in sand continually. These outfalls have been extended several times at great cost to the taxpayers. Improvements to storm water infrastructure are on-going and costly.

A final challenge to point out is pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist circulation throughout town, particularly in the busy summer months. The increase in the number of tourists and visitors in our summer bathing season brings with it a safety and congestion concern. The failure to adhere to motor vehicle laws creates dangerous conditions for bicyclists, skateboarders and pedestrians. Motorists are forced to share the roadway on almost all roadways. More bike paths and the connection of our current bike path on the beach has met with roadblocks from regulatory agencies but is vital to solving the transportation needs of our visitors.

## **Inventory of Key Characteristics**

The US Census indicates that the population of Wildwood Crest and most municipalities in Cape May County continues a downward trend. Factors contributing to this steady decline are lack of affordable housing, public transportation, and year-round, high paying jobs. There are no NJ Transit bus stops within the municipal boundary and only one commercial/industrial property within it.

Due to the current strength of the economy and real estate market the Borough of Wildwood Crest has seen increases in property values and property owners making investments in their properties by way of improvements. Property values have continually increased in the last 5 years. While the year-round population continues to decline there is a steady increase in seasonal property ownership. The Crest's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and abundance of public access along the waterfront makes for an attractive seasonal property investment, one very appealing to retirees.

The Crest has expansive parks along the bayfront and oceanfront and offers a well-used, multi-use purpose bike path along the Atlantic Ocean. All the Borough's parks are listed on the ROSI and are preserved open space. The abundance of family-friendly recreational amenities and open spaces offered adds to the sense of community and surely enhances tourism. The large influx of day-trippers and vacationers in the summer months leads to increased traffic, tourism and use of our parks. Therefore, careful consideration is given to allow for safe pedestrian and bicycle access in all cases. Additional bike racks, bike parking, water filling stations and fit-friendly, ADA accessible amenities are always made a priority. Although parking issues have and will continue to be a challenge for the community during the summer season the Borough is making every effort to address this issue.

As previously stated, the 5-mile island and Wildwood Crest is serviced by three access bridges. The Rt 147 bridge is relatively new and requires only flood mitigation enhancements at its base in North Wildwood. Cape May County is currently making significant and costly improvements to traffic flow and increasing resiliency from flooding at the George Reading Bridge (Rt 47) in Wildwood and has plans to replace the Middle Thorofare Bridge (Ocean Drive) with NIPA funding in the next 7-10 years. The Borough fully supports the County's efforts to reduce flooding issues on roadways in and around the 5-Mile Island.

As of the 2010 United States Census, the Borough of Wildwood Crest's year-round population was 3,270. The population count has decreased by 710 since the 2000 Census, which had in turn increased by 349 from the 3,631 counted in the 1990 Census.

Consistent with many coastal communities, the Crest has a very large number of retired, senior citizens who reside year-round in the community. The Crest is home to the Crest Memorial School. It is a choice school, which serves children in grades pre-k to eighth grade from the Crest and surrounding communities. There are currently 153 children

attending the Crest Memorial School. There are approximately 147 children in grades 9 to 12 who reside in the Crest.

It is estimated that there are 1,435 year-round households in the Borough of Wildwood Crest with family households making up 65% of this number. 13% of these household have children under 18 years of age. Nonfamily households make up 34.80% of the populations. 15% of the population is age 65 or older. Households which include one or more people over the age of 65 totals 764 which represents 53.20% of the households. The average family size is 3 with the average household size of 2.8.

The Borough's racial distribution is varied. 89.80% of the population speaks only English with 5% speaking predominately Spanish.

In working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to define the initial Designation Center, it was unavoidable that the map included sections of the Borough that are in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). This is because the Borough is an island community with the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Sunset Lake to the west and Jenkins sound along the south end of town. A large area of the municipality is on the SFHA and is already developed. There are no changes requested to the current Designation Center map, which encompasses the entire town. The Borough has implemented a GIS system. We are also able to share Cape May County's available GIS data. They do not require an agreement to so.

### **Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas**

The Borough of Wildwood Crest Board of Commissioners has directed the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation report for an area in need of redevelopment that includes three parcels located in the New Jersey Avenue business district and the rehabilitation of the remaining properties from Wisteria to Heather in the New Jersey Avenue business district. We are currently waiting on their report. The Borough's resolution and supplementing property information is attached as Exhibit A.

### **Status of Planning**

The Planning Board has undertaken two Community Design Sub-Elements to address the land use, bulk standards, density, and community design in the residential districts. The first in 2017 focused upon residential development, while the second in 2019 studied the Business Zone in the northern portion of the community. The 2019 sub-element was undertaken in response to a planned county reconstruction and road improvement project along New Jersey Avenue, a county route, within the Borough and commercial district.

The Board at multiple subcommittee meetings and publicly advertised Planning Board meetings discussed the recommendations of the 2005 Land Use Plan and 2012 Reexamination Report. The Board identified additional ordinance modifications to improve residential community identity and support the 2005 Plan and 2012 Reexamination recommendations. In 2017 the Community Design Sub-Element evaluated existing residential structures and recommended the modification of bulk standards and design guidelines to improve visible exterior living areas, provide flexible and harmonious building modulation standards, require mechanical elements in the two

(2) feet above base flood elevation also known as “freeboard”, increase interior ceiling heights, provide more variety to required roof pitch, reduce building mass at upper floors, increase yard areas, and embrace historic platting, building orientation, and development patterns. Implementing ordinances were adopted which have fulfilled the Master Plan vision and goals.

The vision of Cape May County for New Jersey Avenue is to improve the riding surface, address stormwater control, enhance the streetscape, reduce paving width, and create a pedestrian friendly environment. Wildwood Crest in conjunction with the greater Wildwoods and the County, hosted a public meeting with Roger Brooks on May 9-10, 2018 to discuss travel, tourism, downtowns, community branding, and destination marketing. Community stakeholders were identified, workshops were held, and the project area was toured by the group. Two of the major implementing ideas were to expend public funds to improve the street and evaluate the use, density, floor area, bulk standards, parking, and site plan requirements in the district. The Planning Board formed a subcommittee and met on BLANK and BLANK to discuss the Community Design Sub-Element, the conceptual streetscape plan, and the proposed implementing ordinances. The Borough Committee and County Freeholders had public meetings on BLANK and BLANK, respectively where the conceptual streetscape plan was presented. One of the major limiting factors of plan implementation is the lack of information regarding parking demand, not only in the study area, but within the community, particularly during the summer months.

The Crest updated the Master Plan in 2005. The re-examination plan was completed on February 23, 2012.

The courts approved the Crest’s Settlement Agreement, and the Borough has implemented Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program as included in our Master Plan-Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan Element.

To properly plan for sea-level rise and persistent flooding due to coastal storms and high tide events, the Borough has completed and approved a Flood Mitigation and Storm Sewer Master Plan in March of 2019. This plan identifies areas of low elevation that are prone to repetitive, nuisance flooding. It offers alternatives ranging from least expensive to most expensive flood mitigation efforts and will be used as a guide and plan for future and ongoing flood mitigation improvements throughout the Borough.

The Borough’s application for a \$4M 2020 Flood Mitigation Grant to install a pump station and make improvements to increase pipe capacity was unfortunately was unsuccessful. We have once again applied for the same amount for the 2021 Flood Mitigation Grant and are hopeful that obtain funding this year. This important and necessary flood mitigation project is identified in our planning tool- The Borough of Wildwood Crest Flood Mitigation and Storm Water Plan. This plan incorporates the installation of SCADA valves at the bayside outfalls and a pump station in the flood prone, low elevation area along the bayside where persistent, repetitive flooding occurs.

The Borough has also applied for a 2021 Flood Mitigation Grant to fund the design and engineering of a flood mitigation project in the south end of town around Washington Avenue where persistent flooding exists.

The Borough recognizes that the entire 5 Mile Island is extremely vulnerable to coastal storms and tidal flooding events and that it is in the best interest of all of the 5-mile island municipalities to work together to ensure that the coastal evacuation routes for all are accessible during periods of flooding. We support all efforts to effectuate improvements to the safe evacuation of all residents and visitors. We continue to work closely with the Cities of Wildwood and North Wildwood in our efforts to raise the height of bulkheads along the vulnerable bayfront and make joint improvements to storm water infrastructure and raise roadways where appropriate.

The Borough of Wildwood Crest has applied for and received grant funding matched with Borough funds to make improvements to most of our parks. Sunset Lake Park, Centennial Park, Sunrise Park, and Scoop Taylor Park have all been or will be renovated in keeping with our goal to be a world-class beach destination. Each one of our parks serves a unique niche, as we aim to increase recreational, outdoor activity. Sunset Lake has the first of its kind, ADA accessible kayak launch, a viewing and fishing platform, gazebo, and ample parking. Centennial Park provides for ample outdoor entertainment and events while Sunrise Park is the hub of exercise and family activity and features a splash park and enormous playground for the children and fitness station for adults. It is the terminus of the beachfront bike path.

In keeping with our vision, the Borough seeks to revitalize the now struggling New Jersey Avenue Business District making a destination for all visitors to Cape May County. Partnering with the engineering department of the County of Cape May, the Borough seeks to improve upon the traffic circulation in the area by instituting traffic calming and a road diet, improve upon parking, adding key features such pedestrian walkways, bike lanes, bicycle parking areas, improved landscaping, signage, lighting, and trash receptacles. As this is county road, partnering with the County while they make necessary improvements to the roadway and making necessary infrastructure improvements ahead of this will ensure a long-lasting, well-planned revitalization project. The borough has been acquiring real estate to ensure that ample parking exists in key areas surrounding the project limits.

## **STATE PROGRAMS, GRANTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Sunrise Park- The borough has been working on completing improvements to this park by adding an additional playground to accommodate the heavy flow of visitors. We also added a fitness park and water spray park. This beachfront park is meant to engage families in exercise and encourages free family fun.

Beach Bump Outs- In keeping with our family friendly, world class beach destination vision the Borough of Wildwood Crest currently is constructing new, ADA beach accesses throughout town at every street end. These new entrances will include extending timber walkways, showers, trash receptacles and bike racks. These areas will have unimpeded viewing areas for those who have difficulty getting to the water or simply want to sit and enjoy the view. We have received a CAFRA IP permit for this phased project and are currently seeking funding from DCA Small Cities and the Cape May County Open Spaces Program.

Scoop Taylor Park Recreational Improvements- This project is currently underway and is partially funded through a FY2020 DCA Small Cities grant to provide better ADA access. This project includes a new playground with swings compatible to disabled individuals, shelter for quiet enjoyment and attractive landscaping at the oceanfront.

Old Library- Plans are also underway to create a place for historic preservation paired with sustainable initiatives and environmental education in the Crest. Our old library building is uniquely situated along the ocean front adjacent to the beachfront bike path. This well-known and loved building is in the process of a renovation that will culminate in the unique pairing of sustainable efforts such as green building, recycling and ocean health education while providing a home to the Crest's historical artifacts. It will include electric charging stations. We hope to see our senior's use this building a hub for their meetings and gatherings. This project has been the focus of discussion at many Commissioner's meetings and has resulted in important input and informed dialogue with the public. Input from the members of the Planning Board and Green Team has been paramount in the planning of this site.

Little League Field Improvements- the borough is currently replacing the aged infrastructure at the site including the dugouts, concession stand, press box/field house and batting cages. New, energy efficient appliances and sustainable products are being utilized in construction. Plans to continue improving upon the condition of the fields and optimization of use of space are ongoing.

New Jersey and Pacific Avenue Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water Improvements- In advance of the County reconstructing these two County-owned roadways, the borough has invested over 6 million dollars in local funds to ensure that the infrastructure is sound and in good working condition. We have corrected serious drainage issues at great cost.

Bike Path- The Borough is a municipal partner in the Army Corp's federally funded Hereford Inlet to Cape May Inlet Dune and Beach Project. As such we have carefully designed a one-of-a-kind bike path on the beach. This continuous bike path directly on the beach but protected by dunes, will connect to other pre-existing bike paths in town

and create a seamless bike path to and from our neighboring communities and provide an unparalleled biking and walking experience for families. It addresses the issue of already overcrowded conditions on our roadways and competition between motor vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists.

Fishing Pier- to capitalize on and improve upon are our already beautiful, world-renowned beaches we are currently developing and refining plans to reconstruct the Crest Fishing Pier. Our plan is to make this amenity a first-class destination that attracts surf competitions, allows for surf fishing, bird watching and other passive recreation. This new and improved pier will stimulate economic development, provide more and much needed public access and recreation.

Flood Mitigation- The Borough has implemented a Flood Mitigation and Storm Water Plan. This plan is being forwarded to the Planning Board for inclusion in the Master Plan. As indicated earlier in this report, the Borough has applied for a \$4M 2021 Flood Mitigation Grant to install a pump station and make improvements to increase pipe capacity in the northern-portion of Wildwood Crest along the bayfront where nuisance flooding persists. This plan incorporates the installation of SCADA valves at the bayside outfalls and a pump station in the flood prone, low elevation area along the bayside where persistent, repetitive flooding occurs.

The Borough has also applied for a 2021 Flood Mitigation Grant to fund the design and engineering of a flood mitigation project in the south end of town around Washington Avenue where persistent flooding exists. Other mitigation efforts such as the raising of bulkheads, roadways and property are being explored currently. We are taking a regional approach to these measures.

## **RECENT AND UPCOMING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

For the past number of years, the Borough has experienced an increase in residential development, primarily single family, and duplex. From January 1, 2018 through mid-April 2021 there have been fifty-three structures demolished and over one hundred fifty new single family and duplex structures built. This trend has affected all residential zones, the Marine Commercial zone, and Hotel-Motel zones in the borough. There has been one new commercial building (a restaurant) in the Business zone, and one new mixed-use building (including take-out food, residential apartment, and ticket sales booth and gift shop) in the Marine Commercial zone. There is currently one motel (the Mahalo) under substantial renovation, but there has been no new motel construction for many years. Several motels have undergone renovation and variance relief for the purpose of converting to residential multi-family use.

The Planning Board is currently working with the governing body to redevelop the New Jersey Avenue Business district to include a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and encourage additional residential development above the first-floor commercial uses. This area has also been designated for affordable housing to accommodate the borough's Fair Share Housing obligation.

## **STATEMENT OF PLANNING COORDINATION**

The Borough of Wildwood Crest is currently working with the other Wildwood communities on uniform flood mitigation ordinances and shared several services. We have numerous agreements with Cape May County including health, social, sewer, court and other services. We are included in Cape May County Planning Department's Wastewater Plan, the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management's all Hazards Mitigation Plan. We also have an agreement with the Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority to provide sanitary sewer services to our residents.

## **SUSTAINABILITY/ RESILIENCY STATEMENT**

The Crest's planning and regulations support social, economic, and environmental sustainability, including resiliency to climate change. Our Flood Mitigation and Storm Sewer Master Plan can be found on our Borough's webpage at: [http://wildwoodcrest.org/uploadfiles/WWC\\_FloodMitigationandStormSewerMasterPlan.pdf](http://wildwoodcrest.org/uploadfiles/WWC_FloodMitigationandStormSewerMasterPlan.pdf). This document provides property owners with information on existing flood challenges, establishes recommendations to mitigate the adverse impact of flooding and other coastal hazards, and provides flood mitigation infrastructure option to guide our governing body. It ensures compliance with FEMA's Community Rating System and provides guidance to potentially enhance our CRS rating. The Borough participates and coordinates with Federal, State and local entities to ensure that the borough continually progresses forward in mitigating flood hazards.

The borough completed a Bulkhead and Beach Outfall analysis in 2017 in our continued efforts to mitigate flooding. It has proven to be a valuable tool in our planning effort and It is made available to the public with all pertinent flood information on our flood webpage at <https://wildwoodcrest.org/bulkhead-nov17.pdf>.

The Borough's Sanitary Sewer Master Plan (2018) and Flood Mitigation Plan and Storm Sewer Master Plan will be presented to the Planning Board and adopted as a Master Plan Element. Regulation have been adopted consistent with the state's stormwater management plan and are continually reviewed for consistency.

The Borough will continue to update and monitor the Borough's existing and possible flood hazards by completing a vulnerability analysis with the ultimate goal of creating a Local Resilience Plan/ Strategy that addresses local vulnerability and resilience issues.

## **CONSISTENCY**

### **Local & Regional Planning**

The Borough of Wildwood Crest seeks to achieve plan endorsement through a regional approach as "the Wildwoods" together with the cities of North Wildwood and Wildwood and the Borough of West Wildwood. We have met several times and through a collaborative effort and identified common concerns and attributes.

## State Plan – Goals, Policies, and Indicators

The Wildwood Crest Borough Master Plan, Reexamination Reports, Land Use Plan, Elements, and Special Studies are demonstrably consistent with the statewide goals, strategies, and policies. Further the Master Plan Goals and Objectives characterize all the following goals as applied to Wildwood Crest Borough, as explained above.

- Goal #1 Revitalize the State’s Cities and Towns
- Goal #2 Conserve the State’s Natural Resources and Systems
- Goal #3 Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for all Residents of New Jersey.
- Goal #4 Protect the Environment, Prevent, and Clean Up Pollution
- Goal #5 Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
- Goal #6 Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
- Goal #7 Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space, and Recreational Value
- Goal #8 Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

### **State Plan- Center Criteria and Policies**

Wildwood Crest is within a designated center as an environmentally sensitive barrier island planning area inclusive of the Wildwoods. The coordination between the communities provides support, regional planning context, common planning, and shared services. This supports coordinated investment to meet statewide objectives for healthy and active citizens, enhancing community engagement, and participation. In fact, the active planning efforts over the last several years have improved the built environment and seek to further the Planning Area Policy Objectives.

### **State Plan – Planning Area Policy Objectives**

The land use, housing, equity, resilience, economic development, transportation, conservation, and recreation decisions of Wildwood Crest embrace sound planning policy. The New Jersey Avenue project is a prime example of Wildwood Crest’s desire to implement a core destination for residents and visitors focusing upon community design in the private and public realms, as well as flood resiliency, equity, and housing affordability.

No development has occurred in the New Jersey Avenue Business District for 50 years. The Borough seeks to coordinate with the county to implement changes to enhance the community. The New Jersey Avenue project creates a logical transition between beach and bay for gathering, community events, as well as pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The infrastructure improvements to enhance access to scenic resources, waterways, and the sensitive environs, amended land use ordinances, and consistent planning efforts seek to redevelop lands for use and enjoyment by residents and visitors

alike. Increases in permitted residential density in the neighborhood seek to encourage the development of equitable market and affordable housing in conjunction with retail sales and service, eating establishments, and entertainment.

## **MAPPING**

The Borough has implemented a GIS mapping system to track improvements to infrastructure. The County's GIS data was integrated, and file sharing is in place. Our zoning maps are not digitized but our goal is to do so in the next year.

## **STATE AGENCY ASSISTANCE/EXPECTED BENEFITS**

Dredging of Sunset Lake- The Borough has been working with Scott Douglas of the New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJDEP to dredge the state channel in Sunset Lake on our bayside. The DOT is currently attempting to locate a disposal site and/or suitable method for disposal of beneficial dredge material so that this project can proceed. The Borough has requested that the State's channel be relocated to follow the contour of the shoreline to allow boaters access to the docks and parks along the bayfront. This will surely enhance recreational boating and promote tourism in the Crest. The NJDOT has indicated that Superstorm Sandy money is available for this multi-jurisdictional, state channel project. We ask that the State expedite our request so that this funding can still be utilized. It is our understanding that the Sandy funds must be utilized by 2022.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Assistance- We have applied for 2021 FEMA-BRIC funding for two key flood mitigation projects and ask for the State's support.

We are currently working with Wildwood, West Wildwood and North Wildwood on a regional bulkhead ordinance. As part of this ordinance each municipality will be expected to come into compliance and raise their respective municipally owned bulkheads to the new height requirement within the prescribed timeframes. We have requested assistance from Meghan Wren of the Office of Planning Advocacy in this endeavor.

Revitalization of New Jersey Avenue- the Borough is working with the Cape May County Engineer its professionals, our planner, municipal engineer, and grant writer to undergo a revitalization of our downtown area. The Borough's Planning Board is currently completing a study to determine if it meets the requirements of an area in need of rehabilitation. Many businesses have closed, and buildings deteriorate as vacancies occur. We have hired professionals to study and have held several public hearings to garner public support for this project. To bring this struggling 4- block area back to a thriving downtown area which will include shopping and entertainment, and a restaurant with outdoor seating we plan on making extensive improvements to this area including lighting, streetscape, and roadway reconstruction. We have partnered with Cape May County to plan for a modular park area and a pedestrian friendly environment that will

allow for seasonal fairs and entertainment to attract visitors and promote our local businesses. One of the largest obstacles we face with this revitalization is a commercial laundry facility that does not fit with the plan. During our on-going conversations with the facility's owners, they have expressed interest in relocating offshore but have requested financial assistance from the state and local government to do so. We have contacted the neighboring communities, county officials and the state's business action center for assistance. We ask that you aid with the redevelopment and request for financial assistance.

Dredging and Relocation of State Channel in Sunset Lake- the Borough of Wildwood Crest has requested that the NJDOT use available Sandy funding to dredge the state's portion of Sunset Lake. During our discussions we requested that the state consider moving the channel to a more efficient and usable location. We ask for your assistance in expediting this long process as conditions continue to deteriorate and boat traffic increases.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Borough of Wildwood Crest's Master Plan and Vision are consistent with the State's 8 goals. The borough has and will continue to lead the Cape May County and other coastal communities in environmental stewardship by partnering with Love Blue and other entities to provide continuous beach cleanups and public outreach initiatives. We will continue to work with our Green Team to comply with Sustainable Jersey standards. All projects are and will be planned with sustainability and flood mitigation efforts at the forefront. The Borough of Wildwood Crest will continue to invest in and improve upon our parks and infrastructure. Through capital planning, a constant pursuit of grant funding, vision, passion and energy we will enhance our recreational amenities to enhance our family, fit-friendly oceanside environment. Free recreational opportunities such as our new splash park and adjacent, adult, outdoor fitness center fits the state's plan. The upcoming revitalization and redevelopment of our New Jersey Avenue downtown and the renovation of our Old Library Building will include electric charging stations and increased bike racks. We will continue to strive to utilize green building standards to set an example of sustainability standards for our residents and visitors, increase flood hazard resiliency and create equity for all.