

Action Plan: Improve Lake Lorna Doone Park
10.22.14

The Problem

Lake Lorna Doone Park is viewed as unsafe by many of the residents that live in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the park. While the park sees hundreds of visitors each week who utilize the park to connect with friends and to party, this usage regularly outstrips parking capacity and, at times, creates an environment that feels unwelcoming for people who want to utilize the park's other amenities (e.g. playground, basketball court, and tennis courts).

The Solution

Create a fitness focused and family friendly Lake Lorna Doone Park that is the nicest park in the region through a partnership between neighborhood residents, frequent users of the park, Florida Citrus Sports, and the City of Orlando.

Participation

- 48 people participated in the design process
 - 28 residents of the West Lakes neighborhoods¹
 - 12 non-resident frequent users of the park
 - 4 City of Orlando representatives
 - 4 friends of the community representing non-profit organizations
- Participants invested 336 hours over the course of 12 weeks (starting on June 30th, 2014 and ending September 15th, 2014) to build relationships and to discover the insights contained in this brief.
- Meetings were held at the Florida Citrus Bowl's Varsity Club meeting room and conversations with frequent users of the park were held in the park.

Hopes & Concerns

The West Lakes community described Lake Lorna Doone Park as one of the top four issues that they wanted to address during Polis Institute's door-to-door surveys in late 2013.

- When asked about the park, Polis discovered that residents dreamed to see: a beautiful fountain, more seating, an amphitheater, a welcome sign, a splash pad for the kids, less drug activity, all areas of the park used more frequently, cleaner water, picnics, church baptisms, fishing, family friendly atmosphere, fitness trail around the lake, basketball leagues, paddle boats, benches, a gazebo, opportunities for homeless, food concessions, fishing dock, and new bathrooms. There was also an earnest concern expressed that all facilities and park amenities be fully accessible to people with disabilities consistent with the requirements and standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

¹ Lorna Doone, Rock Lake, Lake Sunset, Clear Lake/Bunche Manor/Hollando, Clear Lake Cove, Sunset/Citrus



- Conversely, the residents also stated their concerns were: insufficient parking, inadequate lighting, homeless population, shootings, drugs, the possibility that the park may be done away with, insufficient security, crime, little curb appeal, and poor landscaping.

Design Challenges

Through a Polis facilitated design process, participants articulated three primary challenges to the revitalization of Lake Lorna Doone Park.

- The first challenge was entitled “Safety and Compassion.” The perception that the park is unsafe is keeping many nearby residents from utilizing the park. The reality is that current users of the park tend to be very welcoming but may be participating in activities that are not agreeable to families. Other issues such as poor lighting, lack of police presence, insufficient parking, lack of supports for homeless individuals who utilize the park, poor fencing, and lack of appropriate signage have all contributed directly to the creation of an increasingly insecure environment.
- The second challenge was entitled “Research and Planning.” This grouping of challenges represented the participant’s desire to understand the park’s history more fully, plan thoroughly for its future use, and identify the right voices to bridge differences as they arise. Initial research into the use of the land around the park found the following:

Acres	Use
14.4	Water - Lake Lorna Doone
4.82	Rugby Field
3.98	Other Lake Front Areas
3.35	Unimproved Parking (Church and Tampa)
1.92	Privately Owned (Boy Scouts)
1.52	Actively Used - Parking (Rio Grande), Pavillion, Restroom
1.31	Tennis Courts and Drainage
1.18	Playground and Parking (Church St)
1.07	Rio Grande Ave
33.55	Total Land Area (Rio Grande to Tampa; Church to Central)
16.16	Unusable Area (water, road, private property)
17.39	Usable Area
8.7%	Usable Area that is Actively Used

- The third challenge entitled “Funding” represented the clear need to secure sustainable funding for all of the plans being described.



Challenge Statement

After uncovering the robust set of challenges facing potential revitalization efforts, the design participants crafted the following challenge statement believing that addressing this challenge would require addressing other related issues and best lead to an improved park for all:

“Create a fitness focused Lake Lorna Doone Park that’s the nicest park in the region.”

Brainstorming Session

Participants then engaged in the process of brainstorming unique solutions to their challenge statement. An overarching theme was that all amenities should meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- The ideas for new amenities; (1) walking trails; (2) a fountain in the center of the lake; (3) a fishing dock; (4) exercise stations; (5) a water pad near the playground; and (6) a set of bleachers for the basketball court(s).
- The ideas to improve existing amenities; (1) close Rio Grande Ave or make it one-way; (2) decrease tennis courts and increase number of basketball courts; (3) expand and improve the pavilion; (4) replace the bathrooms; (5) decrease footprint of the rugby field or repurpose it; (6) update picnic tables; (7) install more attractive landscaping elements; (8) improve and/or move the playground, and (9) add additional seating.

Site Visit

- On August 25th, 2014 eight residents and eight non-residents participated in a “walk around” at Lake Lorna Doone Park. The purpose was to test the viability of each idea that was presented during the brainstorming session. Representatives from the City of Orlando, Lift Orlando, Collins Recreation, Florida Citrus Sports, and the Polis Institute were all in attendance.
- The attached map is a visual representation of the efforts of that group.

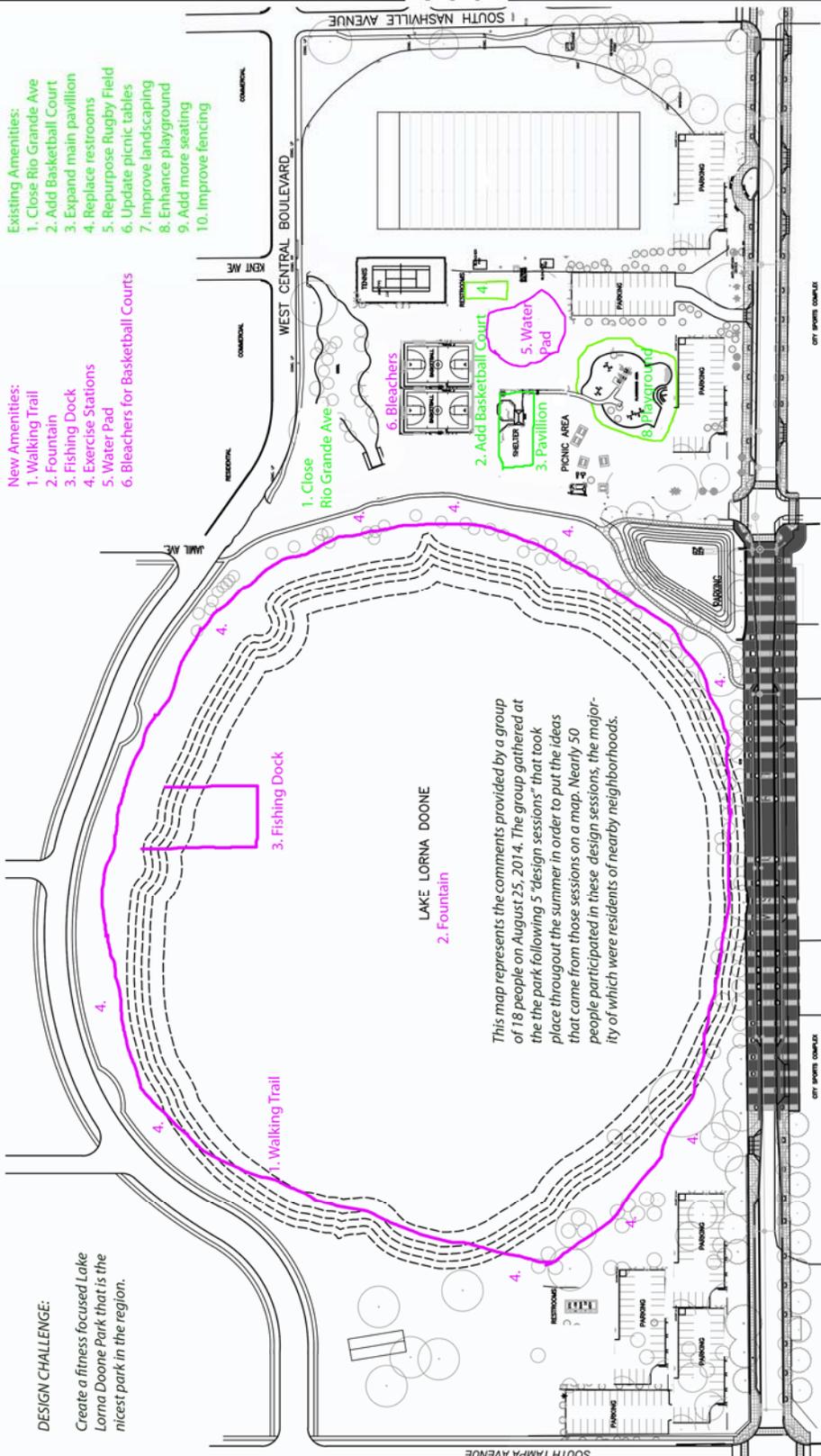
Rough Cost Estimate

- Florida Citrus Sports has verbally committed 1 million dollars to the renovation of the Lake Lorna Doone Park over the next five years.
- The total cost of the renovations, which could be substantial, has yet to be determined.

Next Steps

- Conduct a formal survey of the property
- Create a feasibility report for the ideas presented in this document
- Create a budget for the renovations and ongoing maintenance of the park
- Implement the design





This map represents the comments provided by a group of 18 people on August 25, 2014. The group gathered at the park following 5 "design sessions" that took place throughout the summer in order to put the ideas that came from those sessions on a map. Nearly 50 people participated in these design sessions, the majority of which were residents of nearby neighborhoods.

Map 1: Design Ideas
Lorna Doone Park
1519 West Church Street, Orlando, FL 32805

