

DUCKSWORTH PARK PLAN

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Ducksworth Park Plan

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1. Introduction

A. Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this plan is to rehabilitate and improve Ducksworth Park. Based on input from the District Council Member, the Director of Parks and Recreation, and the community, the following goals were established:

1. Ensure the safety of the park users and the surrounding neighborhood.
2. Increase community access to the park.
3. Improve community health.
4. Provide educational opportunity for children
5. Increase the park's capacity for use.
6. Provide a conservation area by preserving trees and greenspace.
7. Provide areas for family recreation and social events.

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B. Location and History

Ducksworth Park is a city- owned park, located in the Lincoln Park and Terrace Park neighborhoods (see figure 1). The park is bounded on the north by Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., on the west by private lots fronting on Washington Ave., on the south by private lots fronting Tupelo St., and on the east by undeveloped lots in the Terrace Park Subdivision. The park has

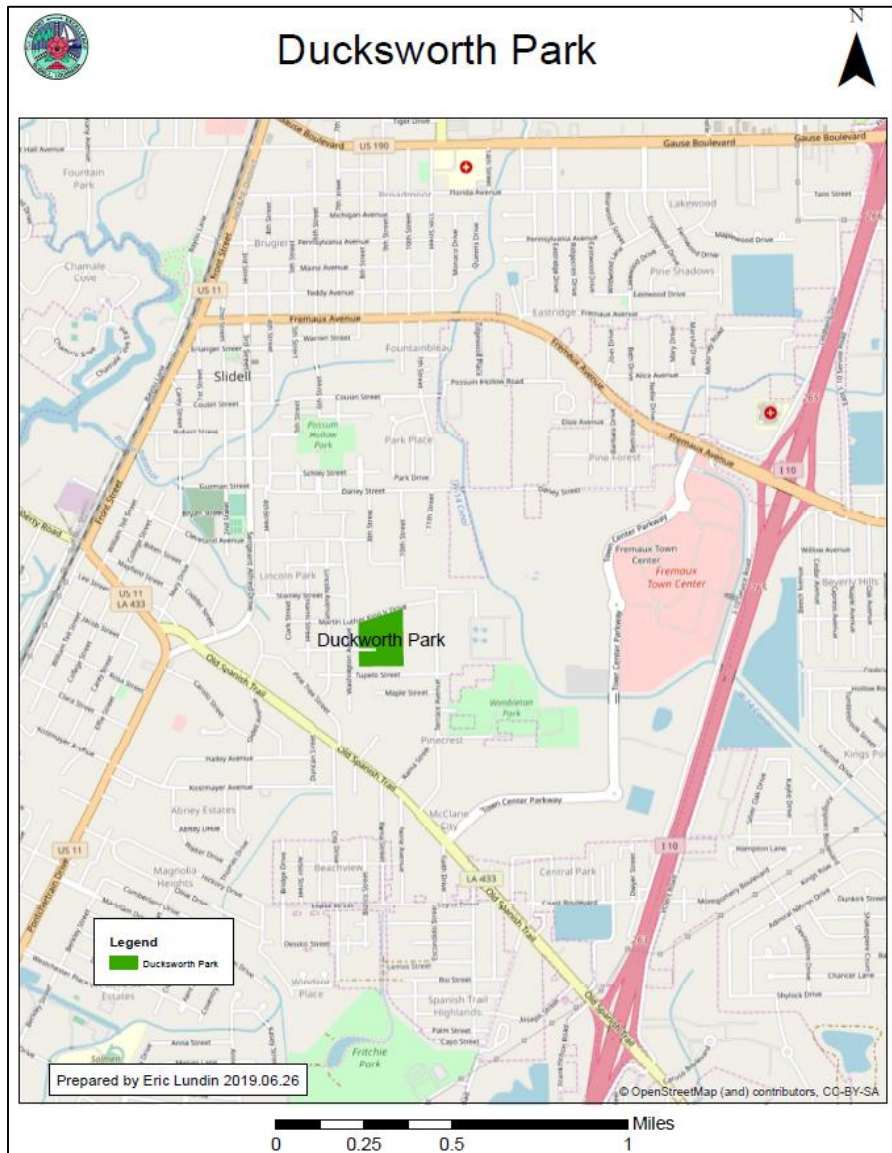


FIGURE 1: DUCKSWORTH PARK

two entrances- the main entrance is located off of Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., directly across the street from the Housing Authority. A second entrance is on Campbell St., which dead ends into

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the park near the intersection of Campbell St. and Washington Ave. The southern third of the park, south of Campbell St., is heavily wooded and undeveloped. The northern two thirds of the park are developed; on its eastern half, the park has a baseball field, a picnic pavilion, and a children's playground. The western half is sparsely wooded and has a basketball court and restrooms located near the Campbell St. entrance.

Historically, the park was used for things like family gatherings for weekends and special occasions, youth exploration and games in its wooded areas, and youth baseball and basketball games. In recent years the park has fallen into disrepair and has been subject to vandalism and illicit activities.

2. Needs Assessment

The first step in the planning process was to determine what the needs were for Ducksworth Park. The needs assessment consisted of three elements: interviews with City leadership, a site inspection of the park's facilities, and community input. Leadership interviews were conducted with Kevin Walcott, Director of Recreation; Jennifer Drennan, Assistant Director of Recreation; and Leslie Denham, Councilmember for District A. The site inspection was conducted by Ryan Herring. Community input was predominantly provided during a community meeting, held on January 15, 2019 in the City Auditorium meeting room. Community input was augmented with interviews from park users, gathered during site visits.

A. Assessment of Existing Facilities

Based on leader and community input, an assessment of the park's existing facilities was completed. The results of this assessment are summarized in Table 1 below:

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TABLE 1: ASSESSMENT OF PARK FACILITIES

Facility	Assessment
Baseball Field, with dugout and bleachers	No lighting, poor drainage
Basketball Court	No lighting, cracked concrete
Public Restroom	Functional, defaced
Pavilion	No water/electric service, only one available
Kid Play area	Remote from restroom, no shade, no parking
Parking	Hard surface parking off Campbell St. only, Unmarked asphalt, overgrown, cracked Distant from playground and pavilion
Sidewalks	Overgrown, cracked, ponding

B. Community Needs Identification

On January 15, 2019 a community meeting was held in the City’s Auditorium meeting room to allow input from the public as to what needs improvement and what additional amenities they would like to have included in a rehabilitated and improved park. Table 2 summarizes and prioritizes the public’s input.

TABLE 2: COMMUNITY INPUT ON PARK NEEDS

Desired Amenity	Number of Comments Submitted
Walking Trail/Tree maintenance	7
Redesign or improve fields for sports	7
Improve facilities (Restrooms, concessions, pavilions)	6
Parking	4
Water and Land Improvements	3
Kids Playground	2
Swimming pool	2
Skate and bike park	2
Lighting and fencing	1
Horseshoe Pits	1
Pedestrian access	1

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C. Park Objectives

Based on the assessment of the existing facilities, input from City leadership, and community feedback, the following objectives were identified:

TABLE 3: OBJECTIVES

Objective	Goals Supported
Construct new children’s playground with emphasis on educational learning and better access to restroom and parking. Retain location close to Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.	3, 4, 5, 7
Maintain the southern wooded portion of the park as green space for conservation area. Add with a walkable nature trail	4, 6
Add a walking/exercise path in northern portion of park and tie it into the pedestrian access from Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. and Washington Ave. and to the nature trail.	3, 6
Renovate the existing bathroom.	1, 6
Add new bathroom in vicinity of Children Playground	1, 2, 5
Rehabilitate the existing basketball court	3, 7
Add a basketball court adjacent to the existing court	3, 5, 7
Rehabilitate the dugouts and bleachers.	1, 2, 5, 7
Add additional pavilions and other shaded seating accommodations	5, 7
Redesign the baseball field into a more flexible multi-use field.	3, 5, 7
Add two Horseshoe pits.	3, 7
Improve the park’s drainage, especially to sports field. Add a detention pond in the southern portion of park	1, 2, 6
Define the park’s entrance with crosswalk, signage, and fencing along Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.	2
Install lighting around the park entrance, parking, restroom, playground, and pavilion	1, 2, 5, 7
Provide an area for a community garden	3, 6, 7
Add parking to meet the increased demand.	2, 5

3. Options and Proposed Plan

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A. Options

At a meeting held on March 19, 2019 in the City Auditorium meeting room, community members received a short presentation, and were asked to place stickers representing the park's needs on a large blown up map of Ducksworth Park. This technique resulted in three options which are detailed in Appendix A. Analysis of the three options identified common themes which were used to develop the proposed plan for Ducksworth Park (Figure 1).

B. Plan

The park will be divided into three areas, interconnected by a walking path (See figure 1). The three areas are Children Playground, Sports, and Conservation. The park will include two picnic pavilions to support family gatherings. Two parking lots will be created with one being at the main park entrance and second one collocated with the children's playground.

(1) Children's Playground Area

The children's playground will be relocated from the northeast to northwest corner of the park. The playground area will include its own parking area with access to Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. and the restroom. Clustering the playground, parking lot, and restroom separately from the other park facilities was intended to create an environment where parents could easily keep better track of their children, especially if they have more than one child to keep track of. The theme of the playground equipment will be education and exercise.

(2) Sports Recreation Area

The sports recreation area will consist of

- Multi-use field
- Two Basketball Courts

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- Two horseshoe pits.

The multi-use field will be created by converting the existing baseball field into a larger more flexible polygon that can be striped to form either football, baseball, soccer, field hockey, or a combination of multiple fields as needed on any given day. The existing baseball bleachers, dugouts and batter backstop will remain in their current location but will be refurbished. Two regulation horse shoe pits will be constructed near the existing restroom. This is a new facility for the park and was added to support a burgeoning community horseshoe league that uses the park most every weekend. The final element of the sports recreation area is the rehabilitation of the existing basketball court and the addition of a second basketball court. The existing combination restroom, concession stand, and storage space located in this area will be rehabilitated.

(3) Conservation Area

The Conservation Area will encompass the southern third of the park south of Campbell St entrance. This area will include a .3-mile nature trail and a pond. The nature trail will wind its way through the existing wooded areas, with stations added to educate visitors on the area's vegetation and wildlife. The goal in the long term is to add a pond and community garden.

Other amenities will be a walking path, parking lots, and family picnic pavilions. In addition to the children's playground parking, the existing gravel driveway and parking area will be converted into hard surface parking lots. The goal is for both parking lots to be constructed on pervious surface to allow for percolation of storm water back into the environment and to lessen stormwater runoff. A hard surface walking path will be constructed to provide access to the three areas.

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(4) Support Facilities

(a) Picnic Pavilions

There will be two picnic pavilions, one existing and one to be constructed, that will be available for rent. The pavilions will be sized to support large family gatherings and will include water service. The existing pavilion already has water service, and water service will be included in the construction of the new pavilion.

(b) Walking Path

A hard surface path will be constructed to provide access to all three park areas, the park entrance, and both parking lots. The path will be approximately a third of a mile, looping through the northern portion of the park. The nature trail will connect with and extend into the Conservation Area.

(c) Parking Lots

The park will include two parking lots. The existing gravel parking area located at the park's entrance will be improved into a hard surface parking lot. A new hard surface parking lot will be collocated with the Children's playground. Use of pervious paving material will be used to allow stormwater to percolate into the ground beneath the parking lots to reduce stormwater runoff.

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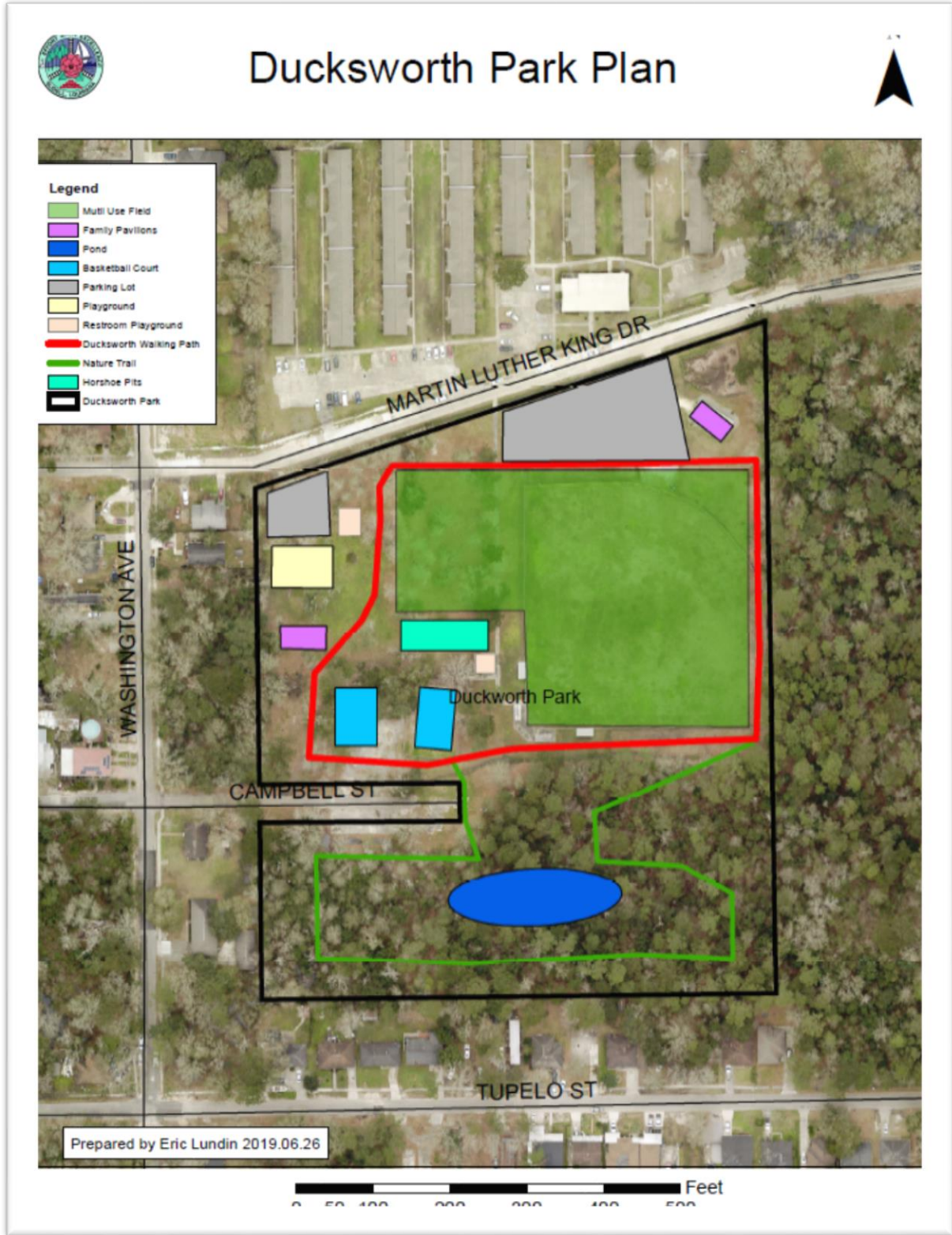


FIGURE 2: PROPOSED DUCKSWORTH PARK

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C. Community Engagement

During planning it became apparent that one of the challenges that has led to the deterioration of Ducksworth park was the lack of community access, and therefore lack of engagement with the park. Recommendations to improve access include the creation of an Advisory Board, the creation of a non-profit to assist in park improvements, and better way-finding signage.

(1) Ducksworth Park Advisory Board

In order to keep community leaders engaged in the improvement and maintenance of the park, an Advisory Board will be created to assist the City's Director of Parks and Recreation in planning park improvements and outreach to the community. Members of the Board would be appointed by both the Mayor and the City Council and would meet regularly with the Director of Parks and Recreation.

(2) Friends of Ducksworth Park

A common practice to allow communities to donate time, labor, and materials to a public park is to create a nonprofit that then enters into an agreement with the City. The creation and running of the nonprofit would need to be undertaken by private citizens. Community labor and donations would be ideal for some of the smaller less intensive projects such creation of the nature trail, horseshoe pits, and renovations to the existing bathroom and picnic pavilion.

(3) Way-Finding Signs

Finding the park was identified as one of the challenges to its use. Way-finding signs will be installed to guide visitors from Old Spanish Trail and Sgt. Alfred Dr. to the park. The City will work with the Louisiana Department of Transportation to install the signs on Old Spanish Trail. The remaining signs will be installed in City rights-of-way.

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4. Cost Estimate and Resourcing

A. Cost Estimate

A cost estimate was developed by comparing the proposed projects with similar completed city projects. Considered in the cost estimate for each item were construction, 10% contingency, and 10% for design and engineering. Table 3 summarizes the cost estimate:

TABLE 4: COST ESTIMATE

Item	Cost Estimate¹
Multi Use Sports Field	\$119,760
Field Lighting	\$268,932
Hard Surface Walking Path with Lighting	\$226,080
Nature Trail through Conservation Area	\$156,000
Renovation of Drainage Ditches (~970')	\$18,000
Detention Pond (40,500 cubic ft)	\$324,000
Culverts (970')	\$28,800
Renovate Existing Restroom	\$18,000
New Restroom	\$197,640
Renovate Existing Basketball Court	\$18,000
New Basketball Court	\$98,880
New Children's Playground	\$300,360
Wayfinding Signs	\$75,000
New Horseshoes Pits (3-4)	\$1,600
New Parking Lot	\$226,560
New Pavilion (24' x 24')	\$29,400
Total	\$2,107,012
Notes	
1. Cost estimates were developed by using cost of similar projects that City has undertaken in the last several years then adjusting them to the park's local condition.	
2. Cost Estimate = Cost of Construction + 10% Contingency + 10% Design and Engineering	

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B. Resources

Funding will need to be identified for each project, though some projects may be combined for efficiency and effectiveness. There are two sources of existing funding that could be used to pay for parts of the plans: U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement funds, and City’s Capital Budget. Funding gathered from other federal, state, and nongovernmental grant programs are feasible but were not considered at this stage. Money, labor, equipment, and material for some projects could be donated by private organizations and individuals. The creation of the Friends of Ducksworth Park non-profit could facilitate these donations. Some of the projects, such as drainage improvements, signage, and nature can be constructed using City labor, equipment and materials reducing their cost. Table 4 shows funds that are either currently available in the City’s Capital Budget, or can accepted from CDBG Entitlement funds.

TABLE 5: FUNDS AVAILABLE

Source	Amount
CDBG Entitlement	\$758,733
Capital Budget	\$32,000
Funding Available	\$790,733

(1) Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Funds

HUD has designated the City of Slidell as an Entitlement Community. As an Entitlement Community, the city is automatically apportioned funds each year to be used in the City’s designated Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) area. The annual amount allocated has varied from \$150,000 to \$188,000 a year. For 2019, the City was allocated \$188,000. Part of the annual

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entitlement is set aside for Administration of the City’s CDBG program, with the remainder available for projects (CDBG labels them activities). Assuming \$150,000 is available a year and that \$30,000 is set aside for Administration, that leaves conservatively \$120,000 a year available for projects. Every five years the City must submit an updated Consolidated Plan to HUD that outlines how it plans to use its entitlement funds. The current Consolidate Plan runs through 2019 and the new plan will cover 2020 to 2024. After consultation with City leadership the plan is focus the 2020 to 2024 Consolidated Plan and 2019’s allocation on the Rehabilitation and improvement of Ducksworth Park. This conservatively will provide \$758,733 in CDBG funding.

TABLE 6: PROJECTED CDCG ANNUAL ENTITLEMENT

CDBG Program Year	Annual Amount	Portion Available for Projects
2019 ¹	\$188,733	\$158,733
2020 ²	\$150,000	\$120,000
2021	\$150,000	\$120,000
2022	\$150,000	\$120,000
2023	\$150,000	\$120,000
2024	\$150,000	\$120,000
Total		\$758,733
Notes:		
1. 2019 CDBG Entitlement amount has already been allocated		
2. 2020 to 2024 Amount are assumed based on lower past entitlement amounts		

(2) Capital Budget

The FY 2020 City Capital Budget includes \$32,000 for Ducksworth Park lighting. This money was approved for lighting improvements for Ducksworth.

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(3) Nonprofit Donations.

If a nonprofit “Friends of Ducksworth Park” was created, it could accept donations and take on some the proposed projects. Community labor and donations would be ideal for some of the smaller less intensive projects, such as the creation of the nature trail, horseshoe pits, and renovations to the existing bathroom and picnic pavilion.

(4) Other Grants and Funding Opportunity

Federal, State, and private organizations regularly announce Notices of Funding Opportunities some of which might be used to fund some of the projects planned for Ducksworth Park. The City has hired a consultant to search out these funding opportunities and assist City staff in applying for them. This plan will be provided to the consultant who will then look for suitable funding opportunities.

5. Ducksworth Park Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

Rehabilitation of Ducksworth park is anticipated take at least five years. The only projected CDBG money at this time is CDBG entitlement funding, and the lighting money already allocated in the City budget. The remainder of the funding is reliant upon future year CDBG annual entitlement funding, future year capital budgeting, other grants and funding opportunities the city identifies and pursues, and donations from the community. Projects could be accelerated based on identification of funding. The below table lays out the planned projects by calendar year through 2025 and identifies the funding source where known.

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TABLE 7: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Year	Project	Cost	Funding
2020	Creation Ducksworth Advisory Board	N/A	N/A
	Creation Friends of Ducksworth Park	N/A	N/A
	Basketball Court- Rehabilitate	\$18,000	CDBG PY 2019 Entitlement
	Basketball Court - New	\$98,880	CDBG PY 2019 Entitlement
	Horseshoe Pits		CDBG PY 2019 Entitlement and Community donation labor, supplies
	Design and Engineer Multi Use Field	\$12,000	
	Install wayfinding signs	TBD	City Construct/capital budget
2021	Multi Use Field construction	\$107,784	CDBG PY 2020 Entitlement
	Field Lighting	\$268,932	Capital budget
	Existing Restroom Rehabilitation	\$18,000	Capital budget City labor
	New Restroom Construction	\$197,640	
	Walking Path Design and Engineering		
2022	Construct Walking Path	\$226,080	Combination CDBG PY2021 Entitlement
2023-2025	Nature Trail Construction	\$156,000	Community donation labor, material, and equipment
	Children's Playground	\$300,360	
	Children area Parking Lot	\$226,560	
	Drainage Improvements	\$46,800	
	New Picnic Pavilion	\$29,400	
	Detention Pond	\$324,000	

Appendix A

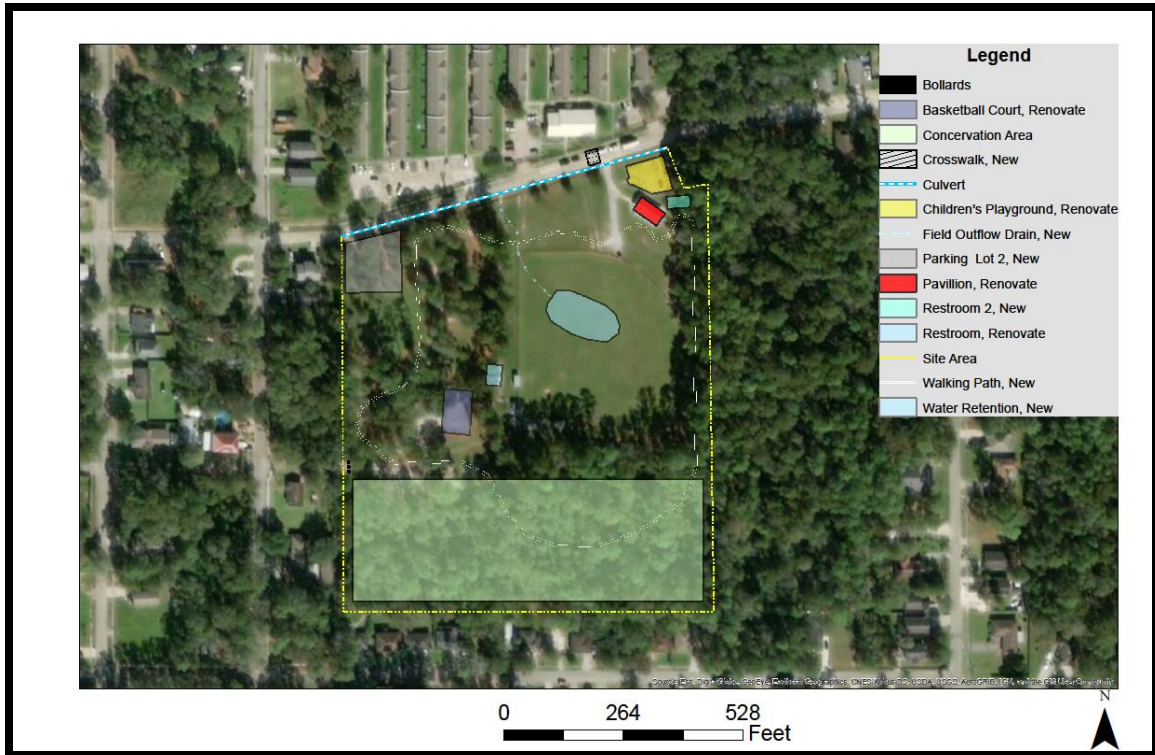
Option 1



1. Cluster 1 in northwest corner:
 - Construct new children's playground, pavilion, restroom, parking lot, and pedestrian lighting.
2. Cluster 2 in northeast corner: Maintain existing pavilion, and children's playground.
 - Construct new parking lot, crosswalk, pedestrian lighting.
3. Cluster 3 in center:
 - Renovate ball field
 - Renovate existing basketball court, restroom, dugouts, and bleachers
 - Construct new pavilion and pedestrian lighting
 - Construct field lighting.
4. Cluster 4 in south center:
 - Construct conservation area, water retention pond, exercise path, pedestrian lighting, and bollards on Campbell St. entrance.

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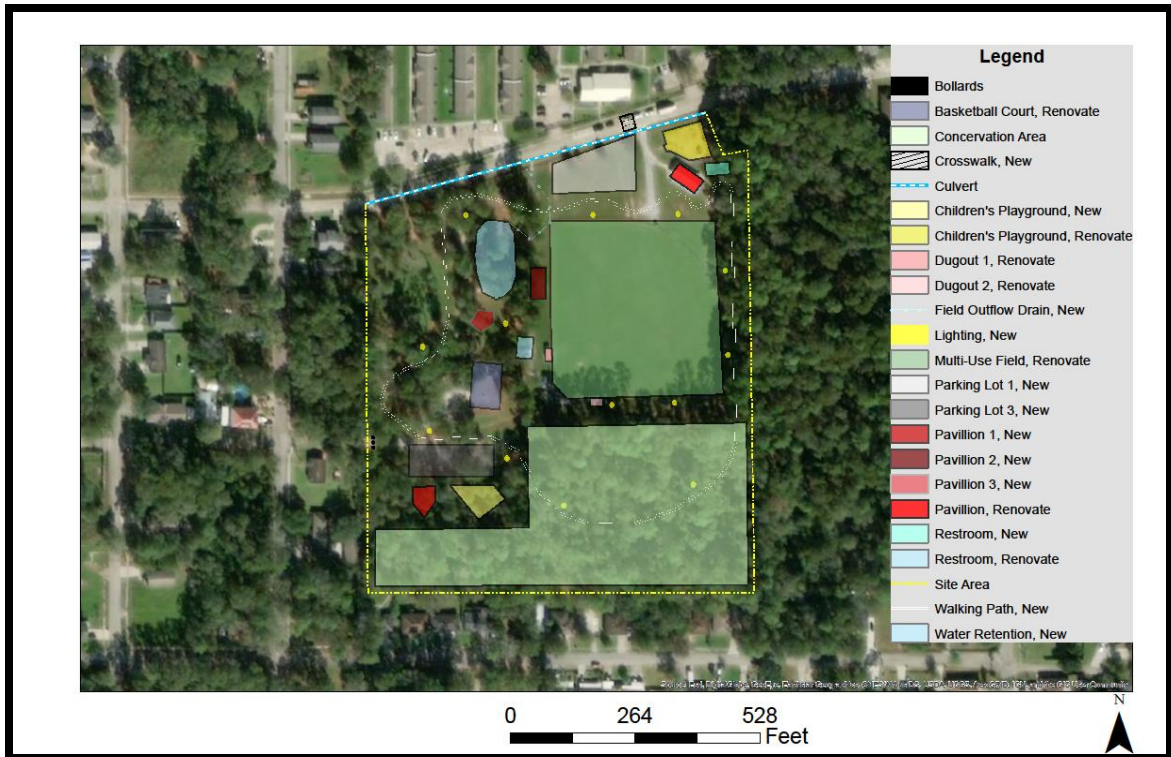
Option 2



1. Cluster 1 in northwest corner:
 - Construct new parking lot, crosswalk, walking path entrance, and pedestrian lighting.
2. Cluster 2 in northeast corner:
 - Renovate existing pavilion, and children's playground
 - Construct new restroom and pedestrian lighting.
3. Cluster 3 in south center:
 - Renovate existing, basketball court, restroom.
 - Construct new pavilion
4. Cluster 4 in north center:
 - Construct water retention pond, exercise path, and pedestrian lighting
5. Cluster 5 in south:
 - Construct conservation area and bollards on Campbell St. entrance

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Option 3



Option 3:

1. Cluster 1 in northwest corner:
 - Construct new water retention pond, 2 pavilions, and pedestrian lighting.
2. Cluster 2 in northeast corner:
 - Renovate existing pavilion, and children's playground
 - Construct new parking lot, crosswalk, restroom, walking path entrance and pedestrian lighting.
3. Cluster 3 in center:
 - Renovate existing basketball court, ball field, restroom, dugouts, and bleachers.
4. Cluster 4 in southwest corner:
 - Construct new children's playground, pavilion, parking lot, pedestrian lighting, and walking path entrance
5. Cluster 5 in south:
 - Construct conservation area and bollards on Campbell St. entrance.

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Appendix B: Community Meetings

Needs Assessment Meeting

Date: 01-15-2019

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Municipal Auditorium Meeting Room, Slidell LA

Purpose: To review objects, priorities, and questions expressed by community members at a public outreach meeting conducted by the city on the subject of Ducksworth Park revitalization.

Attendees: Cindi King, Kevin Walcott, Aaron Conners, Vicki Conners, Doug Lloyd, John Welborn, David Dunham, Richard Reardon, Landon T. Washington, Andre Pichon, Leslie Denham, Freddy Pichon, and Glynn Pichon.

Options Development Meeting

Date: 03-19-2019

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Mayor's Meeting Room, Slidell LA

Purpose: to obtain the community's input on a drafted plan to revitalize Ducksworth Park, using the comments, questions, goals, and concerns expressed during the January meeting.

Attendees: Landon T. Washington, Jennifer Drennan, Leslie Denham, Cindi King, Glynn Pichon, Ricky Darvin, Victoria Bergeron, and Charlotte Lee.