



For Immediate Release

Conservancy Celebrates Groundbreaking, \$43 Million Campaign Nearing Completion

ATLANTA (April 23, 2008) – Piedmont Park Conservancy will celebrate the official start of its 53-acre expansion of the Park with a groundbreaking ceremony, held at the historic Bathhouse on the evening of Wednesday, April 23.

The groundbreaking ceremony comes only one year after the Conservancy announced its capital campaign, themed “Breaking New Ground” to raise \$43 million in funding for phase one of the expansion plan that focuses on preparing the blighted, undeveloped land and improving public accessibility.

Once complete, the newly created parkland will offer Park users immediate access to the landscaped pathways, benches and picnic areas, in addition to an interactive water feature, similar in concept to the rings in Centennial Olympic Park.

To date, the “Breaking New Ground” campaign has reached approximately 85 percent of its goal, receiving challenge grants of \$10 million and \$5 million from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, respectively, \$5 million from an anonymous donor and most recently, a \$1.5 million challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation, a nationally regarded charitable organization that helps non profits build community through its support of human and environmental health, arts and culture, education, and human services.

Additional gifts include, \$1 million from AT&T, The Coca-Cola Company, The Home Depot Foundation, The Kendeda Fund and an anonymous donor, \$500,000 from the Dobbs Foundation, \$490,000 from the Paul E. Abstein estate, \$350,000 from SunTrust Directed Funds – Woolford Charitable Trust Fund, gifts of \$300,000 from the Tull Charitable Foundation and the David, Helen and Marian Woodward Fund, \$250,000 from the Wachovia Foundation, \$200,000 from the Rich Foundation, \$125,000 from Georgia Power Company, and \$100,000 from the Livingston Foundation.

Public funding in the amount of \$4.47 million has also been made available by the City of Atlanta, including \$970,000 in opportunity bond money for renovations to the swimming pools.

Campaign chair and Conservancy board member, Larry Gellerstedt III, President of Cousins Properties Office/Multi-Family Division, has led the first phase of the

campaign, and said, he continues to be motivated and inspired by the generous support the campaign has received from the local community.

“In a region where every acre of green space is precious and rare, Piedmont Park can grow by 40 percent without a single dollar from this campaign being spent for land acquisition,” Gellerstedt said. “Integration of these 53 acres will dramatically transform how the park serves the public.”

Phase one of that transformation, he said, begins with a \$7.8 million renovation of the Park’s historic Bathhouse, updating approximately 30,000 square feet of outdoor plazas, patios, picnic pavilions, and swimming pool areas.

An additional \$100,000 grant was received from the Kresge Foundation’s Green Building Initiative, which will aid the Conservancy in seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification of the Bathhouse renovation. It will be one of the first LEED renovations to a significant structure in an historic park in the city.

The project will feature an integrated design process that incorporates maximum sustainability into the building, including site layout and orientation, building practices, and materials selection.

The Conservancy developed plans for the Bathhouse and pools project with input from an advisory committee consisting of representatives from more than 50 neighborhoods, organizations and constituent groups along with representatives from Atlanta City government, said its President and CEO, Debbie McCown.

“The fact that our organization has been entrusted to coordinate the enhancement of Atlanta’s most beloved park is truly an honor, and we are thrilled to help establish a best in class park system for the people of metro Atlanta,” McCown said.

In 2005, Atlanta City Council approved the planned expansion, which addresses the eighth and final project outlined in the 1995 Piedmont Park Master Plan, and adheres to the fundamental principles guiding the rehabilitation of the Park.

Commissioner for the City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Dianne Harnell Cohen, along with members from the business and civic communities, will be on hand Wednesday evening to signal the start of construction.

Cohen said that collaboration and partnership between its political leadership and corporate and civic communities has been crucial to Piedmont Park’s success.

“The relationship between [the Conservancy] and the City of Atlanta is one of the best examples of this public-private partnership,” the commissioner said. “And we now have the ability to preserve 53 acres of additional parkland, something that is essential to our future quality of life.”

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For more information, contact:

Darrel McCook

Director, Communications and Special Events

(404) 875-7275, ext. 240

dmccook@piedmontpark.org