

## Future Of City Park To Be Decided Tuesday

### *Total Cost Of Proposed Golf Course Put At \$45M*

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**WDSU NEW ORLEANS** -- Changes could be coming to City Park and the future of the 1,300 acre park is in the balance.

City leaders said the big question is whether the park should be turned into a golf course or made into a green space.

The decision on a \$45 million development proposal will be made Tuesday. Resident Alexis Vega said she loves to golf at City Park.

"They have 18 holes, but it's not as good as it used to be before [Hurricane] Katrina," said Vega.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina there were three golf courses there, but ever since the storm city park leaders and the public have gone round and round about how it should be developed. "The whole plan is two and a half courses, two 18-hole courses and a nine-hole course.

Phase one of the plan is a new 18-hole course in approximately the same footprint that the east golf course was on prior to the storm," City Park's chief executive officer Bob Becker said.

Becker said golf has historically played a huge financial role over the years, at one time generating 40 percent of the park's revenue and it can be that again.

A resident who lives close to the park said, "What I know about this proposal that's going on. It's going to become a golf course plantation for the very wealthy."

The man asked NewsChannel 6 not to be identified.

"The trees may be down, but life is springing back up. I see people walking these grounds with their animals, friends and families and really enjoying the space," the man said.

He said he worries that will change once a new golf course is built, even though city park officials said some green space areas around Interstate 610 and the art museum will be preserved.

Alexis Vega said she thinks the public and city park will reach a compromise if they keep swinging at it.

"They really need to keep going on it. It's good to play, it's convenient. For the people around here -- it's a really easy place to get to. The more golf the better," she said. The first phase will cost \$24 million. If approved, City Park will only embark on the first phase.

Money for that would come from damage funding from FEMA, the state capital outlay bill and private dollars.

The City Park Improvement Association will consider the proposed golf master plan on Tuesday at 4 p.m. in The Pavilion of the Two Sisters in the Botanical Garden. If it passes, the proposal will be put out for a bid through a formal process.

Estimated fees for course one would be \$50 to \$95, course two would be \$40 to \$65, and for the nine-hole would be \$12 to \$17