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SPECIAL  
FEATURE

## DEFINING DOWNTOWN

WILDWOOD  
by Irish MUYCO-TOBIN

'New Urbanism' comes to Wildwood with the city's plans for a town center beginning to take shape in its two-square-mile downtown area. Wildwood director of planning and parks Joe Vujnich says the project is more than 10 years in the making and part of the city's master plan. "As it moves forward, people are beginning to realize the vision: an identity for the city and a place for residents to come and gather," he says.

Recently ranked by *Money* as one of the best places to live in America, Wildwood is focused on retaining its appeal, Vujnich says. "New Urbanism is really old urbanism—an attractive, walkable community with nearby services," he says. "It's very much like downtown Kirkwood or Old Town Webster Groves, where you have wider sidewalks and small shops that come up to the edge of the street."

A main component of the plan is the \$70 million-plus construction of the Wildwood Town Center project, a mixed-use development by Koman Properties that is being built in two phases. Scott Haley, Koman's director of development, says a combination of retail, office space and residential properties will make up the 13-building site on 15 acres. "We are moving forward on almost all aspects. We've completed eight buildings since we started in 2005," he says. The completed first phase of the project includes a Walgreens, Starbucks, Indigo Joe's



'New Urbanism' takes shape in Wildwood's Town Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KOMAN PROPERTIES

Restaurant and Cold Stone Creamery. In addition, the just-completed Wildwood Town Center Hotel features 112 rooms and 8,000 square feet of meeting space.

Lori Kelling, executive director of the West St. Louis County Chamber of Commerce, says the ongoing economic development in Wildwood benefits other communities along Manchester Road. "With the help of the East-West Gateway Council, our goal is to revitalize Manchester Road," she says. "We'd like to see the Manchester Road corridor—Manchester, Winchester, Ballwin and Ellisville—become a destination for shopping, dining and entertainment. Wildwood is at the tip of it all, and we hope that the growth and beautification of that community will send a chain reaction down Manchester Road." ♦