



NEWS RELEASE

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New Mini-Train Plans Unveiled In \$11 Million Hermann Park Improvement Proposal

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the Hermann Park Conservancy will unveil a proposed \$11 million improvement plan for Hermann Park's Lake Plaza which includes a new mini-train for the park. The proposal represents the first contract amendment to the Pedal Boat and Other Concessions contract between the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the Hermann Park Conservancy. The proposal will add the mini-train concession to the Conservancy's existing contract for a 10-year term with a 5-year renewal option. Plans and a 3-D model of the proposal will be unveiled on Friday, June 8 at 10:00 a.m. at Lake Plaza near the Houston Zoo.

The new mini-train will help improve Hermann Park's parking problems with three new satellite stations. Two stations will be conveniently located near the Hermann Park/Rice METRORail depot (Sunset and Fannin) and the Houston Zoo METRORail depot (MacGregor and Fannin). The third new mini-train stop will be near the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Houston Garden Center and the Miller Outdoor Theatre.

Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, supports the proposal. "There isn't anyone in Houston who doesn't have a fond memory of the mini-train here at Hermann Park. We're hoping to build on that by providing a mini-train that will not only be fun to ride but is accessible to all and will improve traffic flow at the park."

Under the new contract amendment, the Conservancy will pay all capital costs to replace the existing mini-train infrastructure, estimated at \$4,000,000.

"The new mini-train will be ADA compliant. It will have new tracks and a new route, a new main station, three satellite stations and a new maintenance facility," said Doreen Stoller, Executive Director, Hermann Park Conservancy. "It will fit in well with the additional improvements we have planned for Lake Plaza and will provide better access to the park for all our visitors."

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The proposal almost doubles Lake Plaza's size and improves access to the Zoo, train, pedal boats, and other park attractions. A pedestrian bridge over McGovern Lake, an art component, a new food service facility, restrooms, and expanded pedal boat facility are also part of the plan.

The Conservancy will operate the mini-train concession and will provide 22% of the train rides' gross revenue to the City. The mini-train's net revenue will be used solely for the maintenance of Hermann Park in keeping with the Conservancy's current concession agreement to improve quality of service while increasing revenue for the Park. All the improvements will become property of the City upon completion, except for rolling stock (engines and cars), and all improvements will require approval by the HPARD Director.

The contract was reviewed by the Quality of Life Committee on March 18 and again on April 12, 2007. All new improvements are consistent with the City-approved Master Plan for Hermann Park. The current mini-train concession contract will expire on September 30, 2007.

Hermann Park Conservancy is a non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to the stewardship and improvement of Hermann Park today and for generations to come. Through a public-private partnership with the City of Houston, the Conservancy supports the ongoing maintenance and development of Hermann Park. For more information on the Hermann Park Conservancy, call (713) 524-5876 or visit www.hermannpark.org.

For additional information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department call (713) 845-1135 or visit our web site at www.houstonparks.org.