PLAN Zemurray
our city park

ZEMURRAY PARK MASTER PLAN

HAMMOND, LA

DECEMBER 2017

ROY T. DUFRECHE AND ASSOCIATES, LLC
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS

H/S
HOLLY & SMITH ARCHITECTS

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Director of Administration- Lacy Landrum

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Janice Carter Beard
Johnny Blount
Jason Hood
Lemar Marshall
Mike Williams

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Daryl Ferrara
James Johnson
Chris McGee, Sr.
Kiersten Peltier
Margie Titus

FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS

RECREATION

Brenna Barzenick
DeMarquis Burise
Chris Daniels
Desiree Dotey
James Johnson
Emily Laurent
Chris Mouswaswa
Bridgette Willson

EVENTS

Melissa Bordelon
Amy Brumfield
Dana Crosby
Christopher Reed

NEIGHBORHOODS

Lee Collins
Michelle Gallo
Kiersten Peltier
Guy Recotta Jr.
Stella Remble-Mathews

CULTURAL

Phillip Colwart
Alexis Duncorbier
Carlee Gonzales
Alice Jackson
Laura Knighten
C. Howard Nichols
Chelsea Tallo

LANDSCAPE AND MAINTENANCE

Tracie Shillace

ACCESSIBILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Erin Hermann
Annie Cummer

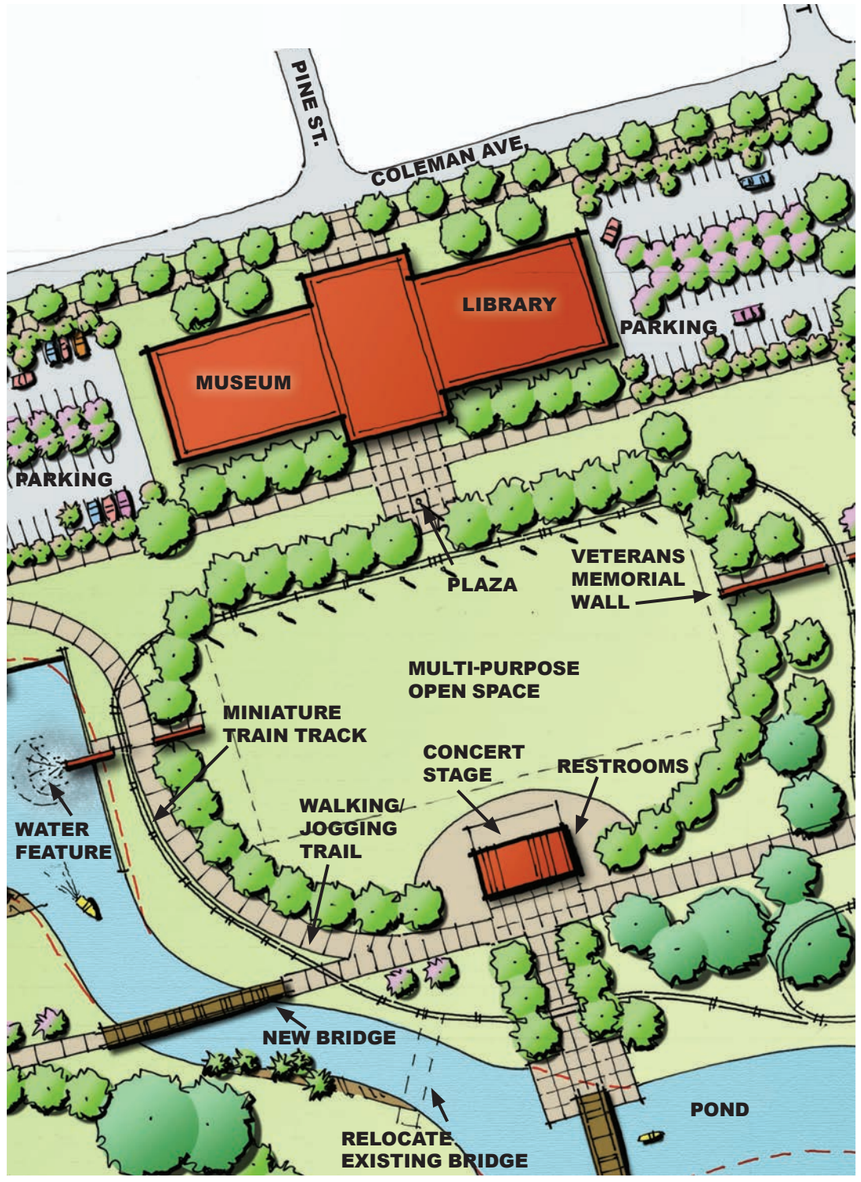
We would also like to thank the many interested citizens of Hammond who gave of their time in attending the many public meetings and planning charette. Your comments and ideas helped shape the future of Zemurray Park.

FINAL MASTER PLAN



The final Master Plan option is the consensus of several public meetings and recommendations from the Steering Committee. The final Plan features ideas developed in both Option 1 and 2 preliminary Master Plans.

CIVIC BUILDINGS / MULTI-USE OPEN SPACE /CONCERT STAGE



Central to design concept of the final Plan is the location of the Civic Buildings. The consensus is that the Civic buildings should be located at the terminus of Pine Street on the Northern edge of the site along Coleman Avenue. Conceptually, the Museum and Library structures would be separated by a large breezeway allowing motorist along Pine Street to see between the buildings and the structures framing the outdoor concert stage. It is envisioned that these buildings be the iconic structures of the site. Artful in their design and functional, these buildings will set the architectural style for all other structures within the park.

Convenient and heavily landscaped parking lots should flank the building on the East and West providing ample parking for the buildings, concerts, swimming events, etc.

The Concert Stage is located South of the Civic buildings along the Pine Street axis. It is easily accessible from the East parking lot and service road for the movement of equipment, etc.

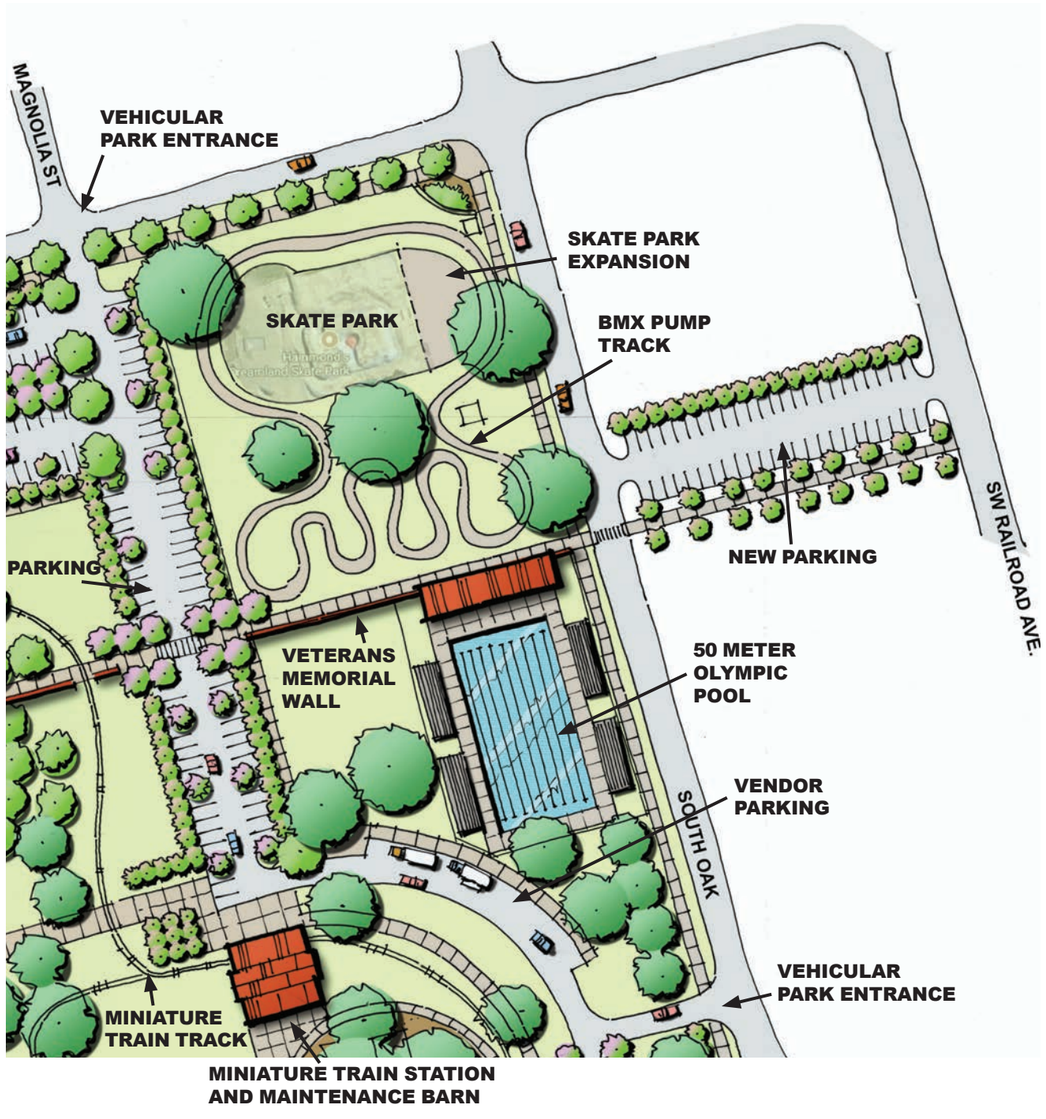
Between the Civic Buildings and Stage is a large multi-purpose open space that is designed to accommodate many types of uses. Concerts, festivals, football and soccer, can all be accommodated within this area.

The Open space is surrounded by a grove of large shade trees. Additionally, the existing miniature train track would be re-routed to circle the open space from its station and maintenance structure near the stage.

New bridges across the pond would be located conveniently to provide easy access and circulation of park users.

Interior vehicular access and circulation would be limited to only provide access to parking and event service. Two new vehicular park entrances will be provided, one at Magnolia Street along Coleman Avenue and the other along South Oak Street.

VEHICULAR ENTRANCE / SKATE PARK / OLYMPIC POOL



The final Plan restricts vehicular access to the Northeastern corner of the site. Two new vehicular entrances are proposed. The first would be located along the Magnolia Street corridor at Coleman Avenue. The second entry is located South of the new Olympic Pool along South Oak Street. Access is limited through the site to this new roadway/parking corridor. This parking will service the skate park and swimming complex as well as the Civic buildings and Concert Stage.

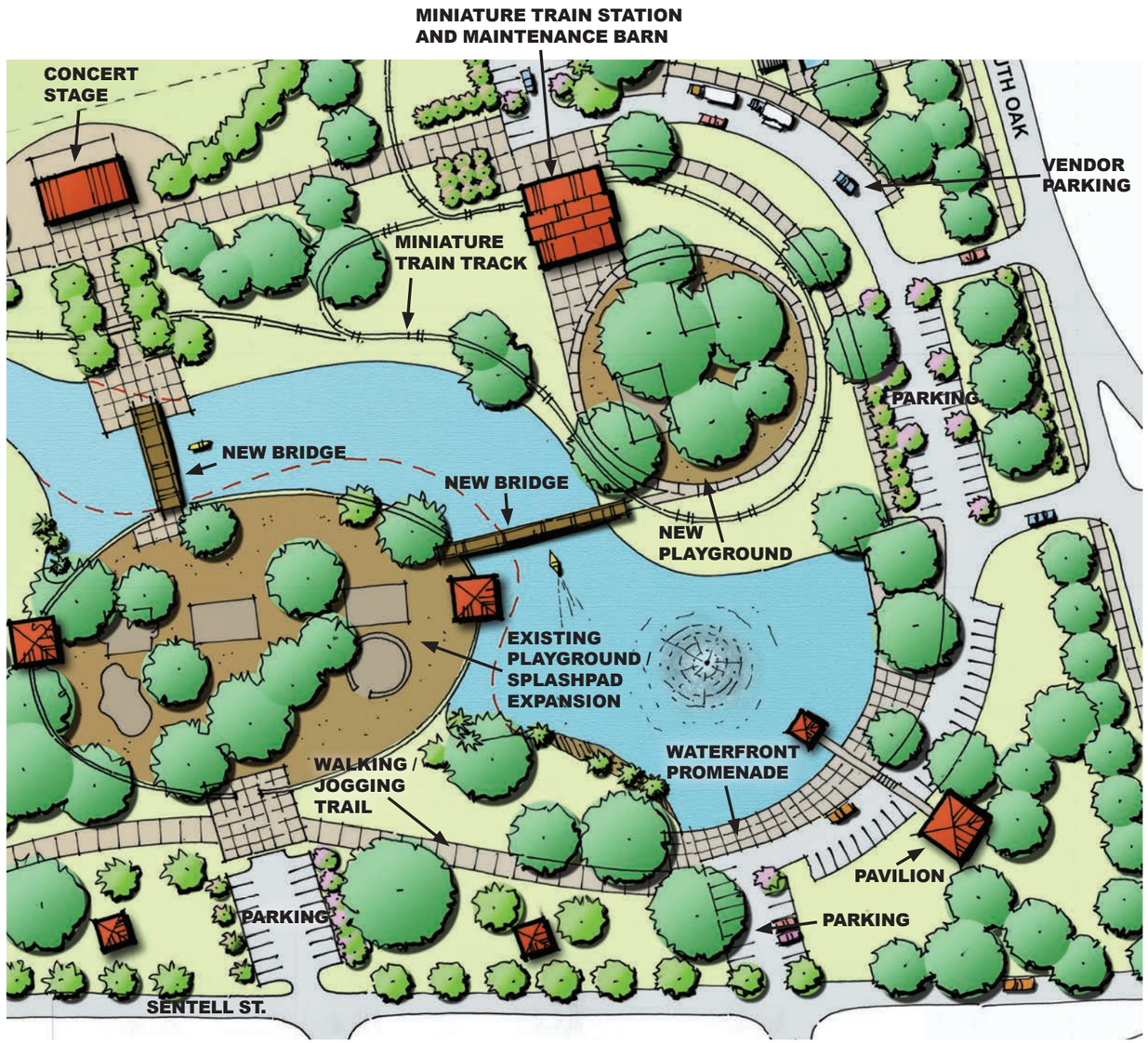
The Southern terminus of the new vehicular entrance will be the proposed Miniature Train Station and maintenance barn. Train rides will depart from this location and circle the large multi-use open space.

The Skate Park is slated for expansion in the final Master Plan as well as the addition of a BMX pump track.

Additional parking is provided via a new lot across South Oak Street on the East side of the park on City-owned property. Park users parking in this lot would cross Oak Street and enter the park along the proposed Veterans Memorial Wall. This is envisioned as an opportunity to honor those Hammond residents who served our Country. This wall continues to the West to the Multi-use open space and visually terminates at a water feature at the pond.

To the South of the Veterans Memorial Wall is the site for the proposed 50-meter Olympic Swimming Pool. This is the site of the existing pool complex slated for demolition. Convenient parking is provided for pool users and guest and is in close proximity to the complex.

NEW PLAYGROUNDS / MINIATURE TRAIN / ON-SITE PARKING



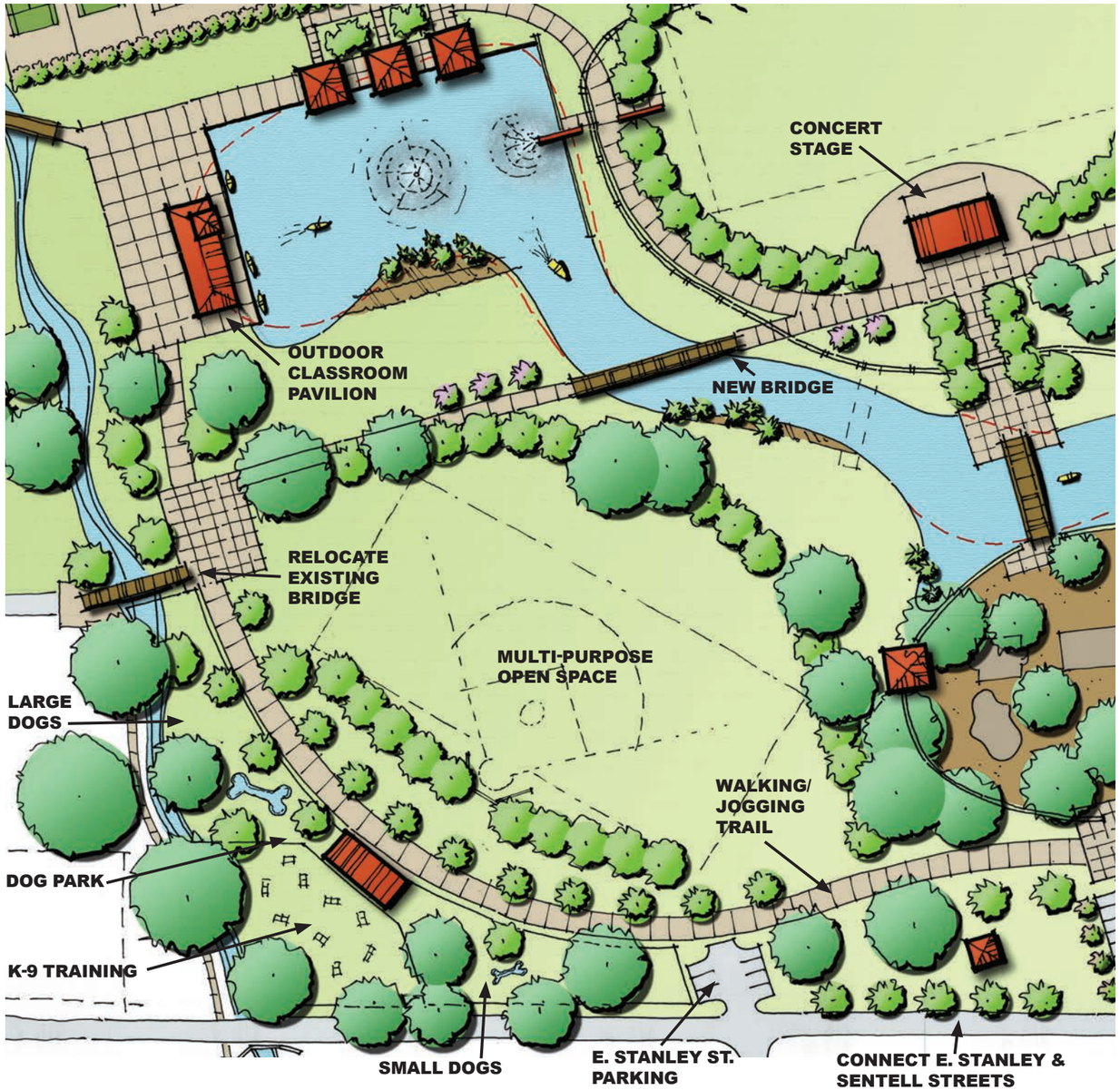
West of the new entrances and parking lot along South Oak Street is the location of a proposed new playground. Its proximity to secure parking allows easy access for children and parents. A restroom facility is located within the train station to the North.

The miniature train will be housed in the Train station/Maintenance/restroom building to the North. The train will circle the playground as well as the large multi-purpose open space to the North. This playground will be connected via a new pedestrian bridge to the West leading to the location of the existing playground and splash park. This playground is slated for expansion and upgrading with the addition of accessible play equipment for special needs users. The playground will be located close to a new restroom and public pavilions for use by the playground users. Both playgrounds will be fenced to provide a safe experience for both parents and children.

A new parking lot will be sited to the South of the playground off Sentell Street to provide easy access for park users. A new pedestrian bridge will be located to the North of this playground allowing access to the concert stage and other activities North of the pond.

South of the South Oak Street entrances and parking lot, the interior vehicular access roadway continues South and exits at a new parking lot off Sentell Street. Additional parking is provided along this access roadway and adjacent to the pedestrian waterfront promenade along the pond's Southeastern end. The existing interior park roadway will remain and be renovated as a walking and jogging trail.

DOG PARK / K-9 TRAINING / MULTI-PURPOSE OPEN SPACE



West of the playgrounds, the plan eliminates Stire and Settoon fields and replaces them with a multi-purpose open space that allows for unstructured recreation. The space is large enough to allow for baseball, football or soccer play or practices.

West of the open space is the proposed site for the new and expanded Dog Park and K-9 Training Facility. The Dog Park will be fenced and designed to allow for both large and small dog separate play areas. Entrance to the facility will be via a pavilion and restroom facility building located along the Walking/Jogging Trail. A K-9 training facility is shown to provide an area for the local police K-9 unit to use in the training and exercise of their dog team.

Another small parking lot is located off East Stanley Street that allows for parking and access to those activities located nearby.

The plan recommends that East Stanley and Sentell Streets, which currently do not align, be connected to allow for better vehicular circulation and access to the park and surrounding neighborhood.

The existing interior roadway remains and is renovated as a walking/jogging trail. The existing pond bridge is relocated to the Western side of the park and will allow for access across the drainage creek to the neighborhood to the West.

A new pedestrian bridge is proposed to provide better site circulation and allow boats to pass under. North of the new bridge the pond is re-shaped with a large public pavilion on the Western edge of the pond. The larger pavilions are provided for large group functions and can be reserved for use.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS / BASKETBALL / TENNIS



Located at the Northwestern corner of the site near the Kenney Center is the proposed re-shaped pond. This new configuration is envisioned as a pedestrian promenade with the pond shape more architectural with a concrete bulkhead, railing and lighting.

On the Northern edge the plan recommends the siting of three (3) outdoor classroom pavilions. The outdoor classroom/pavilions are envisioned as open-air structures where the Museum or Library might hold outdoor activities for children, or even possibly outdoor spaces for yoga classes, etc.

The Western side of the pond would house a large group pavilion and the site of a Kayak Rental facility.

The Eastern edge of the pond is the site of a large water fountain element that is in alignment and a continuation of the Veterans Memorial wall on the eastern side of the site near the Swimming Pool.

North of the pond and classrooms, and along Coleman Avenue, the Plan recommends siting the new basketball and tennis courts. These courts are located next to a tree-lined parking lot servicing the courts as well as the Civic buildings to the East.

The existing bridge that connects the park to the Kenney Center will remain in its current location providing access to pedestrians. The drainage ditch will be renovated into a landscaped water feature.

North and off-site, along Coleman Avenue, the City has acquired two (2) parcels of land. One site is the location of a proposed Boxing facility and associated parking. The other lot may be retained for future parking for the Kenney Center should expansion in the future be required.

To the West of the Tennis courts, the Plan suggests siting the Pickle Ball courts. Since this activity is utilized by an older group, the location next to the Kenney Center is a good location for ease of access by this group of users.

OTHER MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC ART

The planning team along with the Steering Committee and many citizens recommend that the park be the location for Public Art. The park layout provides many locations for the display of three-dimensional art. For the general public to appreciate a public art program, they must have the opportunity to be exposed to art. The Hammond Regional Art Center's participation could be the guiding force behind the implementation of such a program for the Park as well as other areas of downtown Hammond.





WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE

In a facility of this size, Wayfinding and signage will be very important. The planning team recommends that a comprehensive wayfinding and signage system be developed to provide park users with easily identifiable signs and directions for amenities within the park. A comprehensive signage and wayfinding system should be designed within the framework of the early phases of implementation of the park amenities to provide a cohesive, well-designed signage and wayfinding system that addresses the needs of future park users.

SITE FURNISHINGS

The planning team recommends that during the detailed design of park improvements, a comprehensive plan and design theme for site furnishings be undertaken. Site furnishings would consist of benches, trash receptacle, bike racks, picnic tables, bollards, etc. A consistent and cohesive design theme for the site furnishings is an important visual element in the park landscape and must be well conceived.

LANDSCAPING

The Zemurray Park property is covered with many beautiful live oak trees. Building on the beauty of the existing park tree cover, it will be important to consider the design of additional landscaping that will inhabit the park. The planning team recommends the use of native trees and shrubs in the development of the landscape design for the park. This is not to say that ornamental trees and shrubs can't be used, but where appropriate, native trees should be utilized. Particularly around the pond and the pond's edge, the planners envision native aquatic plantings that will support wildlife, improve water quality as well as provide scenic views and vistas within the park.



LIGHTING

Proper lighting is going to be a critical aspect of the park environment. Security has been an issue inside and around Zemurray Park, and the planners recommend that a comprehensive lighting plan be developed that will address the proper illumination of all areas of the park. The lighting design should respect the surrounding neighborhoods as to not cast unwanted light outside the park. Proper pedestrian lighting along walkways and paths should illuminate the pedestrian spaces so that users are comfortable at night in the park. Larger multi-use spaces should be lighted to provide the proper illumination of recreation areas for nighttime use. The use of lighted bollards is also an option for the lighting of pathways and plazas. The proper lighting of the park will be an essential element to ensure the safety and confidence of the users of the park's facilities.



OTHER MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

SECURITY

Proper design can enhance the security of an area, but design alone can't do it. The City and its Police Department will be required to implement a comprehensive security plan for the park. The planners recommend that the City and Police department study the implementation of a park Police patrol, or the inclusion of a small Police kiosk in the park. Officers would use this kiosk as their outpost, and patrol the park throughout the park's hours of operation. The visibility of officers in the park will be an important first step in providing user security.

Design considerations to enhance security could be things such as a comprehensive camera system, which would be monitored in the Police kiosk, proper lighting and limited vehicle access to the park, etc.

FENCES



Fences do not normally provide any security, although they are used for this purpose with the hopes of added security benefits. The use of fences in the Zemurray Park Master Plan are very limited. The Plan calls for the Dog Park to be fenced. This is a requirement to protect the public, but also would provide division between large and small dog conflicts. Additionally, the basketball and Tennis Courts would be fenced for the obvious reasons.

The planners do, however, envision some type of identifying fence element along the borders of the park. This element would be to delineate the parks boundaries as well as provide a nice edge treatment to the park. This fence is envisioned as a low brick wall with a small iron fence above, total height not exceeding 48".

PARK ENTRANCES/GATEWAYS



Entrances to the park, whether pedestrian or vehicular, should be designed to call attention and identify themselves as entrance points. These entrances would be designed to fit within the design of the perimeter wall, fencing and overall design theme of the Park. Opportunity exist to design memorable gateways and entrances enhancing the user's experience.

BIKE RENTAL PROGRAM

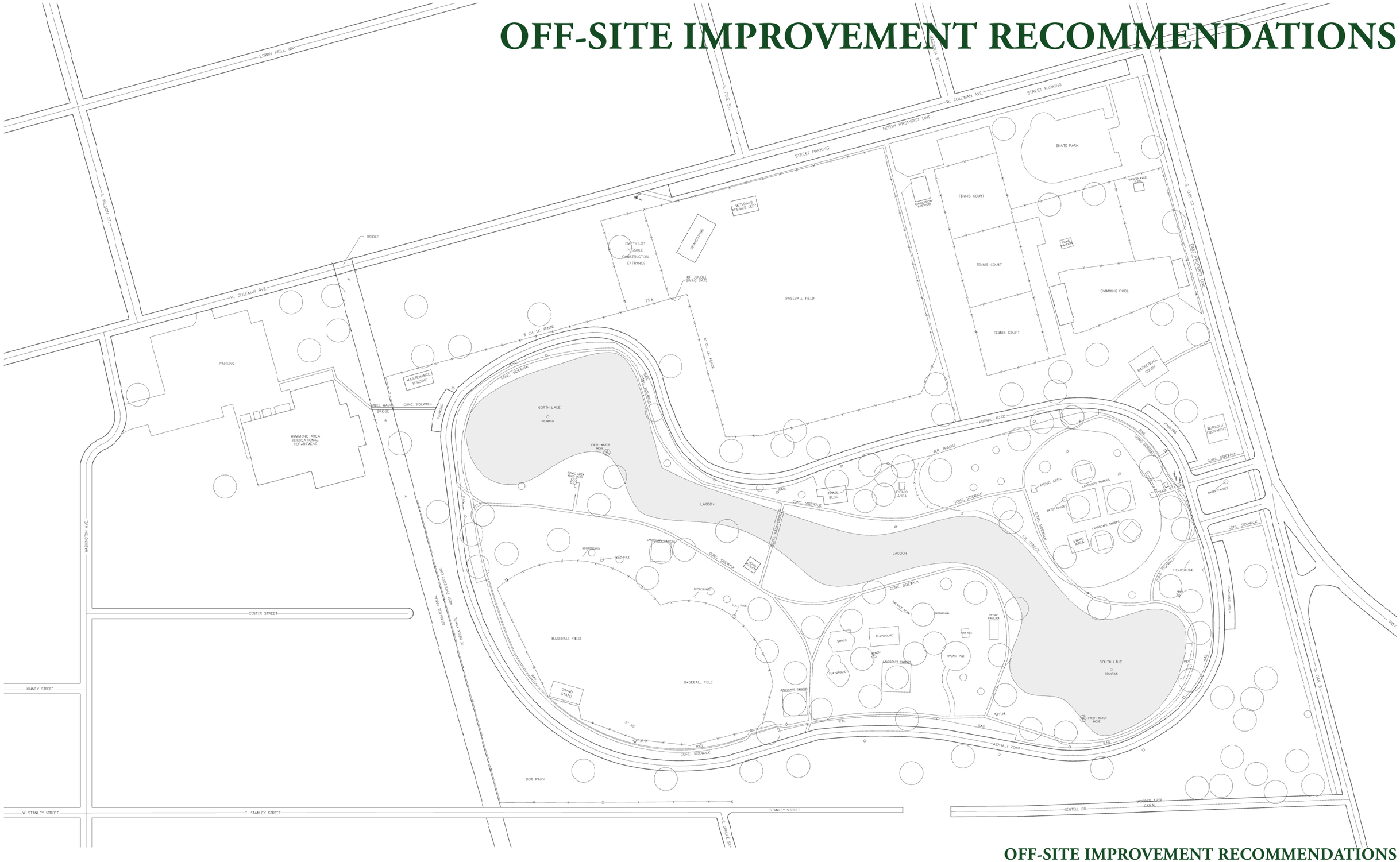
The planners discussed and propose that a bike rental program be instituted in the park in conjunction with Downtown Hammond and Southeastern Louisiana University. Similar to many larger cities, this program would locate bike rental sites at the Park, in downtown locations as well as at the University. Users would access the bike rentals with the use of a credit card, ride the bike for a determined amount of time and then return it to any bike station within the network.

Implementation of this system would encourage bike use as a transportation option, promote exercise and provide citizens an opportunity to use the future bike trail system planned for the City.

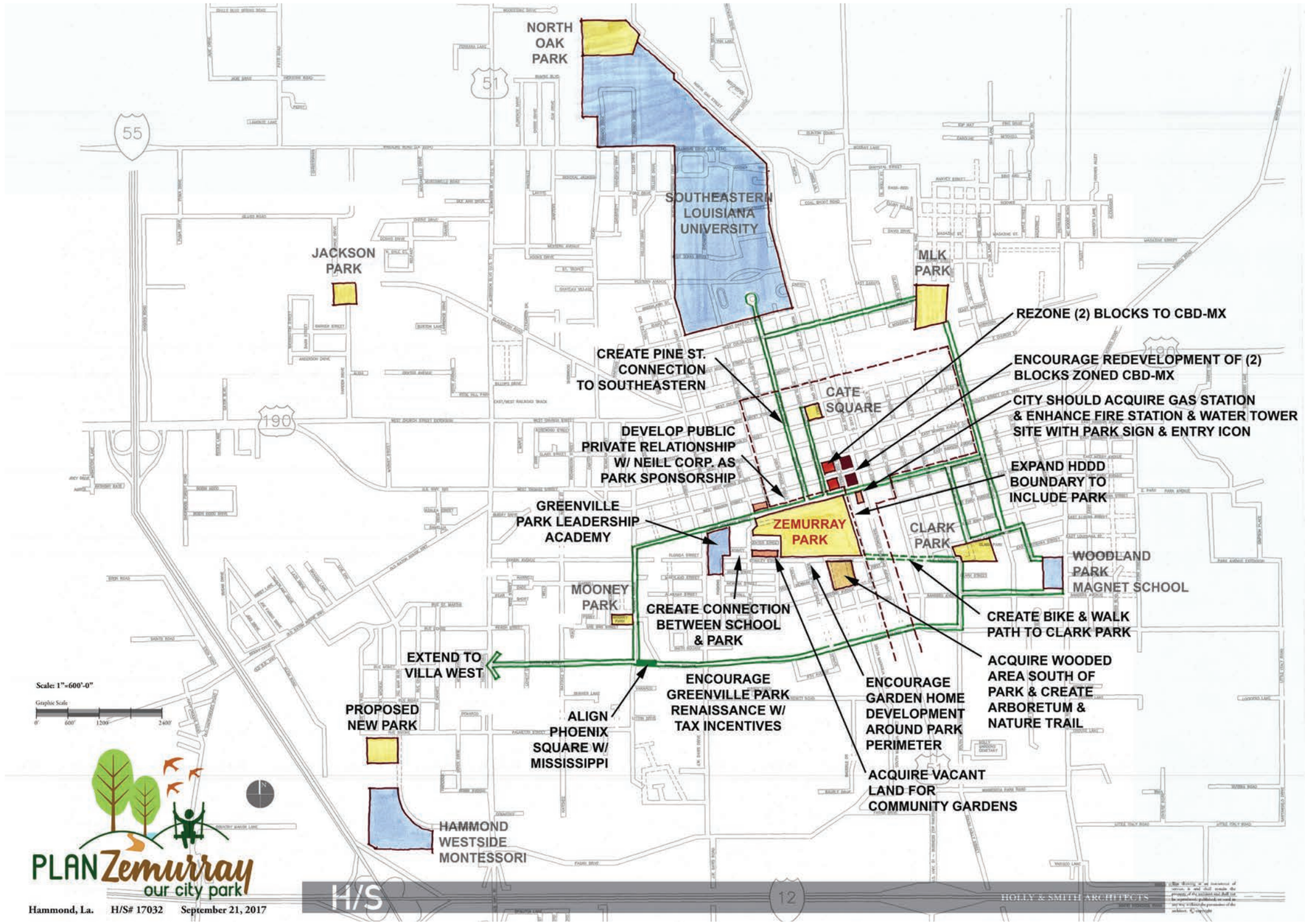
ARCHITECTURE

The Park's building architecture will set the design theme for many elements within the park. The designers of any architecture within the Park should survey the area to collect images of Hammond's many distinct architectural styles. The final architectural design might be a blend of these styles, or of a particular architectural style of the area.

OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS



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MAIN FIRE STATION BLOCK

The planning team recommends that the Main Fire Station block between SW Railroad Avenue and South Oak Street be visually enhanced. Private property within this block exist and acquisition of this parcel by the City is recommended. City control of this parcel would allow for Fire Station expansion if needed in the future, but also provide an opportunity to visually enhance that portion of the block.

Improvements to the area may include:

- Painting of the water tower by artists as a billboard for Downtown Hammond. Could be a Public Art Program opportunity.
- Opportunity to provide signage along SW RR Avenue to help identify and direct visitors to Zemurray Park.
- Removal and/or consolidation of the numerous antennas on the water tower.
- Screening of the ground level water tank with landscaping or site walls to conceal this area.
- Enhance the site through landscaping, signage, etc.

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

New commercial zoning for the residential blocks North of the Park between Pine Street and Magnolia and Magnolia Street and SW RR Avenue are recommended. Re-Zoning of these blocks to CBD-MX will allow for a mixed-use development strategy to be implemented, and will allow for the in-fill and development of first floor commercial uses along with residential uses above. These recommendations would allow for the downtown character, architectural massing and scale to extend from downtown to the park. Renewed investment and the addition of housing and commercial in these areas will benefit the surrounding neighborhoods, Downtown and Zemurray Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD LINKAGES

The planning team noted that there is an opportunity to create linkages and connections to Zemurray park from the many neighborhoods within the City. The plan would be to use certain existing streets and develop them as greenways or linear parks. For instance, the Pine Street corridor which extends from the site of The Civic Buildings North to Southeastern Louisiana University. This street would become a connector street to the park. Improvements such as widened sidewalks, creation of bike lanes, landscaping, lighting and signage would be used to create and identify this as a linear park connection.

Special design treatment of certain streets would encourage residents to use the linear parkways for access to Zemurray park as well as other parts of the City and downtown. This concept could be applied to other streets leading to Zemurray Park, such as Coleman Avenue, Old Covington, Colorado Street, Chestnut and Phoenix Square. The creation of this network of linear park connections will allow for the safe and efficient movement of citizens throughout the city linking other parks, schools and even downtown Hammond.

OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC ART

The planning team recommends the creation of a Public Art Program not only for Zemurray Park but for the Hammond community. Enlistment of the Hammond Regional Arts Center may be the appropriate entity to take on this program. There are many benefits to establishing a Public Art program.

The Association for Public Art notes that a public art program has several goals. To commission, preserve, interpret and promote public are programs.

"Public Art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public spaces, this art is for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art is a reflection of how we see the world - the artist response to our time and place combined with our own sense of how we see who we are."

"Art attracts attention; that's what It's supposed to do. Varied public opinion is inevitable, and it is a healthy sign that the public environment is acknowledged rather than ignored."

Public art is part of our public history, part of our evolving culture and our collective memory. It reflects our society and adds meaning to our cities.

Beginning at the new round-abouts at I-12 and along SW RR Avenue continuing into downtown, throughout the City, in parks, schools, on water towers. Public art has its place in our lives and our City.

ACQUISITION OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES FOR PARK EXPANSION

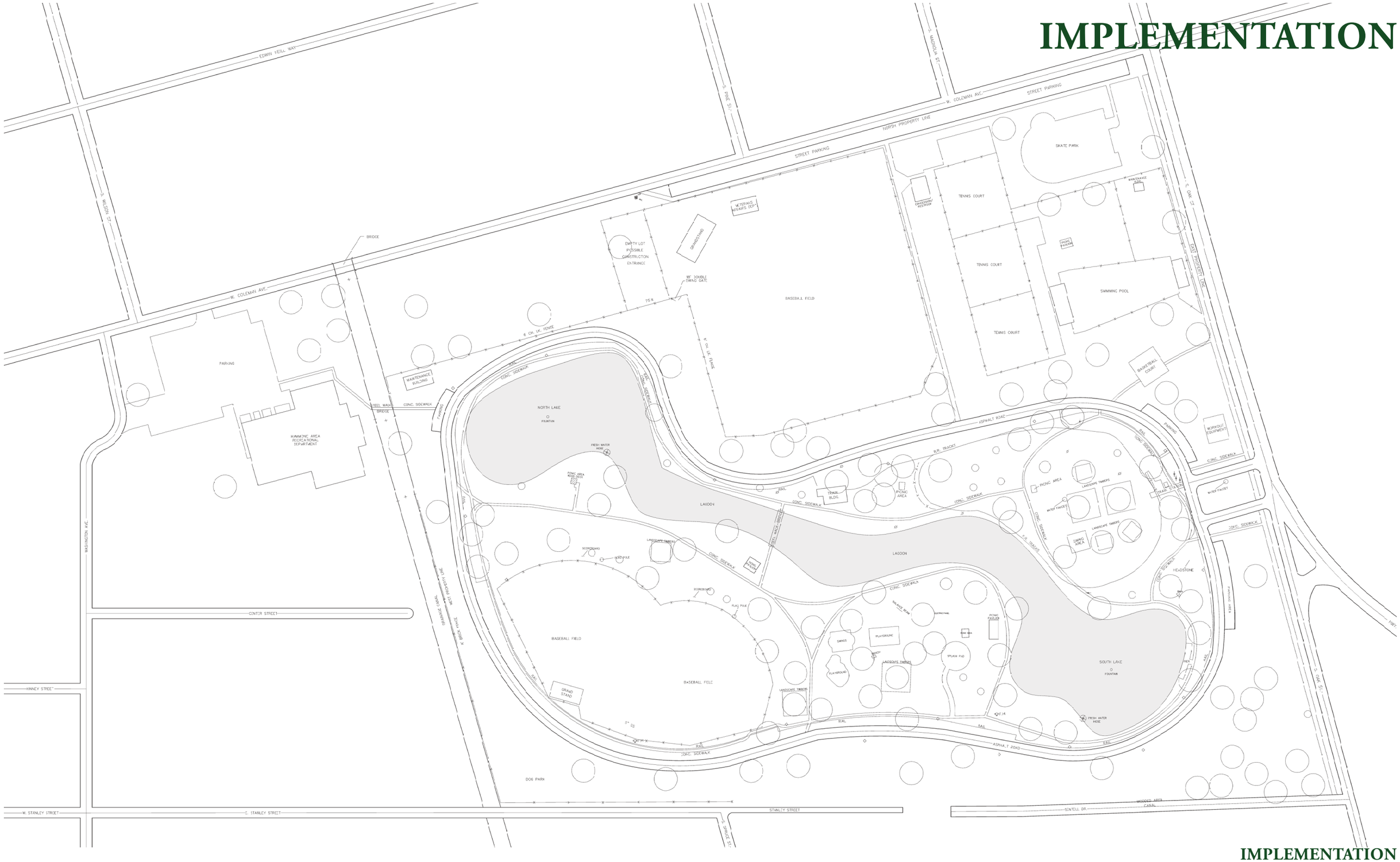
Zemurray Park is confined to an approximately 33-acre tract of land and is surrounded by existing neighborhoods and businesses. The planning team recommends that the City acquire any properties adjacent to the park that become available. Through property acquisition, opportunities exist for the expansion of the park, development of park related services and neighborhood stabilization. In fact, to implement the proposed Master Plan, several properties along Coleman Avenue will have to be acquired.

Properties South of the Park should be acquired if they become available so that the park might be expanded Southward. A large tract of vacant wooded property sits just South of the Park. If acquired, the planning team recommends it be developed as an extension of the park as possibly nature trails and an arboretum.

Vacant property along East Stanley Street West of the park should be acquired for possible future park expansion.

Property at the corner of SW RR Avenue and Coleman should be acquired for possible fire station expansion. Acquisition of this parcel would allow for the visual enhancement of this highly visible corner with landscaping and possibly signage for Zemurray Park. This is a major entrance into the downtown and should be developed to make the entrance to the city more appealing.

IMPLEMENTATION



INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Below are actions identified by the Planning Team that can be implemented immediately by the City. All items are part of the overall Master Plan strategy. These items, some of which are policy, can be accomplished with little time and expense with many immediate benefits in the aesthetics and function of the park.

PARKWAY AND PARK COMMISSION

The planning team strongly recommends the creation and funding of a Parkway and Parks Commission for the City of Hammond.

The Commission would be created by act of the City Council and be tasked to develop guidelines for the creation, funding and maintenance of all green spaces, parks and landscaping throughout the City. This Commission would be comprised of individuals experienced in recreation, urban forestry, finance, horticulture and landscaping. The director should be a licensed landscape architect, horticulturist or urban planner.

The Commission would also be tasked with the development of a City-Wide Parks and Parkway Master Plan outlining future park creation and existing park expansion. This Master Plan would be a guide for the City for future park planning and construction, funding and maintenance as well as city-wide landscape development and maintenance. The Master Plan would also develop landscape guidelines for all parks noting the appropriate species of trees, shrubs as well as landscape maintenance requirement guidelines for all city parks, greenways and urban forest.

RESEARCH INCLUSION OF THE PARK WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The planners recommend that the City approach the Downtown Development District (DDD) to discuss the inclusion of Zemurray Park and some of the surrounding areas into the DDD. Several previous city Master Plan documents have recommended this action, but still today, the park is outside the boundary of the DDD.

Inclusion of the Park into the DDD will:

- allow for possible tax incentives for property improvements
- allow the DDD to offer funding leverage to the City for Park improvements
- allow the DDD to market the park as part of their on-going downtown market strategy
- allow the DDD to plan activities within the park as part of overall larger downtown planned activities (Hot August Nights, Starry November Nights, Blues & BBQ, etc.)
- provide opportunities to partner with other downtown businesses for promotion and marketing
- require State of Louisiana legislative approval

CONNECTION OF SENTELL AND EAST STANLEY STREETS

Along the Southern border of Zemurray Park, Sentell and East Stanley streets run East and West parallel to the property. However, the streets do not connect which makes vehicular circulation along the Southern edge of the park complicated. Currently, Sentell Street is a dead-end street not allowing for through traffic. The Planners recommend connecting these streets to improve vehicular circulation, emergency access and public safety for neighboring properties.

ACQUIRE PROPERTIES SURROUNDING THE PARK

As mentioned in another section of the report, there are properties adjacent to the Park South of Coleman Avenue that are not owned by the City. To accomplish the proposed Master Plan, these properties need to be acquired. Property acquisitions, particularly of these parcels, are crucial to realizing the goals of the Master Plan. Also, the City should consider acquiring some of the properties south of the Park.

CLOSURE OF INTERIOR PARK ROADWAY TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Central to the Master Plan concept was to eliminate or limit vehicular access and traffic



on the interior of the park. Currently there are too many instances of vehicular/pedestrian conflicts, litter brought into the park in vehicles as well as many of the problems related to safety of the park. These problems are due to unlimited vehicle access to the park.

Initially, the City could provide limited access to the park to access convenient parking, but the balance of the park should be closed to vehicular access. The park could be open to vehicles on special occasions and events but remained closed with limited access the majority of time. The unsightly pipe barriers should be removed.

REMOVAL OF BASEBALL FIELDS

The planning team recommends that the City remove Reimers, Stire and Settoon Fields and begin the creation of the multi-purpose open space recreation areas outlined in the Master Plan. The removal would consist of all fences, bleachers, signage and buildings and any other items associated with these fields. Field lighting should remain for the short-term, as these areas could be lighted at night for after-hour recreational use.

The new multi-purpose areas should retain the names of the past fields in remembrance of those who the facilities were named.

The removal of the fields will not only create more recreational space, but visually improve the look of the park with the removal of all the eye-level items associated with these facilities.

REMOVAL OF UNWANTED/UNSIGHTLY ITEMS

The existing condition analysis of the park noted many unsightly items within the park that need to be removed and/or cleaned up. The items consist primarily of signage and pipe railings to deter access to certain areas by vehicles.

Once the vehicle access issue is addressed, the majority of pipe railing will no longer be needed and can be removed. This alone will improve the look of the parks visual environment. It is recommended that the city remove much of the pipe railing, but only after the limited vehicular access plan is implemented. In areas where the railing must remain, the planners recommend painting the railing a color that complements the park environment.

The park signage is a major visual problem. Simplification and elimination of many of the signs would improve the look of the park. It is recommended that the City evaluated the existing signage and remove or simplify the current signage system until a time a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system is designed.

CLEAN DRAINAGE CREEK ON WESTERN SIDE OF THE PARK

The drainage creek on the Western side of the park is unsightly and in many areas littered with debris and trash. The Planners recommend the City remove the wall along the creek, remove unwanted vegetation and debris, as well as study the possibility of terracing the Eastern (Park) side and incorporate the creek and the terracing into the proposed Dog Park. Terracing might allow for access to the creeks edge by park users and dogs within the dog park. Additionally, special landscaping might occur in this area creating a feature within the creek. Fencing should be added to the Western side of the creek to prevent entry into the creek from the neighborhoods to the West.

CREATION AND OPERATION OF A CITY-WIDE GREEN WASTE PROGRAM AND FACILITY

On a yearly basis, the City of Hammond generates tons of green waste that are disposed and not recycled. The Planners recommend that the City research the possibility of creating a City-Wide Green Waste Collection Program. Central to the program would be the operation of a Green Waste Facility on City property. This facility would process the collected green waste into useable mulch for citizen and City use.

This sustainable recycling program would benefit all citizens by allowing for the recycling of tree limbs, leaves and other green waste from their properties into useable mulch for

their landscapes. More importantly, it would provide an unlimited source of mulch for the City to use within the many parks, green spaces and urban forest throughout the City. Over time, this could be a substantial cost savings approach to landscape maintenance within the City.

Zemurray Park could benefit by use of large much beds beneath live oak and other trees within the park. The benefits of recycling green waste and mulching is well known. Soil temperature control, moisture retention, weed control, aesthetics, along with many other benefits make consideration of this recommendation something for the City to seriously consider.

This program would also benefit the general public, as they would be allowed to visit the facility and secure a limited number bags of mulch for their own use.

SWIMMING POOL

The swimming pool design and location should be consistent with the layout in the adopted Master Plan. The construction of the pool should be the catalyst for the park improvements.

COST EVALUATION

The City should invest in a detailed cost evaluation of the Master Plan and develop an annual funding strategy.

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COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

