

## PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

The Mission statement for The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is; *"We strive to enhance the quality of urban life by providing secure well-maintained parks and by offering affordable programs for our community."* This mission is accomplished through the maintenance, operation and expansion of the Houston Park System. Consequently, the Department's overall strategy for capital improvements and the use of all available funding, including Bond Funds, is to improve the quality of life for individual neighborhoods and the city at large.

The Master Plan promotes the redevelopment and expansion of the parks system. The Department will upgrade current parks, continue the very successful Parks to Standard Program, develop the City's unique system of natural waterways into a linear park system extending throughout the City, develop and expand existing park properties, and add new maintenance facilities and community centers.

Property tax supported park bond funds is critical to the implementation of this strategy. By far, bond funds are the primary source of funding for park projects and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The Adopted FY2003-2007 CIP reflects the bond proposition approved in November 2001.

This CIP's Adopted bond funds will initiate the Parks Master Plan and will be used toward the following goals:

- Implement parks-to-standard program at approximately 75 Parks

- Fund Phase I and Phase II improvements at eight undeveloped and underdeveloped parks
- Support the privatization of the Houston Zoological Gardens
- Renovate 16 recreation centers
- Renovate 13 swimming facilities
- Fund flagship parks improvements
- Leverage \$26.4 million in pledged private sector donations for acquisition of new park land
- Continue partnership funding of the Master Plan with the Parks Board

### PARKS MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

#### I. Introduction

Vernon Henry & Associates began work in October 1998, with the goal of providing the Parks and Recreation Department a guide for future acquisition and development specifically, how and what spending should occur in the next 10-15 years

#### II. Overview of the Plan Development Process

- Categorize parks by pocket, neighborhood, community, regional and metro; Inventory existing City, County, and Private Facilities; establish criteria for identifying needs (demand based, standard based, and resource based) and then identify gaps in the parks, facilities and services

- Public Process – Public meetings were held in every city council district. Additionally, surveys and questionnaires were utilized. The objective was to involve the community in establishing priorities regarding renovations (the continuance of the Parks to Standard Program), land acquisitions, new park development, and construction of specific facilities – swimming pools, community centers, and/or maintenance facilities.
- Adoption by City Council.

**III. Master Plan Findings**

- 70 new land acquisitions with an additional 16 expansions
- Continued expansion of the PTS program
- Continued expansion of the linear park system along our bayous
- Community and Regional sized parks to accommodate sports fields
- Add additional 11 recreation centers
- Replace poorly located park maintenance facilities