CONTENT

I. OVERVIEW
II. GOALS
III. STRATEGIES
IV. NEXT STEPS
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
O V E R V I E W

A.L. Davis Park, formerly known as Shakespeare Park, is located at the corner of Washington Avenue and LaSalle Street in Central City, New Orleans. Directly across the street from the former Magnolia/C.J. Peete Public Housing Development, the park holds extensive historical and cultural significance within the context of the neighborhood and the city, but in recent years has lost value as a community amenity due to the lack of funding, maintenance and an associated growth in violent crime.
The Magnolia Projects, officially the C.J. Peete Housing Development, was among the largest Public Housing Developments of New Orleans and the first all-black public housing development federally funded in the United States (after the construction of the all-white St. Thomas). It housed approximately 2,100 people in 1,400 units distributed over 41.5 acres and was completed in two phases (1940-41 and 1954-55). With the erosion of federal funding to sufficiently maintain public housing, the condition of the facility worsened and the violent-crime rates grew. After its demolition in 2008 redevelopment began as part of the Housing Authority of New Orleans Revitalization Plan in an effort to replace the original development with Garden- and Townhouse-style units and apartments. In addition to the physical rehabilitation of the site, the focus now is to provide and coordinate essential programs and services for former and new residents.

Located on the edge of the site, A.L. Davis Park is viewed as a critical component of the successful redevelopment of the area. Since Katrina authorities involved in the park’s future have taken measures towards recovery, such as basketball and tennis court restoration, but the majority of the park is still in great need of definition and improvement. The park has the capacity to offer recreational and educational programs that would contribute to a safer, more sustainable environment and to enhance the currently limited opportunities many young people in the area have to engage in. Furthermore A.L Davis park can serve as an important example for the great potential of the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) and become a model for many neighborhoods in the city currently striving to improve their physical landscapes and the programs available to their residents.
The current A.L. Davis Park covers an area of roughly 5 acres in Central City. The adjacent former CJ Peete Public Housing Development, now under construction as a mixed income apartment complex called Harmony Oaks, is nearly complete with many families already occupying the finished units. Altogether the development will include 460 units and the project is scheduled to conclude in Spring 2011. As the apartments begin to fill, it is increasingly important for the nearby green space to become available to the people in the vicinity. A design plan for the new Woodson Elementary has recently been finalized, and construction on the new building began in the Fall of 2010.

A.L. Davis Park is critically located to provide amenity value - specifically as a playground, sports, recreation and cultural hub - to both the growing residential community and teachers and students at the new school. In its current state the majority of the park is underutilized and unable to meet the demands of the residents nearby. However, with careful planning and design considerations, A.L. Davis Park can capitalize on its location between important residential and educational complexes and become the resource that is so urgently needed in the area.
The New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NONDC) is a non-profit community organizing, community planning and development organization focused on revitalizing the Central City neighborhood. For the last ten years, NONDC has concentrated on increasing the production of quality affordable housing and asset building for low-income families through homeownership. The group’s cluster development activities in Central City are aimed at restoring desolate blocks and turning them into lively areas with new levels of commitment and investment.

NONDC serves as the community partner on the redevelopment of the former CJ Peete public housing complex. With 460 mixed-income rental units, the Harmony Oaks Apartments represent a substantial investment in the neighborhood. However, as a community partner, it is NONDC’s responsibility to make sure that Harmony Oaks does not stand alone in the effort to revitalize the neighborhood. In a comprehensive approach to neighborhood development, one must look beyond housing. Commercial resources, schools and space to play become critical when looking at the neighborhood as a whole.

NONDC partners closely with the Harmony Oaks Neighborhood Association and other established resident groups in the area. As construction progresses on the new school and more families move in to Harmony Oaks, it becomes essential to address the current condition of A.L. Davis Park. Subsequently, it seems natural for NONDC to tap into its existing network of neighbors and local resources to jumpstart a community-led design process for a successful transformation of this critical community asset.
EXISTING SITE BOUNDARY GENERAL

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE
CURRENT CONCERNS

A. existing infrastructure
   A.a tennis courts: surfacing, perimeter definition, location
   A.b basketball courts: roof structure
B. lack of or unattractive perimeter definition (chain link fence)
C. large grass area undefined - lack of designated play fields, seating, shade
D. running/walking
E. pool not in use
F. chess tables unusable
G. kids play area location
H. lack of signage
I. entrance scenario unclear
J. trash cans?
K. storage?
L. park manager facility?
M. seating?
N. security?
O. landscaping?

-existing points of access
OBJECTS

- OAK TREE
- FOUNTAIN
- LIGHTS
- TREE
- TABLES
- TREE
The majority of the current A.L. Davis Park is an unprogrammed open grass field. Lacking maintenance, the park is often littered and generally uninviting with no specific playfields, seating, shade or amenities other than the existing basketball and tennis courts. In order to support the comprehensive neighborhood development surrounding the park it is important to develop an infrastructure that allows for and invites specific recreational and civic functions. The goal is to make the park user-friendly, accessible to the surrounding community and aesthetically pleasing in order to divert crime and violence. The hope is to replace current negative associations of A.L. Davis Park with positive experiences that build on its important history in the neighborhood.
make it **safe**

make it **active**

make it **a destination**

make it **accessible**

make it **flexible**

make it **sustainable**

make it **fun**
This initial design proposal for A.L. Davis is the result of a comprehensive effort lead by longtime neighborhood residents to improve the facilities. Working through the Harmony Oaks Neighborhood Association (HONA) and the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NONDC), we have followed a process that balances maximum community outreach with focused planning and design development.

The first open community meeting produced a list of amenities that people wanted to see in the park, ranking their relative importance or desirability. We then asked for volunteers to form a design steering committee that would work more intensely with the design team to develop specific plans implementing the community’s desires. This committee and the design team worked together over an intensive two-month period before returning to the larger group to present the proposal. The proposal was amended based on feedback from the last meeting before being finalized for this publication.

The two options presented attempt to balance some still unresolved community aspirations for A.L. Davis Park. Both schemes demonstrate a full utilization of the entire site and a rich variety of programmatic opportunity for all park users. We feel that these design proposals are an excellent place to begin a period of greater promotion of park development and improvement and we look forward to continuing this neighborhood lead re-development project with greater support from our local government and other partners who can help bring these efforts to a successful conclusion.
How do you bring a diverse community together?
OPTION 1: PARK

LARGE RELAXATION AREA
MULTI-USE FACILITY ALONG WASH AVE
MULTI-USE SPORTS FIELD
SHADED SEATING/GATHERING AREA
CLUSTERED BALL COURTS
WALKING/RUNNING PATH AS BOUNDARY
CORNER MONUMENT
SEATING
DRAINAGE
SWIM

OPTION 2: TRACK/FIELD

4-LANE RUNNING TRACK
SHADED SEATING/GATHERING AREA
MULTI-USE SPORTS FIELD
CLUSTERED BALL COURTS
CORNER MONUMENT
SWIM
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A. MULTI-USE SPORTS FIELD CENTERED
B. SHIFTS TO WASHINGTON AVE TO FREE UP SPACE FOR RECREATION
C. UNIFY BALL COURTS (ROOF)
   CREATE NODE AT CORNER WASHINGTON AVE/LASALLE ST LOOP AS BOUNDARY
   STRUCTURE ALONG WASHINGTON AVE AS THRESHOLD
   MULTIPLE ACCESS POINTS
   LIMIT FRERET STREET TRAFFIC
   PAVILION
THE PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION TRIES TO INCORPORATE MANY REQUESTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY THE COMMUNITY IN REGARDS TO ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE PARK. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN INTERACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS UTILIZE SPACE EFFICIENTLY, SEVERAL PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO OPERATE SIMULTANEOUSLY OR SHARE THE SAME SPACE.
PHASE ONE

ESTABLISH THRESHOLD STRUCTURE ALONG WASHINGTON AVENUE

STRETCH STRUCTURE OVER LENGTH OF STREET EDGE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

INSERT PROGRAM ALONG WASHINGTON AVENUE
BALLFIELD STORAGE
PARK MANAGER FACILITY
BUS STOP
BATHROOMS
CONcessions
CORNER MONUMENT/PUBLIC ART

ENABLE VISIBILITY INTO THE PARK
PHASE TWO

LATERAL LOOP AS BOUNDARY AROUND SITE - RUNNING/WALKING PATH

ALTER LOOP TO ALLOW FOR FLEXIBLE CONDITIONS - BIOSWALE, INTERSECTION WITH THRESHOLD BUILDING, BOUNDARY AT COVERED BALL COURTS

SECTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
PHASE THREE

MODULAR ROOF STRUCTURE TO COVER GATHERING AREA, BALL COURTS

POROUS ROOF PANELS TO ALLOW FOR LIGHT AND VENTILATION

FOLDED ROOF PANELS TO ALLOW FOR LIGHT AND VENTILATION
Components / Phasing

ELEMENT 1

unifying roof

possible foundations in roof

straight w/ borders along boundary

show site

short in bar building

folded / perforated

segmented

4.

wrapped box
solid / void

ELEMENT 2. - building as boundary

storage

shop

party / balcony

mental / memory
COST ESTIMATE *

**PHASE 1**
STRUCTURE ALONG WASHINGTON AVENUE  
200’x40’ = 8,000 SF @ $50/SF = $ 400,000

**PHASE 2**
BOUNDARY/ENCLOSURE  
1700 LN FT X $15 = $ 25,500
TRACK  
50,000
SEATING  
60,000
FOOTBALL FIELD SURFACE/DRAINAGE  
100,000
GRASS/VEGETATION  
50,000

**PHASE 3**
FOLDED ROOF  
75’x400’ = 30,000 SF @ 50/SF = $ 1,500,000
BASKETBALL/TENNIS COURTS  
$15,000 x 4 = 60,000
DECK  
10,000SF x $10/SF = 100,000

**MISCELLANEOUS**  
$500,000

**ESTIMATED TOTAL**  
$ 2,845,500

*all prices listed are approximate*
THE DRAINAGE CONCEPT INCLUDES SUB-SURFACING THE FOOTBALL FIELD WITH A DRAINAGE SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS FOR EFFICIENT FLOW OF WATER FROM THE FIELD INTO COLLECTOR PIPES THAT AGAIN DIRECT THE WATER TOWARDS FIELD AND SITE BOUNDARIES. ON ONE SIDE OF THE PROPERTY A VEGETATED DRAINAGE SWALE FILTERS THE RUN-OFF WATER THROUGH TRAPPING POLLUTANTS LIKE FERTILIZER AS WELL AS SILT BEFORE IT ENTERS THE CITY’S CANALIZATION SYSTEM.
OPTION 2:
TRACK/FIELD
EXISTING SPORTS FIELD IN NEW ORLEANS

SITE PROPORTION ADEQUATE FOR 8-LANE TRACK

OLYMPIC RUNNING TRACK PLUS SUPPORTING AMENITIES
EXISTING TREES INTERFERE WITH NEW TRACK

FOOTBALL FIELD LENGTH 360’

RUNNING TRACK LENGTH 600’

8-LANE TRACK
PROS

8-LANE OLYMPIC SIZED TRACK FOR ADJACENT SCHOOL, NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND EXTENDED COMMUNITY

GOOD LOCATION FOR SPORTING EVENTS

CONS

EXISTING TREES INTERFERE WITH NEW TRACK

PROBLEMATIC FIT LENGTHWISE MAKES 8 LANES IMPROBABLE

LIMITED SPACE FOR BALL COURTS ALONG SIDE
4-LANE TRACK
PROS

4-LANE TRAINING TRACK FOR ADJACENT SCHOOL, NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND EXTENDED COMMUNITY SITE PRECEDENT (FORMERLY EXISTING)

CONS

LIMITED SPACE FOR ‘PARK’ AREA (SEE OPTION 1)
REDUCED AREA FOR STORAGE AND SHADED GATHERING
VARIETY OF UTILIZATION LIMITED
VEGETATION

Bamboo  Blueberry  Hibiscus  Lemon  Oak  Iris  Wildflower  Wetlands
The investigation will further explore the following areas:

- structure
- surfaces
- material designations
- boundary
- vegetation
- drainage
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT PARTNERS
TULANE CITY CENTER | www.tulaneicitycenter.edu
NEW ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE (NONDC) | www.nondc.org
URBAN STRATEGIES, INC | www.urbanstrategiesinc.org
HARMONY OAKS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (HONA)

PROJECT TEAM
Dan Etheridge | dether@tulane.edu
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR TULANE CITY CENTER
Cordula Roser Gray (Project Lead) | croser@tulane.edu
PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
John Nelson
STUDENT, TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Guan Wang
STUDENT, TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Allison Powell
STUDENT, TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Una Anderson | uanderson@nondc.org
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NONDC
Nina Feldman | nfeldman@nondc.org
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FELLOW
Linda Pompa | linda.pompa@urbanstrategiesinc.org
URBAN STRATEGIES, INC