

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

The Mission statement for The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is: "**To play a vital role in building a sustainable community and enhancing the quality of life in Houston through parks, programs and partnerships.**" 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 park system. The Department will upgrade existing parks, 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.

Park Bond Funds are critical to the implementation of this strategy. Bond Funds are the primary source of capital for park projects and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The FY2005-2009 CIP reflects the continuation of implementing the bond proposition which was approved in November 2001.

This CIP will continue the implementation of Phase I of the Park Master Plan and will be used toward the following goals:

- Begin construction on the first of approximately 75 parks that are scheduled for improvements.

- Fund Phase I and/or Phase II improvements for eight undeveloped and/or underdeveloped parks;
- Support the privatization of the Houston Zoological Gardens;
- Address 16 recreation centers;
- Address 13 swimming facilities;
- Fund flagship park improvements;
- Leverage \$10.4 million in pledged private sector donations for acquisition of new park land;
- Continue partnership funding of the Master Plan with the Houston Parks Board.

PARKS MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

I. Introduction

The Department completed the Master Plan in 2001, with the goal of providing a guide for future park acquisition and development. Specifically, the focus was on the required funding and the prioritization for projects that should occur over 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 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, land acquisitions, new park development, and construction of specific facilities – swimming pools, community centers, and/or maintenance facilities.
- Adoption by City Council was achieved on October 3, 2001.

III. Master Plan Findings

- 79 new land acquisitions with an additional 20 expansions;
- Continued implementation of the PTS program;
- Continued expansion of the linear park system along our bayous;
- 68 Community, 16 Regional, and 9 Metro sized parks to accommodate sports fields;
- Addition of 10 new recreation centers;
- Relocation of certain park maintenance facilities.