



CITY OF HOUSTON

News Release

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\$5 Million Dollar Proposal Would Create New 22 Acre Park in Alief

Mayor Bill White, along with City Councilman M.J. Khan, Parks Director Joe Turner and Houston Parks Board Executive Director Roksan Okan-Vick, announced today a proposal to purchase and develop 22.435 acres of land in southwest Houston to create a new park. The Houston Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Houston Parks Board will present the approximately \$5 million purchase proposal to City Council next week. The proposal comes on the heels of a new Trust for Public Land report ranking Houston No. 1 in total acreage of parkland among the 10 most populous cities in the country.

“All across the country communities, cities and businesses are recognizing the important role parks play in the development of a vibrant and active community.” said Mayor Bill White. “We would like Houston to be at the forefront of that movement and this proposal moves us even further ahead. This site in the Alief area is another great step along that path. We want more parkland and we want it available and accessible throughout Houston.”

The site under consideration is the Hackberry Golf Course, 7777 Dairy Ashford, currently closed, in District F.

“This initiative is exactly what the community needs,” said Council Member Khan. “The Alief area is one of the city’s most rapidly growing. We’ve been working for more than three years to provide more park space in the area so citizens will have another safe and convenient location to bring their families in the neighborhood.”

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The total purchase price of the property is \$4,888,000. The city proposes to fund \$3 million from the Parks Consolidated Construction Fund and the Houston Parks Board will fund the remaining \$1,888,000. The Houston Parks Board will provide \$500,000 in additional funding to provide for site work, refurbishment of buildings currently on site, upgrading the HVAC system and modifying the existing golf cart paths into walking trails.

The Houston Parks Board has a strategy for identifying potential parkland and has also identified areas of the city where park development is a priority. The Houston Parks Board identified the Hackberry property as a potential park more than two years ago, and has worked strategically to fund the acquisition.

“This is an example of how a strategic acquisition plan can really pay-off,” states Roksan Okan-Vick, of the Houston Parks Board. “We’ve been tracking this property for two years, and we’ve watched it sell because we didn’t have the money to acquire it. And yet, thanks to an open minded owner, and the commitment from Mayor White and our donors, we will close on the property in August, and community in the area will enjoy this parkland forever.”

If passed by Council, the proposal would address longstanding requests for more parks by the Alief community.

“This would be a huge win for the Alief community and the city,” said Joe Turner, Director Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “I’ve heard their requests ever since I became director in 2004. I am very excited at the prospect of developing a new park for Alief.”

A celebration event is planned, pending Council approval, on August 18th at 10:00 a.m. at 7777 Dairy Ashford. For more information on the Hackberry purchase proposal or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, please call (713) 845-1135 or visit us online at www.houstonparks.org. More information is also available from the Parks Board at www.houstonparksboard.org.

About The Houston Parks Board:

The Houston Parks Board is a 501(c) 3 organization whose mission is to protect, improve and preserve parkland in Houston. The Houston Parks Board is funded by the generous contributions of private donors, including individuals, families, neighborhoods, foundations and corporations. Without the support of these donors, the Houston Parks Board would not exist. No public funds, either tax or bond funds, are held or managed by the Houston Parks Board.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department:

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department’s mission is "to enhance the quality of urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community." The department oversees the management and stewardship of 38,945.42 acres of parkland for the city which includes 342 developed parks and 200 greenspaces.