

Groundbreaking Event Scheduled For \$2 Million Sam Houston Park Improvements

\$1 Million T.P.W.D. Grant Matched by \$1 Million in Current Bond Funding Will Unify Three Sections of Park

Mayor Annise Parker, The Heritage Society and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the implementation of the Sam Houston Park Master Plan on Friday, November 2, 2012 at 2:00 pm at Sam Houston Park 1000 Bagby. The ceremony will mark the beginning of work to unify the three sections of the historic park and will take place near the U.S.S. Houston Memorial.

"In 1899 the citizens of Houston through their Mayor acquired 20 acres of land to create Sam Houston Park," said Mayor Annise Parker. "Today this park sits in the middle of downtown as a testament to the history of the city and its people. We are thankful to the Heritage Society for its work in preserving that history. We are also thankful to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for its funding which, in combination with capital improvement project funding, is helping us preserve and enhance the natural environment and historic significance of the park while also making it a more usable space for park users."

In addition to its historic buildings, Sam Houston Park is also the site for a number of municipal art pieces including the U.S.S. Houston Memorial. As part of Navy Week 2012, U.S. Navy Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Two Eight Houston led by Lt. E. R. Weatherall completed a total restoration project of U.S.S. Houston Memorial at Sam Houston Park. They worked to remodeling the plaza behind the Heritage Society and build sidewalks to and from the U.S.S. Houston Memorial from the existing walkway.

"For over 100 years, this park has been a place where our city's history has been preserved. Part of that history was honored last week when U.S. Navy Seabees restored the plaza surrounding the U.S.S. Houston Memorial. Today the memorial stands in testimony to the sailors who gave their lives for our country during World War II," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "We thank the U.S. Navy Seabees for their hard work and assistance in keeping the U.S.S. Houston Memorial in tip top shape. We also thank The Heritage Society and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for the role they play in preserving this park. The \$1 Million grant we received from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department combined with Capital Improvement Project funding will help us preserve the history of this park and its historic buildings and artwork for generations to come."

Since its formation in 1954, The Heritage Society, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization formed to save the deteriorating Kellum-Noble House, has preserved and saved nine additional important historic buildings and placed them inside of Sam Houston Park. Their efforts give the public a peek into 82 years of the Bayou City's fascinating and diverse history.

"Sam Houston Park offers the public a unique opportunity to walk through many chapters of Houston's past," said Alice Collette, Executive Director, The Heritage Society. "The buildings and park tell fascinating stories about the people who helped make Houston the great city that it is today. The Master Plan will enhance The Heritage Society's ability to tell these stories and also meet the needs of park users now and into the future. We are honored to be the City's partner in preserving our city's past."

The project cost is \$2,500,000.00 of which \$1 million was received from a matching Grant through the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Costs include design, construction, contingency, testing, and civic art. The Notice to Proceed is anticipated to be issued in early December 2012 with Substantial Completion scheduled for June 2013.

The scope of work for this project will include most of the priorities listed in the Sam Houston Park Master Plan developed by The Heritage Society. This includes:

- The relocation of the existing 4th Ward Cottage and Bandstand and the addition of concrete walks, granite and brick paving, and grass paving at special events service entry
- The redevelopment of parking lots and the addition of entry signage
- The addition of new landscaping including trees, turf establishment, and irrigation
- The refurbishment and relocation of the mechanical system for an existing fountain
- The relocation of various on-site art pieces, including the coordination of the off-site storage of pieces during construction
- Electrical service work which includes lighting, outlets, and electrical upgrades
- The procurement and installation of a pre-fabricated restroom building
- The addition of site furnishing, including benches, trash receptacles and a swing set

Carrera Construction, Inc is the General Contractor. Clark Condon Associates is the design consultant. The General Services Department will manage the design and construction with Duncan Elliott serving as Project Manager.

About the Sam Houston Park Master Plan

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD), the Mayor's Office of Special Events (MOSE), and The Heritage Society (THS) collaboratively developed the Sam Houston Park Master Plan with the assistance of Clark Condon & Associates. The purpose of the master plan is to enhance the preservation of Houston's history through the historic structures as well as to address the demands on the park now and in the foreseeable future. The master plan will help unify the three separate sections of the park, improve way-finding and circulation, develop gateways to define the edges and entries to the park, create more usable space for everyday activities, preserve and enhance the natural environment of the park, provide a coherent presentation of the eclectic collections of memorials, create a prominent central gathering place for visitors seeking information about Houston's history, enhance the park for children and families, improve parking, and maintain the park's ability to stage large events throughout the year.

About The Heritage Society

The Heritage Society, a museum complex at Sam Houston Park, collects, preserves, exhibits, and celebrates the diverse history of the Houston region. It operates ten historic structures that date from 1823 to 1905. The Heritage Society exists not just to educate visitors about Houston's interesting history but also to celebrate the diversity of the people who came together to build this world-class city. For more information on the Heritage Society, call (713) 655-1912 or visit www.heritagesociety.org.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 38,752 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on Sam Houston Park or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.

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