Broussard set to show off park plan

Rec center, soccer and T-ball fields are in the works

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Broussard will unveil its five-year site plan for its new 122-acre sports complex in a mid-November ceremony. But Mayor Charles Langlinais gave The Daily Advertiser a preview Monday.

The park will include five baseball fields with outfield fences at various distances, according to the players' ages. It will also have six T-ball fields, a 25,000-square-foot recreation center containing a double basketball court, two football fields, a field for flag football, six soccer fields, beach volleyball, three lakes, hiking trails, a small water park, batting cages and a lakeside amphitheater.

The estimated cost is $27 million, Langlinais said. The city government has $18 million in cash on hand, so the park probably will be built in two major phases, he said.

Currently, the site is covered with rice fields and forest. The main roads to access the site are St. Nazaire and U.S. Route 90.

"The topography is unusual for Louisianans because it includes rolling hills," Langlinais said. "We'll preserve that landscape by building the soccer fields and tennis courts on flat areas, and have the hiking trails and bike trails in the hilly area."

"We're putting the contract out to bid for building the soccer fields right away," Jack Haines, parks and recreation director, said.

Voters approved a half-cent sales tax in 2012 to help fund the construction of the park.

Langlinais said the city sent a survey to Broussard residents to assess their park priorities. Soccer and T-ball fields were at the top of residents' wish lists.

That year, Youngsville residents also voted to build a major park, a 70-acre sports complex that will be completed in spring 2014. Langlinais, Hains and Youngsville Mayor Wilson Victor all agree that there will be enough demand from parents of preschool through teenage children to keep both parks busy and brimming with families.

"We'll try to help any nonprofit youth league wanting to play on our fields," Hains said. "We've airlifted roadways for fields that small leagues are having trouble maintaining. We installed lights for night games at a soccer field for a league that was trying to maintain its own park. When leagues charge a registration fee for players, a lot of them will discount or subsidize fees to help financially needy players out. We'll try to help those leagues if they want to play here."